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Japanese Bangkok and Bangkok's Japanese: the structures and practices of transnational belonging in a global city

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Japanese Bangkok and Bangkok's
Japanese: the structures and practices of
transnational belonging in a global city

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Abstract:

In recent decades, Bangkok's Japanese community has undergone an unprecedented growth, with its official numbers skyrocketing to over 70 thousand (Japanese MOFA data 2015) and the unofficial ones thought to exceed 100 thousand. The majority of that increase is thanks to a new wave of migration type from Japan that first emerged in the late 1980s (Sato 2001, Ben Ari 2003). These migrants come from all ages and walks of life mostly destined to the global cities of the Asia-Pacific as well as London and New York City. They have been variously theorised as *lifestyle migrants* (Sato 2001), *cultural migrants* (Fujita 2008), *spiritual migrants* (Yatabe 2003), or *transnational sojourners* (Befu 2003, Mizukami 2007, Nakazawa et al 2014).

This interdisciplinary thesis looks at Bangkok's Japanese and explores how the main three characteristics of their belonging: individualism, ambivalence, and impermanence, are produced or accommodated by various structural factors, institutions, and migrants' individual agency to allow the categorisation of this type of Japanese migrants as *individual transnational sojourner*. The data for this research is based on the author's nearly three decades of involvement with the community and ethnographic fieldwork in 2014-15.

Glossary

<i>Ajia-ron</i>	"Asianism", Imperial Japan's ideology that promoted the political and economic unity and cooperation of Asian nations in the face of Western colonialism.
<i>Ayutthaya</i>	capital of the Kingdom of Siam and a prosperous international trading port from 1350 until destroyed during the Burmese invasion in 1767.
<i>Chulalongkorn</i>	the fifth monarch of the Kingdom of Siam under the House of Chakri, widely credited with the modernisation of Siam and saving it from colonialism.
<i>Chūzai-in</i>	the Japanese equivalent of "expat", a corporate employee posted temporarily overseas for an extended period of time on a job assignment.
<i>Datsua-ron</i>	"De-Asianisation", a Japanese nationalistic theory that arguably set the tone for Japan's Orientalism towards its Asian neighbours.
<i>Isarn</i>	Northeast Thailand
<i>Japanese Empire</i>	a historical nation-state along with its colonies, protectorates, mandates, and other territories that existed from the Meiji Restoration in 1868 to the enactment of the 1947 constitution of modern Japan.
<i>Global city</i>	a city which is a primary node in the global economic network.
<i>Greater East-Asian Prosperity Zone</i>	an imperialist concept that promoted the economic and political unity of various Asian nations under the aegis of the Empire of Japan between 1931 and 1945.

<i>Katakana</i>	a Japanese syllabary used primarily for loan words from foreign languages.
<i>Khom</i>	a Khmer script used in Thailand for sacral purposes such as spells, mantras, talismans, and protective tattoos.
<i>Lost decades</i>	a period of economic stagnation in Japan from about 1991 and arguably continuing up to the present time.
<i>Meiji Era</i>	an era of Japanese history from 1868 to 1912 that represents the first half of the Empire of Japan and was characterised by rapid modernisation that profoundly affected all aspects of Japanese society.
<i>Nanshin-ron</i>	a geopolitical doctrine in the Empire of Japan which claimed that Southeast Asia and the Pacific Islands were Japan's sphere of interest because of their greater value for economic and territorial expansion.
<i>Nihonjinkai</i>	the Japanese Association of Thailand
<i>Nihonjinron</i>	the popular essentialist genre in Japan, which purports to analyse Japan's quintessence and cultural core by using three concepts - nationality, ethnicity, and culture – synonymously (Sugimoto 1999).
<i>Nikkei, Nikkeijin</i>	or Japanese immigrants from Japan and their descendants.
<i>Office ladies</i>	a female pink-collar worker in Japan.
<i>Primate city</i>	a city that is disproportionately larger than any others in the country.
<i>Sarariman</i>	a Japanese white-collar office worker.

<i>Siam Thailand</i>	vs. Thailand was known as Siam until 1939 and then between 1946 and 1948. This thesis uses Siam and Thailand and the corresponding adjectives Siamese and Thai where appropriate for the historical period mentioned.
<i>Showa</i>	era of Japanese history from 1926 to 1989 characterised by militarism, totalitarianism, and imperial expansion in its first half and by demilitarisation, democratisation, and rapid economic growth in its second half.
<i>Sukhumvit</i>	a main commercial and residential street in Central Bangkok. Generally considered upscale, it, however, has many less affluent and even seedy pockets.
<i>Silom</i>	a main mixed-use business and entertainment street and area in Central Bangkok where the offices of many local and international companies are located.
<i>Skytrain</i>	elevated monorail system in Bangkok and its suburbs.
<i>Soi</i>	a side-street branching off a major street, typical in the layout of Thai cities.
<i>Thaksin Shinawatra (Chinawat)</i>	the Prime Minister of Thailand from 2001 to 2006 who made a mark with his populist policies, a war on drugs, and government development programmes.
<i>Wakō</i>	pirates of various ethnic origins many of whom were Japanese, who raided the coastal areas of China and Korea between the 13th and the 17th century.

White Australia policy a set of historical policies that aimed to ban people of non-European ethnic origin from immigrating to Australia between 1901 and 1973.

Yellow Peril a racist stereotype that presents East Asians as an existential danger to the Western world.

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I Chapter I. Introduction, theoretical framework, and research questions

I.1 Bangkok's Japanese and transnational belonging: introduction

In October 1996, apprehensive and excited, I found myself in a Bangkok-bound jumbo jet departing from the newly opened Kansai International Airport, a meticulously designed giant structure on an artificial island off Osaka's coast. The clinking of in-flight cutlery superimposed on the subdued chatter of three hundred passengers, the chill of the air-conditioning on my skin, and the heart-warming waft of coconut rice warmed up in the galley microwaves all foreshadowed the sensory assault that my destination would prove to be. My Japanese friend who came up with the idea of this trip was sitting next to me peering pensively at the endless spread of sunset-lit clouds outside the frosty plastic window. An avid Thaiphile, she had told me that Thailand was awash in Japan-related jobs where my professional command of the Japanese language would be in high demand. That seemed an attractive prospect to a fresh graduate as myself, in search of employment and a bit of adventure. As I was leaving the gleaming high-tech archipelago of supreme orderliness and dogged efficiency for the exhaust-choked flood-prone low-pay sprawl of the city that famously "does not know where it is getting" (Rice 1984), little did I realise that I had unwittingly become part of a quietly growing type of transnational mobility out of Japan.

Having in the last three decades superseded the previously dominant form of Japanese presence abroad, *chūzai-in expats* (Japanese MOFA data 1995, 2005 and 2015, Befu and Adachi 2010), their exodus started from a trickle of disenchanting Japanese office workers in the 1980s in Hong Kong (Wong 2003). They have been predominantly destined for the *global cities* of the Asia-Pacific Rim: Melbourne and Sydney (Sato 2001, Mizukami 2007, Nagatomo 2008), Singapore (Ben Ari 2003; Thang, Goda, and MacLachlan 2006), Shanghai (Hasegawa 2007 and 2009, Aoyama 2015), Vancouver (Kato 2009), Bangkok (Ono 2015), Honolulu (Igarashi 2015), Dalian (Kawashima 2018 and 2019), or Los Angeles (Machimura 2005). The world's paramount *global cities* (Sassen 1991), London (Fujita 2009, Sakai 2012, White 2005) and New York City (Fujita 2009, Sooudi 2010) are notable outliers. Qualitatively, the new wave of migrants comes from all ages and walks of life. Amongst them there are foreign spouses (Igarashi 2015), lapsed salarymen and their families, lingering exchange students and tourists (Ono 2015), Working Holiday Visa programme participants (Kato 2013), *genchi-yatoi* local hires (Ben Ari 2003, Wong 2003), *sotokomori* floaters (Ono 2005), entrepreneurs (Watanabe 2007, Harima 2019), and retirees (Hongsranagon 2005, Toyota 2006).

How can such a disparate group of migrants be theorised? Are there enough commonalities between similar Japanese communities elsewhere to theorise them together or are they too different to be united conceptually? What traits make them unique and why is it important in understanding contemporary migration? Responding to the existent research literature on Japanese lifestyle migration (Chapter I.3.3), this thesis looks specifically at Bangkok's Japanese in order to identify similarities and differences with similar communities elsewhere. Does the term *lifestyle migrants* (Sato 2001) borrowed from a growing literature on the contemporary migration outside Japan

(Benson and O'Reilly 2009) exhaustively describe them? Can they be more precisely defined by their main motivation to migrate, such as *cultural migrants* in New York City and London (Fujita 2008) or *spiritual migrants* in Paris (Yatabe 2003)? Or does their settlement pattern define them more precisely: are they fleeting *sojourners* in a *revolving-door community* (Mizukami 2007) or lingering *long-stay tourists* (Ono 2014)? Or can the way they relate to their origin and new countries be their defining characteristic: if they are *transnational migrants* (Befu and Adachi 2010), what are the workings and implications of their *transnationalism* (Vertovec 2009)?

This thesis argues that the main traits that make Bangkok's Japanese lifestyle migrants stand out relative, in varying degrees, to the previous waves of Japanese migration as well as global and Japanese lifestyle migrants elsewhere, pertain to the way their belonging in the new country is shaped: individualism, ambivalence, and impermanence, which calls to categorise them as *individual transnational sojourners*. To support this assertion, this interdisciplinary thesis uses data from the author's original observations starting from 1995 as well as original ethnographic fieldwork conducted in 2014-15 in Bangkok, complemented by secondary data from a range of multidisciplinary academic literature. Responding to the existing research on contemporary Japanese lifestyle migration (Chapter I.3.3), this thesis explores what factors produce, and how, these three defining characteristics of Bangkok's Japanese migrant experience:

- how the modern Japanese presence in Siam/Thailand can be historicised in order to identify what makes its contemporary iteration different (Chapter III);
- how Bangkok's standing as a *global city* (Sassen 1988) attracts a particular type of individualist Japanese residents and shapes their migrant experience (Chapter IV);
- the expectation and reality of transnational belonging in Bangkok's ethno-social landscape (Chapter V);
- the making of the physical space of Japanese Bangkok and its *comfort infrastructure* as enabling migrant individualism (Chapter VI);
- Japanese migrant individualism and the shifting community structures (Chapter VII);
- the role of visa and citizenship regimes in producing ambivalent migrant belonging (Chapter VIII);
- the forms of international capital that enable Japanese transnational migrant presence in Bangkok (Chapter IX);
- the emotional landscapes of Japanese impermanent belonging in Bangkok (Chapter X).

I.1.1 Setting the scene

Thailand hosts the world's fourth largest community of Japanese citizens outside of Japan, 72 thousand officially registered and well above 100 thousand overall (research estimate). Nearly three quarters of them are concentrated in Bangkok (Japan MOFA data 2018). There, individual sojourners

have come to surpass in numbers, yet continue to co-exist with Japanese corporate expats on limited-time assignments abroad (Japanese MOFA 2018 data) known as *chūzai-in*, the erstwhile dominant category of post-war Japanese international mobility (Adachi and Befu 2010). Numerous (Chapter III.2.1), predominantly well-off, long established and institutionalised as a community (Chapter III) and possessing high levels of transnational social and cultural capital (Chapter IX.2), collectively, they are, in a variety of ways, the on-site humanware of the world's third largest economy that just until a few years ago had consistently been Thailand's largest direct foreign investor.

Despite their high numbers, disproportionate influence and long history, the only academic research on Thailand's contemporary Japanese community has been conducted by Mayumi Ono (2005, 2009, 2015). Even specialised literature on Japanese migration has consistently ignore it. It did not merit as much as a single mention in any recent edited English-language volumes on Japanese migration (Befu and Guichard-Anguis, eds. 2001; Adachi ed. 2006; Goodman et al, eds. 2005; Adachi, ed. 2009). Nor do any of the most recent volumes on migration in Southeast Asia and Asia-Pacific (Um and Gaspar 2015, Fielding 2015) as much as make a passing remark on Japanese migration in the region. The previous batch of books on the topic (Iredale, Hawksley, and Castles 2003; Ananta and Arifin 2004, Asis 2005, Hugo 2005, Piper and Yamanaka 2005) also conspicuously ignore it. The same can be said about the meta-analyses of papers on Southeast Asia and Asia-Pacific migration such as Kaur (2010) or Castles and Miller (2009): the issues of immigration to Japan are widely discussed, whilst the opposite flow is given short shrift. The typical single-angle view on Japanese migration is typified by Asis (2005:206): comparing East and Southeast Asia in terms of migration he suggests that East Asia with the exception of China is a migration destination, despite nearly 2.5 million Japanese currently living abroad (Japan MOFA data 2015). The UN International Organization for Migration report on international migration in Thailand (Huguet and Punpuing 2005) also completely overlooked its Japanese residents.

This thesis aims to partially fill this gap. As many researchers insist that the characteristics demonstrated by Japanese lifestyle migrants "do not fit easily with into the theory of international migration" (Mizukami 2007:3), Bangkok offers a strong study case to explore various specific modes and aspects of Bangkok's Japanese presence and specifically of the production of migrant belonging.

Both Thailand and Japan are Asia's outliers as neither country has been formally colonised (if only briefly occupied by a foreign power) as both tried to establish their own colonial realms (Chapter III.1). Their post-colonial relationship is thus unlike many other instances of migration between the Global South and the Global North (Chapter III.4). At the same time, that relationship has been skewed ever since establishing modern diplomatic relations in the 19th century: from signing what were unequal treaties (Chapter III.1), to Siam becoming a playground for Japanese commercial interests (Chapter III.2), to outright Japanese military occupation during WWII, to Thailand becoming Japan's low-cost manufacturing base (Chapter III.3), and eventually also a recipient of a large Japanese migration flow that this thesis is looking at. That has important implications for the way Japanese residents view themselves in their host society (Chapter V.2.2). but also in how Thailand's Japanese presence is

framed legally (Chapter VIII). The place of this unequal relationship in Japanese residents' pre-arrival imagination and migrant praxis is explored in Chapter V.1.

Both the origin and host countries are Asian so Japanese residents find themselves in Bangkok as an *invisible minority* that can easily blend in and enjoy the anonymity of a big city. Thus, the factor of racism, so often inflecting migrant experience, is here largely removed (Chapter V.2.1). Instead, the relations between Japanese residents and their host society revolves around a number of cultural affinities and differences (Chapter V.2.3).

Having been a deliberately created economically liberal entrepôt (Chapter IV.4), Bangkok attracts sizeable migrant communities from rich non-Western nations such as Singapore, South Korea, and Taiwan (Chapter V.2). Their relative, evolving position in global city Bangkok's globalised ethnosocial hierarchy (Chapter V) sheds light on the debate around the recently declared controversial term *expat* (O'Reilly and Lee 2010, Leinonen 2012, Koutonin 2015, Klekowski von Koppenfels 2016, Cranston 2017, Kunz 2020).

Both Japan and Thailand run rather strict visa, immigration, and naturalisation regimes with very important consequences on what migrants can and cannot do, how meaningfully they can become incorporated and rooted in their host societies. At the same time, both countries are very interested in importing foreign labour. Chapter VIII explores how Bangkok's Japanese navigate Thailand's immigration controls as well as how the Thai nation-state manages its international immigrants.

1.1.2 Scientific contribution: lifestyle migration and social theory

This thesis contributes theoretically to the sociological understanding of contemporary Japanese presence overseas as part of a wider population flow known as *lifestyle migration* (O'Reilly and Benson 2015) at the *transnationalist stage* of global migration (Chapter 1.3.3). Further developing Amy Borovoy's (2010:60) idea of Japan as "a thought-provoking reflecting glass" for dominant global trends and models, this thesis situates where Japanese migration and Bangkok's Japanese in particular fit there (Chapter 1.2.2). Given the paucity of academic sources about Thailand's Japanese community, this thesis starts by contextualising its past and present sociologically (Chapter 1.3) and historically (Chapter III) as the groundwork for answering its main research questions of theorising contemporary Japanese lifestyle migration.

