

CROSS-CULTURE ADJUSTMENT AND INTEGRATION OF
WESTERN EXPATRIATE WOMEN IN BANGKOK



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สถาบันวิทยบริการ
จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

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วิทยานิพนธ์ฉบับนี้ศึกษาเรื่องราวของสตรีชาวตะวันตกที่เข้ามาทำงานในประเทศไทย บริเวณกรุงเทพมหานคร ประเด็นของงานวิจัยเกี่ยวข้องกับการผสมกลมกลืนของบุคคลกลุ่มดังกล่าวให้เข้ากับสังคมไทยโดยตั้งคำถามว่า จำนวนสตรีชาวตะวันตกที่เข้ามาทำงานในประเทศไทยเพิ่มมากขึ้นนำไปสู่การผสมกลมกลืนทางสังคมและวัฒนธรรมที่มากขึ้นหรือไม่ วิทยานิพนธ์ฉบับนี้สำรวจและอธิบายระดับของการกลมกลืนในประเด็นหลักสามประเด็น ได้แก่ ภาษาและการสื่อสาร กระบวนการกลมกลืนทางสังคม และการปรับตัวทางวัฒนธรรม

ผู้เขียนวิเคราะห์ระดับความกลมกลืนบนพื้นฐานของมโนทัศน์ดังกล่าวข้างต้น ผ่านการสำรวจเชิงปริมาณอย่างกว้างขวางในหมู่สตรีชาวตะวันตกที่เข้ามาทำงานในกรุงเทพมหานคร ผลของการสำรวจแสดงให้เห็นว่า ระดับความกลมกลืนกับสังคมไทยของสตรีชาวตะวันตกอยู่ในระดับต่ำ ปัจจัยสำคัญที่ก่อให้เกิดปัญหาดังกล่าวได้รับการบ่งชี้และทดสอบผ่านชุดของเครื่องมือวิจัยซึ่งบ่งชี้ว่า (1) สถานภาพของความเป็นชาวต่างชาติ, (2) ลักษณะร่วมซึ่งมีความเป็นสากล, และ (3) การขาดเครือข่ายทางสังคม อาจเป็นปัจจัยหลักที่เป็นอุปสรรคต่อความตั้งใจหรือความสามารถของสตรีชาวตะวันตกในการผสมกลมกลืนกับสังคมไทย

ผู้เขียนเสนอว่าควรจะมีการให้ความสำคัญแก่การเรียนภาษาในกลุ่มสตรีชาวตะวันตกมากยิ่งขึ้น นอกจากนี้กลุ่มและองค์กรต่างประเทศในประเทศไทยควรตรวจสอบบทบาทหน้าที่ของตนภายในชุมชนท้องถิ่น โดยเน้นการผสมกลมกลืนเพิ่มมากขึ้น ทำยที่สุด ผู้เขียนยังแสดงให้เห็นถึงความสำคัญในการเพิ่มความเข้าใจระหว่างสตรีชาวตะวันตกและสังคมท้องถิ่น ในเรื่องของการรับรู้และการยอมรับทางวัฒนธรรมอีกด้วย

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The topic of this thesis is Western expatriate women working in Bangkok, Thailand. The problem concerns their degree of integration into Thai society. More specifically, has the increased involvement of expatriate women in the workplace led to increased social and cultural integration? Both the measurement and explanation of the degree of integration are explored in terms of three key concepts: language and communication, socialization and cultural adjustment.

Through an extensive quantitative survey of Western expatriate women working in Bangkok, the author scrutinizes their level of integration based on the three concepts identified above. The results of this investigation suggest that overall their levels of integration are low. The salient causative factors for these low levels of integration are identified and tested through a series of relevant indicators. The results of these tests indicate that the following may be factors that hinder the willingness or ability of the respondents to integrate into Thai society: expatriate status, global homogeneity and a lack of social networks.

In conclusion, the author argues that more emphasis should be put on the important of language learning in expatriate situations. Additionally, expatriate groups and organizations should examine their roles within their host communities with a view to placing higher value on integration. Finally, the author identifies the importance of increased understanding between expatriates and the local community, in terms of cultural perceptions and acceptance.

Field of Studies Southeast Asian Studies
Academic Year 2004

Student's signature
Advisor's signature

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DEFINITION OF TERMS

1. *Adaptation*

Changes in the behavior of a person or group in response to new or modified surroundings.

2. *Culture*

In this study, culture is defined as all socially-transmitted behavior patterns and systems of belief characteristic of people. Edward B. Tyler (1871: 1) states: “culture or civilization...is that whole complex which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.”

3. *Expatriate*

In this study, the term ‘expatriate’ will be defined as any non-Thai person who is currently working in Bangkok and has resided in the city for a minimum of six months.

4. *Farang*

The word ‘farang’ is the Thai word for foreigner. Historically, the Thai used this variation of the Indian word for Europeans ‘farengi’ to denote the Portuguese, who were the first European settlers in Thailand (H.R.H. Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, 1925: 1)

5. *Integration*

According to Bochner and Furham (1986: 28): “Integration refers to the accommodation that comes about when different groups maintain their respective core cultural identities, while at the same time merging into a super-ordinate group in other, equally important respects.”

6. Socialization

The process of socialization is one in which we learn how to behave, think and express ourselves correctly within our social surroundings. In this study, changes in one's socialization will be assessed through increased awareness of socializations other than one's own.

7. Western Woman

In this study, the term 'Western', when applied in the context of 'Western woman' will be defined as any woman originating from a *country* that is deemed Western-Christian. However, the woman herself does not have to be Christian.



CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

For centuries Southeast Asia has been host to hordes of foreigners from all over the world. The uniqueness of the region has attracted people from all walks of life, from merchants and colonizers to new-age travelers. In recent years, globalization has played a pivotal role in opening the region to foreign investment.¹ (Engholm, 1991: 3) The accessibility this has provided to both job seekers and multinational corporations² can be seen through the high numbers of business suit clad foreigners roaming the city streets of the region.

One such city is Bangkok. Although Thailand is touted by most as a tourist destination because of the beauty of its beaches and culture rich hill-tribes, its capital city has become a sought after place of employment for many westerners.³ The reasons for this are numerous, ranging from the city's ability to provide a high quality of life, to the accessibility to most Western comforts.

Traditionally, employment prospects for westerners in Bangkok were male dominated. This however, has changed in the past two decades. Women from Western countries are now being presented with more work opportunities in the area. In turn, this has led to a new and, as of yet, fairly unexplored area of study.

¹ In 2002, 4 154 000 U.S dollars were invested by foreign companies from Japan, the U.S., Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore and the E.U. (Laparojkit, 2003: 6)

² International investors may be drawn by the high quality of infrastructure in Thailand: 5 international (and one more scheduled to open in 2005) and 30 domestic airports, 6 seaports (Bangkok, Laem Chabang, Map Ta Phut, Sattahip, Sonkhla and Phuket), over 170 000 km of roads, 50 International schools and 60 industrial Estates. (Laparojkit, 2003: 17)

³ According to Engholm (1991: 19), expatriate postings in Bangkok are considered more desirable than other locations in the region.

In the past, Western women living in Bangkok were generally those who were accompanying their husbands, based on the latter's work placement. The role of women in past expatriate studies focused largely on their position as secondary, and often involuntary, characters in the move abroad. In other words, on their abilities to adapt to new cultures, while being removed from the cultural contact that comes from working within the new culture.

As Western women begin to fill the once male dominated expatriate circles in Bangkok, their abilities to adjust and the extent of their integration into Thai society is an area of research as of yet unexplored.

I. Statement of the Problem

Past expatriate studies have clearly outlined the trend of expatriates to form their own, or join, expatriate communities in their new locations (Osland, 1996: 54, Ratiu, 1983), therefore integrating very little with the local communities. This is especially true in locations where the cultural aspects are very different from their countries of origin. In general, this has led to minimal contact between expatriates and the local community. Women were especially affected by this isolation (Adler, 1986; Gaylord, 1979), with the minimal contact usually being with the hired household help.

Nowadays, many women expatriates in Bangkok are working and therefore the amount of cultural contact between expatriate women and local communities has increased. The increased contact, however, may or may not have led to an increase in the integration of expatriate women into Thai communities, nor an increase in cultural adjustment. **Therefore, the question that this study aims to answer is: Has the increased involvement of expatriate women in the workplace led to increased social and cultural integration? If it has, what are the factors accounting for this increase? If it hasn't, what are the salient causative factors?**

This study will assess the levels of integration of expatriate women living and working in Bangkok. The assessment will be based on the following concepts: Thai

language fluency, socialization and cultural adjustment. The potential obstacles to integration are hypothesized as: expatriate status, gender status, cultural homogeneity and lack of social networks. The impact of Thai culture on these issues will be woven throughout the research, and discussed in detail. This study was carried out in two stages.

STAGE I: Concepts of Integration

The first stage was to identify the levels of integration of the expatriate women currently living and working in Bangkok. The levels of integration were measured based on the following three concepts:

1. Language and Communication

The knowledge of Thai language is not essential in modern day Bangkok. Most Thai nationals living in the city have some understanding of the English language, while many of the younger generation are nearly fluent. For most expatriate women working in Bangkok, English is used in all work related communications. In most other areas of daily living, such as taking taxis and ordering food, knowledge of basic words, short sentences and strategic gestures will suffice: “The sojourner confronted by language differences but lacking ability in the host language must learn to carry out the normal daily activities by communicating through other means.” (Cushner and Brislin, 1996: 289)

Reliance on these methods, however, results in two interrelated problems. The first of these problems is a direct result of the inability to perform daily tasks as effectively as one would in a location where the language is known: “The stress of such a predicament is apt to lead to discouragement and/or depression and can affect one’s whole mental outlook.” (Cushner and Brislin, 1996: 289) The outcome of this discouragement and depression can be detrimental to one’s experience abroad, an issue that will be discussed later in the paper.

The second problem is that knowledge of a language is paramount to the understanding of a culture, as it represents the mentality and world view of the people who speak it. The expatriate who makes an effort to learn a language will gain valuable insight into the host culture. (Cushner and Brislin, 1996: 291) **Not only is there a symbiotic relationship between language and culture but, moreover, showing a willingness to learn the language is important in the eyes of the hosts** (Osland, 1996: 48), and therefore may ease one's acceptance into a foreign society.

Learning a language, however, does not necessarily ease the transition immediately. Osland (1996: 44) points out: "Expatriates who make the effort to learn another language experience tremendous mental fatigue in the beginning as they struggle to understand a torrent of meaningless sounds." **Therefore, not solely the knowledge of Thai, but also the amount of effort made to learn Thai, are both indicators into the first concept of integration.**

The current study will examine the Thai language abilities of Western women working in Bangkok. Their language knowledge will be measured by the following indicators: Thai language skills; the language used at work; and pre and post arrival language studies.

2. Socialization

The process of socialization is one in which we learn how to behave, think and express ourselves correctly within our social surroundings. This process leads us to differentiate between what is acceptable and what is not, as members of a given society. However, viewing the world from any one perspective can be detrimental to the expatriate worker. Once one has been socialized, one's ability to understand and identify other realities is affected. (Cushner and Brislin, 1996: 5) The result of this inability is ethnocentrism. Ethnocentrism occurs when people use their own culture's ideas of right and wrong to judge other cultures. (Engholm, 1991: 309)

In order for expatriates to begin the integration process, their instilled socializations must become less concrete, thus reducing or eliminating their

ethnocentricity. According to Osland (1996: 141), successful expatriates will yield the following factors:

“1) cultural certainty, 2) unquestioned acceptance of basic assumptions, 3) personal frames of reference, 4) the unexamined life, 5) accustomed role and status, 6) knowledge of social reinforcement, 7) accustomed habits and activities, and 8) known routines.”

The expatriate’s ability to forego, or temporarily abandon some, or all, of the above will delineate their ability to adjust their socialization and adapt it to their new environments.

The abilities of expatriate women living in Bangkok to overcome their unique socializations is the second concept of integration. Changes in their socializations will be measured by the following indicators: previous experience abroad; pre and post arrival cultural studies; long-term plans of residency; increased cultural awareness when visiting their home countries; comfort levels with Thai people; and knowledge/understanding of Thai politics and Theravada Buddhism.

3. Cultural Adjustment

Cultural adjustment is the process in which one’s behavior is altered to accommodate a different understanding of socialization. Regardless of one’s role in a new country, all people go through similar periods of cultural adjustment. (Cushner and Brislin, 1996: 25) Although the process of adjustment seems quite logical for people who are choosing to live in a society other than their own, it is not as easy as it sounds:

“The demand on individuals to make so many adjustments is one reason for the phenomenon commonly called culture shock. No single one of these demands is overwhelming: People make adjustments every day to new pressures or to new information in their own cultures. But the multiple demands, coming within a short period of them cause frustration during extensive cross-cultural interactions. This frustration occasionally leads to negative feeling about the members of other cultures, no matter how

egalitarian the cross-cultural adjuster happens to be.” (Cushner and Brislin, 1996: 12)

How well expatriate women living in Bangkok adjust to their newfound cultures is the third concept of integration. The cultural adjustment of Western women working in Bangkok will be measured by the following indicators: with whom they socialize; where and what they eat; where and with whom they live; perceived changes in their cultural orientations; and the ‘Thai-ness’ of their current lifestyles.

STAGE II: Causative Factors for Integration Levels

The second stage was to identify the reasons for the levels of integration. The following potential obstacles to integration were assessed:

1. Expatriate Status

The status of being an expatriate may have many social consequences. The two consequences on which I will focus are ‘celebrity’ status and out-group designation.

i. ‘Celebrity’ Status

This is faced by many expatriates living in Bangkok. The status stems largely from the physical differences between the local and Western populations. This status often results in stares and attention, due almost entirely to the presence of a ‘farang’ face. For non-Asian expatriates, one’s foreign status is impossible to hide. Not being able to blend into the crowd results in constant attention, both positive and negative, based solely on one’s appearance.

ii. Out-group Designation

In most societies, the local population is the in-society and the non-locals living in the society are the out-group. Being part of the out-group reduces one’s power within, and knowledge of, any given society. Reminders of their out-group status are frequent in the lives of expatriates living in Bangkok. The often

talked about two-tiered price system, as well as the often overbearing us-and-them attitude are topics lamented over by many expatriates living in the city.

‘Celebrity’ status and out-group designation are two consequences of being an expatriate in Bangkok. The result of these consequences is that many expatriates turn to people and places where they can escape these consequences, even temporarily. Therefore, expatriate organizations begin to play a prominent role in the expatriate’s life.

According to Osland, expatriate organizations can be both positive and negative. The positive side of the groups is that they provide the expatriate with useful information, and a way to ‘escape’ from the unknown. The negative side however, is that they prevent integration by emphasizing interaction with other expatriates. Osland (1996: 55) states that successful expatriates will only spend a limited amount of time in expatriate communities, and therefore be more effective and integrated locally.

Expatriate status may therefore play a large role in the ability, or willingness of an expatriate woman in Bangkok to integrate herself within Thai society. The following indicators will measure whether the integration levels of Western women are affected by their status as an expatriate: with whom she interacts at work; whether her status as an expatriate affects participation in company functions; whether she feels accepted by Thai people; whether she is affected by her status as an expatriate at work; if she joined expatriate groups upon arrival in Bangkok; if she has met most of her social network through expatriate organizations; if her social group is made up predominantly of expatriates; and whether her status as an expatriate was the most difficult aspect to adjust to upon arrival in Bangkok.

2. Gender Status

One’s status within a community is often affected by one’s gender. Gender often dictates traditional social roles based on sex. Often, these traditional social roles will extend to the work place. According to Cushner and Brislin (1996: 299): “In many nations of Africa, Asia and Latin America, for instance, women are rarely found

in positions of authority, high respect, or responsibility – for the most part, they hold of those positions traditionally afforded them.” In Bangkok, however, the traditional role of Thai women has been changing dramatically for the last two decades.⁴ It is no longer unusual for women to be working in the salient international companies in Bangkok.

For expatriate women in Bangkok, their gender would have possibly played a role in traditional Thai society. As this society is changing, and women are playing a larger role in the workforce, the expatriate woman may be less likely to face obstacles related to gender. In addition, past studies have shown that expatriate women working abroad do not always face the same gender obstacles as local women. (Barrett, 1996)

However, if women do feel un-justice due to their gender, it may affect their long-term plans, if their goals are career oriented. **Inability to commit to any long-term sojourn may result in the unwillingness of expatriate women to attempt any integration at all.** The following indicators will be used to measure whether Western women working in Bangkok are affected by their gender: whether their gender affects their participation in work functions; their opinion on how men and women are treated in their Thai work environment; whether they are affected by their gender in their Thai work environment; whether their status and chances of advancement are lower in their Thai company because of their gender; and whether they would encourage Western women to come to Bangkok to live and work.

3. Global Homogeneity: The Westernization of Bangkok

‘Cocacolonization’ is a process through which the west becomes a dominant influence to cultures worldwide. (Lambert, 1966: 170) The effects of this process are that unique cultural aspects of certain societies become eroded and thus traditional ways of life become almost obsolete. ‘Cocacolonization’ (or ‘creolization’) affects the

⁴ According to Klausner (2002: 86): “In the 2001 freshman class in the Faculty of Law, Chulalongkorn University, there were 137 women and 46 men; in the faculty of Political Science, 182 women and 45 men; in the Faculty of Medecine, 112 women and 90 men.”

communities in which it is at work, while at the same time making these communities more accessible to outsiders.

As with many of the other large cities in the Southeast Asian region, Bangkok is filled with Western amenities. From English language radio programs, to fast-food restaurants, to cinemas filled with English language movies. Expatriates living in the city are provided with a plethora of alternatives to aid them in recreating a lifestyle that is closer to their native lifestyles. This however, lowers the necessity of contact with, and understanding of, aspects of the local traditional lifestyle.

To re-create a nearly complete Western lifestyle in Bangkok is expensive,⁵ but not impossible. For expatriate women living in Bangkok, the amount of cultural contact that comes from participating in the more traditional aspects of Thai society is largely limited to choice. For obvious reasons, **their levels of integration may vary based on the choices they make in their everyday lives.**

The following are the indicators used to assess whether the westernization of Bangkok affects the integration of Western women: what types of establishments they frequent for meals; which forms of transport they use; their knowledge of Thai; and the 'Thai-ness' of their current lifestyle.

4. Lack of Social Networks

A necessary part of one's existence as a member of any given society is based on one's social network. Most of us have family, friends, neighbors and colleagues who all play a part in our social existence. The importance of these relationships is cemented in sociologist Weiss' six provisions filled by social relationships, as reprinted in Cushner and Brislin's book, Intercultural Interactions (1996: 264):

⁵ For example, a regular Thai meal can be had for less than 100 Baht, whereas a meal at a Western restaurant would run up to 300 baht. Also, the price of a regular city bus ticket is 4 baht, whereas the more modern sky-train system, the BTS, runs between 10 and 40 baht.

- a) “Social integrations (i.e. a feeling of shared concerns and activities) which is commonly provided by family and/or friends
- b) Attachment (i.e. a sense of security and commitment), which most often comes from a romantic partner or from the family
- c) Sense of reliable alliance (i.e. assurance of continuing assistance), commonly met by the family
- d) Reassurance of worth, predominantly provided by coworkers or colleagues
- e) Guidance, which may be offered by mentors, teachers, or older kin
- f) Opportunity for nurturance, provided by offspring or other dependents”

For expatriates working abroad, most of their concrete relations are affected by the physical separation. Therefore, the successful expatriate has to attempt to re-create a sort of social network within her new community. Some women living in Bangkok recreate this network through affiliation with expatriate groups:

“These goals [of expatriate groups] may include an emotional, expressive function (in which individuals seek to release or air feelings by talking to others), self-clarification (i.e. talking or being with others so as to increase understanding and to reduce uncertainty), and social validation (i.e. seeking out others to find support or confirmation for ones actions and beliefs).”
(Cushner and Brislin 1996: 264)

Others however, will re-create it through like-minded individuals: Thai nationals or foreigners. The choice of who becomes part of one’s social network is subjective. The outcome, however, may determine the woman’s integration levels. In their book Culture Shock! Thailand, Cooper and Cooper (1990: 186) state that regardless of integration levels, foreigners will never become ‘Thai’.

The following indicators will measure whether the integration of Western women is affected by their lack, and/or choice of social networks: who they live with; who they knew in Bangkok before they arrived; whether they feel they have a sufficient social circle; whether their social network is what they miss most about

their home countries; and whether leaving their current social group would be the most salient consequence faced if they left Bangkok.

II. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to measure the levels of social and cultural integration of working Western women living in Bangkok and to identify the factors that contribute to these levels.

Table 1.1 Concepts and Indicators for Measurement of Social and Cultural Integration

Concepts	Indicators
<i>Fluency in Thai Language</i>	Knowledge of Thai Language used at work Pre-arrival language studies Post-arrival language studies
<i>Socialization</i>	Previous experience abroad Pre-arrival cultural studies Post-arrival cultural studies Long term plans of residency Cultural awareness when visiting home country Ease with Thai people Knowledge of Thai politics Knowledge of Theravada Buddhism
<i>Cultural Adjustment</i>	With whom the respondent socializes Where respondent eats What type of food respondent eats Where respondent lives Who respondent lives with Form of transport used Cultural change of respondent Current lifestyle

Table 1.2 Variables and Indicators for Measurement of Possible Obstacles to Integration

Variables	Indicators
Expatriate Status	With whom respondent interacts at work Affected by expatriate status at work functions Accepted by Thais Affected by expatriate status at work Joined expatriate organizations upon arrival Met the most people through expatriate organizations Make up of social group Difficulty adjusting to expatriate status
Gender Status	Participation in work functions affected by gender Gender bias in Thai work environment Affected by gender at work Status at work is lower because of gender Advancement at work lower because of gender Encourage women to come to Bangkok
<i>Westernization of Bangkok</i>	Where respondent eats Form of transport used Knowledge of Thai Respondent's lifestyle
Social Networks	Who respondent lives with Who respondent knew before arriving in Bangkok Contentment with sufficiency of social circle Misses social network in home country Loss of social circle is a consequence to leaving

III. Significance of the Study

The significance of this study is two-fold. The first lies in the fact that women are beginning to form an integral part of the international work-force, and therefore an understanding of their patterns of adjustment and adaptation when placed in a new culture is essential. This could help guide expatriates in their adjustment, while reducing unnecessary frustrations. The second is the extent to which Thai society (or culture) determines the degree of adaptation achieved by expatriate working women. This may aid potential expatriate women to acquire an awareness of Thai culture, thus enabling them to develop a realistic set of expectations.

Although research has been done on expatriate communities in Bangkok, none has focused solely on women expatriates. **The present study represents pioneering research into this unexplored area.**



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CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF SELECTED LITERATURE

Available literature on the topics relevant to this study can be divided into three groups. The first group comprises of material that discusses the concepts of culture and intercultural interactions. The second group comprises expatriate studies. Finally, the third group of literature relevant to this study comprises books and essays outlining Thailand and Thai culture.

Group I: Concepts of Culture and Intercultural Interactions

One of the most salient books for this topic is Cushner and Brislin's Intercultural Interactions: A Practical Guide (1996). This book discusses in detail the difficulties of sojourners when faced with a culture other than their own. Primarily useful as a training manual for pre-departure orientation, it also provides the reader with an overall understanding of the effects of cultural conflict. This book provides theoretical analysis on each of the three integration concepts pertinent to this study: language and communication, socialization and cultural adjustment.