In a wider sense, this thesis also contributes to the growing body of knowledge about the new modes of transnational mobilities in Asia (Collins 2012, Xiang et al 2013). As relations between the nation-state, the corporate world, and migrant labour are taking new forms around the world and in Asia in particular (Ong 1999), it looks at how Japanese migrant belonging in Bangkok is shaped in the

relationship between the Thai state (Chapter VIII), various forms of Japanese transnational capital in Thailand (Chapter IX), and recent social change in Bangkok's Japanese community (Chapter VII).

I.1.3 To belong or not to belong: social impact

This thesis also addresses the concerns of the current broader public debate about migration that to a large degree revolves around migrant belonging: to what degree migrants are, can be, or should be part of their host society (Pew Report 2018, *Many worldwide oppose more migration – both into and out of their countries*). As the last two decades have witnessed a growing backlash against globalisation (Stiglitz 2002, 2017), multiculturalism (Vertovec and Wessendorf 2010), and migration in general (Spencer 2011), an ideology-free and evidence-based response from science is required more than ever. Lifestyle migration may at first seem a frivolous topic for a smaller set of privileged people to research the nice life of a slightly bigger set of similarly privileged people. However, this thesis focuses on the aspects of migration of wider public concern such as migrant belonging and the relationship between the host state and its immigrants.

Opposing takes on migrant belonging and immigration vs. the state have been at the crux of a massive amount of recent public debate, policy decisions and political upheavals from Trump's election (Martin 2017) to Brexit (Outhwaite and Menjívar 2019) and from the European migrant crisis of 2016 (Barlai et al 2017) to Japan's own dilemma of depopulation and foreign labour immigration (Kondo 2002, Ogawa 2011). Popular backlash against the policies of multiculturalism (Vertovec and Wessendorf 2010) has raised important questions about the direction many governments in developed countries have adopted to manage or sometimes not manage population inflows from abroad.

To what extent do/can migrants (be expected to) belong to and be integrated into the host society? Following from that, what should native populations make of them and to what extent and how should their presence be regulated, if at all. The questions of foreign migrants' social integration, political representation, economic contribution, cultural co-existence, and impact on national security inevitably arise in relation to both national identity self-preservation and national migration policy. Such questions are asked in equal measure by citizens, the media, and policy-makers. Are they our own or just outsiders? Should we trust them or not, or to what extent? How do they feel about their host society and their old country? Come football match or war, who will they side with? Are they worth our investment and effort? What does the host society owe to its migrants and vice versa? Such questions need to consider the role and interests of both the migrants and the host society.

This thesis contributes to answering such questions by looking at how they have been answered in practical terms in Thailand with regards to Bangkok's Japanese community. While state policies may not be easily transferable or adaptable outside their country of origin, Thailand's staunch economic liberalism, flexible yet consistent immigration policies, and successful experience of migrant integration offer a valuable empirical lesson for laymen, academics, and politicians alike. Exploring such a range of views has required drawing on data and methods from a range of disciplines. Below are some principles around which I organised that endeavour.

I.2 Interdisciplinarity and epistemology in Migration Studies

I.2.1 Interdisciplinarity in this thesis

"I can calculate the motion of heavenly bodies, but not the madness of people."

Isaac Newton

Social scientists do not approach the study of immigration from a shared paradigm, but from a variety of competing theoretical viewpoints fragmented across disciplines, regions, and ideologies. As a result, research on the subject tends to be narrow, often inefficient, and characterized by duplication, miscommunication, reinvention, and bickering about fundamentals and terminology. Only when researchers accept common theories, concepts, tools, and standards will knowledge begin to accumulate. (Massey et al 1994: 700–701)

Below I will explain how this thesis navigates interdisciplinary divides by using different approaches in order to weave a cohesive narrative of Japanese transnational belonging in Bangkok. Combining data and methods from the "chaos of disciplines" (Abbott 2001) with varying epistemological and methodological premises requires explicit awareness of the purposes, strengths, and shortcomings of each approach. Following Karen O'Reilly's (2012:8) assertion that "a general level theory... can offer insights into fundamental social process that frame migration and provides a sociological framework within which to understand the various substantive theories", I also explain the stance I take in this thesis with regards to fundamental epistemological and theoretical issues such as macro vs. micro perspectives, the relationship between *structure vs. agency*, and historicism vs. ahistoricism. Views on those issues differ widely between different branches of academic inquiry about migration (Brettell and Hollifield 2013:17) and hence need to be made explicit in this interdisciplinary thesis.

None of those is the theoretical focus of this thesis nor is it another misguided attempt at a unifying general theory in the social sciences. Rather, such general level theory embeds the particular theoretical thrust of this thesis (see later in this chapter) and how I use my multi-source data. For example, I complement anthropological and historical sources with each other in my account of how modern Japanese presence in Bangkok evolved to its current state (Chapter III). However, anthropology by necessity often takes an ahistorical approach, whilst history is oblivious to social theory or empiricism that are so important in anthropology. Data collection methods in the two are fundamentally incompatible too. With no common substantive theoretical or methodological platform between the two, or other disciplines I draw on in this thesis, the theoretical meta-framing that I suggest allows the discussion to stay coherent.

1.2.1.1 Macro vs. micro perspectives

One of the big divides that separates different research approaches to migration is between the top-down *macro* perspectives such as in economics or political sciences and bottom-up *micro* perspectives such as in anthropology and oral history (Brettell and Hollifield 2013:2). That divide echoes differences between the founding schools of modern sociology: on the one hand, Marx and Durkheim were interested in how social processes and structures (macro level) deductively shape individual social life and, on the other hand, Max Weber was looking into how the sum of individual social action (micro level) inductively builds up into large-scale social change and historical processes. Neither of the two approaches are right or wrong, nor are they inherently irreconcilable. Choosing one over the other depends on the data type (macro vs. micro) and the intended final research output (micro-level ethnography or convenience-sample survey vs. macro-level economic report or international relations review).

The two inductive and deductive approaches are used selectively in this thesis to cross-check between or combine different sources of data as macro- and micro-level data are mutually complemented. For example, in Chapter IV I contextualise Bangkok's seemingly disproportionate traction for Japanese migration within economic, geopolitical, and cultural macro-factors and continue with looking at how migrants make sense and use of them at the micro-level of their individual choices and actions. In Chapter V the macro-narrative of the Japanese colonial and post-colonial imagination about Siam/Thailand is set against the ethnographic micro-level data of how contemporary Bangkok's Japanese conceptualise their new country to ground the theoretical concept of imagination in empirical data. In Chapter VIII, the official attitudes on nationality and migration in Thailand and Japan and their legal manifestations, define the scope within which Bangkok's Japanese can imagine, construct, and practice their belonging. The success of the Japanese national project manifests in the social position that the Japanese community occupies in the hierarchy of global city Bangkok: the macro-factor of Japan's economic clout and massive investment in the country underwrite the prestige of the Japanese passport, language, and education translating in their turn in a multitude of daily ethnographic occurrences that ultimately shape up Japanese migrant belonging (Chapter IX).

The *meso* level commonly introduced into sociological enquiry into migration is identified with the institutional structures affecting migrants' lives (O'Reilly 2012, Brettell and Hollifield 2014:4, Castles 2014): embassies and immigration authorities, migrant relocation companies, migrant associations, etc. As such it can be understood as a subset of structural macro factors, beyond the control of migrants' individual agency, yet more accessible for empirical research data collection than such bona fide macro factors of geopolitical shifts or cultural narratives. In this thesis, I juxtapose *meso*-level data on Bangkok's Japanese from the Japanese Embassy (Chapter III.1.1) and Thai immigration authorities (Chapter VIII.1), track the role of communal institutions (Chapter VII.1), and examine the legal framework of citizenship and visa regimes (Chapter VIII.2) insofar as they play a role in the construction of migrant belonging.

1.2.1.2 General level theory and agency vs. structure

The relation between macro and micro level factors is exemplified in "the central question of social theory: structure vs. agency" (Archer 2003:2). Despite its fashionable elimination in many subsets of post-structuralism as a 'modernist binary', "it keeps recurring in various guises – whether it is a concern about the relationship between micro and macro levels of analysis, voluntarism and determinism or individuals and society" (Bakewell, 2010:1689). Whenever the nature of this relation is misconstrued in either public or academic debate, they are marked by inconclusive discussions, extreme polarised opinions, and ill-devised policies. For example, the perennial debate on the causes of poverty appears to have become irreconcilably split between the two camps: those blaming everything on "structures", "society", "oppression", "patriarchy", "colonialism", etc. and those who insist that the poor should just "get on the bicycle and find a job" (Ajakaiye and Adeyeye 2001, Brady 2019). In migration debate, migrants can thus be objectified as either the victims of the system in what is known as "poverty porn" (Kempny 2011, Kwapisz Williams 2014, Andrijasevic and Mai 2016, Smets et al 2019) or as "model minorities" who succeed through their individual effort alone (Park 2008, Moon 2021). Seen through the lens of structure vs. agency, the fallacy of both extremes is clear: individuals are neither helpless puppets at the mercy of invisible social forces, nor are they omnipotent against the structural factors.

In this thesis, the general theoretical meta-approach of how the object of belonging is approached lies broadly within the tenets of *structuration* (Giddens 1984) and Bourdieu's (1977) *theory of practice*. The individual agency of Bangkok's Japanese sojourners and the social structures of *global city* Bangkok do not exist as separate opposing entities, nor do they exist independently on discrete micro- and macro-levels. Instead, they can be conceived of as relational extremes of the same social continuum where social phenomena, *transnational belonging* amongst them, are produced. For example, in Chapter VIII, Bangkok's Japanese navigate through both countries' nationality and visa regimes to carve out their niche in Bangkok's sociopolitical milieu. Restrictive legislation is at times bypassed, at times made use of, but at times begrudgingly put up with as migrants build their lives. The common outcome is *split belonging* where migrants build their entire lives in Bangkok but imagine their final resting place in Japan (Chapter VIII.2). The *comfort infrastructure* of finely niche-targeted Japanese businesses such as Okinawan noodle shops, second-hand manga book shops, or golf paraphernalia outlets make Little Tokyo and adjacent Central Bangkok areas as "comfortable as Tokyo" for individual migrants, corporate expats, as well as anyone attracted to Bangkok's exuberant Japanese consumerist abundance (Chapter VI.1.3).

1.2.1.3 Historical approach: timescale and periods

Another divide in migration research methods concern the fourth dimension, time. Looking at interdisciplinarity in Migration Studies, Donna Gabaccia (2014:49-78) juxtaposes the "presentist" vs. historical approaches, also known as *synchronic* vs. *diachronic*. Admittedly, contemporary historians increasingly cross into non-historicist synchronist perspectives (Portelli 2002, Ritchie 2014), while non-history social scientists use historical data to back up their arguments (Thomas 1996, Stewart 2016). Although this thesis looks at the current state of affairs of Bangkok's Japanese, in Chapter III I take on the diachronic approach with two objectives in mind. Firstly, to theoretically conceptualise the character of modern Japanese migration to Siam/Thailand and, secondly, to highlight the importance of the groundwork laid down by the earlier generations of Bangkok's Japanese in the way the latter-

day arrivals' belonging is produced. Various aspects of that groundwork and their workings today are detailed in the subsequent chapters, alternating the diachronic and synchronic perspectives. For example, Chapter VII.2.1 explores how the changing character of Japanese migration to Bangkok (from settlers to businessmen on temporary assignment to individual sojourners) contributed to the recent drop in attendance of the Nihonjinkai, the world's oldest overseas businessmen club and once the stalwart of Japanese presence in Bangkok.

Chapter III also adopts historians' favourite analytical tool of periodisation to track the socio-economic conditions of modern Japanese migration to Siam/Thailand. Thereby, I have arranged its timescale in the stages centred around the dominant type of the mode of migrant belonging at the time (assimilationist/settler, multi-cultural, and transnational). The most widely accepted periodisation emanates from the Chicago School based specifically on the Western, mostly American experience of mass migration (Castles 2014). The timeframe of that periodisation overlaps with modernising Japan and Thailand becoming part of the wider world events, and thus affected by the world wars, the global economic ups and downs, technological breakthroughs, and dominant cultural trends. However, their effects on migration between the two countries have often been different from what happened to population flows elsewhere. For example, Thailand's lack of interest in multiculturalism as a migration policy and post-war Japan's abandonment of settler migration caused Japanese presence in Thailand to entirely skip the multicultural stage (see Chapter III.2).

With a specific reference to Japanese migration to Siam/Thailand, I chose the break-off points between periods signifying a major change in the character of migration that are relevant to Thai and Japanese histories. For example, WWI was very significant for Siam's Japanese as it made the colonial powers scale down their engagement in the country and let Japanese business and migrant community fill in the vacuum (Chapter III.1). More often than not, however, such break-off points are not discreet borders but extended frontiers. For example, there is a lapse between Japan lifting its *sakoku* self-isolation and the first Japanese arrivals in Siam (Chapter III.1). Similarly, there is a gap between the forcible removal of all Japanese nationals from Siam in 1945 and the arrival of first *chūzai-in* expats in Thailand in the 1950s (Chapter III.2). The sometimes ambiguous visa status of the latter-day transnational migrants and the inconclusive statistics of their numbers (Chapter III.4.1) do not allow to define the start of Japanese transnational migration to Thailand more precisely than "in the 1980s".

Two sets of data, from my Bangkok life in the late 1990s and early 2000s vs. my 2014-15 fieldwork data, are also used in the diachronic perspective in Chapter VII to track the changing role of communal institutions such as the Nihonjinkai or the Japanese Association of Thailand (Chapter VII.1.1) and Japanese supermarkets (Chapter VII.1.2) as the structural nodes of the community specifically over the last three decades. Such a diachronic cross-section also allows one to understand the recently evolved community divide between the *furute* (old hands) and *arate* (new hands) in Chapter VII.2.1.

1.2.1.4 Empiricist approach: global vs. local

Another perennial problem of social research is how to marry the global and the local, macro and micro data (Eller 2016). Merging the two into *glocalisation* (Robertson 1992) sensitises the researcher to the complex interactions of the two but does not answer how that can be approached methodologically. This comes to the fore for this thesis as it looks at a rather loose congregation of foreign individuals living transnationally in an economically liberal city deliberately exposed to all global socioeconomic winds. The daily iterations of their belonging in the city are shaped by local and global processes, from Bangkok's land ownership laws inflecting the cityscape of Little Japan (Chapter VI.2.1) to the global perceptions of Japan's place in the global hierarchy of "competition states" mirroring onto the place of Japanese residents within Bangkok's own social pyramid (Chapter V.3). It is impossible to separate them neatly into discrete narratives when trying to understand how the lives of Bangkok's Japanese come together. Every currency exchange fluctuation, every shift of the global market, every bureaucratic spasm of the Thai migration controls, or every instalment of Japan's hiccupping socio-economic reforms inevitably has an effect on their incomes, visa status, or life prospects. Therefore, staying focused on the same subject of how *transnational migrant belonging* comes into being, this thesis by necessity zooms in on ethnographic data and zooms out to political economy, international relations, and historical perspectives in each chapter dedicated to a different constituent aspect of belonging.

As such, some of its approaches are anthropologically inspired and informed, yet it is not a classic ethnography with its "received mandate of committed localism" (Røyrvik 2015). A certain distance from the empiricist bias is taken when considering the macro-level factors of economy or international relations where no ethnographic data is available by definition.

The research object, *Japanese belonging in Bangkok* is looked at from different angles outlined further in this chapter. Each angle is dealt with in a separate chapter, as a blend of local and global factors, a product of individual social action and structural forces. For example, to understand how the physical space of Japanese Bangkok is woven into existence, it is necessary to consider Thai urban planning and land ownership laws, Japanese infrastructure projects, Bangkok's grid that follows its pre-modern canal system, the hierarchy of the metropolitan public transportation, but also the ever-growing network of small Japanese-owned businesses catering to every consumer need and market niche that makes Japanese Bangkok "as convenient as Tokyo".

The anthropological empiricist bias of this thesis relative to its ethnographic approach is complemented with two sociological models invited to make sense of the complexity of a transnational social phenomenon in a globalised urban environment: Castles' (2014) *migration systems theory* and Lefebvre's (1996) *power contestation in the city*. Contextualising empiricist ethnographic data with the help of historical, economic, and international relations research, inevitably takes the analysis away from the realm of empiricism. Sociology in general is much more at ease with such a take as long as there is an agreement on "a general level theory that can offer insights into fundamental social process that frame migration and provides a sociological framework within

which to understand the various substantive theories" (O'Reilly 2013), Anthropology, on the other hand, is more circumspect and sometimes even wary of "un-grounded theory" (Brettell and Hollifield 2013). This anxiety to reconcile epistemology reflects my own research training whereby my epistemological innocence was first challenged in a Theoretical Approaches in Social Anthropology course and then irrevocably lost as I moved across courses and methodological seminars at four faculties (in more detail in the Self-reflexivity part of Chapter II). In choosing to look at intra-Asian "rich migrants", it also puts itself outside the current majority focus in Migration Studies on the plight of migrants from the Global South to the Global North. Despite administratively being a thesis in Cultural Studies, its main analytical term of *belonging* lies outside the scope of the main current of this discipline presently grounded in literary criticism. Its theoretical thrust of grounding cultural phenomena in political economy also runs afoul of the tenets of Cultural Studies exploring mainly the interaction of cultural phenomena. At the same time, it is not a typical ethnography expected from an anthropologist.

1.2.2 Japan as the gadfly of social research

The topic of this thesis, Japanese outward migration, sits on the fringes of the English-language research on migration. In both empirical research and social/cultural theorisation, Japan habitually stands as an outlier defying generalising conclusion (Borovoy 2010). As the only Asian member of the original First World, it is neither a typical developed nation, nor a typical Asian country. It was the only Asian country with a modern colonial empire (Beasley 1987). Finally accepted post-war by the West as a "democracy proper" and part of the Free World, it nevertheless often has a rather divergent take on such important Western liberal democratic values in relation to the capital punishment (Schmidt 2002), feminism (Mackie 2003), ethnic (Yamanaka 2003) or sexual minority rights (Lunsing 2005). Despite being the world's third economy, its ability to project power and hence its global political clout are severely curtailed by its pacifist constitution. It is also the only industrialised country where property prices have steadily showed a downward trend whereas the population is growing progressively thinner. Japan has foreshadowed the ageing and depopulation trend that is now catching up with the rest of the developed world (Coulmas 2007), however, its response to it, unlike practically everywhere else, has for a long time been mostly anti-migrationist (Vogt 2007). Scientific literature outside Japan-specific regional research deals with Japan's persistent falling out of line with general trends in two ways: essentialisation and exotisation or side-lining as an inconvenient outlier (cf. the conspicuous absence of research in Chapter 01.1.1).

A typical Modernist trope, the essentialisation or exotisation of Japan can be just as self-imposed (Iwabuchi 1994) as originated externally. *Nihonjinron*, "the popular essentialist genre in Japan, which purports to analyse Japan's quintessence and cultural core by using three concepts - nationality, ethnicity and culture" (Sugimoto 1999) is a prime example of Japan's self-exotisation. It explains the nature of Japan and being Japanese in the binary contrapositions of Japan's uniqueness vs. the rest of the world, not very dissimilar to how the West explained the world to itself through Orientalism (Said 1978). In many instances, the way *Nihonjinron* emphasises Japan's differences coincides with how the outside world exoticises Japan (Sugimoto 1999). *Nihonjinron*'s assumption of the West as a uniform monolithic entity is an example of Occidentalism (Carrier 1992), both equally unhelpful in mutual understanding (Nishihara 2005).

On the other pole of situating Japan in social thought is universalising tendencies in theorisation which still seem to prevail in some branches of the social sciences less sensitised to the sobering contradictions of cross-cultural comparative research. When Japan data does not suit such theoretical projects, it simply becomes ignored: *nota bene* the sheer scarcity of English-language research on contemporary migration *from* Japan. Thus, despite over two million Japanese citizens living abroad (Japanese MOFA data 2015), Castles and Miller's (2009) authoritative monograph on migration in the Asia-Pacific region cites Japan as a "mainly destination country" for migration. In Gandhi's re-working of her authoritative volume on Post-Colonial theory (2019), Japan and its imperial colonialism merit not one mention, despite having been a bona fide, brutal and aggressive, colonial power.

The middle ground for productive social research would be, as suggested by Amy Borovoy (2010), in avoiding the epistemological futility of both universalisation and essentialisation. The case of Japan can help challenge theoretical assumptions made about the developed world such as the inevitability of causal connections between the capitalist economy and liberal values. Doing that has high practical stakes because such scientifically produced pronouncements are then extrapolated onto the rest of the world, informing how international institutions, based practically without fail in the West, try to shape the fates of the developing countries through financial, political, and ideological mechanisms (e.g., 'The end of engagement', *The Economist* Oct 18th 2018).

In the modern period, Japan's position in global international relations and in the Asian power paradigm has been characterised by a tension between its rapid modernisation and remaining the odd-one-out non-White power amongst the developed nations (Nakata Steffensen 2000). For a long time it was the most powerful nation in Asia but also an economic and, for a time, military equal of all other Great Powers. The Western attitudes towards Japanese immigration, however, were largely hostile and openly racist (Jupp 1995, Lee 2007). The *Yellow Peril* discourse in relation to Japanese presence in the West would flare up as late as in the 1980s. For example, what the Japanese press consistently referred to as trade frictions with the US (*nichibei boeki masatsu*) in the English-language media and Michael Crichton's global best-seller *The Rising Sun* would be persistently described as a trade war (Sera 2010). In Asia, however, Japanese migration and its influence made wider and bolder inroads on the back of Japanese technical expertise, manufactured goods, and military clout.

Such a situation has put Japanese international migration in a rather different context than either the flow of settlers and lifestyle migrants from the West to the colonies or poorer countries, or the movement of Global South workers to the richer countries. The case of Japan thus problematises *the Global North* and *the Global South* as analytical terms, at least in terms of understanding global migration. Although early modern Japanese migration started off as an escape from precarity, it very soon turned into *chūzai-in* expat relocation and colonial settlement: Japanese sericulture specialists were the only non-Western technical experts hired by the 19th century Siamese court, whereas Japanese settlers in Manchuria and Korea mirrored their Western counterparts in the overseas colonies and dominions. Here again, Japan as an outlier baffles attempts to simplify history of migration to viewing the world in the racialised terms of (post-)colonizers vs. the (post-)colonized as "white people" vs. "brown people" or West vs. the rest. Such theorisation stumbles even more

spectacularly when applied to Japanese migration to Siam/Thailand, a never-colonised Asian nation with its own imperial ambitions. What the case of Japanese migration exemplifies is that oppression is not defined solely by race but is first underwritten by a range of manifestations of power: military clout, economic and financial dominance, or organisational and administrative finesse. The main part of this thesis (Chapter IV to X) is built around exploring that power dynamic between Thai society and the state, Japanese migrant presence, and Japanese business/state tandem as constituting and framing Japanese migrant belonging in Bangkok. To paraphrase, by controlling the race factor, it also explores how the power balance is negotiated between two non-western ex-colonial powers.

Reflecting on the Japanese migrant experience in Bangkok, this thesis joins the growing body of academic literature (e.g., Hendry and Webber 1998, Ryang 2004, Clammer 2013) that develops social theory from Japan based on empirical data. By looking at the social dynamics of Bangkok's Japanese community, it implicitly problematises various tenets of the current episteme of migration research. It provides an empirical case study of, first, the less addressed, despite its substantial global share (Pew Report 2014), migration from richer to poorer countries; second, the largely sidelined in scientific literature contemporary outward population flow from Japan; and third, an example of Global North vs. Global South interaction with the controlled factors of race and coloniality. To unpack how Japanese sojourners' belonging in global city Bangkok is woven into existence by a dynamically unfolding interplay of macro-structural factors and individual agency, the analysis of the constituent factors of sojourners' belonging goes on to explore the ideological, ethno-cultural, physical, legal, communal, and economic aspects of contestation, cooperation and accommodation between Japanese Bangkok's main social actors: the Thai nation-state, Japanese corporate (if largely state-backed) capital, the local Japanese community, and individual sojourners. Chapter IV explores the role of Bangkok as an economically liberal *global city* project in attracting and accommodating Japanese migration. Chapter V problematises the role of post-colonialist imagination in the latter-day Japanese migrant belonging in Bangkok and the changing place of Japanese residents in Bangkok's social hierarchy. Chapter VI investigates how the physical space of Japanese Bangkok is created with the involvement of Japanese infrastructure projects but also by Japanese individual entrepreneurs. Chapter VIII investigates how business and state concerns about the visa and citizenship regimes enable but also constrain Japanese migrant belonging. Chapter IX looks into the convergence of different kinds of Japanese transnational capital in producing migrant belonging: Japanese DFI and economic involvement and Japanese residents' internationally transferable cultural capital. Overall, this thesis seeks to understand the complexities of transnational migrant belonging and its relations with the host society.

1.3 Theories of migration from Japan

Since Japan managed successful modernisation practically in tune with the West, it was part of many Western social trends. As global migration went from *assimilationism*, via *cultural pluralism*, to *transnationalism* over the last 150 years, Japanese migration often bucked or defied many of the trends. Below, I juxtapose modern-period Japanese migration and the dominant migration model of each period, finishing with a research literature review of contemporary Japanese lifestyle migration.

I.3.1 The Nikkeijin settlers and the assimilation model

In the early modern period between the Meiji Restoration and the beginning of the Pacific War (1868-1942), Japanese government agencies encouraged, advised and partly sponsored impoverished farmers to emigrate as a way to deal with overpopulation at the time (Adachi 2014). Such policies shared the ultimate objective of ridding the Japan Isles of extra mouths with the Japanese colonial settlement programmes in Manchuria, Korea, and Taiwan. As a result, the bulk of Japanese migrants, save for the eventually repatriated settlers in Manchuria and Korea, became naturalised, assimilated or creolised as a new subset of Japanese ethnicity *Nikkei*, or Overseas Japanese (Befu and Adachi 2010). For the Japanese officialdom, they thus ceased being "Japanese proper" with their Japanese names now only spelled in the *katakana* syllabary, normally reserved for foreign names.

The assimilation model developed by the Chicago School reflected both the reality and imagination of national immigration projects, in particular that of the United States, around the turn of the 20th century (Kivisto 2004). According to it, migrants would leave for their destination country with a view to settle. With a little opportunity to stay connected or travel back to their old country, they would inevitably "acquire the memories, sentiments, and attitudes of other persons and groups, and by sharing their experience and history ... incorporated with them into a common cultural life" (Park and Burgess 1924:735). In this vision of "the melting pot of nations", migrants would eventually blend in their host society with no traces left of their cultural heritage or links to their country of origin. It was a strikingly progressive, idealistic view when at the height of European mass migration to the USA both anti-immigrant sentiment and ethnic/racial discrimination were running high (Hirschmann 1983:397). It took decades of struggle even for various European migrants - Italians, Jews, Slavs, Greeks, etc. - to become accepted as "White Americans" (Allen 1994), let alone arrivals from outside Europe.

Early modern Japanese migrants thus found themselves in the era of the *assimilationist* approach to migration in the Americas and the Pacific (Castles et al 2013): the expectation on both sides was that new arrivals would fully embrace and tracelessly blend into the host society. That ideal, however, contrasted starkly with the reality of explicit racial discrimination with policies and laws openly using terms like "Yellow Peril" (Lee 2007) and "White Australia" (Jupp 1995). At the same time, Japanese settlers in the overseas territories of Imperial Japan did exactly the opposite trying to Japanify their colonial subjects, yet not accepting them as "fully Japanese" (Beasley 1987).

The Japanese migrant experience from the assimilationist era (roughly from the 1860s to the early 1950s) was often in stark contrast to its ideals. Facing racial prejudice and open discrimination in North America and Australia, they struggled to win a place in their new country (Befu and Adachi 2010). A series of anti-immigration laws targeting specifically and explicitly Japanese and other Asian migrants sought to curb their numbers and encroach on their rights in the USA, Canada, and Australia (Daniels 1977, Ryder 1991, Oliver 2007). News about that outraged public opinion in Japan and created a fertile ground for fanning a nationalistic and militarist sentiment (Nakata Steffensen 2000). Things came to head for Asian migrants in the West in the 1940s, as Japan embarked on a war path with the USA and

China became Communist. As a *visible minority* in the Americas, Japanese migrants often found it hard to fulfil their hopes of making a new home in a faraway land (Adachi 2006).

As Japan's economic and political standing rapidly improved, Japanese migrants in pre-war Siam/Thailand, however, increasingly found themselves in a privileged position (Ishii and Yoshikawa 1987). Japan and its migrants became rivals to the Western powers in the region, even recognised as "honorary Whites" by the Dutch colonial authorities in the Dutch East Indies (later Indonesia) and granted the same rights in Siam as Westerners (Ishii and Yoshikawa 1987). That period also laid the institutional and legal foundation that still in many ways shapes the life of Bangkok's Japanese residents today (Chapter III.1, Chapter VII.1, and Chapter VIII.1).

1.3.2 The *chūzai-in expats* and the cultural pluralism model

The post-war period and particularly the 1960s saw a global shift in both migration patterns and their academic and policy conceptualisation. The migration source countries had shifted away from Europe to the developing countries. The economic boom in the developed nations called for labour imports but migration quotas were introduced based mostly on racial and ethnic criteria. Post-war migration from Japan practically ceased in the early 1950s. Like the assimilation model before, the *cultural pluralism model* was descriptive in relation to a new reality of migrants retaining stronger links to the old country than before thanks to more accessible air travel, communication technologies, and the increased availability of ethnic food stuffs (Pantoja et al 1976). However, it was also prescriptive, projecting a policy expectation of harmonious multi-cultural co-existence. Nevertheless, high endogamy rates, socio-economical divisions and disparities along ethnic and racial lines kept standing in the way of that ideal coming to pass (Waters 1990). Originating in the USA and based on its particular cultural experience, this model also came to be prominent outside the US: reflecting in hyphenated identities such as Moroccan-Dutch, Italian-Canadian, or Pakistani-British.

For several decades post-war Japan ceased to be a migrant exporting country. It, uniquely among the developed nations, chose not to rely on labour import to sustain its economic growth (Mori 1996). After the ban on individual travel abroad was lifted in 1964, a trickle of well-heeled Japanese ended up in the West, such as Japanese *spiritual migrants* in France in pursuit of cultural fulfilment (Yatabe 2003). However, most of the newly emerging Japanese presence abroad was made of corporate employees posted on temporary assignments abroad to man Japan's soft-power global expansion (Adachi and Befu 2010). At the same time, the second and further generations of Nikkeis in the Americas generally followed the assimilation path, identifying with Canadian or American values, with decreasing rates of endogamous marriage with every successful generation. That process and its outcomes were far from mono-directional (Adachi and Befu 2010).

The dominant type of Japanese migrant at the time, the *chūzai-incorporate expats*, however, would remain staunchly outside that trend. His (as they were almost invariably male) and his family's presence abroad was explicitly temporary and functional, with the lowest possible levels of cultural or

social involvement with the host society, let alone assimilation, naturalisation, or a hyphenated identity (Glebe 2005). The post-war *chūzai-in expats* were a purely corporate creation, even if the relationship between the Japanese state and Japanese corporation is famously very close. As a valuable mid-career cadre in the course of their training upgrade, they were too valuable to lose to a foreign state, nor did they desire that kind of outcome. Tied firmly to their career back in Japan, their children's need for Japanese education, they remained staunchly Japanese themselves. As such, a foreign passport, a hyphenated identity, or cultural assimilation were never part of their imagination. Thus, the relation between the issuing party and the Japanese migrant was crucial in regard to the kind of migrant belonging that would evolve.

Around the same time, Japan found an excellent export destination and production base in a proactively economically liberal Thailand (Chapter IV.5). Increasing numbers of *chūzai-in expats* would start arriving in Bangkok and what was soon to become its adjacent industrial areas (Chapter III.2). They and Japan's mass tourism to the country have bequeathed an important legacy of infrastructure that makes contemporary Japanese residents' life in Japan (Chapter VI.3.)

1.3.3 Japanese lifestyle migrants and the transnationalism model: patterns and differences

Transnational as a term of migration analysis entered academic parlance in the 1990s in response to a new migrant reality qualitatively different from the previous assimilationist or multi-cultural periods (Schiller, Basch, and Blanc-Szanton 1992). Probably the single greatest factor enabling individuals to live "in between" two countries (Clifford 1997:37) is the contemporary technological advance in digital communication (Vertovec 2004) and international travel (Burrell 2011) technologies.