Throughout the book the authors emphasize and argue the importance of language learning: "Language learning can greatly enhance and deepen sojourners' understanding of their experiences, by allowing them greater insight into and improving their adaptation to their new environments." (Cushner and Brislin, 1996: 290) Though the authors state that sojourners confronting language barriers will resort to other means of communication, they argue that this inability to communicate can be detrimental and lead to discouragement on the part of the sojourner. (ibid, 1996: 289) Moreover, the authors theorize that the sojourner who makes an effort to learn the language of the host country will be rewarded with more than just ease of communication:

“Such efforts show concern and interest in the host culture and open many doors for further learning, adding to the total value of the intercultural experience. More important, a language is more than a related set of vocabulary phrases and rules – it represents the world view of the people who speak it, and as such reflects important concepts and modes of thinking.” (ibid, 1996: 291)

In addition to emphasizing the importance of language and communication learning, the authors of the book identify key characteristics among sojourners when confronted with cultures other than their own. Cushner and Brislin argue that socialization is moreover one’s expectations in any given situation:

“People have certain expectations of the outcomes of their own behavior as well as the motivations of others. These expectations are based upon the behavior they observe in others. Such expectations come primarily from their own socialization, which predisposed them to view the world from a particular perspective.” (ibid, 1996: 9)

When these expectations are not met, a variety of outcomes is possible. The authors outline the three most salient outcomes that occur when the expatriate is faced with a new form of socialization:

- a) “People may feel extreme emotional upset, often without knowing what is at play; as a result, they may have a tendency to avoid further cross-cultural situations, which they perceive to be unpleasant.
- b) People may make faulty attributions, or assign inaccurate interpretations, to the meaning and intentions of others’ behavior, accusing them of lacking sufficient knowledge, cheating, or being pushy; in other words, people may interpret events from their own ethnocentric perspectives and thus judge others by inappropriate standards.
- c) People may begin to inquire as to how others interpret or find meaning in their world; as they begin to learn how others understand and operate from

their own perspectives or subjective cultures, they begin to take part in true culture learning.” (ibid, 1996: 9)

Cushner and Brislin also discuss the necessity of cultural adjustment. The authors argue that, though people frequently make adjustments to their lives, the amount of adjustments necessary in a cross-cultural situation is often overwhelming. They state that this may lead to frustrations among the sojourner, thus resulting in a negative attitude towards the host culture. (ibid, 1996: 12)

A key concept of this book is that of successful assimilation. Through a solid understanding of the reasons behind cultural conflict, the authors have maintained a positive view of cross-cultural interaction. This positive view is reflected by the idea that cultural understanding can lead to conflict avoidance.

This book was pertinent to this study because it provided clear theoretical background into the three areas identified as concepts to integration: language and communication, socialization and cultural adjustment.

The second book that was pertinent to this study and discusses the topic of culture and intercultural interactions is Bochner and Furnham’s Culture Shock: Psychological Reactions to Unfamiliar Environments (1986). The authors argue that all cross-cultural situations result in a form of psychological reaction for the parties involved. The nature of these reactions is largely determined by the dominant factors surrounding the cross-cultural encounter, such as the reason for geographic movement and the consequences of such a move. (Bochner and Furnham, 1986: Part I)

Bochner and Furnham theorize that the intensity of the psychological reactions vary in degree based on the intentions of the traveler. They argue that the mental outlooks of travelers differ based on factors such as the length of time they are planning on spending in a particular place and their reasons for being in a particular place (ibid, 1986, Part II).

This book was extremely useful to this study. It provided a clear understanding of culture shock and cultural adjustment theories, as well as the importance of motivation in assessing the consequences of cross-cultural interactions.

Group II: Past Expatriate Studies

Osland's The Adventure of Working Abroad: Hero Tales from the Global Frontier provides an excellent account of the challenges faced by expatriates across the globe. As the author has herself worked abroad for fourteen years, she is able to draw on her own experiences as an expatriate. This book brings to life Joseph Campbell's metaphor of a 'hero's journey' by comparing the tale to the experiences of an expatriate assignment. Although this comparison adds a slight confusion to the book, the salient overall theme of expatriate challenges and issues is not compromised.

Throughout this book, Osland uses accounts of returned expatriates to illustrate and provide rationale for the theories she is explaining.¹ Osland argues that **a key challenge faced by expatriates is their lack of social networks in their host country**: "This substantial geographical separation leaves expatriates to face the unknown without the benefit of their accustomed anchors." (Osland, 1996: 21) The author states this lack of social networks prompts expatriates to seek out like minded individuals. The result of this usually yields some form of expatriate group or organization. Osland argues that these groups are detrimental to the expatriate experience as they: "...prevent expatriates from developing positive attitudes towards the host culture and from integrating themselves into the other culture." (ibid, 1996: 56)

This book provided a critical understanding of the expatriate experience. This understanding formed an essential part of the analysis for this study. Osland's ability to recount first hand accounts illustrated numerous facts about expatriate life that are relevant regardless of the location.

¹ These accounts are the result of a study she conducted in 1990

Anne-Wil Harzing has written a number of academic articles on the topic of cross-cultural and expatriate studies. In her article “Acquisitions versus Greenfield Investments: International Strategy and Management of Entry Modes” (Harzing, 2002), the importance of language management in multinational companies is discussed. The author argues that international co-ordination has become a source of competitive advantage. This co-ordination however, is hampered by the language barrier which remains to be the ultimate obstacle to international harmonization. The author presents and discusses solutions to alleviate this barrier through language and communication. This article outlines a clear overview of the trend of globalization and the consequences of language incompetence for expatriate management. This article was salient to the current study as it stressed the necessity of communication understanding in cross-cultural situations.

Harzing and Christensen’s article “Expatriate Failure: Time to Abandon the Concept?” (Christensen and Harzing, 2004) was pertinent to the understanding of modern day expatriation. The authors argue that the current understanding of the concept of expatriate failure is outdated due to the fact that it doesn’t take into account the numerous factors that may lead up to such events. Instead, they draw on general human resources literature to analyze the concept through problems related to turnover and performance in expatriate settings. As the current study was focused solely on working expatriate women, this article was of interest on two levels. The first is that it clearly outlines obstacles related to employment in a foreign country. The second is that it provides a better understanding of the current situations expatriates are facing in the global context.

Group III: Thailand and Thai Culture

The first book under this topic is Klausner’s Thai Culture in Transition (2002). This book provides remarkable insight into the culture of Thailand and, moreover, the changes that have taken place in this culture. This book is a collection of essays written by the author, who first came to Thailand to do ethnographic research over forty years ago. This vast stretch of time, as well as the changes that have overtaken

the country during this period, provide the author with an excellent understanding of Thailand's cultural values.

The changing gender role of Thai women is a key issue explored in this text. Klausner argues that: "More and more, Thai women, particularly in the urban areas, are not content to confine themselves to the traditional roles of the nurturing mother and dutiful wife. They are carving out professional careers often in arenas previously considered the province of males." (Klausner, 2002: 85) The author theorizes that the current trend of rejecting traditional gender roles is resulting in an increase of single or divorced career-oriented women, which in turn may increase pressure on family law code reform. (ibid, 2002:85-86)

Despite this, the author argues that: "The present generation of women has to cope with inter-generational and spousal conflicts and tension as well as with the social, legal political and economic environments which are still heavily influenced by the patriarchal values of male supremacy." (ibid, 2002: 82)

For this research, it was important to have a clear understanding of the role of Thai women in present day society. Although the basics of this understanding can be gained from a variety of sources, such as guidebooks and Thai cultural reference materials, none are as pertinent as this. More often than not, tourist publications boast Thai society along traditional lines, while investment-oriented publications celebrate its modernity, forsaking the roots of its present day cultural traditions. The importance of understanding gender roles in the culture in which expatriate women are interacting is invaluable to this study.

The second book under this topic is Mulder's Inside Thai Society (1990). This book explores the 'logic' behind present day society and identifies Thai perceptions of knowledge and order. The author argues that outside perceptions of Thai society as 'loosely-structured' are false. He states that in order to understand Thai society, one cannot compare it to Western systems, but must moreover see it from a Thai point of view.

The importance of this book for this study was two-fold. The first was to give a more in-depth understanding of the Thai mind, as a tool to provide insight into the

culture and social practices at place in Thailand. Mulder (1990: 113-114) argues: “Apart from the massive government bureaucracy, the Buddhist monk-hood is numerically the largest of all Thai national institutions... Buddhism is therefore the greatest of Thai institutions, expressive of and perpetuating the Thai nation, its tradition, its ritual and its identity.”

The second was to outline a basic awareness of Thai perceptions of modern times, as well as their adaptation to it. This part was important because modern times include adjustment to more foreign influences and the penetration of Thai society by the west, in both human and investment form.

The third book, entitled Culture Shock! Thailand (1990) is part of a series of books written about culture shock in a variety of countries. The authors of this book are a sociologist, Bob Cooper and his Thai wife, Nanthapa. The book provides a thorough analysis of Thai cultural habits: body language,² social circles, religion, business and etiquette. The analysis not only explains how things are done, but why they are done in such a way and the consequences of not abiding to the dictum.

The authors argue that foreigners have great difficulty integrating into Thai society, and that over-reliance on expatriate groups is often a hindrance to integration. Cooper and Cooper state that a slight form of social integration is possible, but it remains a gradual process: “The foreigner finds himself decreasingly relying on the foreign community in Bangkok for friendships and entertainment and feels increasingly at ease with Thais.” (Cooper and Cooper, 1990: 186)

The salience of this book lies in the fact that it observes Thai customs and habits through the eyes of a foreigner. For the current study, this is an essential

² The ‘wai’ (the action of putting one’s hands together in front of one’s body as a sign of respect) is discussed in detail and the authors advise foreigners to abide by the following: one should never wai people of lower status, as this may lead to embarrassment to the person of inferior status (servants, laborers, children...etc), one should give a low wai when receiving a high wai, and finally, if one is not sure what the status of the person is, one should simply lower the body in deference but not raise the hands. In addition to the wai, the authors also discuss the importance of the smile, the head, the feet, the voice, the eyes, the hands and personal appearance. (Cooper and Cooper, 1990: 17-28)

perspective. Unlike the first two Thai culture-related books reviewed in this section, this book is not theory based. The language used is non-academic and it is aimed moreover as a guide to Thai culture for any type of visitor. Despite this, it is a valuable tool for dissecting the expatriate communities of Bangkok.

The fourth book is Mole's Thai Values and Behavior Patterns (1973).³ The theme of this book is that one must understand those among whom one is living and working. **The author argues that, for a foreigner living and working in Thailand, knowledge of how and why Thais behave in certain ways is essential to the foreigner's success in the country.** The author states that: "Without awareness and appreciation of the similarities and differences of the two cultures, many of the best motivated actions by citizens of Thailand or the west are subject to severe misunderstanding." (Mole, 1973: 8)

This book is salient to the project. First and foremost, it reiterates the overall idea of successful cultural integration through understanding. Secondly it uses Thailand as a base for this cultural learning, and analyzes the social and cultural values of this base. The information provided by this book is useful as an analytical tool for the current study.

Summary and Discussion

Each of the theories outlined above contains salient points. Cushner and Brislin (1996) have argued for the importance of language learning, as a tool to communication, as well as cultural understanding and acceptance. The authors have also theorized aspects of socialization and the necessity of cultural adjustment. Furnham and Bockner (1986), however, have taken these same concepts and studied

³ This book represents a study necessitated by the awareness that American marines and navy personnel in the Southeast Asian region were deficient in their understanding of the cultures in which they were working. The objectives of this study were to educate personnel on the values, beliefs and behavioral patterns of the people in the region.

the effects of them in terms of psychological reactions. Whereas Cushner and Brislin presented their theories in terms of *what* an expatriate must do to attain successful expatriation, Furnham and Bockner have theorized *why* certain reactions occur in cross-cultural situations. Despite the different approaches to similar areas of study, both of these texts present valuable theoretical analysis to cross-cultural studies.

In all of the literature reviewed above, the role of expatriate groups was frequently discussed. Although Osland (1996) acknowledged the role of such groups in creating social networks, Cooper and Cooper (1990) theorized that the act of distancing oneself from these groups is an indicator of a slightly elevated social integration level. By taking both of these theories into account, one could suggest that a certain degree of contact with other expatriates is necessary during the initial stages of expatriation. However, a long-term, over-reliance on expatriate groups is detrimental to any degree of cultural integration.

Klausner (2002), Mulder (1990) and Mole (1973) have each presented theories that draw on the overall idea that understanding a culture is paramount to successfully living in it. Despite the fact that they have mostly discussed different aspects of Thai culture and the workings of Thai society, some of the areas discussed, such as the changing role of Thai women, have overlapped and resonated the same observations.

This section has reviewed literature relevant to this research paper. The three sections, concepts of culture and cross-cultural interactions, expatriate studies and examinations of Thai culture have each provided unique facets of this paper. These topics are interrelated and each plays a pivotal role in understanding and assessing integration levels of Western expatriate women living and working in Bangkok.

There remains however, a void in the availability of *academic* expatriate literature. Nevertheless, there is a somewhat substantial amount of *non-academic* literature available. Many expatriate oriented website include articles written by expatriates throughout the region detailing their experiences. These types of first-hand accounts were useful to the current study due to their abilities to illustrate the personal side of expatriation.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study is to measure the levels of social and cultural integration of working Western women living in Bangkok and to identify the reasons, or factors, for these levels. This chapter comprises two sections. The first explains the process of finding suitable candidates, the screening of respondents, the establishment of participant criteria and the distribution and collection of the main questionnaire. The second section outlines the main questionnaire design, a note on criteria validity and the analytical tool.

SECTION I: Process of Data Collection

The methodology used in this study is somewhat complicated, as potential participants are scattered throughout Bangkok, and not concentrated in such institutions as schools, hospitals or refugee camps. The sample for this survey was of 51 Western women living and working in Bangkok. The difficulties of finding accurate data for the *actual* amount of expatriate women that would fit the established criteria is summed up in the following:

“Identifying and counting expatriates abroad is not without difficulties and different methods may produce different estimates. There are three main types of estimates, each of them with its advantages and shortcomings: i) statistics of people registered in embassies and consulates overseas; ii) emigrations surveys in origin countries; and iii) compilation of statistics from receiving countries.” (Dumont and Lamaitre, OECD: 9)

Each of the three methods mentioned in the above is problematic in its own way, due mainly to the fact that many expatriates do not register with their embassies, nor convey their intentions when leaving their own countries or arriving in a new country.

Despite the limitation of not having exact expatriate population figures or contact details, the investigator set about finding women to participate in the research in August 2004. The following were the methods used to procure participants for the research:

I. Initial Contact to Seek Suitable Participants

i. Firstly, through Internet research, as well as numerous expatriate oriented publications, a preliminary list of expatriate women's groups in Bangkok was compiled. A letter (see Appendix A) was then sent out to each of these groups explaining the purpose of the research, and asking for women interested in participating to convey their interest to the investigator by e-mail.

The letter was emailed to the following groups:

American Chambers of Commerce
 Australian Chambers of Commerce
 British Chambers of Commerce
 Canadian Chambers of Commerce
 New Zealand Chambers of Commerce
 Bangkok Association of Mothers and Babies International
 Bangkok Women Writers Group
 Australian New Zealand Women's Group

ii. Secondly, an explanation of the research, as well as the investigator's contact information, was posted in expatriate discussion boards on the following websites:

www.asiaxpat.com
www.expatexchange.com
www.ajarn.com

iii. Thirdly, advertisements were put up on the notice boards at Villa Supermarkets¹ in Bangkok, for the month of December, 2004. These advertisements outlined the research and asked interested women to contact the investigator.

iv. Fourthly, a brief advertisement was placed in the classifieds of *Bangkok Metro* magazine,² which ran for two weeks in January 2005. This advertisement was limited by space and stated only that Western women interested in participating in a research project should contact the investigator at the email address provided.

v. Fifthly, an outline of the research, as well as details for participants to contact the investigator, was passed along to friends, colleagues and fellow students who in turn circulated it amongst people they knew.

II. Screening of Respondents

The methods explained in the above section resulted in 72 email replies from women interested in participating in the research. Once a reply was received, the following preliminary survey was emailed to assess each woman's suitability for the project:

Preliminary Questionnaire [Inquiry into Candidate Suitability]

Instructions: This is a simple word file. Simply type your answers beside the question. When you have finished, save your changes and send it back to barrettmia@yahoo.com as an attachment.

¹ This chain of supermarkets is well known for its selection of Western foods and is thus frequented by many expatriates.

² This English language magazine is a free publication that is circulated in Bangkok.

1. Name:
2. Age:
3. Nationality:
4. Marital Status:
5. a. Number of children:
b. Number of children living in Bangkok:
6. Job:
7. Position:
8. Reason for coming to Bangkok:
9. Length of time spent in Bangkok:
10. Estimated departure date:
11. Are you willing to participate in this survey?
12. Your Email Address:

III: Establishment of Participant Criteria

The above preliminary questionnaire was returned to the investigator by 61 of the 72 women it was emailed to. From the range of answers on this preliminary questionnaire, it became clear that the participant criteria could not be narrowed down based on any particular country, job or reason for coming. Therefore, the investigator narrowed down the participant criteria to the following:

1. A woman coming from any *country* that would be considered Western-Christian (*her* own religious orientation is of no consequence)
2. A woman who has lived in Bangkok for a minimum of six months
3. A woman who is working in Bangkok

Based on the above criteria, 55 of the 61 respondents from the preliminary survey were deemed suitable participants for the main questionnaire. The six that were not suitable were eliminated based on the following: three were not working, two were not from Western-Christian countries and one had not been in Bangkok for over six months.

IV: Distribution and Collection of the Main Questionnaire

The main questionnaire was emailed in January 2004 to the 55 suitable candidates from the preliminary questionnaire. The respondents were instructed to

return the questionnaire by email. They were given the choice of sending it directly from their email accounts, in which case their identity would be known. If the participant wanted to remain anonymous, an email account was set up for that purpose. The user name and password were included on the main questionnaire, as well as an explanation on how to use this option for anonymous submission.

In total, 51 of the 55 main questionnaires were returned. Of the 51, 15 were returned anonymously.

V: Case Studies

Once the data from the questionnaires had been analyzed, the investigator set about selecting respondents for face to face interviews. The idea was to try and find five women that would represent the sample. Therefore, the respondents were selected based on the age distribution of the sample, with two under 30, two between 31 and 40 and one over 40. The respondents contacted were those that stated on their questionnaires that they would be willing to meet the investigator for an interview, and had thus furnished their phone numbers. These interviews took place in April, 2005.

SECTION II: Process of Data Analysis

I: Questionnaire Design

This questionnaire was designed to measure the integration levels of Western expatriate women living in Bangkok. The key was to first build a semi-identity of the respondent and then use those identity indicators to judge their levels of integration in their everyday lives.

The questionnaire was designed to answer questions that the investigator felt would provide relevant indicators for assessment. These questions were based on both the investigator's understanding and experiences as a Western woman living in Bangkok, as well as cross-cultural assessment theories provided in relevant literature.

For proper and effective wording, Bradburn and Sudman's book, Asking Questions: A Practical Guide to Questionnaire Design (1983) was consulted.

II. Validation of the Questionnaire

The content validity of a set of questions refers to the degree to which those questions measure the traits which they were intended to measure, as judged from the characteristics or content of those questions. It involves the extent to which each item of the test pertains to the trait as it is defined, and the extent to which the entire set of items represents all aspects of the trait.

For this research, time constraints eliminated the possibility of such thorough tests. Nevertheless, many of the questions were designed to complement previous questions in order to assess the validity of previous answers.

III. Analytical Tool

Once the questionnaires were returned, they were entered into SPSS format and analyzed using descriptive statistics to produce statistical output for each question. In cases where a respondent left an answer blank, it was entered by the variable 'no answer'. In cases where the particular question didn't apply to the respondent, it was entered by the variable 'not applicable.' Both of these variables are noted in the tables in the following chapter.

Additionally, the investigator used weighting to produce weighted averages from the SPSS data. This method is explained clearly in the following section.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

This chapter presents the findings of the study from the main questionnaire. Part I outlines and discusses the results of the questions. Part II measures the integration levels through the three concepts: language and communication, socialization and cultural adjustment. Part III tests the possible reasons for the integration levels: expatriate status, gender status, the westernization of Bangkok and lack of social networks. Finally, Part IV outlines the salient data from the five case studies.

PART I: Analysis of Questions and Responses

Section I: Personal Information

This section was designed primarily to identify each woman's unique characteristics. The importance of this identification was to provide an understanding of the woman's motivation for being in Bangkok, as well as the factors that may affect her experience here, such as marital status and age.

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Table 4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Criterion	Number of Respondents		
	%	Number	
Age	30 and under	37%	19
	31 - 40	33%	17
	41 - 50	18%	9
	Over 50	12%	6
	Grand Total	100%	51
Nationality	U.K.	25%	13
	American	24%	12
	Australian	14%	7
	N.Z	14%	7
	Canadian	12%	6
	French	4%	2
	German	4%	2
	Dutch	2%	1
	Norweigan	2%	1
	Grand Total	100%	51
Religion	None	39%	20
	Christian	29%	15
	Catholic	14%	7
	Protestant	8%	4
	Buddhist	4%	2
	Anglican	4%	2
	Jewish	2%	1
	Grand Total	100%	51
Marital Status	Single	59%	30
	Married to non-Thai	24%	12
	Divorced	12%	6
	Married to Thai	6%	3
	Grand Total	100%	51
Children	No	67%	34
	Yes	33%	17
	Grand Total	100%	51
Education	B.A.	53%	27
	M.A.	37%	19
	Diploma	6%	3
	Phd	4%	2
	Grand Total	100%	51

Item 1: Respondent's Age

The age of the respondent is a tool that is useful to determine a variety of factors, the most salient of which is her long-term intention of residency. A young woman may be more likely to view her time in Bangkok on a more temporary level. Gaining experience abroad and the adventure of travel may be the pull factors. For an older woman, Bangkok may become a semi-permanent home. Rather than the pull factors mentioned for the younger woman, the push factors from her original country may play a larger role for the older woman in Bangkok. The push factors could include a recent divorce or a need to escape from a lifestyle she finds unrewarding.¹

For this survey, the respondents were of a vast range of ages with the youngest being 25 years old and the oldest being 64 years old. The average age of respondents was 36 years old.

As table 4.1 shows, the majority (70%) of the women who completed the questionnaire were under 40 years old. Therefore, the pull factors may play a more salient role in their reasons for being in Bangkok, but their intentions to stay here may be short-term.

Item 2: Respondent's Nationality

As stated in the participant criteria, the respondents had to originate from a country that would be considered Western-Christian. The reason for this criterion was to select women who had very different cultural backgrounds than those found in Asian countries.

Noted in table 4.1 is the abundance of women from English speaking countries (88%). This will be discussed in greater detail in the language section that follows.

¹ Push and Pull factors in migration have been debated extensively by scholars such as Brown (1960), Rossi (1955) and Berman (1979). The debate has largely centered around the negative and positive aspects of both. Lee's Theory of Migration (1966) outlines four factors that affect the decision to migrate: the push factor of the origin, the pull factor from the destination, intervening obstacles and characteristics of migrants.

In addition to this, it can be observed that, although a great number of women come from the United States and the United Kingdom, a total of nine nationalities are represented. Although these cultures are similar in many ways, they also differ from each other in ways that may affect women in their abilities to overcome their socializations.²

Item 3: Respondent's Religion and Religious Practices

As religion plays a large role in Thai society³, the respondent's own religious orientation could play a pivotal role in their ability to understand the rational behind the inner workings of such a society. Table 4.1 shows that 61% of the respondents consider themselves to have a religious orientation. However, only a fraction (4%) practice the dominant religion of Thailand, Buddhism.

Although Bangkok is a Buddhist center, there are a number of religions represented in the city.⁴ However, although 61% of the women consider themselves

² In Adler's book International Dimensions of Organizational Behavior, she discusses the idea of 'parochialism' (2002: 11), which is the idea that one often sees the world from only one perspective. Adler states that: "A person with a parochial perspective neither recognizes other people's different ways of living and working nor appreciates that such differences can offer significant opportunities or create serious consequences." (ibid, 2002: 11-12) Adler goes on to discuss how, while everyone is parochial to a certain extent, people of certain nationalities are more so than others. She states a number of sources that decry Americans as perhaps the most parochial society that exists today. (2002: 11-12)

³ In 2000, there were 57 357 826 Buddhists in Thailand (out of a population of 62 354 402, making 92% of the population Buddhist), in addition to 34 111 monasteries, 265 791 monks and 97 875 novices. The same year yielded 2 977434 Muslims (3181 mosques), 1 012 871 Christians (2200 churches), and 118 011 inhabitants of other religions. (Source: The Religious Affaires Department, Ministry of Education)

⁴ For example, the Anglican Christ Church on Convent Road offers both English and Thai services, as well as the Catholic Assumption Cathedral on Charoen Krung Road and the Holy Redeemer Catholic Church on Wireless Road.

religious, only 24% are practicing their religion in Bangkok.⁵ The importance of overseas churches is summed up by Osland (1996: 75): “Overseas churches are also seen by many expatriates as communities that extend a warm welcome to newcomers.” This could suggest that religious institutions in Bangkok may play the same role as expatriate organizations, thus being potentially detrimental to integration.

Item 4: Respondent’s Marital Status

The importance of the respondent’s marital status is discussed in detail in chapter five of this paper. According to table 4.1, the most represented groups in this study are: single women (57%) and women married to non-Thais (26%).

From these levels, it is clear that the majority of the women who answered this questionnaire are lacking in the cultural contact that comes with dating⁶ or marrying a person of the culture in which you are living. This may be a key factor in the integration levels measured in the analysis.

Item 5: Respondent’s Dependents

Although this research is not focusing on women with children, it is of importance. This importance lies primarily on the evidence of their willingness to integrate or segregate their children by placing them in Thai or international schools. If placed in Thai schools, their children will likely absorb Thai cultural values to a greater extent than if they are placed in international schools. In addition to this, it shows the woman’s perception of the salience of Thai cultural learning for her children, thus delineating whether she herself views it in a positive or negative light, and perhaps the possibility of her long-term plans of residency.

⁵ See table 4.2 in Appendix C

⁶ The 29 Single respondents were subdivided into more specific categories: dating very rarely (16 respondents); in serious relationship with non-Thai (7 respondents); casually dating (4 respondents); and in serious relationship with Thai (2 respondents).

Although foreign children must be able to communicate proficiently in Thai to attend a Thai school, most will pick up the language fairly easily if they are frequently exposed to it. International schools, in which the curriculum is taught in English, are extremely expensive by Thai standards,⁷ thus limiting the contact foreign children have with their Thai peers to those of the wealthier, upper class families.

The results show that only 17 (or 33%) of the 51 respondents have children. Of these 17 women, only 11 of them have children under 19 years of age. Of these 11 women, 10 of them have enrolled their children at international schools, while one has a child that is not yet of school age.⁸

As stated earlier, the data presented above was only to draw a general idea of what the trends are in terms of schooling for the children of expatriate women. An in-depth study on this would be necessary to draw any significant conclusions. Nevertheless, the fact that all of the participants who had school aged children had them enrolled at international schools is indicative of the socio-economic status of these women (due to high tuition fees), as well as the importance they place on cross-cultural contact for their children.

Item 6: Respondent's Language(s)

The following represents the respondent's language knowledge:

⁷ For example, the New International School of Thailand charges between 118 500 – 238 400 Baht per student per semester, in addition to a 4 000 Baht application fee and a 225 000 Baht registration fee. (NIST Website)

⁸ Only one of the women stated that her children were Thai schooled, however this woman was married to a Thai man and had resided in Bangkok for over ten years. This is indicated on the table above, but her children are now above 19 years of age and therefore cannot be considered dependents as such.

Table 4.3 Respondent's Languages

Mother tongue		Second language (frequency)						
Language	Percentage	Frequency	None	French	English	Spanish	Thai	Others
English	86.20	44	19	12	0	4	3	5
German	3.90	2	0	0	1	0	0	1
French	5.90	3	0	0	3	0	0	0
Dutch	2.00	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
Norwegian	2.00	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
Total	100.00	51	19	12	5	4	3	6

The majority (86%) of the respondents are native English speakers, leaving the remaining 14% as non-native English speakers. However, unless the non-native English speakers are proficient in the Thai language, they must have considerable knowledge of the English language to communicate in Bangkok.

Sixty-three percent of the respondents have a second language, 33% have a third language and 12% have a fourth language. Although the respondent's proficiency in these languages was not tested by the investigator, it is moreover an indicator of the respondent's willingness for cross-cultural encounters and, perhaps even insight into their lack of parochialism.

Item 7: Respondent's Knowledge of Thai

A key concept for the integration levels being tested in this research is communication abilities. As stated in the first chapter, knowledge of the dominant language of the society in which one is living provides insight, understanding and increased acceptance into the new culture. The following is a table indicating the respondents proficiencies in the Thai language.

Table 4.4 Knowledge of Thai Language

Knowledge of Thai	Frequency	Percent
Fluent - speak, read, write	7	13.7

Fluent at speaking, some reading and writing	8	15.7
Only enough to order food and give directions	24	47.1
Only basic words	11	21.6
None	1	2.0
Total	51	100.0

According to the above table, only 29% of the respondents considered themselves to be fluent or near-fluent.⁹ The remaining 71% could only communicate necessary information, courtesy phrases or nothing at all.

The above table indicates that the majority of the women (47%) are only able to perform necessary tasks in the Thai language. For non-Thai speakers living in Bangkok, the following situations are generally the most difficult to accomplish: ordering food at small restaurants or street side stalls,¹⁰ and giving directions to taxi drivers.¹¹

⁹ According to Cooper and Cooper (1990: 37): “For most foreigners, to learn Thai to any useful level would take a sustained daily effort for one or two years or more and very few have the time.”

¹⁰ This is difficult, especially outside the main tourist areas because the food vendors have limited, or no English language training.

¹¹ While many of Bangkok’s taxi drivers have very good English skills, perhaps the result of a lot of contact with foreigner passengers, many still remain unable to communicate in English. In the case of the latter, the difficulty of the situation is compounded by the different street names in English and Thai (For example, ‘Wireless Road’ is the English version of ‘Thanon Withayu’) and area names in English and Thai (For example, ‘Victory Monument’ is the English version of ‘Anousavarichai’), as well as a foreigner’s pronunciation of the Thai language. To add even more complexity to the matter, cartography was not traditionally taught in Thai schools therefore, procuring a map for the taxi driver is often useless.

These situations are difficult for the non-Thai speaker mainly because these are tasks that are often performed alone. For an expatriate living in Bangkok who doesn't speak Thai, there are innumerable situations that can only be accomplished with the help of a Thai friend or translator. These include normal house related activities such as paying bills and setting up a phone line.

Item 8: Number of Months Spent in Bangkok

The number of months a respondent has spent in Bangkok is important in a number of ways. First of all, it may give an indication of her contentment here, as well as her long term plans.¹² Also, it could possibly explain her knowledge, or lack of knowledge of the Thai language, the size of her social network, and her understanding of, and socialization to, Thai cultural aspects. The following is a table showing the length of time respondents have spent in Bangkok.

Table 4.5 Length of Stay in Bangkok

Length of Stay in Bangkok	Frequency	Percent
6 months - 1 year (6 - 12 months)	12	23.5
1- 2 years (13 - 24 months)	16	31.4
2 - 3 years (25 - 36 months)	6	11.8
3 - 4 years (37 - 48 months)	3	5.9
4 - 5 years (49 - 60 months)	2	3.9
5 - 10 years (61 - 120 months)	4	7.8
Over 10 years (121+ months)	8	15.7
Total	51	100.0

The majority of the women (55%) have spent less than two years residing in Bangkok. This could clearly have consequences on the outcome of the findings, based

¹² Engholm (1991: 312) states that most Westerners who accept overseas postings do it on the condition that they will return to the west in three to five years maximum.

mainly on the reasons mentioned above. However, at the other end of the spectrum, 16% of the respondents stated that they have lived in Bangkok for over ten years.

Item 9: Reason for Coming to Bangkok

A pertinent and explored topic in expatriate studies is an understanding of the **reasons** for expatriation. For the current study, this was also a salient factor. The following in a table outlining the respondents reasons for coming to Bangkok.

Table 4.6 Reason for Coming to Bangkok

Reason for Coming to Bangkok	Frequency	Percent
To work	31	60.8
To accompany spouse/partner	11	21.6
New cultural experience	7	13.7
Other ¹³	2	3.9
Total	51	100.0

According to the above information, 61% of the women came to Bangkok to engage in some form of work, 22% came because of their partner's work and 14% came because of interest. In a question related to their reason for being here, respondents were also asked if they came here voluntarily.

According to the results, 88% of the respondents consider that they came to Bangkok voluntarily, which would therefore include at least some of the women that came because of their spouse's work. Only 6% stated that they didn't come voluntarily and 6% stated that they weren't sure if they came voluntarily or not.¹⁴

¹³ One of the respondents originally came because her parents were working here, another respondent was here to study at a local university.

¹⁴ See table 4.7 in Appendix C

The importance of the idea of not being *forced* to move abroad is summed up concisely by Osland (1996: 28):

“Both the expatriates I interviewed and those I observed abroad who had been ambivalent or downright unhappy about going abroad tended to be less adjusted, in their own opinion, than those who had wanted to go...People who do not want to live abroad seldom make the necessary effort; thus they remain either marginalized in solitude or ‘enclaved’ with other unhappy compatriots.”

The fact that 88% of the respondents did want to come to Bangkok indicates that they may be less likely to blame their failures or disappointment on others, as they are accepting responsibility for their actions.

Item 10: Highest Level of Education Completed

Table 4.1 expresses information that is somewhat removed from the actual importance of this study, but pertinent to giving a general idea about the education levels of women that come to work in Bangkok.

As the table shows, the majority of the respondents have been educated at the university level. There may be two reasons for this. The first is that most foreigners working here, at least outside of the teaching profession,¹⁵ must be qualified for the work they are doing. The second is that the Immigration Bureau will generally only issue working visas to applicants with a minimum of a Bachelors degree.

¹⁵ Although it is stated that English teachers in Bangkok must have at least a Bachelors degree, this is usually only enforced if the teacher wants a working visa. Many English teachers in Bangkok who do not have degrees simply get by obtaining 30 day transit visas at the borders, or three month tourist visas at Thai consulates in the countries adjoining Thailand. The exceptions are international schools, which are most often extremely strict on the issue of teacher qualifications, but will almost always offer their teachers working visas.

Section II: Employment

Item 11: Number of Months it Took to Get First Job

The reason for inquiring from the candidates the length of time it took for them to acquire employment in Bangkok was to decipher how many of the respondents came to be residing in Bangkok solely for employment. There are cities all over the world that attract foreigners, and an abundance of them in the Southeast Asian region. Respondents who chose first location (Bangkok) and second employment may display signs of a willingness to learn culturally in a society very different than their own.

The following table shows the length of time it took respondents to acquire employment in Bangkok, as well as how many had employment before they arrived.

Table 4.8 Length of Time Taken to Find a Job Once Arrived in Bangkok

Time Taken to Find Employment in Bangkok	Frequency	Percent
Had job before arrived in Thailand	31	60.8
Didn't have job when arrived, took 1-3 months	10	19.6
Didn't have job when arrived, took 4-6 months	7	13.7
Didn't have job when arrived, took 10-12 months	1	2.0
Didn't have job when arrived, took over 12 months	2	3.9
Total	51	100.0

By looking at the above table, 39% weren't employed when they arrived in Bangkok. When comparing this to table 4.6 regarding the respondents reasons for coming to Bangkok, it was determined that 37% came out of interest or because of their husband's work. As 22% came because of their husband's work, it would be a strong possibility that they would make up the group of respondents that took over four months to get a job, as their own employment may not have been necessary immediately upon arrival.

Item 12: Number of Months Employed in Bangkok

The following table shows the number of months the respondents have been employed in Bangkok.

Table 4.9 Number of Months Employed in Bangkok

Length of Time Employed in Bangkok	Frequency	Percent
6 months - 1 year (6 - 12 months)	14	27.5
1- 2 years (13 - 24 months)	16	31.4
2 - 3 years (25 - 36 months)	6	11.8
3 - 4 years (37 - 48 months)	2	3.9
4 - 5 years (49 - 60 months)	4	7.8
5 - 10 years (61 - 120 months)	3	5.9
Over 10 years (121+ months)	6	11.8
Total	51	100.0

This table indicates that the majority of the women have been employed in Bangkok for the entire duration of their current stay in Bangkok. The numbers shift somewhat from Table 4.5 for the following reasons: 1) the respondent didn't have a job when she arrived and thus there was a delay between the time she arrived and started working, 2) the woman changed employment during her time here (sometimes producing a gap between the time she left one job and started the next), 3) the woman took time out of her career for any number of reasons (childbirth, childrearing, break, education...etc.). Thus the discrepancy between the amount of time she has *lived* in Bangkok and the amount of time she has *worked* in Bangkok.

Item 13: Previous Experience Abroad

A woman's previous work experience abroad may play a role in her current experience in Bangkok. As she will have already been exposed to cross-cultural

encounters in the past,¹⁶ her ability to understand the emotions she is feeling, as a result of culture shock, may be increased. This increased level of awareness may lead to positive actions on her part to reduce the shock. By absorbing the integral cultural and social components of the community in which she is living, she may ease the transitional period in which she must make adjustments to her own socialization. According to Cushner and Brislin (1996: 2-3), people who have been successful in past experiences abroad tend to become more competent and quicker at necessary adjustments in future assignments.

The respondents in this study are nearly divided in their previous work experience abroad.¹⁷ The results indicate only a slight difference of three respondents, that haven't worked abroad in the past. One possible conclusion that could be drawn from this is that, because Bangkok is vastly different in most socio-cultural aspects from the respondents home countries, it may be possible that women don't usually come here for their first experience. It may be more likely that they will begin their work experience abroad in a culture less different than their own. If they are successful there and wish for something even more radical, they may then choose Bangkok as their next stop. These women may find that their willingness to integrate is higher than women who haven't had any previous experience abroad.

For the respondents who have had their first work experience abroad in Bangkok, they may find themselves overwhelmed by the cultural differences. Unable, or unwilling to adapt or alter their socializations, they may become disgruntled and revolve around others who are feeling the same way, thus segregating themselves from the local community: "Too often, sojourners relate their negative

¹⁶ One's cross-cultural encounters are not limited to experiences had abroad. As Cushner and Brislin (1996: 5) point out: "We consider most people to be potentially multicultural, as we are all socialized by many different groups that influence our behaviors and thought patterns; gender, nationality, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and religion, for example, all play roles in our socialization." And: "By this definition, everyone in a pluralistic society – such as that in the United States, Australia, New Zealand, Great Britain and Israel – is multicultural to some degree." (Cushner and Brislin, 1996: 8)

¹⁷ See table 4.10 in Appendix C

experiences to one another, and this may serve to reinforce negative images of various host countries.” (Cushner and Brislin, 1996: 133)

Item 14: Duration of Contracts

The original reason for asking this question was to determine whether the respondent felt, or was contractually obligated, to remain in Bangkok because of her job.¹⁸ **The idea of being ‘trapped’ for a pre-determined period of time could result in an inability, or unwillingness, to consider Bangkok anything more than a temporary home.** This could result in seeing any adjustment to one’s socialization as futile.

The results show that almost two-thirds of the women (61%) were working on a set contract.¹⁹ However, these results are not highly relevant as many of the respondents indicated that their contracts had been renewed many times. Also, in a circumstance where the respondent desired to leave her current position, she was only obligated to give the required amount of notice stipulated in her contract.²⁰

¹⁸ Compared to other Asian countries, Thailand is perhaps one of the easiest in which a foreigner could break a contract, without too many negative effects. In some teaching positions, if the school paid for your working visa, you may be held responsible for the price of that visa if you don’t finish your contract. However, when compared to a country such as South Korea, breaking a contract can only be done under dire circumstances. Based on the investigator’s own experience, foreign workers in South Korea are more likely to complete their contracts, as law dictates that one month’s salary must be given as a bonus for every twelve months of work completed. The result is that foreigners tend to stay a minimum of twelve months and complete their contractual obligations.

Thailand’s Labor Protection Act of 1998 outlines specific conditions for employment termination. If the employment period is not specified in the employee’s contract, both the employer and the employee have the right to end the contract at any time, effective at the next pay period or after one month, whichever is shorter. Conditions differ for termination based on unacceptable employee behavior, or “cause.” Termination for cause does not entitle the employee to severance pay and may be effective immediately. (Gross, 2001)

¹⁹ See table 4.11 in Appendix C

²⁰ This required amount of notice ranged from one to three months.

Item 15: Management Level Positions

This item is important for a number of reasons. The first is that some studies have shown that expatriate workers enjoy a sort of elevated work status if they are willing to work abroad. This opens doors to higher rank opportunities than they may have had in their home countries. The fact that they are Western-educated,²¹ as well as mostly native English speakers may increase their qualifications in the eyes of both Thai and foreign companies. These facts raise the question of whether expatriates choose to work in Bangkok because it is a positive move career-wise or whether it is because they are seeking cross-cultural experience.

The second issue relates to their management position in terms of their relationships with their Thai colleagues. Many Western cultures emphasize a clear separation between employers and employees. It is seen as a positive attribute to good, efficient management. One would rarely socialize with one's boss for pleasure, in non-work related situations. When Western women come to Bangkok to assume a managerial position, they may bring with them their own perceptions of proper management.²² This may reduce the non-work related contact she has with her Thai colleagues. A sense of frustration could arise due to the woman not understanding the nearly non-existent divide between work and pleasure for the Thai people.²³ However, if she knew them outside of work, she would perhaps be able to understand them more and through this understanding enable a re-structured management plan

²¹ Western-educated Thais and Foreigners are held in high esteem in Bangkok.

²² According to Engholm, (1991: 315): "Western personnel management methods may seem cold, clinical, and depersonalizing to Asian workers..."

²³ The Thai word for work is similar to the Thai word for party: *tam ngan* means work, while *pai ngan* means go to functions/parties. Engholm states: "Thais know the difference between work and a party, but they want work to be as pleasant as possible." (1991: 316)

that would be more effective in her present situation. 49% of the respondents consider their positions to be at management level.²⁴

Item 16: Amount of Hours Worked Per Week

Expanding on the discussion in table 4.12, regarding how many of the respondents worked at the management level, this outlines the amount of hours the women work per week.

Table 4.13 Hours Worked Per Week

Hours Worked Per Week	Frequency	Percent
Under 20 hours per week	5	9.8
21-40 hours per week	25	49.0
41-60 hours per week	17	33.3
Over 61 hours per week	4	7.8
Total	51	100.0

In most Western countries, the average work week is of forty hours.²⁵ The above results indicate that 59% of the respondents worked forty or less hours per week. However, the remaining 41% worked over forty hours per week.²⁶ For this latter group, the amount of time they put in at work could be detrimental in many ways. The first is that it may diminish the cultural contact they have in non-work

²⁴ See table 4.12 in Appendix C

²⁵ As outlined in the Labor Act of Thailand, Employees must receive at least 13 national holidays and six days of vacation per year once they have worked with the company for one year. In addition, each employee must receive a one-hour rest period after working for five hours. The employee may opt for less break time, but must accept at least one hour per day. The employee also must take one day off per week. Pregnant employees may not work on holidays. (Gross, 2001)

²⁶ This may indicate that women in managerial positions are required to work much longer hours than those who are not.

related situations. The second is that it could impede their abilities to build a social network. The third is that it could indicate an unwillingness to leave their 'safe' zone, where they feel they understand more of what is going on and therefore feel in control of their surroundings.

Item 17: Language Used at Work

In most cases, expatriates working in Bangkok are hired based on assumed qualities they offer the companies, qualities not reflected in the local work-force. As stated earlier, these qualities may be a Western education and a fluency in the English language, in addition to valuable experience and insight they may bring to the Thai work environment. The following table shows which language is used by the respondents in their Thai work environment.

The results indicates that the majority of the women (75%) use English to communicate at work, while 22% use both Thai and English and 4% use only Thai.²⁷ Given that 33% of the respondents are employed in the field of teaching, this leaves 41% of the respondents in non-teaching positions. Therefore, regardless of technical know-how and international experience, the respondents are also bringing their English language abilities to their Thai workplace.

Item 18: Company Functions

Whether or not the respondent's company provides functions for its staff may play a role in the contact they have with their colleagues. The importance of this contact is that it may provide the foreign worker a way in which she can socialize and meet with her Thai colleagues in a context slightly removed from everyday work responsibilities. This may enable her to view and understand the different aspects of Thai socialization. The following table shows how many of the respondents' companies provide functions for staff.

²⁷ See table 4.14 in Appendix C

According to the results, 77% of the respondent's companies provide functions for its staff.²⁸ The following table shows how often the respondents participate in these functions.

Table 4.16 Respondents Participation in Company Functions²⁹

Participation in Company Functions	Frequency	Percent
Always	14	35.9
Frequently	12	30.8
Average	7	17.9
Rarely	5	12.8
Never	1	2.6
Total	39	100.0

Interestingly, 67% of those to whom the question was applicable attended work functions always or frequently. This could demonstrate a desire on the part of expatriate women living in Bangkok to want to engage in the cross-cultural experiences that do not form part of their everyday work lives. Of the respondents whose companies did provide functions, 15% attended the functions rarely or never. However, **none of the respondents stated that they felt excluded from functions based on either foreigner or gender status.** The interest derived from this is a common occurrence for expatriate women working abroad. Often, they are not subjected or treated to the gender biases at play in the communities in which they are working. (Barrett: 1996)

²⁸ See table 4.15 in Appendix C

²⁹ Twelve of the respondents stated that their companies did not provide functions for staff. These respondents are not included in this chart.

Item 19: Role of Gender in Work Environment

To get an understanding of whether the women are affected by gender in their Thai work environments, two interrelated questions were asked. The basis of these questions was to provide a comparative analysis of the respondent's opinion of gender inequalities both in her home environment and her Thai work environment. The following two tables represent the respondents' opinions on this issue.