Befu and Adachi (2010) date "Japanese transnational migration" back to the 14th century. The Japanese pirates *wakō* lived as lawless outcasts of mixed ethnic composition in the fuzzy frontier area between the pre-modern *mandala-states* of Japan, Korea, and China (Turnbull 2012). The *wakō* mode of explicitly marginal existence was qualitatively different from the latter-day Bangkok's Japanese who jet and facebook between two well-established and tightly run national regimes. Nor could the *wakō* claim, like modern Japanese-Brazilian repatriates', "two countries, double address" (Ishii 2005) because they did not belong to any country, nor did they have a permanent address registered by the bureaucratic apparatus of the modern nation-state. Unlike its historical antecedents, contemporary transnationalism primarily refers to *trans-state* rather *trans-ethnic* interactions (Howard 2014:4). It defines itself vis-à-vis modern nation-states and those are a fairly recent development (Wimmer and Feinstein 2010).

Save, perhaps, for the soon-ceased farmer relocation to the Caribbean (Horst and Asagiri 2010), all post-war Japanese migration can, in fact, be theorised as transnational (Befu and Adachi 2010), predating the emergence of such a mode of mobility elsewhere. The post-war *chūzai-in corporate expats* sent abroad, with or without families, on temporary assignments were explicitly transnational.

Their bodies may have been in a foreign country, but their hearts and minds firmly remained in Tokyo, where the payroll, family and career prospects belonged. Culturally too, they remained part of probably the most successful national project with an exceptionally strong and cohesive national identity (Hendry 2017). Socially too, they remained an aloof presence among their host society, their overseas belonging being ephemeral by design (Glebe 2003). In the opposite flow of migration, the Nikkei repatriates from South America to Japan found themselves as cultural outsiders (De Carvalho 2003). They often ended up developing an exaggerated version of their Latino identity and belonging (Ishii 2010) and living as transnational migrants in Japan in flesh and in Brazil in spirit (Lesser et al 2003).

The third contemporary strain of Japanese transnational migration are neither *chūzai-in expats* on temporary corporate assignments, nor Nikkei repatriants returning to the land of their ancestors and a greater economic opportunity. Building on the established term of *lifestyle migration* (Benson and O'Reilly 2009) that describes population flows from richer to poorer countries, Sato (2001) pioneered the distinction between Japanese *lifestyle migrants* and the previous waves of Japanese exodus abroad driven by the economic reasons of escaping poverty. It is such lifestyle migrants in Bangkok that are the research focus of this thesis.

This particular strain of Japanese global migration started off just as Japan's economic miracle had reached its pinnacle in the late 1980s. Although at first, their rise was limited to lapsed female expats who chose to try their luck finding employment abroad than go back to their dreaded working life in Japan (Wong 2003, Sakai 2005), it soon diversified to include people from all walks of life, reasons to migrate, and relocation outcomes (Sato 2001, Ben Ari 2003, Mizukami 2007, Nagatomo 2008, Ono 2015, Aoyama 2015, Igarashi 2015, Kawashima 2018 and 2019). In Hawaii upper-middle class Japanese families live transnationally to improve their well-being and their children's education opportunities (Igarashi 2015). In Bangkok, young Japanese people trade the security of a steady job in Japan for the money-poor but time-rich lifestyle of a *sotokomori* (Ono 2005). If in Australia young Japanese graduates' dream of a laid-back outdoorsy lifestyle often ends up in a rude awakening to the realities of surviving in a complex and competitive economy (Nagatomo 2015), many Japanese retirees in Malaysia enjoy both creature comforts and personal fulfilment (Ono 2015, Wong and Musa 2015).

1.3.3.1 Lifestyle migrant, transnational sojourner

Given the sheer diversity of this wave of migration, researchers use different terms for it such as *cultural migrants* (Fujita 2008), *spiritual migrants* (Yatabe 2003), *transnational sojourners* (Befu 2003, Mizukami 2007, Nakazawa et al 2014), whereas migrants themselves use various endonyms to differentiate between different types of Japanese residents in Bangkok (Chapter III.4.3). Although the umbrella term of *lifestyle migrant* (Sato 2001, Ono 2009 and 2014, Nagatomo 2015) satisfies one of the main characteristics of this type of Japanese migrant, pursuit to experience a different or better lifestyle abroad (Chapter X.2), I also argue (concurring with Befu 2003, Mizukami 2007, and Nakazawa et al 2014) that another prevailing property of specifically Japanese lifestyle migrant experience is its impermanence (Chapter X.4) against the backdrop of his/her community's institutional continuity

(Chapter VII.1). In that sense, Japanese lifestyle migrants can be seen as qualitatively different from the previous types of historical Japanese migration, where the objective was most often to settle permanently, naturalise and integrate (Chapter III.1) as pre-war migration from Japan used to mean a practically irreversible deal of trading one's life for a belonging to the new country (Adachi and Befu 2010). To make a distinction between these two vastly different realities of migrant experience, I define Bangkok's Japanese lifestyle migrants as *sojourners*.

Originally coined by Paul Siu (1952) the term *sojourner* has gained popularity over the last decades to reflect the uncertain and non-definite reality of an increasing proportion of the latter-day migration (Shupe and McGrath 1998, Gudykunst 2005). Specifically for contemporary Japanese lifestyle migration, Befu 2003, Mizukami 2007, and Nakazawa et al 2014 use this term to emphasise its defining characteristic of the non-finality, impermanence of their presence in what Mizukami (2007) called a "revolving door community". The inherent impermanence of their presence in the country is evident from the fact that more of them intend to leave at some point of time than to stay permanently (Mizukami 2007:4-5). There are also secondary attributes of the fleeting *sojourner* experience and the ambivalence of his/her belonging such as reluctance to give up Japanese citizenship and naturalise (Chapter VIII.2), reliance on personal interest-based informal networks rather than a defined ethnic community (Chapter VII.2), low level of interest in learning the Thai language (Chapter VII.2.4), and oft-cited lists of cultural differences and incompatibilities (Chapter V.2.3). If we are to go by the precepts of the post-war Thailand's drive to assimilate its ethnic Chinese "Thai name, Thai language, Thai citizenship", Bangkok's Japanese sojourners manifestly do not satisfy any of the criteria.

Similar to the way that zero-hour contract workers in the gig economy will spend their employable age working in a prolonged uncertainty (Bryant 2020), so do Bangkok's Japanese dwellers often end up spending (large chunks of) their adult lives living outside Japan as permanent residents, foreign spouses, students, local hires, or *de jure* tourists who *de facto* are employed in Bangkok as local hires (Chapter III.4.2). The term *sojourner*, thus, calls for attention to a major shift of how contemporary migrants settle in and relate to their new country, on the back of their transnational *modus vivendi*. A lack of certainty/finality in one's status and life situation and its conscious acceptance (Chapter X.4) is what evidently characterises this type of migrant experience when extensive economic rights are traded for a lack of political rights (Chapter VIII.1). To flesh out the essence of being a sojourner, this thesis further explores the complex ways Bangkok's Japanese make their home, construct their belonging at the junction of their sojourn's impermanence (Chapter X.4) and the continuity of their community's structures and institutions (Chapter VII.1). The narratives of Bangkok's Japanese (lifestyle migrants/sojourners) and the structures of Japanese Bangkok (community) are explored to provide the answers to what lifestyle migration as a Japanese *transnational sojourner* in Bangkok constitutes.

1.3.3.2 Same technological change, different outcomes

The late 1980s also was the heyday of the global *multi-culturalism* era when hyphenated ethnic identities came to reign supreme. It was around that time too that a revolution in communication technologies and cheap air travel brought about a new reality for migrants. First, the advent of satellite TV made a constant cultural consumption/connection to the old country possible: books and articles on international migration still often feature photos of migrant neighbourhoods plastered with

satellite dishes. Then, the sharp cost drop of international phone calls made it possible to stay connected physically, culturally, and emotionally to both the host and origin countries in complex arrangements transcending both national borders and previous assumptions about migrant experience (Vertovec 2004). Cheap air travel in Asia-Pacific was pioneered in the 1980s by conventional flag-carriers such as Philippine Air and Korean Air (and, further afield, Gulf Air and Bulgaria Air). They offered truly affordable rates for overseas travel from Japan, ending the prohibitively expensive triopoly of Japan Airlines, ANA, and JAS. Finally, mass Internet access in the 1990s and budget airlines in the 2000s truly shrank the migrant world and made the erstwhile luxuries available to the comparatively less well-off Japanese. Living abroad had stopped being the exclusive purvey of the high-rolling individuals like the Japanese *spiritual migrants* in France (Yatabe 2003). The third development that changed the character of global migration was the "revolution of migrant rights" (Mizukami 2007): more countries developed migrant-friendly policies and formalised them legally.

However, despite the global ubiquity of the above three contributing factors to the rise of *migrant transnationalism*, its local iterations have continued to vary significantly. Having long been a member of the "global powers", the First World, and the developed nations club, Japan, however, often defies academic generalisation extrapolated from other members of that privileged grouping (Borovoy's 2010:60). Lifestyle migration is by default a population from richer to poorer countries so, in that sense, the case of Japanese lifestyle migrants can serve as a sociological control group. The characteristics Japanese sojourners demonstrate "do not fit easily with into the theory of international migration" (Mizukami 2007:3). Looking into the reasons why that happens, practically all researchers emphasise various factors that set Japanese lifestyle migrants apart. Specifically, Japanese communities in Asian-Pacific global cities develop their own unique socio-economic patterns, despite sharing many other important variables between each other as well as with other similar communities. What exactly are those differences and how are they produced?

1.3.3.3 Against the global grain

In addition to the globally universal causes such as improvements in communication, transportation and migrant rights, Mizukami (2007:6-7) attributes the rise in Japanese individual migration to a "revolution in migration-consciousness", which has advanced the idea of migration in pursuit of diverse lifestyles as attractive and desirable. Migration thereby is not merely a rational pursuit of economic opportunity but a desire to experience a different kind of life. That is a significant departure from the prevailing views of yesteryear when emigrants were considered *kimin*, "forsaken" or "discarded people" (Hayase 1989, Konno and Takahashi 1993).

Another specifically Japanese push factor has been the social change in the 1990s Japan such as the gradual erosion of the lifetime employment system and a shift towards a healthier work-life balance (Nagatomo 2008). That was true even for the earliest wave of Japanese lifestyle migrants to Hong Kong (Wong 2003) at the peak of Japan's economic boom in the 1980s. The stronger yen following the Plaza Accord in 1985 made travelling or moving to overseas destinations more affordable for large

swathes of Japanese people. For corporate Japan, shifting production from Japan to Asia became profitable and so started the exodus of factories and personnel abroad. Many of the latter often would later turn into lifestyle migrants to retain the benefits of a better life standard abroad. For such Japanese migrants to Australia, improving one's lifestyle trumps economic factors (Ip, Wu and Inglis 1998) or future education opportunities for children (Waters 2005) that are more important for comparably well-off Taiwanese migrants.

Such a move is significantly braver for a Japanese *sarariman* with his culture of loyalty to the company, than for his Western counterpart. Putting your own needs ahead of collective or company's needs is frowned upon in Japan. However, as the social contract of exchanging loyalty for lifetime employment and its impressive benefits started breaking in the first "lost decade" of the 1990, the rise of individualist culture in Japan was a push factor for the growing wave of lifestyle migration (Nagatomo 2008). That very fledgling individualism is argued to make its imprint on how Japanese lifestyle migrants form their communities abroad.

1.3.3.4 Settlement patterns, communal structures and belonging

Contemporary Japanese communities abroad tend to be acephalous, with no social or geographic focal point. For example, there is no one geographical or psychological centre of Melbourne's Japanese community as there no perceived need for mostly middle-class migrants to cluster (Nagatomo 2008). London's Japanese too are dispersed around the city (White 2005), even if the *chūzai-in* expats tend to concentrate in the centrally located company-paid accommodation (Sakai 2012). There is no singular Japanese "community" in Vancouver either (Kato 2009, 2010, 2013, 2015): *Nikkeijin* (Canadians of Japanese descent) and *ijusha* (Japanese residents) live separately, many recent arrivals are fragmented into small groups around interests or connected on an individual basis through loose and temporary ties. As such, Vancouver's Japanese community has no visible geographical centre. *Ijusha* in particular show no interest in either "community" or communal activities or the history of Nikkei in Canada. "Self-seeking" and "finding work that they really want to do" are their main motivation. A similar opposition between Nikkeis and lifestyle migrants is at work in Los Angeles (Machimura 2005). Such communal disconnect results in a "de-territorialised community" where migrant networks are established and maintained on an individual basis (Nagatomo 2008).

In Bangkok, however, there is an established geographical focal point, Little Japan. Unlike in other cities with such clearly demarcated Japanese areas, Bangkok hosts no Nikkei (naturalised settlers) population - the last ones of the very few of them were forcefully expelled in 1945. Up until the 1990s, Japanese Bangkok was truly a "revolving door community" with *chūzai-in* expats arriving and departing with predictable regularity. Even now, the majority of Japanese residents make no plans to stay in Bangkok permanently (Chapter X.4).

In order to explain why, against all ostensible odds and in sharp contrast with many other comparable communities elsewhere, the Japanese Bangkok area is so well defined (Chapter VI.2) and also boasts strong well-established institutions (Chapter VII.1), this thesis explores the community's historical roots (Chapter III), its imported Japanese urban pattern (Chapter VI.2), and how the fanning out of the Japanese community further afield has been caused by both an increasing wealth gap (Chapter VI.1) as well as the expansion of the mass-transit rail system (Chapter VI.1.4). Central Bangkok's Japanese-oriented *comfort infrastructure* (Chapter VI.3) and Japanese-built rail transport replicating (Chapter VI.1.4) too have had a bearing in that. Chapter IX.1 looks into how Japanese economical involvement in the Thai economy affected that.

1.3.3.5 Global city as a nation-state project and its lifestyle migrants

The geographic distribution pattern of Japanese residents overseas in many ways mirrors the scope of the erstwhile Japanese Empire's actual spread or strategic interest but also Japan's situation as a Pacific island nation. It is focused mainly on the old and new *global cities* (Sassen 1991) of the Pacific Rim. The only outliers are London (White 2005, Sakai 2012) and NYC (Fujita 2008, Sooudi 2010), the par excellence global alpha ++ cities presiding over the overlapping imperial, economic, financial, and political linkages of the Free World/Pax Americana, of which Japan is an important lynchpin. Just like in New York City where Japanese migrants say they can "fulfill one's personal potential and live a fuller and freer life than in Japan"(Sooudi 2010:240), in China's pre-eminent global city Shanghai Japanese female migrants look for choices and opportunities (Hasegawa 2009). The specific context of London as a global city (Sassen 1991) is of considerable significance. For its Japanese residents, London's "size, position in global networks and significance in educational, cultural, media and other spheres create a highly diversified set of broader attractions" (White 2005:89).

Bangkok as a *global city* (Douglas and Boonchuen 2006) is also an outlier as it neither has the legacy of being part of a colonial empire like Hong Kong or Singapore, nor is it a long-established affluent major city of the First World like Vancouver, Sydney, or London. It rather belongs to a new crop of natively conceived, consciously created, and often very successful neo-liberal entrepôts like Dubai, Singapore, or Shanghai. Bangkok's special standing is reflected in two ways. First, in the way Japanese sojourners conceive their pre-arrival perceptions (Chapter V.1.1 and V.1.2) and how those play out in reality (Chapter V.1.3 and V.2). Second, in the way the Thai state chooses to manage its foreign migrant population (Chapter VIII).

Bangkok's strong draw for Japanese immigrants - it hosts the world's fourth largest number of Japanese residents - needs explaining as it is not immediately apparent. On the surface, Bangkok is neither a particularly pleasant nor any longer cheap city. Nor does it offer its middle-class immigrants the attraction of abundant cultural life like London (White 2005:92-93). Nor is it an officially Anglophone city, which is a major factor for Japanese people, who often move abroad either to improve their English or because English is their main foreign language of communication (White 2005,

Fujita 2008). There is also no ex-colonial (cultural and linguistic) connection of the sort that draws French residents to Morocco (Therrien and Pellegrini 2015) or British later-life migrants in Malaysia (Green 2015).

Chapter IV explores how Bangkok attracts and retains its Japanese lifestyle migrants, and what sets it above the local, regional, and global competition. The cultural affinities that Bangkok's Japanese find with their host society are listed in Chapter V.2.3 and the place Japanese residents occupy in Bangkok's global ethno-cultural hierarchy is explained in Chapter V.2.1 and V.2.2. The extent of their post-colonial nostalgia is explored in Chapter V.1.2. The role of Bangkok's lingua franca in how Japanese residents make home in the city is attested in Chapter VII.2.2.

1.3.3.6 Receiving structures of the host society

Historically, the host country's attitudes towards immigration can undergo an uneven evolution with often unpredictable turns between indifference, hostility, and opportunism. The relations between the state and migrant labour, in terms of providing paths for naturalisation, political rights, or retirement provision, the mainstays of the post-war embedded liberalism model (Castles 2011) differ vastly from country to country. In the Gulf states like the UAE, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, etc. local populations are largely outstripped in numbers by foreign workers on time-limited work contracts, who, however, have next to no opportunity of becoming fully fledged citizens there (Malecki and Ewers 2007, Sater 2014). In the USA, foreign-born U.S.-trained PhDs are made automatically eligible for permanent legal resident status (Lan 2013), while many unskilled workers from its southern neighbours can still hope for the same. In Russia, migrant workers from Central Asia are often denied access to healthcare or legal protection but also retirement benefits upon return to their home countries (Ryazantsev et al 2010). The more socially oriented European Union used its two most recent enlargements to capitalise on the cheaper educated work force from the new member-states. However, equal citizen rights for migrants are guaranteed between the richest and poorest members (Menz and Caviedes 2010).

Japan's ambiguous position as the only non-Western great power, modern empire, and developed nation has been inflecting how Japanese migrants were treated by their host societies (Chapter III). For example, migrant-oriented Western countries such as the USA, Canada and Australia have gone full circle from first welcoming cheap Japanese labour (Chapter III.1), to later introducing often humiliating curbs and blatantly racist policies, and further to the internment and prosecution of Nikkeis, and finally to welcoming Japanese expats, tourists and investment after a brief moral panic of "Japanese invasion" in the 1980s. Latin America followed a similar trajectory (Adachi 2006) until local Nikkeis started departing en masse to Japan for "repatriation" (Hirabayashi et al 2002). Siam/Thailand's history of dealing with its Japanese migrants has been rather different, inflected by sociopolitical developments (Chapter III).

The contemporary approaches to handling Japanese immigration are largely inflected by its status as an affluent economy and its citizens enjoying visa-free access to most countries. In similarly positioned

countries, Japanese residents enjoy favourable but limited rights. In Hawaii, long-term residence is not easy to obtain even if a path to naturalisation is widely open (Igarashi 2015). Australia strategically chose to follow the multi-culturalism path as a method of dealing with the consequences of its ethnically diverse population (Nagatomo 2008:7), so Japanese sojourners are largely left to their own devices.

The position of Japanese migrants in Bangkok's socio-cultural hierarchy has always been rather exalted (Chapter V.2). Originally, it was, and still is, backed by highly favourable bilateral treaties securing their status in the country (Chapter III.1). Relative to Thailand's own position as a mid-income developing country, Japanese are a welcome presence in Thailand not only because they bring in their pensions, savings, and property investment but various types of transnational social capital (Chapter IX.2). At the same time, the Thai state is exercising a tight control of migrants' rights, whereby their economic freedom is ensured but political participation is severely curtailed (Chapter VIII.3). The Japanese state on the other hand, with its zero-tolerance of dual citizenship will not allow Japanese migrants to take deeper roots in their new country. I argue that this situation is one of the main reasons why the majority of Bangkok's Japanese remain transnational *sojourners* (Chapter VIII.3 and Chapter X.4) with a split sense of belonging (Chapter X.4).

1.3.3.7 From tourism to lifestyle migration

The connection between tourism and lifestyle migration has been widely noted in research literature. There is no doubt that tourism may, on occasion, inform the sojourner's decision to move countries, e.g., from the UK to Spain (O'Reilly 2013) or from Japan to Thailand (Yamashita 2008). Tourism experience is often a factor for relocation to Australia (Mizukami 2007, Nagatomo 2008) and Hawaii (Igarashi 2015). Many Japanese migrants had previously experienced Australia (Nagatomo 2008) and Canada (Kato 2015) on working holiday visas or during their studies abroad. For example, in Mayumi Ono's (2005, 2009, 2015) anthropological account of some types of non-*chūzai-in* Japanese sojourners in Bangkok, *international retirees* and *sotokomori* are under the rubric of *lifestyle migration* and linked to the mass tourism exposure. Commenting on such links, Yamashita (2008) argues that they should be "seen not as migrants but rather as long-staying tourists searching for their own "real" selves. However, does a pleasant getaway with a frozen margarita in hand necessarily lead to a transcontinental uprooting?

Fieldwork findings for this research, indeed, problematise such notions. For example, lapsed *chūzai-in* expats or people not familiar with Thailand prior to arrival are a very common presence amongst Bangkok's Japanese sojourners. Many of them spend a great part of their adult lives in Bangkok, buy a home, start a business, give birth to and raise children. By any yardstick, that is not "just a kind of tourism" (Yamashita 2008) even though the "foreign adventure" excitement is, indeed, part of the emotional landscape of Bangkok's Japanese experience (Chapter X.2). Nevertheless, why do other tropical, more laid-back destinations, either domestic or international, not seem to attract Japanese

sojourners in equally high numbers? If azure waters and an unhurried pace of life are decisive factors in international relocation, how come it is not coral-sanded Krabi or leafy Chiang Rai but fast, brash, and chaotic Bangkok that attracts such a disproportionate amount of Japanese residents despite having no beaches and next to no parks yet boasting the world's third longest working hours (Swiss Bank survey data 2015) and the world's 12th worst traffic jams (INRIX Global Traffic Scorecard 2017)? The complex workings of Bangkok's attraction for Japanese migrants are dealt in depth in Chapter IV.

One aspect of the tourism to migration connection omitted in the existing research is the role of tourist infrastructure in lifestyle migration. Bangkok's highly developed tourist infrastructure is a legacy of both its pro-American stance during the Vietnam War and the sustained commitment of successive Thai governments to economic liberalism. The sheer numbers of Japanese tourists make feasible a wide range of *comfort infrastructure*: Japanese-g geared shops, restaurants and numerous niche-marketed service business such as second-hand manga stores or Okinawan ramen bars (Chapter VI.3.2). It does not only make Bangkok "just as comfortable as Tokyo" but also keeps Japanese residents connected with their established Japanese consumerist patterns, thus supporting their situation as transnational sojourners (Chapter VI.3.3).

The above outlines the scope of the inquiry of this thesis. The following chapter explains its research methodology and setup.

II Chapter II. Research methodology and setup

II.1 Sampling and research design

This study is based on empirical data collected through my involvement with the community between 1996 and 2015, participant observation as part of ethnographic fieldwork carried in 2014-15, during which I interviewed a convenience sampling of Bangkok's Japanese sojourners based on their response to a questionnaire. A host of secondary data from Thai and Japanese media, legal and governmental sources as well as economic and political science research has further been brought in to contextualise the empirical data. Although the epistemological and methodological foundations of this thesis are grounded in anthropology and sociology, it also draws on research and theoretical models from history, political science, international relations, and cultural studies.

II.1.1 Selection of the site

Thailand has the world's fourth largest community of Japanese citizens, nearly three quarters of them concentrated in Bangkok (Japan MOFA data 2018). Largely bypassed by academic attention, this migrant presence, however, offers a very particular case for understanding the construction of contemporary migrant belonging. First, this is a migration flow from a rich country to a poorer country, the direction less explored in the studies of migration. Its intra-Asian context problematises post-coloniality in a number of ways. Both countries are non-Western and have never been formally colonised, yet the power relationship between them is skewed (Chapter V.1). That asymmetry reflects on a variety of aspects of the construction of Japanese belonging in Bangkok be it economic (Chapter IX), legal (Chapter X), or the physical setup of (Chapter VI). Uncharacteristically for post-war Asia, there

is no bad blood between the two nations, nor are there any explicit social tensions, resistance, or discrimination between the migrants and their host society. As both countries are Asian, the racial element usually seen as lying at the core of asymmetrical power relationships is absent here. However, Bangkok's position as a global city, enjoying a very high level of connectedness into the global economy and thus foreign direct investment, lends well to exploring links between global capital and global labour.

Little Tokyo in the Phromphong and Thong Lor sections of Sukhumvit with its long history and the highest concentration of Japanese residents is considered the heart of Bangkok's Japanese community (Chapter VI.1 and Japanese Bangkok map in Appendix A). Given its many Japanese-owned shops and restaurants, observing the shopping and dining out habits of Japanese sojourners was the easiest there (Chapter VI.3.2). The faded glory of the once mighty Fuji Super pointed towards some important trends in the shifting communal structure (Chapter VII.1.3). The Sukhumvit branch of the Nijonjinkai offered a glimpse into the richly diverse *naraigoto* (hobby club activity) life of mostly *furute* (old hands) ranging from gospel singing to tap dancing (Chapter VII.1.1).

However, the geographical spread of the community has been pushed by the rising rents and property prices (Chapter VI.1.1) but also facilitated by the recent expansion of Bangkok's monorail and underground railway systems (Chapter VI.1.4). Many respondents live farther afield in the more affordable sections of Sukhumvit, in the leafier Sathorn area, or even in the Bang Na industrial park right outside Bangkok proper, where most Japanese-run manufacturing facilities lie (Chapter VI.1). Many areas of Bangkok have become more palatable for Japanese occupancy thanks to the traffic-beating Sky Train and Metro links: the previously low-key Ari is now considered *the* place for young Japanese professional local hires. However, rent considerations and cheaper food still make the grittier Makkasan a magnet for the more budget-conscious Japanese retirees, students, and floaters. As the Skytrain's Sukhumvit line keeps extending, so do many Japanese residents follow it to settle farther eastward away from Central Bangkok.

Soi Thaniya in the central Silom business area hosts the majority of Japanese corporate night entertainment spots as well as upmarket golf equipment shops all – frequented exclusively by male *chūzai-in* expats and evidently off-limits for non-Japanese social researchers. The Bon-odori Ramwong Contest, by far Bangkok's grandest regular Japanese event, was held in the National Stadium, right behind the perennially upbeat and trendy Siam Square (Chapter VII.1.2.). As the Japanese community's numbers and diversity increase, its presence becomes more dispersed across Bangkok's cityscape. The Tai Chi Contest I attended with some of my research participants was held at the gymnasium of a local school in the Phaya Thai area. *Kenjinkai* (prefecture associations), *dōsōkai* (alumni associations), *ritayaa kurabu* (international retirement clubs) meetings are held regularly in various public venues around Bangkok.

II.1.2 Research data sets and personal data protection

Understanding the local nature of global processes at play in the researched community's transnationalism and the sense and materiality of its belonging required data from a combination of macro- and micro-perspectives. My own empirical data was contextualised with the help of multidisciplinary secondary sources as well as government, media, and legal sources from Thailand, Japan and beyond. Public-domain Thai and Japanese government publications on statistics as well as migration and citizenship laws were used extensively for data on demographics (Chapter III.4), economy (Chapters VI.3 and IX.1), diplomatic relations, and migration and citizenship laws (Chapter VIII). Bangkok's numerous Japanese-language "free papers", albeit advertising-driven and light on editorial content, offered an important glimpse into some aspects of Japanese-Bangkok life such as the rude health of the "visa run" industry (Chapter VIII.2) or the explicitly *non-pori* apolitical attitudes of many Japanese residents (Chapter VIII.1).

The empirical data for this thesis comprises two sets. The first was collected over two decades of empirical observations in the community during the time I lived in and visited Bangkok between 1995 and 2014. The second one is 2014-5 fieldwork data gathered through participant observation, questionnaires, and interviews. The observational set was used selectively and with caution for historical insights or to track the relatively recent changes in the community. For example, in Chapter VI.1.4 I relate how the community spread farther afield from Little Tokyo with the advent and expansion of the Skytrain and the Bangkok Metro networks over the last three decades. Connecting the shifting role of community institutions with changes in the community composition (Chapter VII.1) was possible upon reflecting on my observations when living in and about Bangkok's Little Tokyo around the turn of the century. The same practice of anonymisation was applied to sources from the observational data set: the names were changed and recognisable life data altered.

My observations of the community started in September 1995 when I went to Bangkok to visit my Japanese friends - unwitting transnational sojourners themselves. A year later I joined them and have been in various ways involved with the local Japanese community since. Living there through the latter half of the 1990s and early 2000s, I became witness to a dramatic change in the community composition. It was around that time that the increasingly Internet-savvy and cosmopolitan individual sojourners began to outnumber the previously dominant corporate expats reduced to living on slowly but surely shrinking benefit packages. There is no scientific research looking at this period of Bangkok's Japanese community. To make sense of the recent developments, I have pieced together my own empirical observations with the available economic and demographic data. Juxtaposing that with the second set of data I obtained during my fieldwork in 2014-5 allowed to identify a variety of trends, for example, the increasing role of informal networks (Chapter VII.2) over the decreasing role of the institutional nodes (Chapter VII.1) or the evolving geographical spread and configuration of the community (Chapter VI.1).

Prior to my fieldwork, my exposure to the community involved personal friendships, work involvements, innumerable chance meetings, and daily observations of Bangkok's Little Tokyo and the

Japanese business/entertainment areas of Silom. I found my Bangkok job on the back of my Japanese proficiency and the company where I worked counted all major Thailand-based Japanese manufacturers and service providers as its customers. Thanks to that I could meet Japanese expats both during and after the office hours. Our office was situated on Asoke Road (Sukhumvit 21) favoured by Japanese companies as the location for their Thailand headquarters. Only a walk away from Little Tokyo in Sukhumvit 39, I would come across Japanese residents in the local gym, various lunch haunts, and retail outlets. Right across the street from my office building, the Japan Foundation ran a popular library and weekly screenings of Japanese movies attracting a steady coterie of Japanese residents and Japanophile Thais. At its language courses I made friends with Thai students of Japanese as well as their Japanese teaching staff. Thailand's largest university in the Ramkhamhaeng area where I lived attracted a growing number of Japanese students studying Thai language degrees. A one-off stint as a Japanese interpreter for the NHK during the 1997 Asian Games where many other local Japanese were employed in the same capacity, gave me an even wider exposure to various individuals I would have not come across otherwise. Given the shortfalls of the official quantitative data (Chapter III.4.1), my long and varied involvement with very different strata of Japanese Bangkok afforded me a unique qualitative insight into what types of migrants the community is comprised of (Chapter III.4.2).

My local social connections, linguistic competence and intimate knowledge of the community and the city where I spent many years of my life proved useful for my later fieldwork. Many insights were gained from my interaction with Bangkok's Japanese during my stay there between 1996 and 2002 and later visits. Particularly, most data about the community post-war history were collected from personal communication with Bangkok old hands (*furute*). By virtue of my employment, Japanese proficiency, and social connections, I was afforded very special personal access to many aspects and sections of Bangkok's Japanese community that would be nigh on impossible for a researcher. On the other hand, my local Thai connections and Thai proficiency gained me ethnographic insights into how the host society perceives and treats its Japanese residents. Re-assessing that exposure in the light of my later training in social sciences provided an important frame of reference understanding the social dynamic, composition, and recent history of the community.

In the light of many recent developments in Japan and Thailand since my departure from the country, an update on the life of the community and its members became required. For that purpose, a number of participants were recruited for semi-structured interviews. Formal in-depth interviews conducted during the 2014-2015 fieldwork provided finer-grained ethnographic data on the individual aspects of migrant belonging as well as community updates.

Personal data protection

Anonymisation is an ongoing concern in participant observation based fieldwork and its efficacy, necessity and usefulness are as far from clear obvious. Participants' anonymity in social research is 'normalised' (Tilley and Woodthorpe 2011: 198) so most ethical guidelines include it by default, SOAS's being no exception. However, some researchers, particularly in anthropology, contend that anonymity is counterproductive to 'empowering' participants (Grinyer 2002; Giordano et al. 2007) or even that

harm from a lack of anonymity has been exaggerated (Moore 2012). The very convention of confidentiality in qualitative research is challenged too as it "hinders transformative political action", thwarts "exposing and resisting hegemonic power arrangements"(Baez 2002), and "deflects activist agenda" (Nespor 2000:556). The practicalities of anonymisation are routinely questioned too: is it actually achievable at all (Van Den Hoonaard 2003)? With the advent of Internet search engines, it is now possible to identify individuals just by a few personal characteristics, which now need to be protected by "un-googling" them (Shklovski and Vertesi 2013). Despite all care taken, anonymization is still "likely to be most problematic precisely where it would be most useful—at the local" (Nespor 2000:548), because intimates and associates are very likely to be able to recognise personal details.