Table 4.17 Treatment of Men and Women in the Work Environment in Respondent's Home Country

Treatment of Men and Women in Home Work Environment	Frequency	Percent
Men and women are treated the same	35	68.6
Men are treated better than women	13	25.5
Not sure	3	5.9
Total	51	100.0

Table 4.18 Treatment of Men and Women in Respondent's Thai Work Environment

Treatment of Men and Women in Thai Work Environment	Frequency	Percent
Men are treated better than women	26	51.0
Men and women are treated the same	24	47.1
Women are treated better than men	1	2.0
Total	51	100.0

According to the above tables, the respondents believe that women hold a more equal position at work in their home countries than they do in their Thai work environment. However, as noted previously, expatriate women are often excluded from gender biases at play in the countries in which they are working.

The following table explains firstly whether the respondents are affected by their gender in their Thai work environment,³⁰ and secondly whether their status as a foreign worker alters this affect.

Table 4.19 Respondent Affected by Female Status in Thai Work Environment

Respondent Affected by Gender in Thai Work Environment	Frequency	Percent
No, because I am a foreigner	20	39.2
No, regardless that I am a foreigner	19	37.3
Yes, but different than Thai women	8	15.7
Yes, same as Thai women	4	7.8
Total	51	100.0

The above table states that, while 77% of the respondents are not affected by their gender, 39% of these 77% believe that it is because they are foreigners. Only 8% of the respondents felt affected in the same way as Thai women.

The following two tables simply add weight to the above findings, with roughly the same amount of women (71%) stating that their gender does not affect their status or opportunities for advancement at their Thai companies.

Table 4.20 Status in Company Based on Gender

Lower Status in Company Because of Gender	Frequency	Percent
Yes	5	9.8
No	36	70.6
Not sure	10	19.6
Total	51	100.0

³⁰ According to Cooper and Cooper, (1990: 56): "...it remains generally true that the position of women throughout Thai society is one of social and economic inferiority to their men, and they are still frequently referred to as 'the hind legs of the elephant' – which implies that they are just as important as men in terms of economic contribution, but that their proper place is at the back, behind their men and supporting them."

Table 4.21 Advancement in Company Based on Gender

Less Opportunities for Advancement Because of Gender	Frequency	Percent
Yes	7	13.7
No	36	70.6
Not sure	8	15.7
Total	51	100.0

Item 20: Pre-Departure Preparation

According to much cross-cultural literature, pre-departure preparation can play a pivotal role in the successful assimilation of the expatriate. The amount and nature of the pre-departure preparation depends largely on the assignment, or role, the expatriate is going to undertake. For example, Peace Corps volunteers are often sent on learning work-shops in which they are placed in simulated environments. These re-created environments will require the potential volunteer to learn through exercises in which he/she has to interact in cross-cultural situations that may be faced during a posting.

For this study however, the respondents came to Bangkok for a variety of reasons. Therefore, the pre-departure training in which they may have taken part will be largely subjective. The following shows the time that passed between when the respondents knew they were coming to Bangkok and their arrival in Bangkok.

Table 4.22 Amount of Time for Pre-Departure Preparations

Amount of Time for Pre-Arrival Preparation	Frequency	Percent
1-3 months	27	52.9
4-6 months	21	41.2
Over 7 months	3	5.9
Total	51	100.0

The majority of the respondents (53%) had under three months to prepare for their trip to Bangkok. According to Osland (1996:86): “You should always prepare as much as possible, learn about the job, the country and the people and have realistic expectations.” The following shows which pre-departure preparations the women made.

Table 4.23 Preparations Made Before Respondent Arrived in Bangkok³¹

Pre-Arrival Preparations	Frequency	Total	Average
No preparations	21	51	35.3
Studied Thai culture	18	51	41.2
Studied Thai language	16	51	31.4
Studied Asian business etiquette	6	51	11.8
Other	9	51	17.6

Sixty-five percent of the women partook in pre-departure preparations, while the remaining 35% undertook no preparations. The following indicates the respondents' reasons for making these preparations.

Table 4.24 Reason Respondent Made Pre-Departure Efforts³²

Reason for Pre-Departure Efforts	Frequency	Percent
I was interested	30	90.9
My company made it mandatory	2	6.1
Other	1	3.0
Total	33	100.0

³¹ Respondents could give more than one answer, therefore a total percent for each row is representative of how many of the respondents partook in each of the possible tasks.

³² 18 of the respondents did not make pre-departure preparations

Interestingly, despite vast amounts of research indicating the importance of pre-departure preparation, only 4% of the respondents were *required* to do so. The majority (91%) of the respondents who did make pre-departure preparations, did so out of interest. The following table shows whether the respondents felt that their pre-departure preparations were useful once they arrived in Bangkok.

Table 4.25 Effectiveness of Pre-Departure Efforts after Arrival in Bangkok

How Much Pre-Departure Preparations Helped	Frequency	Percent
A little	17	51.5
Moderately	10	30.3
Very much	6	18.2
Total	33	100.0

All of the women who took preparatory steps before-hand felt that they did help to some extent. The level of help ranged from a little to very much. Basing the importance of pre-departure preparation on the cultural differences between the respondents' home countries and Bangkok, it could be a key to provide the expatriate with realistic expectations. According to the results, 71% of the respondents felt that Bangkok met their expectations.

When correlated with the amount of respondents who had made pre-departure preparations (65%), the number of respondents who felt that Bangkok met their expectations (71%) is very close. Osland (1996) emphasized the importance of pre-arrival studies to develop an accurate set of expectations.

Section III: Lifestyle and Social Behavior

Item 21: Accommodation Arrangements

As was mentioned in chapter one of this study, lack of a social network can be detrimental to the expatriate experience. The following shows with whom the respondents reside.

Table 4.27 Accommodation Arrangements

Accommodation Arrangements	Frequency	Percent
Living alone	23	45.1
Living with foreigner(s)	23	45.1
Living with Thai(s)	5	9.8
Total	51	100.0

The above results indicate that the majority of the respondents live alone (45%), while 45% live with other foreigners. Only 10% of the respondents live with a Thai person. The amount of cultural contact that comes from living with a member of the community in which you are living may greatly increase your understanding and knowledge of the community's core values and rituals.

This may be especially true in Thai culture, which has been described by some as a culture that generally turns a blind eye to negative, socially unacceptable behavior, as long as this behavior is not made obvious. (Gross, 2001) For example, *public* displays of affection are taboo and yet affection between two partners will undoubtedly take place in the privacy of one's home. Losing face through angered outburst is also largely frowned upon in social situations, therefore one's home may be the only place in which emotional outbursts occur.

For many expatriates, the rigors of living abroad are softened by an increased level of social status due to the availability of inexpensive household help. Housekeepers, nannies, drivers and security guarding your accommodation are fairly normal aspects of the expatriate lifestyle in Bangkok. The following table shows how many of the respondents employ the above mentioned help.

Table 4.28 Employment of Household Help³³

Employed Help		Frequency	Total	Average
	Housekeeper	33	51	64.7
	Nanny	5	51	9.8
	Driver	10	51	19.6
	Security guarding accommodation	46	51	90.2

The table shows that most of the respondents enjoy some or all of the perks associated with expatriate lifestyles. These perks, however, can be detrimental to one's cultural experience. According to Osland (1996: 87):

“There is more contact when riding local buses, doing one's own shopping and errands, and living in a middle- or working-class neighborhood. Servants, chauffeurs, and messengers save time, but they also buffer the expatriate from the daily contacts that can add up to greater cultural understanding.”

The results indicate that only 29% of the respondents live in a predominantly Thai neighborhood.³⁴ In Bangkok, the expatriate neighborhoods differ largely from their Thai counterparts. The shops, restaurants and entertainment establishments are often more up-scale, offering an assortment of Western conveniences.³⁵

³³ Respondents could give more than one answer, therefore a total percent for each row is representative of how many of the respondents indicated each choice.

³⁴ See table 4.29 in Appendix C

³⁵ A way of identifying expatriate neighborhoods in Bangkok is by locating western supermarkets, such as Villa. Supermarkets are a stronger indicator than entertainment or shopping complexes because they aren't geared for tourists. The areas of Silom Road, Sukhumvit Road and Aree are all serviced by a Villa supermarket and each of these areas has a large number of expatriate residents.

Item 22: Social Group

The social aspects of an expatriate's life are key indicators of their integration levels. The basis for this is that their choices in social groups, as well as the types of social activities they engage in, will delineate their cultural exposure.

Before assessing the respondent's social circle, it's important to have an understanding of what type of, if any, social circle they entered *upon* their arrival. This is key because it is likely that the people the expatriate knew before their arrival will be their original 'social tour-guides' and cultural mentors. The following is a table indicating who the respondent knew before she arrived in Bangkok.

Table 4.30 People Known to Respondent before Arrival in Bangkok

People Known before Arrival in Bangkok	Frequency	Percent
Some members of the company for which I was going to work	8	15.7
Some expatriates not associated with my company	11	21.6
Some Thai nationals	5	9.8
Nobody	25	49.0
Other	2	3.9
Total	51	100.0

According to the above table, half of the respondents didn't know anybody when they arrived in Bangkok and only 10% of the respondents stated that they knew Thai people. The following table shows which activities or groups the respondents enrolled in or joined after they arrived in Bangkok.

Table 4.31 Activities Engaged in Upon Arrival in Bangkok³⁶

Activities Engaged in Upon Arrival in Bangkok	Frequency	Total	Average
Joined expatriate organizations	22	51	43.1
Enrolled in Thai language courses	21	51	41.2
Nothing	12	51	23.5
Enrolled in Thai cultural awareness courses	2	51	3.9
Other	3	51	5.9

³⁶ Respondents could give more than one answer, therefore a total percent for each row is representative of how many of the respondents partook in each of the possible tasks

Just under half of the respondents joined expatriate organization (43%). According to some cross-cultural studies experts, joining expatriate communities can speed up the transition process. (Osland, 1996: 53) Although general expatriate groups (based solely on expatriate status or even those that are nationality centered) include a large range of people of diverse interests, they are still beneficial: “The common bond among most compatriots allows them to let down their hair and talk about their frustrations or events that are happening at home.” (Osland, 1996: 53)

Nevertheless, expatriate organizations have their negative points. These are largely based on the reliance expatriates have on these groups. Organizations such as chambers of commerce can become ‘safety zones’ for expatriates that need areas in which they understand and are understood: “Less adjusted expatriates spent more time in the safety zones with people from their own culture.” (Osland, 1996: 76)

Fortunately, for the most-part, joining expatriate groups at the beginning of one’s stay does not solely dictate one’s social circle for the remainder of one’s time abroad. The following is a table indicating how the respondents have met the most people.

The method of analysis used for the following table is that of weighted averages. In the questionnaire, the respondents were asked to identify, in order of importance, the top three ways in which they have met people. For example, if they met the most people through expatriate organizations, they would put ‘1’ beside this, if they met the second most people through church, they would put ‘2’ beside this and if they met the third most people through work, they would put ‘3’ beside this. To create a weighted average for each variable, the respondent’s first choice was multiplied by 3, her second choice by 2 and her third choice by 1. This created averages in which their first method of meeting people was given more importance (or weight) than their second choice, and their second choice more weight than their third choice. The following is the equation that was used to produce the weighted average of each of the answers:

$$[(\text{the most} \times 3 \text{ points}) + (\text{the second most} \times 2 \text{ points}) + (\text{the third most} \times 1 \text{ point})] / \text{total points} = \text{weighted average}$$

This rational will be used throughout this study and will only be reiterated in the footnotes if the equation is different from the above, based on the number of selections the respondents are asked to make.

Table 4.32 Methods in Which Respondent Has Met People³⁷

Method of Meeting People in Bangkok	Weighted Average
Through friends	29.4
Through expatriate groups	27.1
Through work	25.5
In classes	5.2
Through church	2.0
In pubs, bars or nightclubs	2.0
No answer	7.2
Other	1.6
Total	100

The above shows that the respondents have met most of their social network through other friends, expatriate organizations and work.

³⁷ The following is the math that was used for this question to produce the weighted average.

This math will only be shown for this table, but will apply to all other tables in this study that use weighted averages:

$$\text{Through friends } (13 \times 3) + (20 \times 2) + (11 \times 1) = 90 / 306 = 29.4$$

$$\text{Through expatriate groups } (19 \times 3) + (11 \times 2) + (4 \times 1) = 83 / 306 = 27.1$$

$$\text{Through work } (14 \times 3) + (14 \times 2) + (8 \times 1) = 78 / 306 = 25.5$$

$$\text{In classes } (2 \times 3) + (1 \times 2) + (8 \times 1) = 16 / 306 = 5.2$$

$$\text{Through church } (2 \times 3) + (0 \times 2) + (0 \times 1) = 6 / 306 = 2.0$$

$$\text{In pubs, bars nightclubs } (0 \times 3) + (1 \times 2) + (4 \times 1) = 6 / 306 = 2.0$$

$$\text{No answer } (0 \times 3) + (4 \times 2) + (14 \times 1) = 22 / 306 = 7.2$$

$$\text{Other } (1 \times 3) + (0 \times 2) + (2 \times 1) = 5 / 306 = 1.6$$

Item 23: Social Circle

For expatriates living abroad, the people they socialize with will play a large role in their cultural submersion. The following table indicates the respondents' social circles.

According to the results, 65% of the respondents socialize mostly with expatriates, while only 6% socialize mostly with Thai people.³⁸ Both of these situations can be detrimental to the expatriate's integration level. For the former, the effects are that it could result in a near complete segregation between the expatriate and the host community. As was stated above, a reliance on expatriate groups and social circles is, more often than not, a way to 'escape' from one's current surroundings. These groups may compound feelings of frustration. In the case of the former, one might resist socializing with expatriates based on a desire or need to distance oneself from the familiar. In this case, a social group of mostly Thais may provide the expatriate with an 'escape' from social situations in which she may not have been comfortable in the past, while retaining and propagating a sense of bitterness of her previous culture. The 29% of respondents who socialized with both expatriates and Thais, may be more adjusted and tolerable of cultural encounters. The following table describes the social circles of the respondents in terms of professional or non-professionals.³⁹

Table 4.34 Education Level of Respondent's Social Circle

Respondent's Social Circle		Frequency	Percent
	Educated professionals	37	72.5
	Non-professionals	2	3.9
	Both professionals and non-professionals	12	23.5
Total		51	100.0

³⁸ See table 4.33 in Appendix C

³⁹ In 2002, Thailand yielded 291 715 graduates above high school level. Of these, there were 164 349 with bachelors and 29 016 from graduate schools. (Graduates, Academic Year 2002, National Statistics Office, Ministry of Communication and Technology.)

According to the above table, 73% of the respondents socialize with educated professionals. As all of the respondents to this survey are professional, this is not an unusual result. In most Western societies, educated professionals tend to socialize amongst themselves. Discrepancies in this can often be summed up to pre-adult social circles (for example, friends from high school), and social circles based on one's extended family. As one's social network is larger, and built over a longer time period in one's home country, one will not always socialize with like minded individuals. For the respondents, however, they will have little contact with expatriates who are not working in Bangkok, unless it is one that came to accompany their spouse and has not sought employment.

According to the results, 65% of the respondents socialize mainly with native English speakers.⁴⁰ This however, does not necessarily mean that the remaining 35% socialize with native Thai speakers, but more likely, with a vast amount of nationalities. Fourteen percent of the respondents were not themselves native English speakers.

Item 24: Social Patterns with Colleagues and Friends

The issue of socialization with work colleagues was touched upon earlier in this chapter. In that section, the concept was narrowed to socialization based on pre-arranged work related social events. This section deals with the respondent's socializing with work colleagues removed from the social obligation that comes with pre-arranged work related events.

The following indicates how often the respondent socializes with work colleagues.

⁴⁰ See table 4.35 in Appendix C

Table 4.36 Time Spent Socializing with Colleagues Outside of Work

Respondent Socializes with Colleagues	Frequency	Percent
Always	6	11.8
Frequently	6	11.8
Average	15	29.4
Rarely	14	27.5
Never	10	19.6
Total	51	100.0

The above table indicates that the majority of the respondents (47%) rarely or never socialize with work colleagues. For those that do socialize with work colleagues, the following table delineates who the respondents socialize with at work.

Table 4.37 Colleagues Socialized with at Work⁴¹

Respondent's Socialization with Colleagues	Weighted Average
Foreign women	24.5
Foreign men	20.3
Thai women	16.6
Thai men	2.0
No answer	17.0
Not applicable (I don't socialize with colleagues)	19.6
Total	100

The trend from the above table appears to indicate that the respondents socialize mostly with foreign female colleagues, second most with foreign male colleagues and third most with Thai female colleagues. The following table shows the types of establishments the respondents tend to frequent with their colleagues.

⁴¹ As with the previous weighted average table, the respondents were asked to identify and rank their top three groups. Some of the respondents identified only one or only two groups, therefore 'no answer' represents these respondents.

Table 4.38 Establishments Frequented with Colleagues

Establishments Frequented with Colleagues	Weighted Average
Restaurants	32.0
Pubs, bars, nightclubs	16.7
Each others homes	8.5
Coffee shops	7.8
Cinemas	3.6
Shopping malls	2.9
Other	2.6
No answer	6.3
Not applicable (I don't socialize with people from work)	19.6
Total	100

According to the above table, the respondents tend to frequent restaurants the most and pubs, bars and nightclubs the second most with their *colleagues*. The following table indicates the types of establishments the respondents frequent with their *friends*.

Table 4.39 Establishments Frequented with Friends

Establishments Frequented with Friends	Weighted Average
Restaurants	36.9
Pubs, bars, nightclubs	24.5
Each others homes	17.0
Coffee shops	8.5
Shopping malls	5.9
Cinemas	4.6
Other	1.0
No answer	1.6
Total	100

According to the above table, the respondents tend to frequent restaurants the most, pubs, bars and nightclubs the second most and each others homes the third most. When comparing the top three establishments the respondents frequented with their colleagues, to those frequented with their friends, the main difference is that they

were more likely to socialize at each others homes with their friends rather than their colleagues.⁴²

Item 25: Sufficiency of Social Network

According to the results, just over half (55%) of the respondents feel that they have a sufficient social network in Bangkok.⁴³ These results correlate approximately to the fact that roughly half of the respondents have lived in Bangkok for over two years, thus making the likelihood of them having met more people over time a higher possibility. This may indicate that one's social network takes over two years to build.

Item 26: Food

Although there are is an abundant variety of foods available in Bangkok,⁴⁴ Thai people generally prefer and cherish their own. For many Thai friends, food is a regular topic of conversation, and most social situations will involve a great deal of eating. For Western people living in Bangkok, indulging in local Thai food often takes a certain amount of practice, due mainly to the abundance of spice and chilies that make up most dishes. However, once this is overcome, there is a general agreement within the expatriate community that the food is delicious and preferable over Western dishes. Therefore, the question in this section is not to identify which food the respondent prefers, but rather to raise the question of how one is socially affected by one's choices.

⁴² According to Cooper and Cooper, although Thais do entertain at home: "When making a more specific invitation, it is quite usual among Thais to invite to eat in restaurants." (1990: 47)

⁴³ See table 4.40 in Appendix C

⁴⁴ "Thailand boasts a very large hotel and restaurant sector with approximately 100,000 restaurants (not including the tens of thousands of street stalls) and some 3500 hotels and resorts. Total food service sales in Thailand are in the order of US\$7 billion, a relatively small portion of which is provided by imported product due to the abundance of good quality, low priced food generally available locally" (The Food Service Market in Thailand, 2000).

According to the results, 75% of the respondents eat a mix of Thai and Western food, while 8% eat mainly Western food and 18% eat mainly Thai food.⁴⁵ As you are brought up to enjoy and associate certain foods with pleasurable aspects, it makes sense that the majority of the respondents haven't given up on Western foods. By being able to enjoy both, they are open to trying Thai delicacies offered to them. As most Asian cultures place a high emphasis on the importance of entertaining and feeding guests, it is only natural that some degree of insult is taken if an offered dish is rejected. For many Thai people, expatriates living in Bangkok, regardless of the length of their stay, will always be viewed as 'guests'. Therefore, the benefits of being able to share and enjoy local food may bridge a certain gap between them and the local population.

The majority of Thai meals are bought, either at street side stalls or in restaurants. Street stalls are sometimes stereotyped as lower class eateries because of the inexpensive dishes, while air-conditioned restaurants are often more pricey, thus delineating the clientele. Therefore, the types of establishments where the respondents eat may give an indication of the type of local people in which they are in cultural contact with. The following table indicates *where* the respondents eat.

Table 4.42 Establishments Frequented for Meals

Where Respondent Eats	Weighted Average
Small Thai restaurants	29.1
At home (I cook)	18.3
Up market restaurants	17.0
Street stalls	12.1
I order food to home or work	11.8
Hotels	7.2
Other	2.0
No answer	2.6
Total	100

⁴⁵ See table 4.41 in Appendix C

According to the above table, the respondents eat at small Thai restaurants the most, at home the second most and at up-market restaurants the third most. In terms of which foods they would eat in these situations, small Thai restaurants will serve mainly Thai food, food prepared at home will likely be Western and up-market restaurants will usually offer both a Thai and Western menu.⁴⁶

In terms of culturally rich social settings, the small Thai restaurant (or more likely the street side food stalls) could be comparable to the local pub in the British countryside. It is in these establishments that the local communities come together to eat and socialize. Most often, the menus are solely written in Thai and the staff speak very little or no English. Their clientele is unlikely to include many Westerners, and therefore, no concessions have been made to accommodate Western tastes or comforts, which is usual for more up-market eateries.

Item 27: Transport

Similar to the levels of cultural contact that occur based on choice of eating establishments, the expatriate's choice in transportation will have similar effects. The various forms of transport available in Bangkok can be differentiated primarily by cost, and secondly by convenience. For example, the BTS,⁴⁷ the MRTA,⁴⁸ taxis and private car are more expensive than vans, buses and boat taxis, but more convenient due to their abilities to avoid traffic congestion (BTS, MRTA) and pick-up/drop-off where you desire (taxis, private cars). For Thai people living on an average Thai

⁴⁶ “Thai food service industry estimates that food and beverage imports for the sector are US\$75-100 million. Imports are almost exclusively destined for 4-5 star hotels and resorts, fast foods chains, international restaurants, and airline catering.” (The Food Service Market in Thailand, 2000).

⁴⁷ The BTS is the acronym for the Bangkok Mass Transport System. This sky train system was established in 1999 and runs two lines through the center of Bangkok. As of March 21st 2005, it has serviced 471982406 passengers. (Bangkok Mass Transport System)

⁴⁸ The MRTA is the acronym for the Mass Rapid Transport Authority, which runs an underground subway system, opened in 2004. (Mass Rapid Transit Authority of Thailand)

income,⁴⁹ buses would be the normal form of transport throughout the city. However, for those living at an above average income, other, more convenient forms of transport are available and abundant.

The following table indicates the most and second most used forms of transport by the respondents.