Yet, the case for anonymity is by far not lost. Anthony Kelly (2009) defends anonymity by deflecting its critics blaming it for not being perfect. Jan Nespor (2000) concedes that anonymisation does offers protection as long as what is discovered is insignificant and hence has little chance to put research participants in harm's way. If the researcher is to address the wishes of most research participants, then anonymisation is, indeed, the way to go (Corden and Sainsbury 2006). So it is too, should the researcher try to anticipate and prevent any potential misuse of data in the future (Wiles et al 2012:47). On the balance, both the critique and the supporting views expose anonymisation and confidentiality a social research ideal on par with "value-free judgment": highly desirable, if hardly achievable in perfection.

In this particular research, all personal data was subject to anonymisation to protect the identities of all individuals from both research data sets. Participants were only asked about their personal data insofar it was necessary for the purposes of research (minimisation): gender, age, education level, occupation, and duration of their stay in Bangkok. Personal data from the observational set was even further minimised to bare minimum as it was gathered without formal consent; all care was taken to make the individual data there unrecognisable and untraceable.

Such stringent data protection was carried out not simply to comply with SOAS's guidelines ethical guidelines but also because offering anonymity was absolutely crucial in order to gain potential participants' trust. Bangkok's Japanese are far from a conventional tightly knit community: they are spread around geographically (Chapter VI.1.1) and comprise disparate social groups (Chapter III.4.2) that can live rather separate existences (Chapter VII.2.1). However, connected increasingly through personal networks (Chapter VII.2.3) than any formal institutions (Chapter VII.2), Japanese residents use *uwasa*, informal sharing of personal information, as a means of intra-group social cohesion (Chapter VII.2.3). That trait would any personal data prone to potential leaking and oversharing. To alleviate such concerns and following the SOAS Ethical Guidelines, all personal data was anonymised to protect the identities of all individuals from both research data sets. In addition to changing their names, their identifiable life data such as exact age, occupation, and the details of their personal circumstances etc. was altered to prevent any potential tracking. However, I made sure that would not affect the data's sociological value such as belonging to a particular age, gender, or income bracket group.

The fieldwork participants were given informed consent forms translated into Japanese (Appendix C) explaining the purposes and risks of the research, how their data will be used and protected, that entering the research is voluntary and can withdraw at any point. I had two Japanese people, my main informant Masako and a friend, a Master's in Migration Studies graduate from King's College, go over the consent form to confirm that it could be readily and easily understood.

II.1.3 Questionnaire and interview

The time and resources limitations of fieldwork called for enhancing participant observation with more time-efficient sociological approaches. That put this research on the fence between anthropology and sociology, diverting the pure party line for either. The nature of the questions too called for a degree of "cutting to the chase", as some aspects inquired about would be very difficult to observe or fathomed through regular participant observation. Eliciting self-narratives through a subsequent interview was used to deepen the insight about such hidden aspects. Due to certain cultural peculiarities, access to the participants' social engagements or domiciles would be either extremely hard or impossible to gain even if given much more time for fieldwork.

The sheer diversity, geographic spread and lack of tightly-knit cohesiveness of Bangkok's Japanese community as well as the absence of definite data on its total numbers and composition made it unfeasible to pursue a *representative sampling* built around quantitative data. Instead, the research focus was put on developing a qualitative account of transnational sojourners' belonging as a social process based on data from participant observation, questionnaires and interviews conducted a *convenience sampling*, leaving the claim to universality and representativeness outside the scope of this research.

A four-page questionnaire with 54 questions (Appendix B) was sent to those who agreed to participate. A confidentiality letter in Japanese outlying SOAS ethics guidelines in relation to research participants was presented to each participant (Appendix C). Beside the generic personal data, the main themes explored were as follows: motivation to move to Thailand, expectations vs. reality; social life in Bangkok; food habits and preferences; sense of belonging; life in Thailand vs. life in Japan; attitudes to other Japanese, Thais, other nationalities, participation in Japanese community life and events. Once a filled in copy was received, a follow-up interview based on the replies was arranged. Two respondents asked me to fill it in myself during the interview. The questionnaire was compiled in Japanese. Masako, my main collocutor, offered invaluable advice in fine-tuning the question format to ensure that Japanese respondents would be comfortable answering them. Questions were kept open-ended where appropriate. The purpose of many questions was to invite the respondents to start thinking of certain aspects of their experience, with the view to have them elaborate on the topic in the interview.

Pre-sending the questionnaire to have the participants answer the questions in writing prior to the interview, served two purposes. First, it allowed the participants time for reflection and coming up with answers, as some questions were of a rather self-reflective nature. Still, some even more personal questions would actually be a follow-up on those asked in the interview. They were worded according to the rapport established during the interview. Second, despite some questions being quite personal, they overall were rather innocuous and not intrusive. That put the participants' minds at ease and allowed a degree of trust to be gained for an interview. However, the role of Masako's personal recommendation in that should not be underestimated.

The interviews had two objectives. First to clarify some written answers. Second, most importantly, to allow the participants to freely share their ideas on the subjects mentioned in the questionnaire. Unsurprisingly, in live communication much more data was obtained. Apart from supplementing the questionnaire data, interview recordings were combed for patterns and repetitions that would hint at some common themes unforeseen at the research proposal stage. For example, the oft-mentioned *seken* (social opinion) and *kaihōkan* (the sense of liberation) pointed towards two contradictory aspects of Japanese experience in Bangkok.

Two attempts at eliciting a BNIM style narrative (Wengraf and Chamberlayne 2006) during the interview were made. Both times the respondents found it awkward to follow the pattern and asked for a more conventional style interview with particular questions. After that, the BNIM style interview was abandoned.

II.1.4 Recruitment of participants, urban setting challenges, main informant, rapport with participants, and sampling bias

The site of this research presented a number of challenges, typical for urban settings. Despite the high numbers and localised concentration of Japanese residents in Bangkok, finding research participants proved no easy task. Generally, Japanese abroad tend to be wary of outsiders (foreigners). The caveats section of Japan's most popular guidebook series *Chikyu no Arukikata* has for many decades (in)famously insisted on exercising extreme caution with any Japanese-speaking foreigners abroad. Self-consciousness about one's foreign language proficiency can also keep Japanese abroad from engaging with foreigners. Many, if not all, respondents I managed to involve in my fieldwork research, however, having lived abroad besides Thailand or being married to a non-Japanese person, were comfortable dealing with a non-Japanese outside like myself.

Big city life too took its toll on the level and character of engagement for social research in a "revolving-door community". Like any other modern urbanites, Bangkok's Japanese are constantly busy managing their life projects, often juggling work, studies, hobbies, families, fitness, and various

cultural and social pursuits. For many, sparing time for a stranger to answer a long list of personal questions proved too much to ask for. Because of my limited budget, I could not offer incentives for the research participants, save for treating them to a drink and a cake at the cafes where we met. Two women explicitly told me they had agreed to participate because they had done research projects for their degrees and knowing how hard it is to recruit participants, wanted to help me out. With another participant, I had to sit perched on the side of her work desk and interview her in between her work phone calls - an apt allegory of Bangkok's frenetic pace of life.

Additionally, Bangkok's permanently clogged and creaking transportation infrastructure makes travel very time- and energy-consuming. To commit to even a brief interview meeting would take a considerable effort and sacrifice for potential participants. Many of them declined answering the questionnaire because it would have taken too much time. Two respondents filled out the questionnaire but declined interview for logistical reasons and a lack of time.

Finding a place to conduct interviews turned out to be a challenge. It needed to be a neutral public enclosed space in an easily accessible central location. I scouted venues around Central Bangkok, however, they all were too noisy for an extended research interview. The idea that blaring music equals cheerful atmosphere seemed too pervasive. It took a few trial-and-error runs before a suitable location, a quiet teahouse in the Thong Lor area, was finally found.

The fieldwork constraints did not allow me to develop a sufficient level of trust to be invited to the participants' home, which Japanese are generally very reluctant to do. Because of that, I had to rely on self-reporting to find out about some aspects of participants' private lives. To eliminate the usual discrepancies of self-reporting, I cross-checked questionnaire data in interviews by asking similarly worded questions or allowing participants to speak freely on the topic. For example, the topic of food preferences was first breached in the questionnaire by asking about the share of Japanese, Thai and Western dishes in one's weekly food intake. Additional inquiries on the subject in the follow-up interview gave more granular qualitative data about Japanese residents' views and attitudes and helped to identify common patterns (Chapter V.2.3).

Main informant

My main informant Masako (54) had been introduced to me by a mutual friend, a long-time Bangkok resident. Semi-retired with wide social connections both in Tokyo and Bangkok, very educated and knowledgeable, she would easily switch into the analytical explanatory mode when talking about Bangkok's Japanese. We had instant rapport and her willingness to help me with my research was truly boundless. I owe a great deal of insight to her sharing her observations and insider knowledge with me. Her active participation in recruiting interviewees helped reach outside my social circle in Bangkok, which had dwindled over the years since I moved away, and her good offices as a community insider opened up the avenues that otherwise would not be available to me. At the same time, it has

left a imprint on the sampling with a high participation of rather well-off and well-adjusted middle-age Japanese women (see Chapter II.1.5).

The conspicuous prevalence of contemporary female migration out of Japan has been noted starting from its very first instances in Hong Kong (Wong 2003). Elsewhere the female/male gender ratio is skewed too: 80/20 in Vancouver (Kato 2009) and 63/37 in Australia (Nagatomo 2008: 116). One of the reasons cited for this imbalance is that Japanese women through exposure to Western lifestyles "have come to see constraints and limitations imposed on them by the Japanese society" (Nagatomo 2005:181). Fieldwork research for this thesis ran into the same reality of Japanese women being the more visible and active members of the community, which affected its sampling bias. Bangkok's Japanese community has long relied on its female half: even in the early days, it was Japanese sex workers who supplied the initial capital for various trade enterprises (Chapter III.1).

Rapport with participants

People's willingness to take part in the research could have been negatively influenced by what and who I am: a stranger, with no direct relation to the community, non-Japanese, male. In many cases, to even get in touch at all I had to rely on the social capital of Masako, my Collocutor Zero, a well-connected Japanese socialite, and subsequently on the good offices of her friends. The people who I recruited without Masako's help were motivated by altruistic reasons to help me with my research.

The next step in developing contact was the consent form and the questionnaire. The former addressed all possible concerns in terms of how the gathered data would be used. The very formal style (*keigo*) it was written in put potential participants' minds at ease as it met their culture-specific expectations of how such documents should be put together. The questionnaire too was written in the most appropriate Japanese formality register and the questions were innocuous and non-intrusive enough to alleviate potential concerns.

Establishing initial personal rapport with my research participants often happened on the back of my Japanese proficiency. Speaking "grown-up Japanese" (*otonarashii hanashikata*) with all the right honorifics (*keigo*), correct grammar, and extended vocabulary evidently took many participants by surprise, which they did not hold back to express. Knowing how things should be done properly (*chanto*) and performing the social obeisances correctly (*reigi tadashisa*) is an important part of Japanese interpersonal communication. Decades of living, studying, and working with Japanese had prepared me for the task.

There were many cases when none of my tricks worked, particularly with Japanese men. My main collocutor Masako suggested that for them as the breadwinners (*kazoku no daikokugashira*) I offered

no apparent gain or benefit, 'if they can't make money off you, they won't even talk to you (*aite ni shite kurenai*)'. Some potential participants' attitude was outright hostile. One man introduced by Masako told me to my face, 'Who are you that I should answer your questions?'. Masako's explanation alone, however, did not account for gainfully employed women taking part in my research much more willingly. Overall, the interviewee sampling bias towards women reflected the distinct contemporary tendency for female emigration from Japan noted across research literature from Wong (2003) to Nagatomo (2008) and Kato (2015).

Participant recruitment methods

To work around such obstacles, participants were recruited in two ways. The majority were found by "snowballing" starting from Masako (54), my main informant. A few interview participants were also found by publishing adverts in the classified sections of Bangkok's Japanese-language newspapers. Posting adverts recruiting respondents in online forums for Japanese expats yielded no results. There were few signs of activity there altogether. The old-fashioned community notice board once prominently featured at the Fuji Super supermarket, rich in details of community life, had been dismantled and hence was not available (Chapter VII.1.3). Nor was the Japanese Association of Thailand helpful in finding participants, despite my making sure that I was referred to the right contacts there by the right people (Chapter VII.1.1). The passive-aggressive attitude of its entry-level officials made me give up pursuing that avenue rather quickly, even if I did manage to observe hobby club activities there.

At the end of each interview, I would explicitly, yet very politely (see *keigo* earlier in this subchapter) ask the interviewee to spread the word around their social circle to help me find more research participants. More often than not, that would yield no further recruitment splurge. When it did, there were strong social links between the interviewees and their introducees. That downside of the snowballing method had resulted in a number of sampling biases.

II.1.5 Research limitations: representativeness and sampling bias

This research is qualitative and looks at belonging as a *social process*. The purpose is to understand what factors and forces are at play in the construction of belonging, and how it is experienced and made sense of, rather than to provide representative results or exhaustive descriptions of the social life and structure of the entire Bangkok's Japanese community. As such it does not attempt to be sociologically representative of the community as a whole since there is no conclusive quantitative data even on Thailand's Japanese population (Chapter III.2.1). The qualitative insight into the many kinds of Bangkok's Japanese residents is in Chapter III.2.2, although not all of them were equally covered during the fieldwork. Below I discuss the limitations of the convenience sampling of this research and how I compensated for them.

For the reasons explained earlier in Chapter II.1.4, men were substantially less represented (1:3 ratio) in the interview sampling as were some types of residents. *Sotokomori* (floaters) and corporate expats were not represented at all, however, interview participants were asked about their attitudes towards them. The exclusion was not deliberate but rather resulted from my choosing snowballing as the main participant recruiting method. There appeared to be a degree of social distance between different types of migrants, which themselves, however, do not necessarily form distinct social groups. It seemed to result from different lifestyles as defined, first, by the objective of their move to Thailand but also because of available resources to pursue certain activities. As Makoto (69, male retiree) commented that "for some *sotokomori* even the Skytrain fare is a luxury".

My main collocutor and the initiator of much of the snowballing sampling Masako is an upper-middle class university-educated Tokyoite. Her contacts tended to be either from similar social circles or in the more bohemian and class-diverse world of art she takes interest in. As a result, many of my interviewees were middle- and upper-middle class university-graduate women, often foreign educated and well-travelled, some married to non-Japanese. Their cosmopolitan exposure, linguistic proficiency set them apart from the Japan-dwelling Japanese, which, in its turn, inflected my fieldwork micro-level data. Their input had an imprint of their distinct life experience before and after moving to Japan. Despite the oft-repeated claim that Japan is a "90% middle-class society", there do exist class differences evident in various social markers. Many of my interviewees reported attending a prestigious university, studying abroad, working for a foreign company either in Japan or abroad, or having a foreign partner as a normal, matter-of-fact occurrence. However, some such markers are far from common relative to the general population in Japan. Many of them are often, if not exclusively the domain of the middle- and upper middle individuals, reflecting partly 21st century Japan's move away from a relatively flat class hierarchy (Chiavacci 2008).

Reported experience of Japanese life in Bangkok also often depended on income/class. Among such differences were the ability to live in the nicer areas of Central Bangkok, blessed with various consumerist conveniences (Chapters VI.1 and VI.3.2), to qualify for permanent residency (Chapter VIII.2) or to land high in Bangkok's ethno-social hierarchy (Chapter V.2.2). Also, as middle-class migrants equipped with *transnational cultural capital* (Chapter IX.2) many of my research participants have much less need to flock together for collective survival. That has reflected in the way the newer arrivals in the community have shifted away from residence in Little Tokyo (Chapter VI.1.1) and using communal nodes (Chapter VII.1) to a wider spread across Bangkok and linkages around shared interests, individual preferences, and informal networks (Chapter VII.2). Little Tokyo still stays a symbolic heart of the community, but now for mostly consumerist reasons (Chapter VI.2.2).