Table 4.43 Forms of Transport Most Used⁵⁰

Transport Most Used	Weighted Average
Taxis	30.7
BTS/MRTA	27.5
Car	22.2
Bus	4.6
Motorbike taxis	4.6
Boat	2.0
Vans	2.0
Tuk-tuks ⁵¹	0.7
No answer	5.7
Total	100

According to the above table, **the most usual forms of transportation for the respondents are taxis, BTS/MRTA and car**, all on fairly equal levels. As the

⁴⁹ The average monthly income in Bangkok per household (3.3 persons) is 28,329 Baht. This correlates to 8 509 Baht per capita. This however, is much higher than the average monthly income Kingdom wide of 13 736 per household (3.5 persons), and 3 913 per capita. (Average Monthly Income, 2002. National Statistics Office, Ministry of Information and Communication Technology.)

⁵⁰ The question for this table asked respondents to indicate which forms of transportation they used the most and the second most. The following is the equation that was used to produce the weighted points of each of the answers: [(the most x 2 points) + (the second most x 1 points)] / total points = weighted average

⁵¹ A tuk-tuk is a three wheeled motorbike with a covered bench for passengers. This form of transportation is somewhat controversial for environmentalists as they expel fumes and gases and are therefore not considered environmentally friendly. However, these vehicles are the livelihood of their operators and unless alternative employment can be found for them, they will continue roaming the city streets of the region.

question asked the respondents to list their levels of most used and second most used, it was interesting to see that 18% didn't answer their second most used, therefore indicating that they usually rely on only one form of transport.

For obvious reasons, the use of private cars will provide the least amount of cultural contact. Despite this however, if the expatriate is driving themselves they will inherently acquire a different form of socialization through an understanding of road rules and driving patterns. Despite the fact that reliance on taxis can exclude the expatriate from cultural contact, in the sense that you are moving through the hot bustling streets in the comfort of a quiet air-conditioned car, taxi drivers themselves often provide useful insight and information. Though not the norm, it is not unusual to take a taxi in Bangkok driven by a fairly well educated Thai man. If his English abilities, or your Thai abilities are such that you can communicate well with each other, he will often share his political views, his own self-motivations and a brief account of his family history. Though this is a semi-regular occurrence in taxis the world over, the expatriate may gain more insight and understanding into Thai culture from this conversation than many others that have preceded it in more formal situations.

Many expatriates rely on both the well established BTS and the newer MRTA. This reliance is such that many won't even think of living in areas that are not within a short distance of one of these. The main reason for this is that the BTS and the MRTA are the only forms of transportation in Bangkok in which one can determine exactly how long it will take to get from one point to another. Even private cars and taxis are subjected to the frequent traffic jams that overhaul the city during working hours. The price of tickets for these two forms of transport, in addition to the limited areas they cover, and perhaps influenced slightly by a guarded reluctance or suspicion against these forms of transportation by some Thai people, remove any great insight

or cultural contact for the expatriate who uses them.⁵² In most cases, loud talking is frowned upon during the journeys.

Section IV: General Life

Item 28: Acceptance

As quoted in Osland's book. The Adventure of Working Abroad (1996: 46): "Foreigners are, by definition, part of the out-group and are usually treated with distrust and suspicion by the in-group." (Triandis and others, 1988) As expatriates in Bangkok would form part of the 'out-group' by this definition, it was of interest to find out how the respondents felt in regards to this.

According to the results, 78% of the respondents feel accepted by most of the Thais they meet.⁵³ The possible reasons for this majority are numerous. To begin with, one must examine the historical relationship between Thailand and the Western world. Despite the fact that all of Thailand's neighboring countries were at some point colonized by Western powers,⁵⁴ Thailand remained independent throughout. According to some accounts, it maintained its independence through a positive relationship with the West, and by altering some of its traditional values and customs to reflect more Western norms.⁵⁵ (Gross, 2001)

⁵² One interesting aspect of Thai culture that becomes most evident to foreigners who frequently take the BTS is the respect given to children by Thai people. Nearly every time a parent and child board the train a seat is quickly offered to the child.

⁵³ See table 4.44 in Appendix C

⁵⁴ Myanmar (formerly Burma) and Malaysia were colonized by the British, while Cambodia and Laos were colonized by the French.

⁵⁵ In addition to this, much evidence points to Thailand's geographic location as the key facet to its independence throughout the colonial period. As its North-Eastern and Eastern borders were

In general, there appears to be a certain respect by Thai people for Western countries. As mentioned earlier in the paper, it is of prestige for one to be educated abroad. The prestige of a Western education dates back to King Rama V who sent his sons abroad for their education. Wealthy families in the civil service followed suit and this created Western education as a symbol of status. (*Rama V: Chiang Rai-Chiang Mai Website*)

One could also try and explain this ‘acceptance’ as being removed from any sort of Western related context, and try to explain it moreover by the purported rule of acceptance influenced by the doctrine of Theravada Buddhism to which Thai people abide. Unfortunately, however, this ‘acceptance’ is lacking in regards to many of the other non-Western nationals working in Bangkok.⁵⁶

Item 29: Changes in Cultural Orientation

Although many cross-cultural specialists point to the fact that a certain degree of socializational change is necessary for the expatriate’s assimilation into a new culture, it largely agreed that one will not completely abandon one’s native culture. Even when looking at long-term or permanent immigrants to North American cities, it is rare that the first generation will fully adopt the cultural aspects of their new surroundings. For expatriates, who are generally working in any given culture on a temporary basis, full cultural integration is highly unlikely, if not impossible. More likely, the successful expatriate may adopt certain aspects of the culture in which he/she is living. The following table shows which statement the respondents feel suit them.

French ruled, while it’s North-Western, West and South borders were British ruled, Thailand became a sort of buffer zone between the two rival forces.

⁵⁶ Cambodian, Laotian and Burmese migrant workers and refugees, some African, Middle-Eastern and Indian nationals, as well as many of the displaced ethnic groups from the North of Thailand are looked down upon by most Thai people.

Table 4.45 Statement on Cultural Change Best Suited to Respondent

Cultural Change Statement Best Suited for Respondent	Frequency	Percent
I feel that I have retained my native culture	27	52.9
I feel that I have a mix of my native and Thai culture	24	47.1
Total	51	100.0

According to the table above, just over half (53%) of the respondents feel that they have retained their native culture, while just under half (47%) feel that they have a mix of both their native culture and Thai culture.⁵⁷ When compared to the length of time the respondents have lived in Bangkok, these results correlate to what would perhaps be expected. 55% of the respondents have been in Bangkok for less than two years, while the remaining 46% have lived here for over two years.

Although it is difficult to judge what ‘retaining’ or ‘mixing’ culture would entail, it is best looked at as a subjective judgment of the changes in one’s own socialization. A second indicator is to gauge the impact of return visits to one’s native country. Feelings of discomfort and misunderstanding could reflect changes in one’s socialization. According to Cushner and Brislin, (1996: 261): “It may take two years or more for returnees to feel comfortable again in their own countries.” The following table shows how many respondents feel comfortable when they return home to their own countries.

The results indicate that only 41% of the respondents feel that they fit in culturally when they return home for visits, while 31% stated that they only fit in somewhat.⁵⁸ Comparing this to the 53% of respondents who feel that they have retained their native culture, one can formulate some possible explanations. The first could be that the respondent has, unconsciously, slightly altered her socialization. Although she cannot identify the changes, they have enabled her to adapt to living in

⁵⁷ None of the respondents chose the statement “I feel I have adopted Thai culture.”

⁵⁸ See table 4.46 in Appendix C

Bangkok and deal with cross-cultural encounters. The second reason is that, upon return to her native country, she may become more aware of cultural aspects that were invisible to her before. If the levels of awareness are such that one can identify positive and negative aspects of different cultures, there may be evidence of at least some level of understanding of the culture to which she has been exposed as an expatriate.

Item 30: Departure Consequences

For many expatriates, frustrations and discontentment with a culture do not necessarily lead to one's departure from the offending culture. Less well adjusted expatriates may continue to live in a state of constant confusion, conflict and misunderstanding due mainly to the benefits they reap from such postings. The following table shows the expected consequences that would affect the respondents if they left Bangkok.

Table 4.47 Expected Consequences of Leaving Bangkok⁵⁹

Expected Consequences of Leaving Bangkok	Frequency	Total	Average
Loss of good friends	28	51	54.9
Financial insecurity	26	51	51.0
A sense of failure	3	51	5.9
Other	4	51	7.8
None	6	51	11.8
No answer	1	51	2.0

The above table indicates that the majority of the respondents feel that they would lose good friends and face financial insecurity if they left Bangkok.

⁵⁹ Respondents could give more than one answer, therefore a total percent for each row is representative of the total number of respondents that stated each consequence.

Item 31: Adjustment

For expatriates coming to Bangkok from a Western country, the changes are significant. Not only are the changes on a cultural level, but they are also based on the geographic location of Thailand (a tropical climate), the food (much different and spicier than in Western countries), as well as a change in the status of the expatriate (out-group designation). The following table shows what the expatriate found the most and second most difficult to adjust to in Bangkok.

Table 4.48 Difficult Adjustments of Living in Bangkok⁶⁰

Most Difficult to Adjust to	Weighted Average
Language barrier	35.6
Expatriate status	14.4
Culture	12.4
Climate	11.1
Food	3.8
Noise	2.4
Other	1.3
No answer	19.0
Total	100

According to the above table, the language barrier was the most difficult obstacle the respondents had to overcome. This was followed by expatriate status, climate and culture. Surprisingly, 14% of the respondents didn't feel that they had difficulty adjusting to anything in Bangkok, while 16% had difficulty with only one of the obstacles. Perhaps the fact that 53% of the respondents had worked abroad previous to their Bangkok experience may explain this lack of difficulty.

⁶⁰ The question for this table asked respondents what they found most and the second most difficult to adjust to in Bangkok. The following is the equation that was used to produce the weighted points of each of the answers: [(the most x 2 points) + (the second most x 1 points)] / total points = weighted average

Item 32: Thai Friendship

According to many westerners and Thai studies scholars, friendship in Thailand connotes a different meaning than it does in the West:

“...The European concept of friendship is always non-hierarchical and confidential, and therefore essentially confrontational. Thai friendship seems to center on mutual interests and pre-determined social positions⁶¹ and thus normally includes an element of hierarchy; it is not necessarily confidential in the sense of opening up to each other and tends to avoid confrontation.” (Mulder, 1990: vi)

According to the results, 57% of the respondents do feel that they have one close friend.⁶² A second question was asked to be sure that the respondents defined and identified ‘friend’ in terms of friendship, and not just as someone who acts as your cultural mentor.

According to the results of this second question, 98% of the respondents stated that they feel that they have at least one person they can get advice and information from.⁶³ When compared to the 57% that feel that they have at least one close Thai friend, the two have likely been differentiated from each other by the respondents.

⁶¹ In defining social positions and the roles within, Mulder states: “Whereas Thai seem to separate their roles positionally, meeting in well-defined relationships such as relatives, classmates, party members, bosses, employees, or friends, my concept of a friend is somebody with whom I can be totally myself, mixing my various persona and opening up any aspect of being Niels [Mulder]. For Thais such role-mixing is bewildering to the extent of arousing anxiety; ‘friend’ is a particular role that normally excludes the other role identities that a person may have.” (1990: vi).

⁶² See table 4.49 in Appendix C

⁶³ See table 4.49 in Appendix C

Item 33: Interaction Energy

In cross-cultural situations in which the language is different than one's own, communicating can be especially tiring. The following table shows how many respondents feel that interacting with Thai people takes a lot of energy.

As was indicated in table 4.48, 37% of the respondents felt that the language barrier was the most difficult obstacle they faced in Bangkok, while Table 4.4 indicated that 28% of the respondents were fluent or near fluent in Thai. When asked if they felt that interacting with Thai people required a lot of energy, 33% of the respondents stated that it didn't, while 67% stated that it did.⁶⁴ This could correlate with the 28% who speak Thai well enough to communicate their thoughts, actions, desires and to hold deeper conversations than just small talk.

Despite the possibility that the language barrier is most likely what requires more energy when interacting with Thai people, another factor may be at play. Even in one's own culture, certain people require more energy when interacting than others. These are usually people with whom one's common interests are not shared. Different cultural values and understanding may play a role in the differences between what a Westerner and a Thai person consider to be interesting, stimulating and easy conversation.

Item 34: Expatriation Decision

Whether or not an expatriate feels that he/she has made the right decision to work abroad may affect his/her willingness to adjust to it. When one feels pressure to do something, or feels that they have made the wrong decision, one may tend to withdraw, both socially and emotionally from the situation they are in.

According to the results 77% of the respondents feel that they made the right decision to come to Bangkok, while 8% stated it was the wrong decision and 16%

⁶⁴ See table 4.51 in Appendix C

weren't sure.⁶⁵ If one feels that their decision to come to Bangkok was right, then they may feel they have benefited in some way from their decision. This benefit may have come in the form of an increased economic status, gained cultural experience, or more possibly, an overall appreciation of what they have learnt as a result of this cross-cultural experience.

Item 35: Level of Perceived Adaptation

Making the decision to move to a new culture involves a certain amount of willingness to make adjustments, both socially and culturally. One must take into consideration the numerous factors that will change: language, social networks and socialization. If one is willing to temporarily forego or alter their ability to communicate, their support group and their understanding of social values and norms, they may be more open to the changes they will face in a new culture.

For an expatriate in Bangkok, one's keenness to make the required efforts will likely play a large role in their ability to adapt and succeed in the new culture. Despite the obvious benefits of such adjustments, expatriates are not always willing to make such amendments. This decision is largely subjective, as is one's own perception of one's efforts to do so.

According to the results, 57% of the respondents feel that they have made a sufficient amount of effort to adapt to living in Bangkok.⁶⁶ While only 28% of the respondents stated that they can speak Thai fluently or nearly fluently, it seems that more effort should be made on the part of those that don't. However, the move itself to Bangkok, and all the changes that alone entails, may in their eyes represent significant changes and adjustment already.

⁶⁵ See table 4.52 in Appendix C

⁶⁶ See table 4.53 in Appendix C

Item 36: Contentment

In this study, the term ‘lifestyle’ can be defined by a variety of elements: career, financial situation, social network...etc. In brief, it encompasses all aspects of the expatriate’s life that lead to a general contentment or discontentment in the individual.

According to the results, 61% of the respondents are happy with their current lifestyles, while 22% weren’t and 18% weren’t sure.⁶⁷

Additionally, the majority of the respondents (67%) consider their lifestyles to be more Western, while 4% state that their lifestyles are more Thai and 29% state that they are a mix of both cultures.⁶⁸ This indicates that although the respondents are faced with cross-cultural encounters and interactions in their everyday lives, they have been able to retain elements of their native cultures within. As was discussed in chapter one of this paper, modern day Bangkok is a city that is abundant with Western amenities. Re-creating a Western lifestyle in the city, although somewhat pricey, is fairly easy if one desires to do so.

Item 37: Respondent’s Advice to Potential Female Expatriates

Although the respondents are themselves women working in Bangkok, only 37% of them would encourage other women to do the same, while 43% would not and 20% weren’t sure if they would.⁶⁹ This could indicate that although they have made a life for themselves here, and feel that they made the right decision to do so, the hardships that they initially encountered, or still do encounter as Western women working in Bangkok are very difficult to overcome.

⁶⁷ See table 4.54 in Appendix C

⁶⁸ See table 4.55 in Appendix C

⁶⁹ See table 4.56 in Appendix C

Item 38: Permanent Residency

Making a decision to work abroad is very rarely seen as a decision to leave one's own country permanently. Like all challenging situations, expatriation is a risk. It may work out wonderfully, or it may flop. However, expatriates are generally able to handle both situations based largely on the temporality of the situation. .

Although the majority of the respondents (61%) are content with their current lifestyles, only 29% feel that they could live in Bangkok indefinitely. 63% stated that they would not stay permanently in Bangkok, while 8% were undecided.⁷⁰ This is perhaps due to the idea that one would have to put more emphasis on adapting their socialization permanently in an attempt to gain acceptance from the local community. For the temporary resident, only minor adjustments to their socialization may still permit them to have a successful experience abroad.

It is interesting to note that, in the above table, 29% of the respondents said they could live in Bangkok indefinitely, while in table 4.55, 33% of the respondents described their lifestyles as either a mix of Thai and Western, or more Thai. Perhaps the expatriate who makes more adjustments to living in Bangkok will be more willing to dedicate themselves to living here, and see the possibility of their permanence as the driving force to cultural learning and adaptation. The following table indicates the main reason the respondent would leave Bangkok.

Table 4.58 Main Reason Respondent Would Leave Bangkok

Main Reason to Leave Bangkok	Frequency	Percent
Other opportunities	18	35.3
Family reasons ⁷¹	9	17.6
Husband's work	8	15.7

⁷⁰ See table 4.57 in Appendix C

⁷¹ Family reasons included both obligations to support family in home country as well as undesired to bring up children in Bangkok.

No suitable dating partners	6	11.8
Financial reasons	3	5.9
Other	2	3.9
No answer	5	9.8
Total	51	100.0

According to the above table, 35% of the respondents would leave Bangkok for other opportunities, while 18% would leave for family reasons and 16% would leave because of their husband's work. The following table shows what keeps the respondents in Bangkok.

Table 4.59 Reason Respondent Stays in Bangkok

Reason to Stay in Bangkok	Frequency	Percent
Work	20	39.2
Lifestyle	12	23.5
Money	7	13.7
Husband's work	5	9.8
Interest	4	7.8
Effort made already	2	3.9
Partner	1	2.0
Total	51	100.0

According to the above table, work (39%) is the most prevalent reason for the respondents to stay in Bangkok, followed by lifestyle (24%).

Item 39: Elements Lacking

By identifying which elements or factors the respondents miss about their own countries, it becomes clearer which elements of they are lacking in their Thai environments. The following table shows what the respondents miss most about their home countries.

Table 4.60 What Respondent Misses about Home Country⁷²

Miss About Home Country	Weighted Average
Friends and family	54.9
Ease of communication	20.9
Dating	7.8
Environmental issues ⁷³	5.2
Food	3.3
Other	2.0
No answer	5.9
Total	100.0

The above table indicates that the most missed element for the respondents is friends and family, followed closely by ease of communication. This points to the fact that the lack of a social circle, in addition to the language barrier may be the most salient elements that are lacking in their current lives in Bangkok.

Item 40: Projected Worries

According to Osland, (1996: 38): “If we allow it, projected dangers can become threshold guardians that prevent us from ever crossing the first threshold, or from really experiencing the other culture.” Therefore, fear of the unknown can deter one from wanting to learn and experience what they don’t understand. This fear can become compounded when faced with a culture in which the elements are completely unknown.

The following table shows the respondent’s first and second worries about living in Bangkok.

⁷² The question for this table asked respondents to indicate what they missed most and second most about their home countries. The following is the equation that was used to produce the weighted average of each of the answers: [(the most x 2 points) + (the second most x 1 points)] / total points = weighted average

⁷³ Environmental issues include: silence, cleanliness, climate and lack of pollution.

Table 4.61 What Worries the Respondent about Living in Bangkok⁷⁴

Concerns About Living in Bangkok	Weighted Average
Isolation from family and friends	24.8
Not having a strong social support network	20.4
Not meeting a partner	17.6
Financial insecurity	6.5
Other	11.1
No answer	19.6
Total	100

According to the above table, the respondents worry the most about isolation from friends and family, not having a strong social support network, and not meeting a partner. The first two worries can correlate to what the respondents stated as the elements they missed the most about their home countries. The third worry, about not meeting a partner, can correlate to the 29% of the single respondents who stated that they are dating very rarely. Interestingly, 14% of the respondents had no worries at all, while 18% only had one worry.

Item 41: Social Comfort

According to Cushner and Brislin, (1996: 265) “It thus becomes critically important for individuals working across cultures to be able to find people with whom they are comfortable and with whom they can interact on a rather close or intimate level.” For expatriates who have made a certain level of adjustments to the new culture, this level of comfort will not be solely with other expatriates. The following table indicates with whom the respondents feel the most comfortable.

⁷⁴ The question for this table asked respondents to indicate what worried them the most and second most about living in Bangkok. The following is the equation that was used to produce the weighted average of each of the answers: [(the most x 2 points) + (the second most x 1 points)] / total points = weighted average

Table 4.62 Respondent's Ease with Social Groups

Group with Whom Respondent Is Most Comfortable		Frequency	Percent
	Foreign women	28	54.9
	Foreign men	14	27.5
	Thai women	4	7.8
	Thai men	1	2.0
	No answer	4	7.8
Total		51	100.0

According to the above, the majority of the respondents feel the most comfortable with foreign women (55%), followed by foreign men (28%). Only 10% of the respondents stated that they feel most comfortable with Thai people. Of the four respondents who did not answer this question, two stated on their questionnaires that they felt equally comfortable with everyone, while two stated that they didn't feel comfortable with anyone.

Item 42: Knowledge of Salient Thai Institutions

The importance of understanding a culture is not based solely on understanding the language and values systems at play within. An understanding of the driving elements behind the social values and practices is essential. In Thailand, both the political and the religious spheres play a key role in the social functioning of society.⁷⁵ For the foreigner living in Bangkok, a basic understanding of these two institutions is paramount to their understanding of the culture within. The following two tables indicate the respondent's knowledge of Thai politics and Theravada Buddhism.

⁷⁵ The monarchy, which is perhaps the most important institution in Thailand, plays a key role in both the political and religious spheres. It takes little time for the foreigner, even short term tourists, to understand the importance the monarchy plays in the lives of the Thai people. All guide books stress this fact, and one is constantly aware of the importance through the pictures, billboards and calendars of, as well as the numerous shrines dedicated to the royal family throughout the kingdom. However, for most foreigners, their knowledge of the royal family is relegated to their awareness of this extreme respect. Discussion with Thai people about the royal family is frowned upon, lest it seem critical.

Table 4.63 Respondent's Knowledge of Thai Politics

Knowledge of Thai Politics		Frequency	Percent
	Very	9	17.6
	Somewhat	27	52.9
	Not	15	29.4
Total		51	100.0

Table 4.64 Respondent's Knowledge of Theravada Buddhism

Knowledge of Theravada Buddhism		Frequency	Percent
	Very	6	11.8
	Somewhat	25	49.0
	Not	20	39.2
Total		51	100.0

According to the above tables, approximately half of the respondents are somewhat knowledgeable about both institutions. It appears that the respondents are slightly more knowledgeable about politics than religion. This is highly likely based on the content of Bangkok's English language newspapers, *The Bangkok Post* and *The Nation*. These papers both offer extensive coverage of political matters in Thailand.

Item 43: Final Remarks

Regardless of the location in which one is living, there will likely be facets of the location that are frustrating to the residents. The following table shows what the respondents find the most and second most frustrating about living in Bangkok.

Table 4.65 Respondent's Frustrations about Living in Bangkok⁷⁶

Frustrations about Living in Bangkok	Weighted Average
Environmental issues ⁷⁷	41.2
Cultural differences	22.8
Meeting people	11.1
Expatriate men	9.8
Other	3.3
No answer	11.8
Total	100

According to the above, the respondents' frustrations are extremely varied, with the most frequent answer to this question in regards to environmental issues. Nevertheless, 6% of the respondents had no frustrations whatsoever, while 18% of the respondents had only one frustration.

PART II: Measurement of Integration Levels

This part tests the integration levels based on the results of the questionnaire. The integration levels were formulated by taking indicators for each of the three concepts (language, socialization and adjustment) and weighing them according to importance to produce a weighted average for *each* respondent's integrational level for all three of the concepts. A full example of this process is explained in the first section (language and communication). The rationale outlined in this section will apply to each of the following sections.