However, the opportunity and the desire to move and live abroad are not strictly class or income determined. The relatively affordable Bangkok attracts Japanese from all walks of life and income brackets (Chapter III.4.2) offering a range of residential choice for any budget (Chapter VI.1). Among the people I came across were scions of prominent families and broke students alike. The feature that seemed to enable their relatively smooth transitioning and incorporation into Bangkok's

socioeconomic fabric irrespective of their social differences was their internationally transferable cultural capital (Chapter IX.2).

In the face of the interviewee sampling bias, I cross-checked the data I collected from them with the data I gathered from participant observation encounters before and during the fieldwork as well as other levels of data. For example, the macro- (structural) and meso-level (institutional) data were not affected by the sampling bias and allowed to cross-check some micro-level data. For example, in Chapter VII.1.1 the general avoidance by many recent arrivals of the Nihonjinkai events reported by many interviewees was countered by the Nihonjinkai's vigorous club activity, thus pointing towards diverging patterns of institutional attendance between different community groups.

Certain characteristics were rather constant and irrespective of social class or income bracket and occurred in both micro-level data sets over an extended period of time. Among most important common personal characteristics among Bangkok's Japanese, interest in foreign cultures, living abroad, or relationships with non-Japanese romantic all act as powerful, if not the only and not always decisive, determinants in one's desire to move and remain abroad. That echoes with Fujita's (2008) outward-looking Japanese cultural migrants to NYC and London and the control group of those who stayed in Japan. It also coincides with the bell curve distribution of self-reported class belonging in Japan (Cabinet Office data in Sugimoto 2014:40). On closer inspection, however, the causal relationship between such determinants and their outcomes is not necessarily mono-directional. Some research participants 'developed a taste' for living abroad while on one's own or one's partner's corporate assignment. An overview of common intra- and inter-group similarities and differences among various types of residents is included in Chapter III 4.2.

II.1.6 Self-reflexivity as a social researcher

My engagement with the researched community goes back to 1996 when I landed my first job in Bangkok after studying in Japan. I found it through my Japanese connections and I was hired because of my Japanese expertise to work with Japanese customers. Over the next six years, I worked and socialised with local Japanese. Later I went back numerous times, including for my fieldwork in 2014-15. Over the next two decades after my fateful Osaka-Bangkok flight back in 1996, Bangkok has morphed into an almost unrecognisable city. Bashful wistfulness and sometimes laid-back rustic attitudes have given way to cultural confidence and a relentless pace of life. Despite a high turnover of Japanese residents, some stayed, with varying degrees of success in adapting to Bangkok's drastic transformations.

As a social researcher, I am part of my research project just as its participants. This view, generally if not yet universally accepted across the social sciences, has wide implications. What I am, how I present myself, my presence in the observed environments does have a degree of influence on my research. An awareness of my background and social environment does help see that the research questions I ask are a product of a certain social environment. However, solely "turning the most objectivist gaze ...

onto the private person of the enquirer" (Bourdieu 2003:281) and even onto the entire scientific field would leave my individual agency out of the scope.

My opinions on many of the issues touched upon in the questionnaire and the interviews have been influenced by my previous experience of life in Bangkok among Japanese residents. The research questions of this thesis are to a large extent a product of British or, broadly speaking, Anglo-Saxon academia, in which I have spent last nine years and where my formation as an academic took place. However, I am neither a Westerner, nor Asian, and my life experience of moving countries every several years has immersed me in multiple cultures, giving me an outsider-insider position in relation to them.

My deep cultural and linguistic immersions, first in Japan and then in Thailand, have undoubtedly affected my attitudes and perceptions. Although I do not claim a cultural insider status, the very nature of the way I spent my time in both countries, practically outside the expat circle, using the local language for everyday purposes, living with no external funding or anywhere to go back to, afforded me a deeper level of insight into both societies.

No presentation of self is "neutral" (Frankenberg, 1993:31). Sending out a consent form written in very formal Japanese, signed as a researcher from the University of London did exert a certain influence in recruiting participants. From my participants' feedback, speaking the appropriately formal Japanese during the interviews created an atmosphere of professionalism and, at the same time, safe distance as the interviewees felt that they could share personal information with me because I was an outsider and asking questions for work purposes.

II.2 Interview participants

Out of the overall fifteen interview participants five were men, and ten - women. The age range spanned between 28 and 70. Four women and one man had a Japanese spouse, while two women were married to Sino-Thai men, and one divorced. One woman was married to a Swiss national. Four men out of the five were single, one in relationship with a Thai woman.

Apart from the main participants with whom I had direct contact and in-depth interviews, various data was collected from peripheral participants I came across on my fieldwork. These included attendants and guests at gallery events showcasing Japanese artists, customers at a Japanese veterinary clinic in Thonglor where one of my participants regularly volunteered, members of a Japanese Tai Chi club and their friends, employees and members of the Japanese Association of Thailand, attendees at the Ramwong Bon-odori Taikai event, and Japanese people I had brief chats with around Bangkok. I did not collect their life data to the same extent as the main fieldwork participants. When using their input

in my research, I have changed their names and any recognisable identifiers. There were also a few people who declined to either fill in the questionnaire or agree to an in-depth interview but engaged in spontaneous conversations of various length.

Below are the interview participants' brief life stories that elucidate the reasons, objectives, and performance of their sojourn in Bangkok. A table with their more detailed life data is included in the Appendix at the end of this thesis. The age of participants is given as of at the time of interviewing in 2014-15. The names and some personal details were changed to protect privacy.

1. Teruko (53, female): Restaurant proprietress. Lived a few years in North America where she met her Thai husband. Moved with him to Thailand without any idea what it would be. Divorced and re-married a local Japanese man. Raising two children, both go to an international school.
2. Arisa (49, female): Tai Chi teacher, formerly a healthcare marketing manager. Finished a North American university, where she met her Sino-Thai husband. Moved to Bangkok after living in Japan together first 3 years. Daughter studies in Europe.
3. Jitsuko (37, female) Postgraduate student. Tokyo University graduate (Japanese equivalent of an Oxbridge graduate). Moved to Bangkok twice: first due to her own job transfer, then after returning to Japan when her husband was posted in Bangkok.
4. Manabu (45, male) Artist, university lecturer and lighting designer. Moved from NYC to Bangkok to advance his career in a more "laid-back" environment. First time arrived as a tourist, then had a personal exhibition, ended up teaching at a university while working on his artistic career. Two years in Thailand and planning to stay longer. Was attracted by Bangkok's burgeoning art scene and relative ease of career advancement.
5. Shin-ya 1 (23, male) Post-graduate student on an exchange programme in Bangkok. Interested in learning Thai massage for a year. Not interested in staying beyond his programme.
6. Shin-ya 2 (30, male) Artist. Came to Bangkok to have his exhibition and "for inspiration".

7. Shizuka (69, female) Housewife and volunteer for many Japanese institutions and events. Extremely active socially. Married her Sino-Thai husband 46 years ago. Considers Bangkok her home.
8. Hisae (68, female): Housewife. Ex-flight attendant back in the days when it was a glamorous job. Married a Japanese man who lived in Bangkok, moved there in the late 1960s. One of the *furute* (old hand) stalwarts of the community.
9. Misae (40, female) Housewife. Had lived 10 years in Europe before husband's sudden job transfer brought her to Bangkok with "but a suitcase in hand" as did not expect to stay long. Owns a condominium flat "not to waste money on rent". Plans to return to live in Japan in a year.
10. Yūta (43, male) Microbiologist researcher. Four years in Bangkok researching tropical diseases. Lives with his family in an apartment in Sukhumvit. Speaks Thai on the tourist level just enough to communicate with taxi drivers and to order food. Speaks English to non-Japanese colleagues and friends. Not interested in Japanese events or institutions.
11. Makoto (70, male) Retired provincial civil officer. Took his retirement as a "second life" (*dai-ni no jinsei*) to be spent abroad. Opted for Thailand over Malaysia and Singapore because had a Thai friend there. Nine years in Thailand, no plans to return to Japan. Speaks basic Thai with his Thai friends and volunteers for Japanese-run events.
12. Kayoko (43, female) Housewife. Moved to Thailand 10 years ago due to her husband's job transfer. Uncharacteristically, the assignment has been extended well beyond the usual 2-3 years. Has no plans to go back to Japan. Lives right outside Bangkok, in an industrial area with a high concentration of Japanese manufacturing facilities. Speaks little Thai because there is little opportunity to do that. Mostly Japanese friends: families of husband's colleagues, people from *naraigoto* clubs.
13. Kazue (35, female) Works at a high level for a Thai TV broadcaster. Came to Bangkok to work in a similar position with a Japanese TV channel. Married a Japanese man in Bangkok, quit her job when was told to go back to Tokyo. Lives with her husband in a condominium flat they own.

14. Yuri (28, female) Japanese language teacher. Came to Bangkok as an overseas volunteer. Works just outside Bangkok. Comes on weekends for fun and relaxation even if it is hard to afford that as a volunteer.

The influx of Japanese individual sojourners in Bangkok is a recent phenomenon but Japanese presence in the country goes back many centuries. This thesis takes care not to see contemporary social phenomena as transactional processes free from their historical background (Chapter I.2.1.3). Many of the important aspects of the contemporary Japanese community are the "accumulated labour" (Bourdieu 2010:81) of the previous generations and socio-economic processes of the yesteryear such as its institutional nodes (Chapter VII.1), transport (Chapter VI.2.1)) and comfort infrastructure (Chapter VI.3.2), or its privileged visa regime (Chapter VIII.2). Next chapter tracks down that accumulation from the early modern era to our days.

III Chapter III. Bangkok's Japanese: historicising Japanese migration to Thailand from unfair treaties to transnational mobility

Chapters IV and VIII of this thesis trace Bangkok's latter-day allure for global and Japanese migration to Thailand's post-war economic liberalism and liberal migration policies. However, historical evidence suggests that Siamese capitals were intensely cosmopolitan centuries drawing people from near and far long before the advent of Neo-Liberalism (Ruangsilp and Wibulsilp 2017). Siam's strategic location on the maritime route from the Pacific Far East to Western Eurasia, abundance of food and land, clement climate lacking extremes and calamities, and the populace's generally xenophilic disposition had historically made it a popular migration destination (Reid 1993). The Siamese royal courts and its institutions were consistently keen on hiring foreign professionals, among them Japanese mercenaries (Sansom 1978:413-4). In the chronically underpopulated pre-modern Southeast Asia the preferred booty from military conflicts was capturing foreign populations to resettle as labour force in one's own principality rather than expanding it through land annexation (Reid 1990:124, Scott 2010:64). Siamese kings complemented voluntary migration with the forced relocation of war captives from the neighbouring kingdoms and settling them in and around the capital city (Lieberman 2003: 297, Van Roy 2009).

As early as in the 16th century, the Siamese capital Ayutthaya, just eighty kilometres upstream from Bangkok, emerged as a pre-modern global city, where intercontinental trade links brought together Chinese junks and Dutch East Indiamen, and Frenchmen and Persians rubbed shoulders with Indians and Japanese (Ishii 1971, Baker 2003:52, Lieberman 2003). As in the 17th century Tokugawa Japan came to rank as Siam's largest trading partner (Iwao 1963, Ishii 1971), a thriving Japanese settlement was established in Ayutthaya where Japanese soldiers of fortune were joined by traders and religious refugees (Nagazumi 1999). Japanese residents there came to play important roles in bilateral trade and diplomatic relations and even at the high level of the Siamese polity (Polenghi 2009). However, Japan's isolationist *sakoku* policy introduced in 1633 and Siamese revolution of 1688 resulted in a long lull in Thai-Japanese relations. Migration between the two had petered out to nil until the latter half

of the 19th century when both countries embarked on modernisation. The Meiji Restoration and King Chulalongkorn's reforms opened a new chapter in Japanese migration to Siam. Understanding its character is easier thanks to the adoption of modern administrative techniques at the time that means there is much more recorded data available. However, Thailand's Japanese community has largely escaped the attention of social scientists and thus has never been taken into consideration when theorising global migration.

In the evolution of modern governance, social research came to supply state policies with terminology, statistics and models for migrant belonging and identity (Geiger and Pecoud 2010). As the socio-economic reality and forms of migration evolved, so did its scientific conceptualisation and policy attitudes (Betts 2011). The consensus in the sociology of migration is that they went through three stages: *assimilationism*, *multi-culturalism*, and *transnationalism* (Castles et al 2014). How do these concepts developed from the symbiosis of social research and social policy in relation to the Euro-American experience, however, apply to Japanese migrant belonging in Thailand and Thailand's policies towards its Japanese presence?

This chapter will historicise those by looking at how they emerged at the confluence of the economic and geopolitical trends of each historic period but also framed by the changing domestic situation in each country. It will track how the power relationship between Japan and Siam/Thailand, often relative to their mutual levels of modern development, technological and administrative advancement, reflected on the situation of Japanese presence in Siam/Thailand. Its evolution can be divided into three somewhat overlapping phases, explored in the following sub-chapters. On the timescale of sociological migration conceptualisation (Castles et al 2014), the first period broadly coincides with assimilationism, the second one with multiculturalism, and the third one with transnationalism. However, local characteristics left a significant imprint on the character of Japanese migration to Siam/Thailand in each historical era.

III.1 Japan's imperial ambitions, Siamese nation-building, and community institutionalisation

The early modern period spanning the latter part of the 19th century was characterised by the establishment of an unequal power relationship between Siam and Japan that was to last into the 21st century. In the 19th century, as the Industrial Revolution fuelled trade expansion and colonialism, Western pressure on Asia in the quest for markets, resources, and labour intensified. Siam and Japan remained the only two Asian countries not formally colonised. The real crunch, however, was between the degrees of modernisation success to acquire the ability to project power. Siam, wedged between the British and French colonial possessions, turned to modernisation in the latter half of the 19th century. Meiji Japan lifted its self-isolation in 1853. While court politics put Siamese reforms off for another two decades, Japan swiftly abolished the shogunate and embarked on vigorous reforms (Feeny and Siamwalla 1998). It went on to extend and solidify its nation-state border by annexing adjacent islands Ezo (modern Hokkaido), weaker neighbours such the Ryukyu Kingdom (modern Okinawa Prefecture) and Korea and went to successfully to take on first Imperial China and Imperial

Russia, prying from them a number of territorial possessions such as the Kuril Islands and South Sakhalin. As a result of WWI, a number of German territories in the Pacific went under Japanese jurisdiction.

So did Siam, consolidating its nation-state boundaries by annexing neighbouring principalities (Winichakul 1994). For a limited period since the beginning of Thai modernisation till the end of WWII, the ambitions of the newly established nation-state switched to territorial acquisition (Winichakul 1997). With its attention on the adjacent, formerly semi-independent realms, it kept annexing, losing, re-gaining, and assimilating them under the umbrella of the newly constructed pan-Thai national identity (Winichakul 1987). Although Japan and Siam started off modernisation at about the same time and with a similar advantage, their paths diverged early on and that told on the migration flow between the two.

The newly gained economic and military power (*fukoku-kyohei*) put Japan in many ways on a par with the Western powers, who, however, for a long time would not treat it as an equal (Nakata-Steffensen 2000). Japanese migrants in the West were subject to explicitly racist discriminatory policies (Adachi and Befu 2010). In Asia, however, Japan was the supreme power, if overshadowed by the Western colonial empires. After WWI Japan was given free reign in the Asia-Pacific, which it used to expand its territorial base by colonising, annexing, drawing other Asian nations into its sphere of influence. Japan's aspirations to become established in Siam were time and again curtailed by refusals to extend extraterritoriality to Japanese citizens or grant them equal rights with Westerners. Towards the end of the 19th century Japan seized the moment by imposing its own unequal treaties on Siam, securing a privileged position for its subjects residing in the kingdom (Hong 2003). Japan's persistent diplomatic effort in Siam, rising military clout, and economic power, ensured that the Japanese community enjoyed preferential treatment compared to other Asians.