⁷⁶ The question for this table asked respondents to indicate what they found the most and second most frustrating about living in Bangkok. The following is the equation that was used to produce the weighted average of each of the answers: [(the most x 2 points) + (the second most x 1 points)] / total points = weighted average

⁷⁷ Environmental issues include: traffic, noise, pollution, crowds and climate.

Section I: Integration Levels Based on Language and Communication

According to the findings from the questionnaire, 29% of the respondents are fluent, or near fluent in the Thai language. The majority of the respondents (47%) were only able to communicate in Thai to order food and give directions. This second group of respondents may have very little understanding of the structure of Thai language and may only have memorized the sentences necessary for their convenience.

An important aspect of Thai language is the different words used that denote the status of the speaker. As Thai society is one in which hierarchy is important, one must be aware of the differences in speech between people in unequal social positions.

For the women that are unable to communicate in Thai, they will socialize mainly with people to whom they can speak and be understood. Therefore, their social circles may only include people who speak and understand English. The Thai people in their social groups may be well educated and more Western influenced than Thai people who don't speak English. In addition to this, their understanding of Thai culture and their cultural experiences in Thailand may be limited by their lack of communication skills.

The indicators used to test the integration of the respondents based on language and communication are as follows. Beside each indicator is the weight assigned⁷⁸ for that particular indicator.

1. Knowledge of Thai (fluent – 4, near fluent – 3, only enough to order food and give directions – 2, only basic words – 1, none – 0)
2. Language used at work (Thai – 2, both Thai and English – 1, English – 0)

⁷⁸ The weights were assigned by the investigator to add more importance to indicators thought to be more salient than others. For example, the fact that a respondent is fluent in Thai was deemed more important than the language she used at work. If a woman was fluent in Thai, yet worked in an English speaking environment, she wouldn't likely state that she communicated in Thai at work.

3. Pre-arrival language studies (Yes – 1, No – 0)

4. Post-arrival language studies (Yes – 1, No – 0)

According to the above weighting method, the maximum amount of points possible is 8. If a respondent received a total of 8 points, it would mean that their integration level was as high as possible based on their language and communications skills. The amount of points received by each respondent was then divided by the total amount of points to produce a percentage. For example, if the respondent received a total of 4 points, this would be divided by the total of 8 for a total of 50%.

The following is table shows how the averages for each respondent were derived. **This will only be shown for this case, but the same rational will be applicable to all tables for remainder of this chapter.**



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Table 4.66 Measurement of Language and Communication

#	Thai Skills	Language Used at Work	Pre-Arrival Language Studies	Post-Arrival Language Studies	Total (out of 8)	Percent
1	1	0	0	0	1	13
2	2	0	0	1	3	38
3	3	1	0	0	4	50
4	4	1	1	1	7	88
5	3	0	0	1	4	50
6	4	0	0	1	5	63
7	4	1	1	1	7	88
8	2	0	0	1	3	38
9	4	2	0	1	7	88
10	3	0	1	1	5	63
11	2	0	0	0	2	25
12	1	0	0	0	1	13
13	3	0	0	0	3	38
14	1	0	1	0	2	25
15	2	0	0	1	3	38
16	2	0	0	1	3	38
17	2	0	0	0	2	25
18	2	0	0	1	3	38
19	3	0	0	1	4	50
20	2	0	0	1	3	38
21	2	1	0	0	3	38
22	3	1	0	1	5	63
23	2	0	0	0	2	25
24	0	0	0	0	0	0
25	2	0	0	0	2	25
26	2	0	0	1	3	38
27	3	1	1	1	6	75
28	2	0	0	0	2	25
29	2	0	0	0	2	25
30	2	0	0	1	3	38
31	2	0	0	1	3	38
32	2	0	1	0	3	38
33	4	2	1	0	7	88
34	2	1	1	0	4	50
35	1	0	1	0	2	25
36	1	0	0	0	1	13
37	2	0	0	0	2	25
38	4	1	1	1	7	88
39	1	0	0	0	1	13
40	2	0	1	1	4	50
41	1	0	0	0	1	13
42	3	1	1	1	5	63
43	1	0	0	0	1	13
44	2	0	1	0	3	38
45	2	0	1	0	3	38
46	1	0	0	0	1	13
47	4	1	0	0	5	63
48	2	0	0	0	2	25
49	1	0	1	0	2	25
50	1	0	0	0	1	13
51	3	1	1	0	5	63

To assess the integration levels based on the sample of 51 respondents, the following ranking was used:

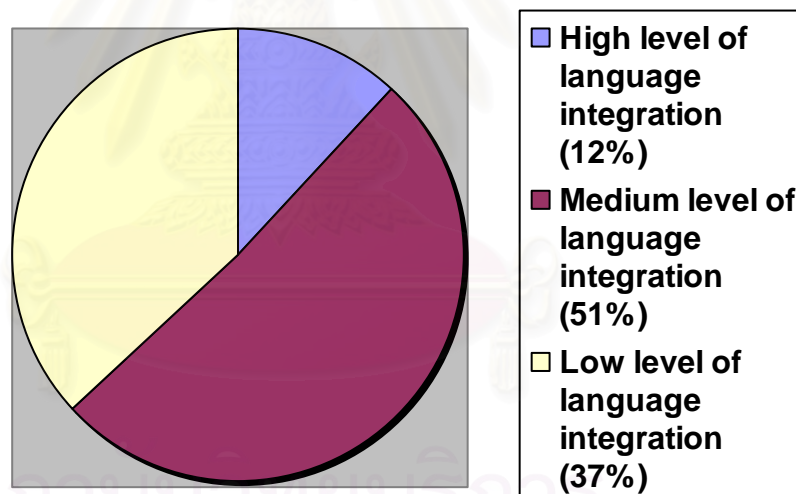
High levels of integration were determined to be 68 – 100%

Medium levels of integration were determined to be 34 – 67%

Low levels of integration were determined to be 0 – 33%

Based on the results displayed in table 4.66, the percentages of six respondents fell into the ‘high’ category, 26 respondents fell into the ‘medium’ category and 19 respondents fell into the ‘low’ category. The following chart represents the integration levels of the respondents based on language and communication:

Chart 4.67 Levels of Integration Based on Language and Communication



Based on the responses to the questionnaire, **most Western women living in Bangkok do not have the skills to effectively communicate in Thai language.** This may impede their integration.

Section II: Integration Levels Based on Socialization

Unlike language and communication skills, an expatriate’s socialization is more complicated to judge. As was stated in chapter one of this paper, and according to Osland, (1996: 141), successful expatriates will yield the following factors:

“1) cultural certainty, 2) unquestioned acceptance of basic assumptions, 3) personal frames of reference, 4) the unexamined life, 5) accustomed role and status, 6) knowledge of social reinforcement, 7) accustomed habits and activities, and 8) known routines.”

For the women studied in this research, it is possible to suggest they have yielded some of the above factors. In their answers, they have indicated an awareness of cultural differences between their home countries and Thailand. Many of the respondents stated that they didn't fit in culturally when they returned to their home countries,⁷⁹ thus illuminating the strong possibility that their socialization now differs from that of their fellow compatriots.

Nevertheless, many of the respondents felt that they had retained their native culture, while quite a few stated that they felt they now had a mix of both cultures. For the group that felt they had a mix, it's possible to suggest that this mix is the result of a need to make changes and adjustments to enable them to live successfully in a new culture. Though they won't likely ever abandon their own cultural norms and values completely, they have identified a need to do so in certain circumstances of their present situation.

The indicators used to test the integration of the respondents based on socialization are as follows. Beside each indicator is the weight assigned for that particular indicator.

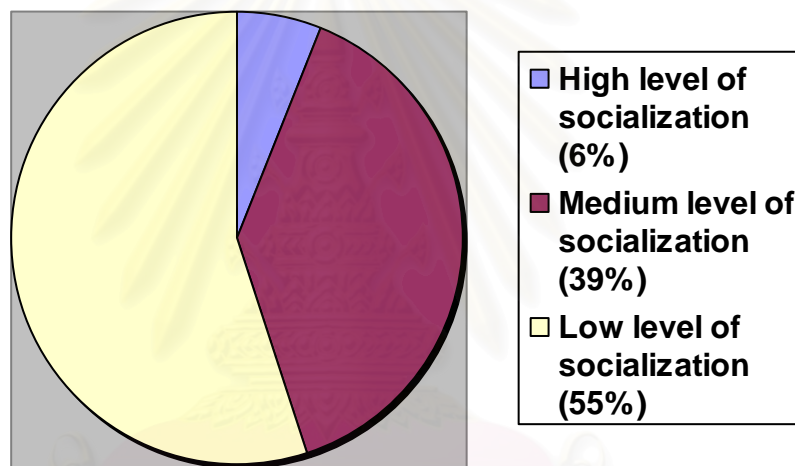
1. Previous experience abroad (Yes – 1, No – 0)
2. Pre-arrival cultural studies (Yes – 1, No – 0)
3. Post-arrival cultural studies (Yes – 1, No – 0)
4. Long term plans of residency (Yes – 2, No – 0)

⁷⁹ Some research has shown that people who chose to live abroad were sometimes those that felt they never fit in at home. Therefore, the fact that many of the women stated that they don't feel like they fit in at home may not solely be a result of an altered socialization due to their experiences as an expatriate.

5. Fit in culturally when visiting home country (No – 2, Somewhat – 1, Yes – 0)
6. Comfortable with Thai people (Yes – 3, No – 0)
7. Knowledge of Thai politics (Yes - 2, Somewhat - 1, No – 0)
8. Knowledge of Theravada Buddhism (Yes – 2, Somewhat – 1, No – 0)

The most points possible based on the above weights are 16. Again, these were calculated into percentages and ranked from high to low. The results are as follows:

Chart 4.68 Levels of Integration Based on Socialization



According to the above chart, very few of the respondents have altered their unique socializations to levels that would suggest integration. However, by basing the changes moreover on the presence of an ‘awareness’ of cultural differences, it is possible that the respondents’ socializations may have been altered, ever so slightly, increasing their integration levels.

Section III: Integration Levels Based on Cultural Adjustment

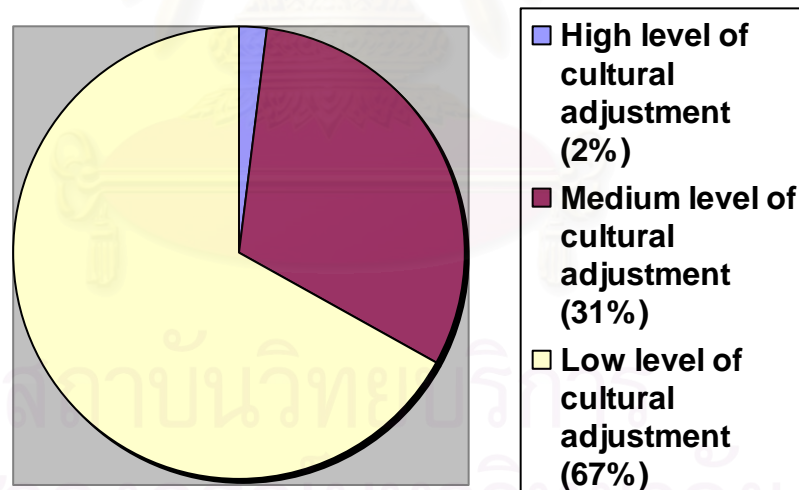
The respondents levels of cultural adjustment were measured in a variety of ways, with indicators placed throughout the questionnaire. The following are the indicators and the weight assigned to each one:

1. With whom the respondent socializes (Thais – 2, a mix of Thais and expatriates – 1, expatriates – 0)

2. Where respondent eats⁸⁰ (small Thai restaurants – 2, street stalls – 2, other – 0)
3. What type of food respondent eats (Thai food – 2, mix of Thai and Western – 1, Western – 0)
4. Where respondent lives (Mostly Thai area – 2, Mostly expatriate area – 0)
5. Who respondent lives with (Thai(s) – 1, other – 0)
6. Form of transport used (all public forms of transport⁸¹ – 1)
7. Cultural change of respondent (Adopted Thai culture – 2, mix of Thai and native culture – 1, retained native culture – 0)
8. Current lifestyle (More Thai – 3, mix of Thai and Western – 2, More Western 0)

The total possible points based on the above is 13, which would suggest full integration based on cultural adjustment. The following chart represents the results in averages based on high, medium and low integration levels for this concept:

Chart 4.69 Levels of Integration Based on Cultural Adjustment



⁸⁰ There were many answers given to this question. The most applicable, in terms of cultural adjustment are the only ones to which any weight is given. Additionally, as this question had asked respondents to identify the establishment frequented the most, second most...etc, only the establishment most frequented was used for this assessment. This rationale is used for all indicators of similar format.

⁸¹ Public forms of transport include buses, boats, BTS/MRTA

As represented in both the above chart, as well as by the findings in part I of this chapter, one can conclude that **very few of the women have altered their habits to levels necessary for them to bridge the gap between their own and Thai culture. Nearly all of the respondents stated that they have retained their native culture, that they live a more Western lifestyle, that their social circles are made up of mostly expatriates and that they would not consider living in Bangkok indefinitely.** The adjustments made by the respondents have largely been only to the levels of the upper classes of Thai society, such as more expensive transport and restaurant choices. This lack of willingness for cultural adjustment, at the local middle-class level, may impede their integration levels.

Summary

The average of the percentages for each concept were added together and divided by the total of the three:

- Language 41% (Medium)
- + Socialization 30% (Low)
- + Adjustment 29% (Low)
- = Total Average of Integration Levels 33% (Low)

If this average is scaled according to the method used in the analysis for the three concepts of integration (high 68-100, medium 34-67 and low 0-37) it would indicate a low integration level.

The respondent's integration levels were based on three concepts: language and communication, socialization and cultural adjustment. The first concept showed that the majority of the respondents didn't possess enough skills in Thai language to integrate into Thai culture. The second concept showed that most of the respondents were aware of cultural pluralism, and that slight alterations were made to their own socializations as a result of this. The third concept showed that very few of the respondents had altered their own cultural practices to any degree that it would alter their lifestyle significantly. Therefore, despite the fact that the second concept showed signs of cultural awareness, the more practical aspects measured in the first and third concepts were not put into practice, **thereby strongly suggesting that most**

Western women living and working in Bangkok are not integrated into Thai society.

PART III: Test of Causative Factors

This part tests the possible reasons for the above integration levels. The indicators were weighted to produce weighted averages. The rationale for this process is the same used in part II of this chapter.

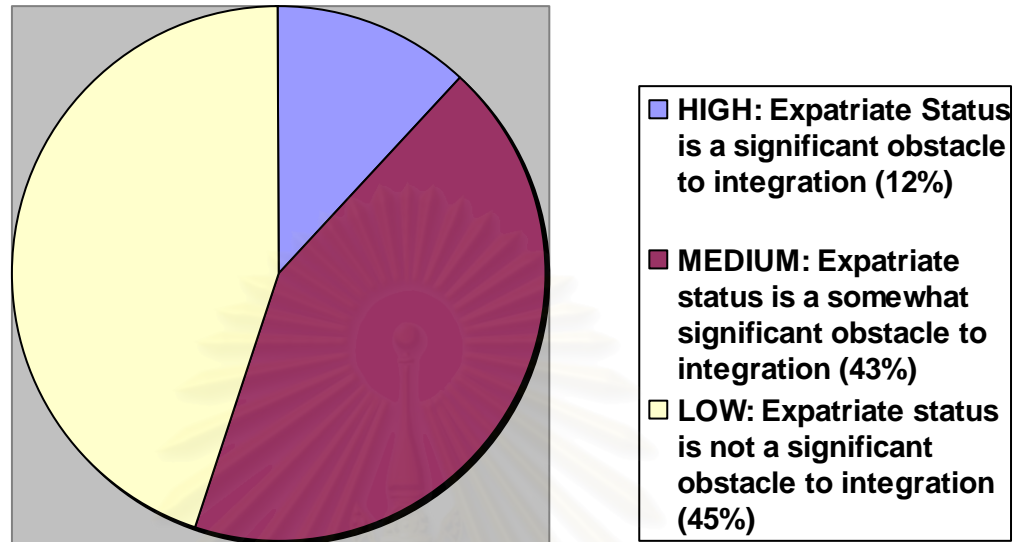
Section I: Expatriate Status

The respondents' roles as expatriates may play a part in their low levels of integration. The following are the indicators, and their assigned weights, used to measure whether expatriate status is an impediment to integration:

1. With whom respondent interacts at work (Foreigners – 1, other 0)
2. Affected by expatriate status at work functions (Yes – 1, No – 0)
3. Accepted by Thais (No – 2, Yes – 0)
4. Affect by expatriate status at work (Yes - 1, No – 0)
5. Joined expatriate organizations upon arrival (Yes – 1, No – 0)
6. Met the most people through expatriate organizations (Yes – 2, No – 1)
7. Make up of social group (Mostly expatriates – 2, Mix of Thais and expatriates – 1, Mostly Thais – 0)
8. Expatriate status was the most difficult to adjust to upon arrival in Bangkok (Yes – 2, No – 0)

Based on the above, the most points possible are 12. If a respondent receives 12 points, it would suggest that expatriate status is an obstacle to integration. The following chart indicates how many of the respondents were affected by their status as an expatriate:

Chart 4.70 Expatriate Status as an Obstacle to Integration



The above chart suggests that expatriate status was a medium to low obstacle for the integration of respondents. The results of the survey imply that the social circles of most of the women were made up solely of other expatriates. Although out-group designation may play a role in this, it is more likely that ease of communication and cultural similarities provide expatriates with a common bond. Therefore, one's status as an expatriate may open doors to groups of like minded individual, while closing doors to the local community, thus impeding cultural integration.

Section II: Gender

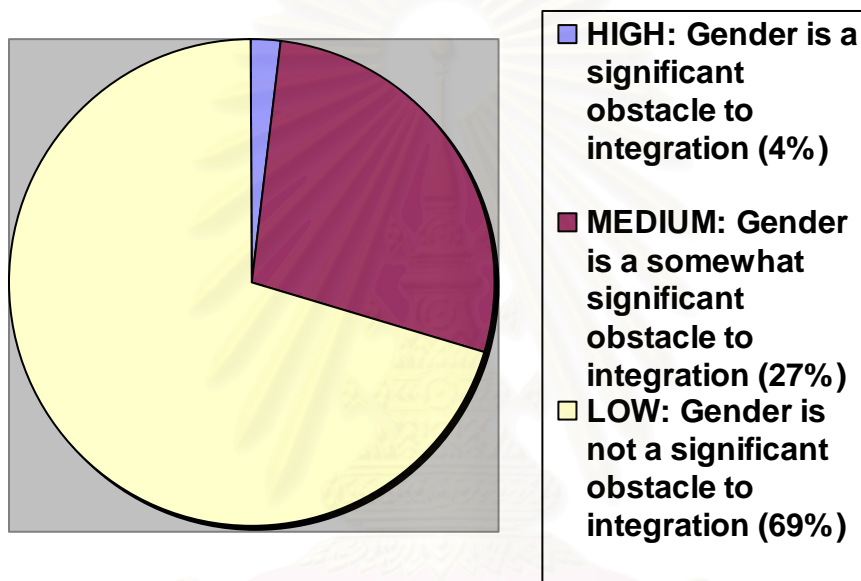
The following are the indicators that were measured to assess the role of gender in integration:

1. Participation in work functions affected by gender (Yes – 2, No – 0)
2. Men are treated better than women in Thai work environment (Yes – 2, No – 0)
3. Affected by gender at work (Yes – 2, No – 0)
4. Status at work is lower because of gender (Yes – 2, Maybe – 1, No - 0)
5. Chance of advancement at work is lower because of gender (Yes – 2, Maybe – 1, No – 0)

6. Respondent would encourage women to come to Bangkok (No – 2, Not Sure – 1, Yes – 0)

The total possible amount of points per respondent is 12. 12 points indicates that gender is an obstacle to integration. The following chart indicates how many women are affected by their gender.

Chart 4.71 Gender Status as an Obstacle to Integration



Based on the results of the survey, the respondent's gender made very little difference in their integration levels. Nevertheless, the respondents always stated that they were more likely to socialize with female Thai work colleagues than male Thai work colleagues, and felt more comfortable with Thai women than Thai men. Because Thai women may have more family responsibilities than their male counterparts, they may have less free time to socialize outside of work, and therefore little time to form friendships with the Western women.

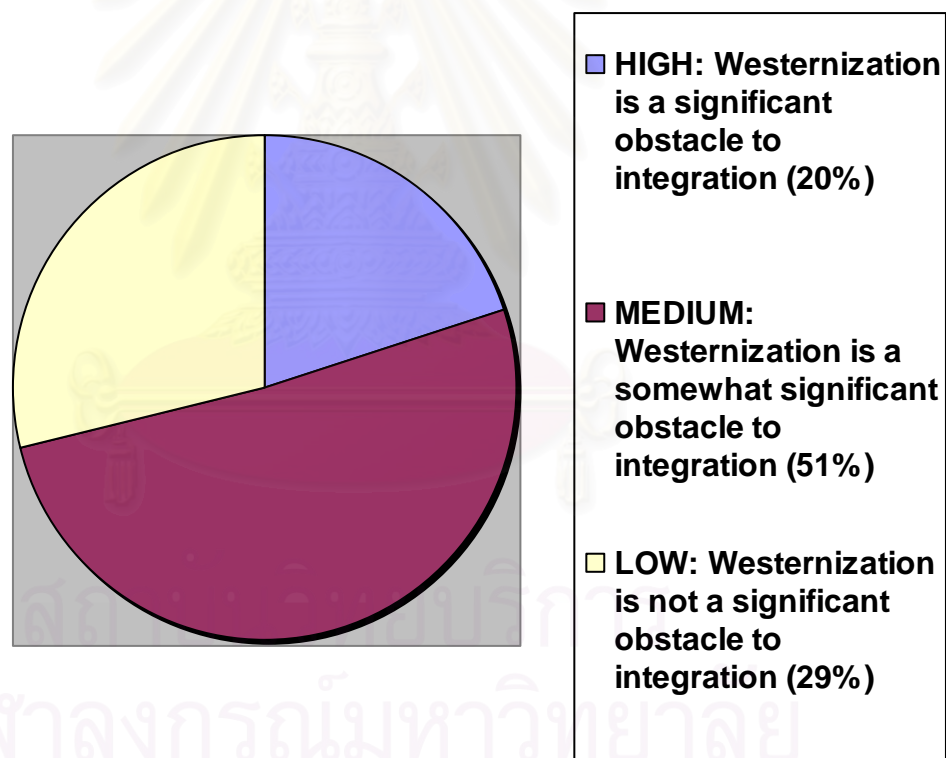
Section III: Westernization of Bangkok

The following are the indicators that measured whether the westernization of Bangkok is an obstacle to integration:

1. Where respondent eats⁸² (hotels – 2, up-market restaurants – 2, order food to home or work – 1, cooks at home – 1, other - 0)
2. Form of transport used (BTS/MRTA – 1, Taxis – 1, Car – 1)
3. Knowledge of Thai (None – 3, basic words – 2, enough to order food and give directions – 1, other - 0)
4. Respondent's lifestyle (More Western – 3, mix of Thai and Western - 1, more Thai – 0)

The total amount of points possible is 9, which would indicate that the westernization of Bangkok is an obstacle to integration.

Chart 4.72 Westernization as an Obstacle to Integration



⁸² The weighting assigned for this was based on the idea that hotels and up-market restaurants may give the respondent very little contact with the average Thai person. Additionally, if the respondent cooks at home, it will likely be Western food, purchased at a Western grocery store. If the respondent orders food, it may be from one of the delivery services that offers English language operators, such as Pizza Hut. Each of these would represent minimal contact with Thai people and culture.

The availability of Western amenities in Bangkok may be the driving force behind the continuation of Western lifestyles for the respondents. **The ease in which they can re-create a lifestyle similar to that they have in their home countries may decrease the willingness, and necessity to adjust and integrate.**

Section IV: Lack of Social Support Networks

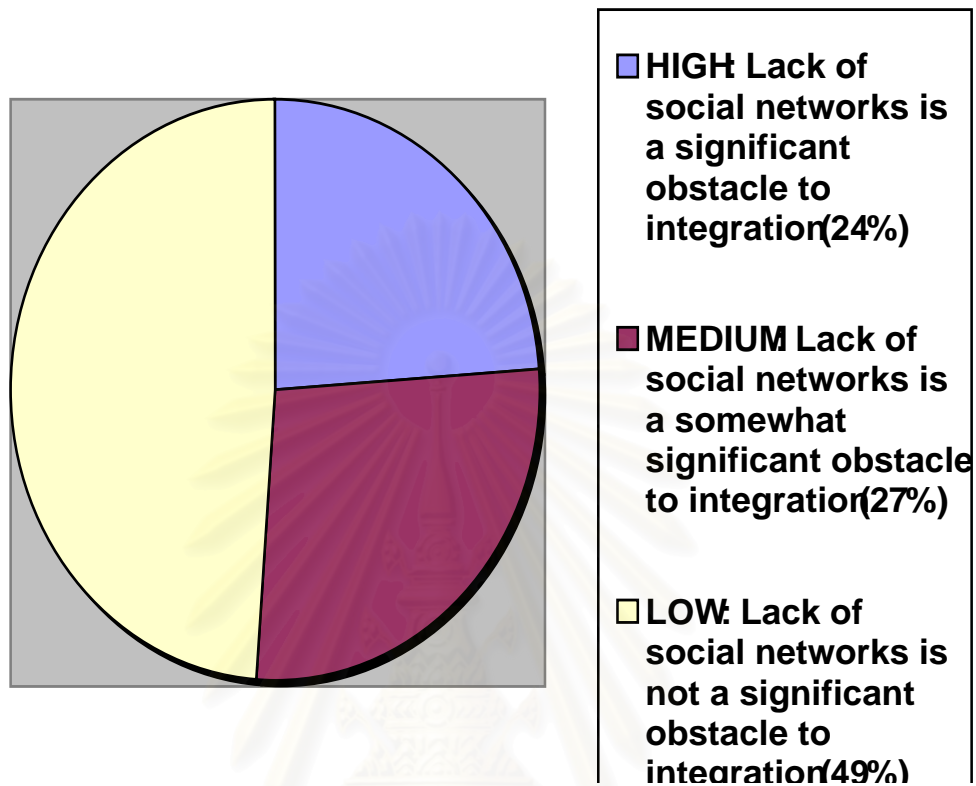
The indicators used to test whether lack of social support networks is an obstacle to integration are as follows. Beside each indicator is the weight assigned for that particular indicator:

1. Who respondent lives with (no one – 2, other – 0)
2. Who respondent knew before arriving in Bangkok (nobody – 2, other – 0)
3. Respondent's contentment with sufficiency of social circle (not content -3, content - 0)
4. Misses social network in home country (Yes – 1, No – 0)
5. Loss of social circle in Bangkok is a consequence to leaving (No – 1, Yes – 0)

The total amount of points possible from the above is 9, which would suggest that lack of social support networks is an obstacle to integration in Bangkok. The following chart displays the results in the form of percentages:

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Chart 4.73 Lack of Social Networks as an Obstacle to Integration



According to the respondents, lack of social support networks was a somewhat significant obstacle to living in Bangkok. Expatriates may be more likely to form groups with others who are in similar situations, both eager to build bonds and connections much quicker than in their own countries. This reliance on other expatriates may in turn lead to the respondent's isolation from Thai society, as one may rely more and more on the bonds they have created within expatriate groups. Therefore, **this basic need for social support networks may lead Western women to choose the easiest means of friendship with people in similar situations, thus putting almost no emphasis the importance of forming bonds and integrating with the local community.**

Summary

After identifying the integration levels as low, the following obstacles were tested: expatriate status, gender, the westernization of Bangkok and lack of social networks. Based on indicators from the questionnaire, **it was determined that expatriate status, the westernization of Bangkok and lack of social networks**

were the key reasons for this lack of integration. Gender did not appear to affect the respondents.

PART IV: Case Studies

Five case studies were conducted after the data from the questionnaire was analyzed. The five women chosen for the case studies were all respondents on the questionnaire and were interviewed by the investigator in April 2005.

Case Study #1

Jan⁸³ is a 25 year old NGO worker from New Zealand who has resided in Thailand for the last four years. She came to Thailand originally on a six month volunteer contract with her original company, but was subsequently offered a paid position and has remained with the company ever since: “After my original volunteer period I was apprehensive about accepting the permanent position for a couple of reasons, but mainly because I didn’t know if I would like living in Bangkok. I didn’t know anyone, and I’d just recently graduated from university and still wanted to travel to other places.” Despite this, she accepted the position due mainly to the fact that she didn’t think she would be able to acquire such a position in any other country: “I knew that I was lucky to be offered this job, and that if I was in any other country in the world I would have started out in a very low entry level position.” This acknowledgment is what has driven Jan for the last four years. She says that if it wasn’t for the job then she would have left Thailand a long time ago: “I’ve been pretty lonely most of the time living in Bangkok, mostly because I don’t know a lot of people. I’ve tried to quit my job four times, but each time they offer me more money and I always end up staying.” For Jan, the loneliness stems largely from her inability to meet suitable dating partners: “There are no guys that want to date foreign women. I know it sounds petty, but it’s impossible for me to plan any type of future here when I don’t think I’ll ever meet anyone here.” Jan says she’s dated very rarely over the last four years. She says that foreign guys prefer Thai girls over foreigners and Thai guys are difficult to meet. Jan admits that her Thai language skills are not good enough to carry on anything but a basic conversation and believes that this may be one of the things that stops her from socializing with Thai men. She does however, have a few female Thai friends that she has met through work: “We go out together sometimes, but it’s different than with my foreign friends. With my Thai friends, we normally go out for food or to the cinema, but I prefer going to bars because it’s better to meet people.” After four years, Jan has finally decided to leave Thailand: “I know I’ll be sad when I leave, but I think I’ve been here way too long already. I should have left a couple of years ago.”

⁸³ All names have been changed to protect the respondent’s privacy.

Case Study #2

Mary is 32 years old and from England. She has been living in Bangkok for the last eight months with her British husband: “When Greg was offered the job we were both really excited. I had traveled to Thailand with friends after we had graduated from university, but that was over ten years ago. We had so much fun on that trip and met some really amazing Thai people.” Four months passed between the time her husband accepted the position and their arrival in Thailand. During this time, Mary read up a lot on Thai culture and studied basic Thai language from a book: “I was very excited about the move. My company had downsized a few months earlier so I was out of work and really wanted a change.” As she was in a similar field of work as her husband, the Thai branch of his company offered her a part-time consultancy position. When they arrived in Bangkok, everything was already set up for them: “Greg had traveled over a month earlier to make sure everything was ready, so we basically just went straight from the airport to our new apartment.” Although the consultancy position didn’t work out, Mary wasn’t disappointed: “As soon as we arrived I enrolled in an intensive Thai language course – it was a great way to learn about the culture too because my teacher was always discussing Thailand.” In addition to this, Mary joined an expatriate organization and found she made friends very quickly: “The chamber was great because it made it so much easier to meet people – we already had dinner plans for the first weekend we were here!” After two months in Bangkok, Mary got a job through a contact she made in her expatriate group. It’s just part-time, and so she is still able to pursue her language classes: “In a way I feel sorry for Greg because he had to jump right into his job as soon as we got here, and didn’t have enough free time to do any of the stuff I’m doing.” Although she says she’s far from fluent, Mary says that her language skills are getting quite good: “I can do most of the basic stuff we have to do and even have conversations with some Thai people – if they speak slowly!” She says that she is beginning to distance herself from the expatriate group she was originally involved in when she arrived: “I guess I’m just busier now. We’ve made some good friends and we mostly just socialize with them.” In terms of long term plans, Mary doesn’t know what they will do. As Greg’s contract is two years, everything after that time period is undecided: “I guess it depends on his work really, since that’s why we are here in the first place. I think I could stay for longer, but Greg misses a lot more about England than I do. A lot of people that I’ve met have told me that I’ll be sick of it after a year anyways, so we’ll see what happens.”

Case Study #3

Lisa is a 37 years old American and has lived in Thailand for the last eight years with her American husband, Paul. She originally came to Thailand because of her husband's job, and they have remained here for the same reason. She has been working for five of the eight years, but took time off when her children were born. Both of her children were born in Thailand and attend international schools: "We don't know how long we'll be here, I mean we could leave anytime. I didn't want the children to miss out on the education that they would have received at home, so international schools were the best option." This 'potential to leave anytime' is one of the main reasons that Lisa says she hasn't put too much effort in: "It sounds a bit ridiculous now, since it's been over eight years, but when we came here, we thought it might only be six months. I didn't really want to come in the first place, we were happy at home, I had a good job and I wanted to start a family. When we got here I didn't make any effort at all to learn to the language. I regret it now, but I still don't see the point since we will be leaving anyways." Almost all of Lisa's close friends in Bangkok are expatriates. She says that only one of her friends speaks Thai: "In all honesty, I don't think it's really that necessary. My husband's driver takes me almost everywhere I go, so I don't need to worry about directions and stuff. Our maid does most of the shopping and takes care of most of our household stuff." Despite the fact that Lisa would prefer not to be living in Bangkok, she admits that there are many aspects of the lifestyle she enjoys: "Well the driver is one thing. But it's more that I don't have to spend time doing stuff like cleaning and shopping, like I do at home. This gives me a lot more free time. When I had the kids, we got a nanny who is still with us now. If I were at home, having children would have been a major thing, but here it was much easier. I feel like life here is better because we have more money, more help and more free time." Lisa says that she has quite a few Thai acquaintances, but very few Thai friends. She has met most of her Thai acquaintances through work and her fitness club: "We talk at work, and sometimes we have lunch together and things like that, but we never get together on the weekends or anything. I think the problem is that I'm much older than most of them, and I have a family. We have different interests."

Case Study #4

Elsk is a 29 year old from Norway who has been in Bangkok for almost one year. She came to Bangkok after graduating university because she had friends living in the city and wanted a change. It took her four months to get a job: “The first four months were hard because I kept being on the verge of leaving. I was trying everything to get a job in marketing, and was going to networking meetings up to four times a week!” Although she already knew some expatriates in Bangkok, she felt that the networking meetings were a great way to meet friends: “I didn’t get here and join expatriate organizations to meet people. I did it because I needed to make business contacts. But I ended up making some friends that way anyways.” Elsk says she was too busy for language classes, and since she didn’t know if she was going to stay, didn’t see any real reason to make the effort. She is now working in a company in which she is in charge of a Thai team: “The biggest issue we have is the language barrier. English is my second language too, so it makes it even more difficult. Sometimes I feel that it’s easier for me to do things myself than try and explain what I want done. It’s so frustrating sometimes.” She admits that she only has one Thai friend, and that was someone she knew before she arrived: “I don’t have a lot of friends right now, nothing like in Norway. Besides the networking meetings, I find it really hard to meet people, especially guys.” Elsk loves to eat Thai food, but is a bit hesitant about food from street-stalls: “In Norway there’s no way that food could be sold like that. I don’t know if it’s clean.” To get around Bangkok, Elsk relies on the BTS and avoids buses: “I wouldn’t have a clue how to take a bus. I don’t know the routes or anything like that.” Elsk is planning on leaving Bangkok after her one year contract is up. She says that she came to get out of Norway for a while, and also to get experience working, which will both have been accomplished after this year.

Case Study #5

Joyce is a 46 year old American with Thai citizenship through marriage. She has lived in Bangkok for 12 years with her Thai husband and children. Her and her husband met while studying in the states and she moved to Thailand with him after they graduated. Joyce lives in a pre-dominantly Thai neighborhood: “I really enjoy living where I do because I feel more immersed in the culture. Some of my [foreigner] friends live in areas with mostly other foreigners and tourists and I don’t think they need to adapt as much as I did when I arrived.” Joyce speaks Thai fluently, though says her reading and writing still needs work: “I took some formal language training when I first arrived, but only to get a better understanding of the language structure. My husband is Thai, so most of the Thai I have learned was through him, his family and our Thai friends. I think it took me about a year and a half to feel comfortable with the language.” Joyce says that although the language barrier was the most difficult to adapt to when she arrived, she also had problems with her status as an expatriate: “I had never been abroad before I married so when I arrived in Thailand it was the first time I had been in a situation where I was the outsider. At the beginning I was uncomfortable going out by myself because I would always have people looking at me and I didn’t know how to handle it. The first couple of years here were pretty stressful for me.” Despite this, Joyce says that she managed to get over it, mostly through an increased understanding of the language and culture. Although Joyce has some close foreign friends, most of her social group is Thai: “My husband has a large family and I’ve become very good friends with some of his sisters and his brothers’ wives. We do a lot together, especially during holidays when we go on trips together.” Joyce returns home to visit her family at least once a year, but doesn’t plan on moving back to the States: “We are happy here and I think we have a better quality of life in Bangkok than we would in the States. Thai people are very friendly and welcoming and I think it’s a very safe place to raise a family.”

Summary

The case studies above represent brief illustrations of five of the respondents on the questionnaire. The aim of these case studies was to give a more personal look into the lives of those interviewed. The results of the interviews indicate that expatriate women living and working in Bangkok have a vast array of attitudes toward the importance of cultural learning and the concept of acculturation. These case studies

provide a clearer understanding of the possible reasons for positive and negative attitudes, as well as the importance of personal choice and desire in the decision for expatriation. Based on the above, it may be possible to suggest that the respondents adapted more to the culture when they *wanted* to come to Bangkok. Additionally, those respondents who planned on staying longer term appeared to put in more effort to learn the language and study the culture, and in general seemed more content and positive about their lives in Bangkok.



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CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Review of the Problem and Hypothesis

The purpose of this study was to measure the levels of social and cultural integration of working Western women living in Bangkok and to identify the reasons, or obstacles, for these levels. The levels of integration were measured based on language and communication, socialization and cultural adjustment. The proposed factors that hindered integration were expatriate status, gender status, cultural homogeneity and lack of social networks.

Findings and Conclusions

In light of the results of this study, it has become clear that few Western women living and working in Bangkok are integrating into Thai society. This can be viewed as a negative issue, or even a non-issue, but nevertheless it cannot be seen as a positive issue.

The negative side of this non-integration can be seen on the subjective, local and international levels. At the subjective level, it may lead to discontentment and isolation, as past expatriate studies have shown. At the local level, there may remain a rift between expatriate women and the local community. This rift may stem from miscommunication and misunderstanding. At the international level the effects may be two-fold. Firstly, women returning from an assignment in Bangkok may bring back negative feelings and stories about life in the city. Bangkok's reputation as 'haven for men, hell for women' is already in circulation. Secondly, international companies may be less likely to send women on international assignments, based on the potential obstacles they might face.

Limitations

1. *Insufficient Responses*

Because only a small number of expatriate women were interested in participating in this research, the criteria for participants was **much broader** than the investigator had originally wanted. When analyzed, two of the three criteria were somewhat problematic:

Criterion 1: *A woman coming from any country considered 'Western-Christian'*

A vast amount of countries worldwide can be considered Western-Christian. Each of these countries is different from Thailand in the sense that it is not Asian. This is not to say that Asian countries do not differ from each other, in fact they do, maybe more so even than Western countries. Two of the salient cultural qualities that differentiate Thailand from Western-Christian countries are religion and language.¹ Both of these are paramount to understanding and fulfilling interactions in the cross-cultural context.

Nevertheless, the differences between Western-Christian countries are also numerous. Cultural misunderstandings often arise between people of these countries when cross-cultural contact occurs between them. The cultural differences between France and England cannot be exaggerated, yet when looked at the difference between *France* or *England* and *Thailand*, the differences between the former two countries is reduced.

Ideally, this study would have comprised of women from one given Western-Christian country. However, due to a lack of respondents from any

¹ Although different languages are spoken in different Western-Christian countries, the shared characteristic is that they are alphabetized.

particular country, the criteria had to be established in broader terms. This was a limitation to the study.

Criterion 2: A woman who is working in Bangkok

The term ‘working’ is problematic in the sense that it encompasses an indefinite amount of unrelated jobs. One’s career path is based largely on personality related strengths and weaknesses. For example, it’s possible that a woman working for a foreign investment firm will differ largely on her outlook, future goals and priorities than a woman working for a charitable organization. For each woman interviewed, the importance and durability of her current job is largely unknown. If one is here to work on an expatriate assignment for a set period of time, she will likely return to her home base to reap the benefits and rewards of a successfully completed mission. As far as culturally integrating herself, this woman may feel little need, as the completion of her duties is her priority. In contrast, a woman who is working here primarily because she *wants* to be here will likely put her experience here *first* and her job *second*. Such women may not have an established home and job to go back to, and therefore try to make the most of this experience, as it will aid them if they stay here indefinitely or relocate to another, unknown country.

Ideally for this research, the definition of ‘working’ should have been expanded to only include women in related work fields, with definite (or indefinite) future plans.

Additionally, levels of integration may vary based on the individual demographic characteristics of the women interviewed. The salient variations in demographic characteristics that may affect integration are as follows:

i. Income

A woman’s income could play a large role in the necessity of her cultural integration in Bangkok. Western women will almost certainly make

over the average monthly Thai income,² and some will make well over their incomes in their home countries. This may have two effects. The first is that women may be likelier to stay in Bangkok for financial reasons. This could result in an unwillingness to learn about the culture and ‘escape’ at every given opportunity, such as vacations. The second is that their income may delineate what they can afford to do. Bangkok offers amenities for all income brackets – designer brand shopping centers³ to local flea markets,⁴ upscale eateries to street-side stalls selling local foods.⁵ The type of establishments one frequents delineates who one comes into contact with. Only a minority of the local population can afford the top end of the market in terms of food, shopping and socializing.

ii. Marital Status

For most expatriate women living in Bangkok, one’s marital status may play a significant role in their experiences abroad. The defining aspects of the expatriate experience, based on marital status are: 1) reason for coming to Bangkok; 2) reason for staying in Bangkok; 3) social life; 4) cross-cultural contact. For this study, the marital circumstances that may have the most effect on cultural integration would have been as follows:

a. Married to a non-Thai

² Estimated at around 8500 baht (Source: *Average Monthly Income, 2002*. Ministry of Information and Communication Technology)

³ Gaysorn Plaza, Emporium and Discovery Center are some such establishments.

⁴ Chatuchak weekend market as well as a variety of others scattered throughout the city are examples of such markets.

⁵ As far as expense, upscale hotel restaurants are normally at the top of the scale. At the bottom of the scale would be the thousands of street side stalls littered throughout the city.

A woman married to a non-Thai is, more often than not, living in Bangkok because of her husband's work. This makes her motive for living and working in Bangkok not a personal choice based on career or interest. Neither are this woman's reasons for staying based on her own work or personal desire.

Although the married women in this study are working, there is the possibility that they remain here involuntarily. This may lead to resentment of a culture in which they feel trapped by circumstances beyond their control.

b. Married to a Thai

A woman living and working in Bangkok who is married to a Thai is likely to have much more cross-cultural contact than all other marital circumstances in this study. She may have a better understanding of the culture in which she lives.

Although her reasons for being here may be largely related to her partner's nationality, she may view this as a permanent or semi-permanent situation, and not as an assignment that must be endured.

c. In serious relationship with a non-Thai

A woman living here who is in a serious relationship with a non-Thai may be more content than a single woman living in Bangkok. As was discussed above, the importance of a social network is that it reduces isolation. Having a partner may reduce the isolation and anxiety.

d. In serious relationship with a Thai

A woman in a serious relationship with a Thai may have more cross-cultural contact and awareness of Thai culture. Although her

reason for being in Thailand may be a personal one, her reason for staying may be motivated by her partner's nationality. This woman's interest in learning and understanding the culture may increase.

e. Single

Although their reasons for living in the city are personal, and not motivated by their partner's career or nationality, the challenges faced by single women living in Bangkok may be the most difficult among the five groups mentioned.

The importance of this group of women to this study is that they face both the isolation of not having a partner in their social network, and they do not gain from the cross-cultural contact that comes from being in a relationship with a Thai.

iii. Previous Experience Abroad

Previous experience abroad may affect the woman's present experience. Having already worked in a country other than her own, the woman may be more culturally sensitive. As she may have experienced culture shock in her previous posting, she may be able to recognize the signs and move through it more easily. She has also been through the experience of being removed from her social network, and therefore has had to seek out friends in a new culture.

If the sample for this study would have been higher, the effects of personal demographic characteristics on the integration of Western women working in Bangkok would have been measured by indicators covering each of the categories mentioned above through comparative analysis with the three concepts of integration: language and communication; socialization; and cultural adjustment. However, based on participant response, it was impossible to narrow down a certain field. This inability to narrow the field was a limitation to the research.

In order to increase the sample size, the investigator would recommend a number of alterations to the current study. The first of these would be to shorten the questionnaire. By removing some of the less relevant questions and combining similar questions, the questionnaire could be shortened to two-three pages. This would likely increase the number of women willing to fill it out, as it would require a shorter time commitment. The second recommendation would be to accept snail-mail submission, in addition to e-mail submission, of the final questionnaire. This would be useful, as the investigator could have passed out pre-paid postage envelopes containing the questionnaire at expatriate women's group meetings and networking events. This would have been a more personable approach than electronic contact.

2. Difficulty Conceptualizing Indicators

As is the case with much pioneering research, this study was limited by a lack of theoretical comparison. The investigator's emphasis on certain indicators was somewhat arbitrary. Weighting was assigned based on the investigator's understanding of the indicator saliency, the result of thorough research into the pertinent areas. In order to overcome this limitation, a parallel study to provide comparative analysis would be an asset to judge the value of each indicator used in this study.

3. Lack of Time for Respondent Testing

This study was limited by the investigator's lack of subjective knowledge about the respondent's abilities. As the integration levels of working women in Bangkok were tested based on responses to the survey, it was impossible to know how each one responded to level indicator questions. For example, a humble respondent may place their knowledge of Thai at an inferior level, whereas a more arrogant one may elevate their knowledge to a level beyond their ability. A test of their language skills would have been an asset to this project, but due to both time and resource limitations, it could not be executed.

This problem however, is not solely relevant to language. How one would respond to a question about whether they have retained their own culture, acquired Thai culture or adapted to a mix of both depends largely on how culturally aware the individual is. This lack of subjective knowledge about each respondent's abilities was a limitation to the study.

4. Lack of academic and comparative literature on expatriate women

As was mentioned in the introduction of this paper, only a limited amount of research has been done in the field of working women abroad. Most academic literature in which women are the subjects in expatriate or cross-cultural studies delves into their roles as wives. Whether working men assimilate culturally better than working women, or vice versa, has not been thoroughly investigated. For this reason, the lack of relevant, academic comparative literature was a hindrance to this study.

Recommendations

1. Thai language classes should be made available by companies, highly recommended or mandatory, for women expatriates. Language and communication skills cannot be underestimated. As available time, and not so much financial aspects are the likely source of unwillingness to study, classes should be slotted into the working schedule. Many foreign companies provide free, mandatory English classes to Thai workers. This area should be explored and may provide a model for such classes in Thai.

2. Expatriate groups should share some of the responsibility of assimilation by recognizing the importance of cultural contact, and not segregation. Although these groups provide a necessary source of social contact for their members, they also hinder their member's relations with the local community and customs. Nationality should not be the key requirement to interest groups, and expatriates would benefit

from meeting Thai people with the same interests. Obviously language would be an issue and likely English would have to be a criterion for members.

3. Increased understanding between Thais and expatriates is paramount to integration. The blame here can be placed on both parties. When confronting a Thai person about ‘why’ something is done the way it is, the likely answer will be ‘it’s the Thai way’. Not only does this only add to the confusion and frustration of the expatriate, but it only furthers the rift. Thai people who are in informal positions of ‘cultural mentors’ (such as friends, co-workers and teachers...etc.) should delve a bit deeper into their own understanding of their culture and relate more logical and comprehensive answers to these questions. Additionally, expatriates have to stop criticizing what they don’t understand based on what they do (‘in my country...’). An understanding of each other, or adjustment in their unique socializations, may lead to more comfortable interaction between Thai people and foreigners.

Suggestions for Further Research

1. **While this research recommends that a key to integration is increased interaction with Thais, it is of paramount interest to know whether this desire for cross-cultural interaction is reciprocated.** The investigator would propose a study on the effects of interaction with expatriates on young Thais. It would be interesting to see which positive, and which negative, effects emerge. This study could also focus on assessing the willingness of the younger generation of Thais to interact with foreigners, and on what levels it is socially acceptable, or detrimental to one’s status. The results of this proposed study could complement the current study as another potential obstacle to integration.

2. The emergence of a female expatriate work-force is not unique to Bangkok. This is a trend throughout the Southeast Asian region. **The investigator would propose a similar study on other expatriate strongholds in cities throughout the region.**

Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Manila and Jakarta would be of increased interest. These studies would enable comparative integration assessments of Western women in these cities and facilitate cross-cultural analysis on two levels: levels of assimilation in any given city, as well as, levels of assimilation across the region.

3. **An additional study of interest would be to reproduce the current study on male expatriates in Bangkok.** One would assume that the integration levels would be increased, due to the extensive cultural contact that comes from having a partner of a different culture, as is moreover the case with expatriate men than expatriate women in Bangkok. This type of study could provide key indices for the degrees of integration based on *gender*, in addition to providing comparative analysis and assessment of the methods of integration measurement used in the current study.



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APPENDICES

สถาบันวิทยบริการ
จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

Appendix A

Letter Sent to Women's Groups

The following is a copy of the first letter that was sent out:

I am a Canadian female currently doing my Masters in Southeast Asian Studies at Chulalongkorn University. At the moment, I am preparing to begin my thesis. My focus is on the lives of expatriate women living in Bangkok.

The idea is to try and determine to what extent foreign women can integrate themselves into Thai culture and establish a social existence within their temporary communities. I'm hoping that the research will bring to light a comprehensive understanding of the difficulties foreign women face, as well as the benefits they reap, both at work and in their personal lives, and consequently how their perceptions of Thailand are thus altered.

I am looking for volunteers to participate in the research, openly or anonymously. The initial research will consist of a mailed questionnaire. I would appreciate it if you could pass this email on to the members of your group. Any interested individuals can contact me by email (barrettmia@yahoo.com) or by phone (Mobile: 063344173, Land Line: 022547569). I will send them a more detailed outline of the project, and if they are then interested in participating, I will send them the questionnaire.

Thank you very much,
Mia Barrett



สถาบันวิทยบริการ
จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

Appendix B

Main Questionnaire

QUESTIONNAIRE

A Note on Anonymity:

If you wish to keep your identity private, I have opened a Yahoo e-mail account for this purpose. To submit the survey anonymously, please follow these steps:

1. Go to: www.yahoo.com
2. Click on 'Sign In'
3. For User name, enter: **expatresearch**
4. For Password, enter: **Bangkok**
5. Once in, click on 'mail', then 'compose', then 'attach file'
6. Send the email to barrettmia@yahoo.com

Instructions:

- All the questions are numbered, please type your answers beside the questions. Most of the questions just require a short answer, a word or two.
- In general, 'Y' will be taken as Yes, 'N' for No, 'N/S' for not sure, and 'N/A' for non-applicable.
- For questions where a selection of possible answers are given, please put a 'Y' beside the one that is most applicable for you.
- Some questions will ask you to rank the options given. In these cases, '1' will always be considered 'high' (i.e. most applicable).
- If the question does not apply to you, please put N/A.
- Please feel free to add or expand on your answers. For example, if you don't feel that the options given for an answer are suitable for you, add ones that are.
- **PLEASE REMEMBER TO SAVE YOUR CHANGES TO THIS FILE.**

I. Personal Information:

1. Age at last birthday:
2. Nationality:
3. Religion:
4. Marital Status (please go to the category you are in):
 - a. Single
 - i. Living with a partner
 1. What nationality is your partner?
 2. Did you meet in Thailand?
 - ii. In a serious relationship
 1. What nationality is your partner?
 2. Did you meet in Thailand?
 - iii. Casually dating
 1. Do you date mostly Thais or non-Thais?
 2. How do you meet?
 - iv. Single (dating very rarely)
 - b. Married
 1. Of what nationality is your partner?
 2. Did you meet in Thailand?
 - c. Divorced, Separated, Widowed

5. Do you have children?
 - a. No (Please skip to question 6)
 - b. Yes
 - i. If 'yes', how old are they?
 1. Age of first child:
 2. Age of second child:
 3. Age of third child:
 4. Age of fourth child:
 - ii. Which of your children live with you in Bangkok?
 1. First child:
 2. Second child:
 3. Third child:
 4. Fourth child:
 - iii. Are your children enrolled at an International school or a Thai school?
6. Which languages do you speak? (please start with your mother tongue)
7. Which best describes your knowledge of Thai?
 - a. Fluent (speak, read and write)
 - b. Fluent at speaking, some reading and writing
 - c. Only enough to order food and give directions
 - d. Only basic words
 - e. None
8. How long have you lived in Bangkok? (# of years, # months)
9. Why did you come to Bangkok?
 - a. To work for IGO
 - b. To work for INGO
 - c. To work for an international school
 - d. To work for a Thai company
 - e. To work for a foreign company
 - f. Accompanying spouse
 - g. To experience a new culture
 - h. Other (please specify):
10. Please indicate the highest level of education completed:
 - a. High School Diploma
 - b. College or Technical Diploma
 - c. Undergraduate Degree
 - d. Masters Degree
 - e. PhD

II. Employment

11. Did you already have your job when you arrived in Bangkok?
 - a. If no, how long did it take you to get your first job?
12. Number of years employed in Bangkok: (# of years and # of months)
13. Current position in Bangkok:
14. Is this your first time working abroad?
15. Do you have a contract in Bangkok with a set duration?
16. Would you consider your position to be at management level?
17. On average, how many hours do you work per week?
18. In which language do you communicate at work?
19. Does your company provide functions for clients or staff?
20. Do you participate in all of these functions?
 - a. always (100%)
 - b. frequently (75%)
 - c. average (50%)
 - d. rarely (25%)
 - e. never (0%)
21. Do you feel that your gender excludes you from participating in any of these functions?
22. Do you feel that your status as a foreigner excludes you from these functions?

23. Do you often socialize with people from work?
- always (100%)
 - frequently (75%)
 - average (50%)
 - rarely (25%)
 - never (0%) (If 'never', please skip to question #29)
24. With whom do you socialize the most with at work? (please rank the options that apply to you, 1 being the highest)
- Thai Men
 - Thai Women
 - Foreign Men
 - Foreign Women
25. What types of establishments do you frequent with your **colleagues** (please rank the options that apply to you, 1 being the highest)
- Pubs, bars and nightclubs
 - Cinemas
 - Shopping Malls
 - Restaurants
 - Coffee Shops
 - Each others homes
 - Tourist Attractions
 - Areas outside of Bangkok
 - Other (please state):
26. In your opinion, how are men and women **generally** treated in the work environment in your **home** country?
- Men are treated better than women
 - Men and women are treated the same
 - Women are treated better than men
27. In your opinion, how are men and women **generally** treated in the work environment in **Bangkok**?
- Men are treated better than women
 - Men and women are treated the same
 - Women are treated better than men
28. Are you affected by your status as a female in your Thai environment?
- Yes
 - If 'yes', are you affected the same way as your female Thai co-workers are affected?
 - No
 - If 'no', do you think it is because you are a foreign women?
29. Do you feel that your status within the company is lower because you are female?
30. Do you feel that your gender affects your opportunities for advancement in your company's Bangkok office?

III. Pre-Departure Preparation

31. How many months passed between the time that you decided to come to Bangkok and your arrival here?
32. What sort of preparations did you make **before** you arrived? (please put 'Y' beside all the answers that apply to you)
- Nothing (please skip to question # 36)
 - Studied Thai Language
 - Studied Asian Business Etiquette
 - Studied Thai Culture
 - Other (please state)
33. Why did you make these efforts?
- My company made it mandatory
 - My company suggested it
 - I was interested
 - Other (please state)

34. Did your pre-departure efforts help you once you arrived in Bangkok?
- A little
 - Moderately
 - Very much
 - Not at all
35. Who do you live with?
36. Do you have any of the following household employees?
- Thai housekeeper
 - Live-in or Part-time?
 - Does she/he speak English?
 - Thai nanny
 - Live-in or Part-time?
 - Does she/he speak English?
 - Driver
 - Other:
 - None (please skip to question # 41)
37. In which language do you communicate with these employees?
- English
 - Thai
 - Both
38. How would you describe the area in which you live:
- An area comprised of mostly expatriates and Thais.
 - An area comprised of mostly expatriates
 - An area comprised of mostly Thais
 - Other: (please state)
39. When is there security guarding your accommodation:
- All day and night
 - At night
 - Never

IV. Social Behavior

40. Upon arrival in Bangkok, which of the following did you do?
- Enroll in Thai language courses
 - Take Cultural awareness classes
 - Join expatriate organizations
 - Other (please state):
41. Who did you know in Bangkok before you arrived?
- Some members of the company for which I was going to work
 - Some expatriates not associated with my company
 - Some Thai nationals
 - Nobody
 - Other (please state):
42. How else have you met people in Bangkok? (please rank the ones that are applicable to you, 1 being the highest)
- Through expatriate organizations
 - Through expatriate women's groups
 - Through friends
 - Through work
 - On the internet
 - In pubs, bars or nightclubs
 - In classes (language, fitness..etc)
 - Through church
 - Other (please state):
43. How would you best describe your social circle?
- Mostly expatriates
 - Mostly Thai
 - A mixture of expatriates and upper class Thais

- d. A mix of expatriates and middle class Thais
 - e. Mostly Thai
44. Are most people that you socialize with:
- a. Educated professionals
 - b. Non professionals
 - c. Other
45. Are most people you socialize with native English speakers?
46. What types of establishments do you frequent with your **friends**? (please rank the options that apply to you, 1 being the most frequented.)
- a. Pubs, bars and nightclubs
 - b. Cinemas
 - c. Shopping Malls
 - d. Restaurants
 - e. Coffee Shops
 - f. Each others homes
 - g. Tourist attractions
 - h. Areas outside of Bangkok
 - i. Others (please state):
47. Do you generally eat:
- a. Western food
 - b. Thai food
 - c. A mix of both Thai and Western food
48. Where do you eat (Please rank the options that apply to you, 1 being the highest)
- a. Hotels
 - b. Up-market restaurants
 - c. Street Stalls
 - d. At home
 - e. I order food to home or work
 - f. Small Thai restaurants
 - g. Other: (please state)
49. Which forms of transport do you use mostly in Bangkok: (Please rank the options that apply to you, 1 being the highest)
- a. Vans
 - b. Taxis
 - c. Tuk-tuks
 - e. Car
 - f. BTS/MRTA
 - g. Buses
 - h. boat
 - i. motorcycle taxis

V. General Behavior

50. In general, do you feel accepted by most Thais you meet?
51. Which of the following statements best describes you?
- a. I feel that I have retained my native culture
 - b. I feel that I have adopted Thai culture
 - c. I feel that I have a mix of my native culture and Thai culture
 - d. Other:
52. When you return to your home country for visits do you feel you fit in culturally?
53. Do you consider that you came to Bangkok voluntarily?
54. Which of the following consequences would affect you if you decided to leave Bangkok?
- a. Financial uncertainty
 - b. A sense of failure
 - c. Loss of good friends
 - d. other:
55. Do you feel that you made the right decision to come to Bangkok?

56. What did you find the most difficult to adjust to? (please rank those that apply to you, 1 being the most difficult)
- Language barrier
 - Expatriate (foreigner) status
 - Climate
 - Food
 - Culture
 - Other:
57. Do you have at least one close Thai friend?
58. Did Bangkok meet your expectations?
59. Do you find interacting with Thai people takes a lot of energy?
60. Do you feel that you should make more effort to adapt to living in Bangkok?
61. Are you happy with your current lifestyle?
62. Would you describe your current lifestyle as more Western or more Thai?
63. Do you have at least one Thai person that you can get advice or information from?
64. Do you feel that you have a sufficient amount of friends in Bangkok?
65. Do you attend a religious institution in Bangkok?
66. Would you encourage women to come to Bangkok to live and work?
67. Do you feel that you could live in Bangkok indefinitely?
68. What do you miss most about your home country: (please rank the options that apply to you, 1 being the most missed)
- Ease of communication
 - Friends and family
 - Food
 - Religious orientation
 - Climate
 - Dating
 - Other:
69. What worries you most about living in Bangkok? (please rank the options that apply to you, 1 being your biggest worry)
- Threat of terrorism
 - Isolation from friends and family
 - Financial insecurity
 - Being a victim of crime
 - Not meeting a partner
 - Not having a strong social support network
 - threat of disease
 - Other:
70. What are the main reasons you would leave Bangkok?
71. What keeps you in Bangkok?
72. With whom do you feel the most comfortable?
- Thai Men
 - Thai Women
 - Foreign Men
 - Foreign women
73. How knowledgeable are you of Thai politics? (Very/Somewhat/Not)
74. How knowledgeable are you of Theravada Buddhism? (Very/Somewhat/Not)
75. What, if anything, do you find frustrating about living in Bangkok?

Appendix C

Additional Tables from Chapter IV

Table 4.2 Attendance of Religious Institution in Bangkok

Religious Attendance	Frequency	Percent
Yes	12	23.5
No	39	76.5
Total	51	100.0

Table 4.7 Voluntary Move to Bangkok

Own Choice to Come to Bangkok	Frequency	Percent
Yes	45	88.2
No	3	5.9
Not sure	3	5.9
Total	51	100.0

Table 4.10 Previous Experience Abroad

Previous Employment Abroad	Frequency	Percent
Yes	24	47.1
No	27	52.9
Total	51	100.0

Table 4.11 Contracts with a Set Duration

Contract with Set Duration	Frequency	Percent
Yes	31	60.8
No	20	39.2
Total	51	100.0

Table 4.12 Position at Management Level

Management Level Position	Frequency	Percent
Yes	25	49.0
No	26	51.0
Total	51	100.0

Table 4.14 Language Used at Work

Language Used at Work	Frequency	Percent
English	38	74.5
Thai	2	3.9
English and Thai	11	21.6
Total	51	100.0

Table 4.15 Company Provides Function for Staff

Company Functions Provided	Frequency	Percent
Yes	39	76.5
No	12	23.5
Total	51	100.0

Table 4.26 Respondent's Expectations Met¹

Expectations of Bangkok Met	Frequency	Percent
Yes	35	71.4
No	14	28.6
Total	49	100.0

¹ 2 of the respondents stated that they had no expectations

Table 4.29 Area in Which Respondent Lives

Type of Area Lived In	Frequency	Percent
An area comprised of mostly expatriates	36	70.6
An area comprised of mostly Thais	15	29.4
Total	51	100.0

Table 4.33 Respondent's Social Circle

Respondent's Social Circle	Frequency	Percent
Mostly expatriates	33	64.7
Mostly Thais	3	5.9
A mixture of expatriates and Thais	15	29.4
Total	51	100.0

Table 4.35 Dominant Language of Respondent's Social Circle

English is Dominant Language of Social Group	Frequency	Percent
Yes	33	64.7
No	18	35.3
Total	51	100.0

Table 4.40 Respondent's Contentment with Social Network in Bangkok

Satisfied with Size of Social Network	Frequency	Percent
Yes	28	54.9
No	23	45.1
Total	51	100.0

Table 4.41 Type of Food Generally Eaten

Type of Food Generally Eaten	Frequency	Percent
Western food	4	7.8
Thai food	9	17.6
A mix of both Western and Thai food	38	74.5
Total	51	100.0

Table 4.44 Acceptance by Thais as Felt by Respondent

Feel Accepted by Thais		Frequency	Percent
	Yes	40	78.4
	No	11	21.6
	Total	51	100.0

Table 4.46 Cultural Comfort When in Home Country²

Fit in Culturally When Return to Home Country		Frequency	Percent
	Yes	20	40.8
	No	14	28.6
	Somewhat	15	30.6
	Total	49	100.0

Table 4.49 Close Thai Friend

At Least One Close Thai Friend		Frequency	Percent
	Yes	29	56.9
	No	22	43.1
	Total	51	100.0

Table 4.50 Thai Person to Get Advice and Information From

At Least One Thai Person For Advice		Frequency	Percent
	Yes	50	98.0
	No	1	2.0
	Total	51	100.0

² Two of the respondents had not returned to their home countries since their arrival in Bangkok

Table 4.51 Interaction with Thai People

Does Interaction with Thais Take a lot of Energy?		Frequency	Percent
	Yes	34	66.7
	No	17	33.3
	Total	51	100.0

Table 4.52 Respondent's Satisfaction with Decision to Come to Bangkok

Right Decision to Come to Bangkok		Frequency	Percent
	Yes	39	76.5
	No	4	7.8
	Not sure	8	15.7
	Total	51	100.0

Table 4.53 Effort Made to Adapt to Living in Bangkok

Should Make More Effort to Live in Bangkok		Frequency	Percent
	Yes	22	43.1
	No	29	56.9
	Total	51	100.0

Table 4.54 Respondent's Contentment with Current Lifestyle

Content with Lifestyle		Frequency	Percent
	Yes	31	60.8
	No	11	21.6
	Not sure	9	17.6
	Total	51	100.0

Table 4.55 Respondent's Current Lifestyle

Orientation of Respondent's Current Lifestyle		Frequency	Percent
	Western	34	66.7
	Thai	2	3.9
	A mix of Western and Thai	15	29.4
	Total	51	100.0

Table 4.56 Respondent's Opinion of Western Women Coming to Bangkok

Western Women Should Come to Bangkok		Frequency	Percent
	Yes	19	37.3
	No	22	43.1
	Not sure	10	19.6
	Total	51	100.0

Table 4.57 Respondent's Willingness to Live in Bangkok Indefinitely

Could Stay Permanently		Frequency	Percent
	Yes	15	29.4
	No	32	62.7
	Not sure	4	7.8
	Total	51	100.0

Appendix C**Personal Demographic Characteristics of Respondents**

#	Age	Nationality	Religion	Marital Status	Children	Education
1	45	German	None	Single	No	Phd
2	25	American	None	Single	No	B.A.
3	25	N.Z	None	Single	No	B.A.
4	27	American	Christian	Single	No	B.A.
5	37	Canadian	Catholic	Married to non-Thai	Yes	Diploma
6	35	N.Z	Christian	Married to non-Thai	Yes	B.A.
7	32	U.K.	Protestant	Single	No	M.A.
8	27	French	Catholic	Single	No	M.A.
9	47	American	Christian	Single	No	M.A.
10	46	American	Protestant	Married to Thai	Yes	B.A.
11	42	U.K.	Protestant	Married to non-Thai	No	B.A.
12	32	U.K.	Christian	Married to non-Thai	No	B.A.
13	31	N.Z	None	Single	Yes	Diploma
14	47	U.K.	None	Divorced	Yes	B.A.
14	29	N.Z	Christian	Single	No	B.A.
16	29	U.K.	Christian	Single	No	B.A.
17	26	American	None	Single	No	B.A.
18	27	German	None	Single	No	M.A.
19	27	Dutch	Buddhist	Single	No	M.A.
20	32	U.K.	None	Single	No	M.A.
21	37	American	None	Single	No	B.A.
22	42	Australian	Christian	Single	Yes	M.A.
23	38	Australian	None	Married to non-Thai	Yes	B.A.
24	29	Norwegian	Christian	Single	No	B.A.
25	31	Canadian	None	Single	No	M.A.
26	50	U.K.	Anglican	Married to non-Thai	Yes	B.A.
27	52	American	Buddhist	Married to Thai	No	B.A.
28	27	Australian	None	Single	No	M.A.
29	57	Australian	Catholic	Divorced	Yes	B.A.
30	36	U.K.	Christian	Divorced	No	Diploma
31	37	U.K.	Christian	Single	No	B.A.
32	32	U.K.	Catholic	Divorced	No	Phd
33	64	American	Jewish	Married to Thai	Yes	M.A.
34	29	Canadian	None	Single	No	B.A.
35	30	American	None	Single	No	M.A.
36	26	U.K.	Christian	Single	No	B.A.
37	40	N.Z	Christian	Married to non-Thai	Yes	B.A.
38	52	Australian	Christian	Married to non-Thai	Yes	B.A.
39	28	Canadian	None	Single	No	B.A.
40	29	American	None	Single	No	M.A.
41	36	N.Z	None	Married to non-Thai	Yes	M.A.
42	54	Australian	Christian	Divorced	Yes	M.A.
43	25	Canadian	None	Single	No	B.A.
44	32	N.Z	None	Single	No	M.A.
45	33	American	Catholic	Single	No	M.A.
46	45	French	Christian	Married to non-Thai	No	B.A.
47	42	U.K.	Catholic	Married to non-Thai	Yes	M.A.
48	37	Canadian	Protestant	Married to non-Thai	Yes	B.A.
49	25	Australian	Catholic	Single	No	B.A.
50	28	U.K.	Anglican	Single	No	M.A.
51	56	American	None	Divorced	Yes	M.A.

BIOGRAPHY

Maria Ida Barrett was born in England in 1978. She graduated from the University of Western Ontario (London, Canada) with a B.A. in Media Communication in 2002. Then, she joined the Southeast Asian Studies Program at Chulalongkorn University in 2003.



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