In modern Siam of the latter half of the 19th century, Japanese immigrants were struggling to establish themselves economically and politically (Swan 1986, Ishii 1988 and Yoshikawa 1987). Although they did not face outright discrimination, Japan's aspirations to be treated on a par with the Powers were time and again curtailed by the Royal Court's Western advisors refusing to extend extraterritoriality to Japanese citizens or grant them equal rights with Westerners. Although many Japanese settlers married Thai women at the time, they also made a considerable effort to retain their citizenship, run Japanese schools for their children, and maintain strong links with Japan (Ishii 1988 and Yoshikawa 1987). They may have rooted themselves firmly in the new country but that was far from assimilationism that was the order of the day for migration of that era.

Compared to other destinations, early modern Japanese migration to Siam was extremely modest (Swan 1986). For a long time, Japanese immigrants were struggling to establish themselves

economically and politically (Swan 1986, Ishii 1988). Throughout the first two decades of the 20th century Japanese businesses continued to carve out a market niche in Siam. They were first brushed off as a low-level threat to Western preponderance both economically and politically (Flood 1969). They were also ill-equipped to compete with the well-established Chinese and Indian merchant networks. Japanese industrial products at the time were of infamously poor quality and had a hard time competing with English and German goods (Swan 1986). In the independent Siam, WWI presented a major turn in fortunes as the colonial powers lost trade ground in Asia. Japanese products in the meantime improved in quality and range and their market share and prestige increased (Swan 1986).

In the early years of Asian modernisation, one of the main sources of revenue and investment for Japanese businesses in other bustling Asian port cities was sex labour by Japanese women known as *karayuki-san* ("Ms. Gone to China"), trafficked from impoverished rural areas (Swan 1986, Mihalopoulos 2003). Despite their direct economic contribution to establishing Overseas Japanese communities, they were considered a blemish on Japan's fragile international reputation (Sone 1990). Their high numbers in Singapore (Warren 2003), Manila (Terami-Wada 1986), and British Malaya (Shimizu 1997) provided the much-needed money to help the local Japanese communities establish themselves. However, it took significantly much more time in Bangkok with its much lower port activity and hence very few Japanese sex workers. Because of that, Japanese traders there for a long time had little starting capital and thus experienced a great difficulty entering the Siamese market (Flood 1969). Despite that, Bangkok's Japanese community established and strengthened its institutions such as the Japanese Business Club, later renamed the Japanese Association of Thailand, and then a Japanese school (Ishii and Yoshikawa 1987).

From Chulalongkorn's reign to the end of WWII, Siam's policies were centred around the drive to modernise and interest in importing foreign expertise and manufactured goods. The few Japanese technical advisors hired by the Siamese court were largely outnumbered by Westerners. (Ishii and Yoshikawa 1987). The struggling Japanese small-time traders in Siam were left to their own devices. In 1894, the Thai government tried to lure Japanese immigrants with an offer of "a considerable area of land... on an 80-years' leave without any rent being charged" (The Straits Times, 3 April 1894, Page 3). Although two projects following from that - sericulture and farmer settlement - first managed to gain Japan's official backing, eventually they failed (Otsuka 1982, Ishii and Yoshikawa 1987). After that, the Meiji government, had little interest and resources in supporting Japanese migrants or entrepreneurs in Siam. Interested in remittances and tackling the overpopulation, it then quickly focused its emigration goals on the economically vibrant Asian port cities and the Americas (Swan 1986). Compared to those, Siam/Thailand for a long time remained a very minor destination for Japanese migration. Meiji Japan was preoccupied with Japanese "riffraff" in Siam - sex workers, adventurers, and petty criminals - and tarnishing Japan's image abroad and thus being an obstacle to Japan achieving the same status as the Western powers (Ishii 1988).

Just as the modernising Siamese state became concerned with its numerous ethnic Chinese immigrants, the few Japanese migrants never became a concern for Thai nationalism. It took Siam half

a century of political wrangling and nationalist soul-searching to make headway from ominously declaring Overseas Chinese "the Jews of the Orient" to forcefully, and in the end successfully incorporating them into the fold of the modern Thai ethnicity. The Japanese migrants, small in numbers and with a secured privileged position, however, kept staying under the radar screens of the system, unaffected by their host society's assimilationist efforts towards its migrant populations. Legally, Siam's Japanese residents time were ranked on a par with Westerners and avoided the fate of Sino-Thais forcefully integrated into the Thai nationhood.

Those two contrasting outcomes happened on the back of Japan's ascending power and prestige, while China was still an underdog struggling to find its way to become a unified, prosperous and powerful modern nation able to protect the interests of its citizens abroad. As the most successful and powerful nation in Asia at the time, Japan extended its empire and subsumed the nations it could not conquer into the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, thus presiding over the entire East and Southeast Asia. This period peaked out by WWII when Japan invaded and occupied Siam, parts of China, and many other Asian countries. Japan's war defeat, however, resulted in the forceful repatriation of all Japanese residents from all those territories in 1945 (Watt 2010).

Despite such an abrupt end, this period bequeathed a long-lasting legacy to the Japanese community. First, it enshrined its privileged legal status. Second, it established a core of institutions that would keep serving as the backbone of the community well into the 21st century. Chapter VIII examines how the bilateral treaties dating, in a regularly updated form, back to the 19th century still secure Japanese citizens' extended rights in Thailand and legally frame their belonging there. Chapter VII tracks the way the changes in the community's composition that gathered momentum in the 1990s have affected the way Japanese sojourners articulate their belonging to the community.

III.2 Japan's post-war economic expansion, Thai economic liberalisation, and the revolving-door expat community

The end WWII also heralded the end of territorial changes in Asia. Most newly independent nations soon stabilised within their colonial borders. For those who managed to build a functioning nation-state the next task was building modern economies. Once Thailand's geographic extent was set, the 1950s economic liberalisation finally enabled achieving modern economic growth (Feeny and Siamvalla 1998). It is also around this time that Thailand's "Chinese question" was decisively solved and its modern name Thailand was firmly established (Tong and Chan 2001).

The post-war period saw not only the end of the Japanese empire but also the end of mass economic migration from Japan (Befu and Adachi 2010). In the early years after WWII, a defeated Japan fell under the US military control and was forced to implement sweeping social and political reforms.

Bolstered by the US military contracts during the Korean War, the Japanese economy rose from the ashes of its war defeat and embarked on its own economic miracle (Forsberg 2000). As material hardship was quickly becoming a thing of the past, the previously dominant agricultural settler migration quickly fizzled out (Befu and Adachi 2010).

After various restrictions on Japanese diplomatic and trade activities were lifted, Japanese business began making a global re-entry on the back of its economic soft power: investment, overseas manufacturing facilities, and international trade. The migrant work force to people that vigorous expansion abroad were the *chūzai-in* expats and increasingly their accompanying families. Starting from the 1950s, on the heels of Japan's global soft-power expansion, tens of thousands of corporate employees were routinely posted on generously paid temporary assignments to their companies' overseas subsidiaries (Befu 2003). Although this phenomenon started before WWII (Asobu 199, Nakanishi 2016), it is the post-war economic boom that propelled them to a prominent international role. The *chūzai-in* became the main type of Japanese presence abroad from the 1950s well into the 1980s (Akagi 1992).

As Japan's rapidly growing economy generated an excess of capital that begged to be exported, Thailand soon emerged as a preferred target of Japanese investment. For the first time since the early 17th century, Japan again became Thailand's largest source of imported goods, especially machinery and equipment (Jiranyakul and Brahmasrene 2012:111). What Japan failed to accomplish earlier by military means, it did this time with its soft power. As Japan's soft-power advancement and economic expansion in Thailand grew, corporate expatriates and their families staying for a few years on temporary business assignments became the most visible and documented Japanese presence in Thailand. Their numbers grew from 379 in 1955 to 14,289 in 1990 (Japan MOFA data) riding on the surge of Japanese investment, which in 1989 amounted to 69 percent of all FDI in Thailand (Hartley 2017). The Thai state at the time was busy assimilating its large Chinese minority who later ended up highly creolised yet decidedly Thai (Bao 2001), whilst keeping challenging Thai statehood with their ambivalent identity (Tejapira 2015). Seen by the Thai state as a foot soldier of the much-wanted Japanese capital, the Japanese *chūzai-in* was welcome on his own terms and bypassed by the assimilationist effort.

Ethnographic evidence bears out this distinction in relation to Japanese expat communities: cultural aloofness and social exclusion from the host society run as common threads (Glebe 2005, Ben Ari 2005). There is a good reason for that. *Chūzai-in*'s stay abroad is an explicitly temporary experience. For most it is an inevitable career stepping stone for a promotion back home. It is more important to keep an ear to the ground on the goings-on in the Tokyo HQ than to the local people's rich cultural output. Their assignment is sometimes taken as a reward when stationed in a desirable city (NYC, London, Paris) or as a trial to soldier through when the business mission takes them to a dangerous, less developed location. In either case, the bond with their new temporary home is limited and very business-like (Trevor 2013).

For a few post-war decades Bangkok's Japanese population was limited to a few hundreds of constantly rotating *chūzai-in*: corporate, diplomatic and media expats on temporary assignments, and their families. However, as private travel abroad from Japan was banned until 1964, only people on government or corporate business trips were allowed to leave the country. The latter made up the majority of the Japanese presence in Thailand where Japanese corporations started to establishing trade offices and factories as early as the 1960s. In Bangkok too, they formed a closed club revolving around Japanese supermarkets, golf clubs, and entertainment quarters in Soi Thaniya in the Silom area (Kusaka 2000). Their aloofness was confounded by their views of Thailand as a Third World country (Mitski 2011)

Although corporate expats would only be stationed for a few years and grow no roots in Bangkok, their presence gave rise to the development of communal and physical infrastructure to accommodate their needs: real estate agents, schools, bookshops, golf clubs, Japanese restaurants and supermarkets, etc. Many high-rise luxury condominiums in Central Sukhumvit became occupied predominantly by *chūzai-in* expats (Mitski 2011). However, in Bangkok they never established completely segregated areas like, for example, in Jakarta where heavily guarded purpose-built Japanese-only residential compounds were built. Together with the rapidly growing Japanese tourist arrivals, the *chūzai-in* and their families were behind creating Japanese *comfort infrastructure* abroad: retail facilities, food outlets, and service providers geared for Japanese specific consumerist needs.

The first four post-war decades dramatically changed the landscape of Japanese presence in Bangkok. Chapter VI explores the role of Bangkok's Japanese *comfort infrastructure* and the physical space, into which contemporary Japanese sojourners arrive, in the way it enables and frames their belonging. Chapter VII explores how the shift in community's composition have changed the way the communal infrastructures are used and related to as a practice of belonging to the community. Chapter IX looks at the role of Japan's economic clout in Thailand in shaping the sojourners' belonging.

III.3 Japan's peaks out, Thailand's demographic and economic maturity, and individual migrant transnationalism

Always much less numerous than the *chūzai-in*, Japanese non-expat migrants, students, foreign wives at the time would fine the 'land of promise' (*akogare no mokutekichi*) in the US and, to a lesser extent, other Western countries (Befu and Adachi 2014). Enabled by Japan's newly acquired affluence and more favourable visa regulations it slowly grew in numbers from the 1970s. Often spearheaded by women, this new type of non-corporate migration was first epitomised in Ieda Shoko's scandalous non-fiction book *Yellow Cab* (1991). As it came to the attention of social researchers, this new wave of migration was variously conceptualised as *lifestyle* (Sato 2001, Sakai 2003:131, Nagatomo 2008), *cultural* (Fujita 2009), or *spiritual* (Igaki 2003). Thailand would receive only a trickle of such non-*chūzai-in* Japanese residents: individual entrepreneurs, spouses married to Thai nationals, students (Japan MOFA data). However, that was about to change just as the economic trajectories of Japan in Thailand both took a drastic turn.

In the 1980s, Japan's "bubble economy" reached its vertiginous peak. Thanks to the yen appreciation (*endaka*) by half its value, a large number of manufacturing jobs were shifted overseas, including to Thailand, in the process known as *kudoka*, "hollowing out" (Horaguchi 2004, Cowling and Tomlinson 2011). The rise of the service sector jobs did not make up socially for that loss, as such are often less paid, less fulfilling, and less secure (Bailey 2003). The life standard for the majority of Japan's population has stagnated amidst a drastic change of domestic rhetoric about Japanese society from "social harmony orientated" and "90% middle-class" to *kakusa shakai* ("society of inequality") divided into *makegumi* (losers) and *kachigumi* (winners) (Slater 2011). That way, Japan is once again behaving like part of the West, rather than of Pacific Asia where the newly acquired and still booming prosperity is ideologised with tropes of national unity and collective good around Asian values (Thompson 2001).

A change in attitudes and a difference in "economic pressure" between the newly emerged Asian "economic miracles", ironically often fuelled by high levels of by Japanese capital activity, and the "economically depressed" Japan had contributed to making the former attractive for migration from the latter. First, Japanese *office ladies* (female white-collar employees) stationed in such dynamic, yet decidedly less affluent places than Japan such as Hong Kong and Singapore, would quit their jobs to try their luck in local employment, sacrificing higher salaries for a promise of a more fulfilled life (Ben Ari 2003, Wong 2003, Sato 2001). Then, as the four decades of Japan's unprecedented economic growth came to a screeching halt in 1991, Japan entered the so-called *lost decades* of flat economic growth and painful economic restructuring (Funabashi and Kushner 2015). With fewer attractive economic opportunities domestically, Japanese from all walks of life, ages, and income brackets take to leaving their homeland. Yoshio Sugimoto's (1993) bestseller *How to Cease Being a Japanese* became the symbol of an era when leaving Japan and its ways behind became an established, even fashionable trend for many Japanese people. More often than not, their preferred destinations would be other Asian countries of the Pacific Rim, from Korea and China (Kawashima 2018 and 2019) to Malaysia (Ono 2015) and Singapore (Ben Ari 2003). Some would venture further down to Hawaii (Igarashi 2015) and Australia (Sato 2001, Mizukami 2007, Nagatomo 2008).

As Japan now enters a fourth decade with no signs of return to economic growth, the number of registered long-term and permanent Japanese residents abroad shot up from just over 600 thousand in 1990 to nearly 1.4 million in 2015 (Japan MOFA 2017 data). If, historically, overpopulation was often a major factor in mass migration from the Japanese Isles, contemporary migrants are leaving behind a shrinking nation. In 1989 the total fertility rate dropped beyond the reproduction minimum of 1.57 children per married couple. The so-called *1.57 Shock* was, however, followed by an even further contraction down to 1.26 and is projected to reach 1.16 in 2020 (Aoki 2013). The emigration and the dwindling birth rate are to a degree, offset by the highest number of non-Japanese living in Japan ever since the end of WWII (1,351,970 officially registered, MOFA data 2017), yet not enough to prevent the depopulation trend.

In the meantime, Thailand's development trajectory started approaching that of Japan. The post-war period in particular saw the disappearance of one of the pull factors of the "low-pressure Southeast Asia": the low population density (Cleland 2001). Thailand's economic boom that started in the 1980s, fuelled to a large extent by Japanese capital (Pupphavesa and Pussarungsri 1994) created a vibrant labour market, an improving life standard, and increased financial in-flows from the West and Japan. In the next decade, Thailand's demographic "shift to an ageing society", unique in the region (Huguet and Chamrathirong 2011:17) contributed to the country becoming once again a net importer of labour (Manning 2002, Huguet and Punpuing 2005, Sciortino and Punpuing 2009). Under a considerable economic and demographic pressure, the Thai state adopted a more lenient stance towards both documented and undocumented immigration to satisfy business demands (Chantavanich et al 2007).

Thailand's need for low-skilled labour previously met mostly by migration from Thailand's poorer provinces, now became increasingly fulfilled also by migrants from its regional neighbours. Between 1990 and 2017 Thailand experienced a sharp surge in immigration flows: from 530,000 to 3.590.000 (WLO data). Thailand's need for low-skilled labour previously met mostly by migration from Thailand's poorer provinces, now increasingly becomes fulfilled also by migrants from its neighbouring countries. The integration of the formerly socialist Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, and Myanmar (Burma) back into the world capitalist system was followed by the "opening of borders to increased movement of people and trade within the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS)" (Archavanitkul and Hall 2011). On the other hand, despite the significant progress achieved in expanding its education system, Thailand is still struggling to produce enough professionals to support an upgrade of its economy to more-added-value production (Kirtikara 2001, Pimpa 2011, Fry and Bi 2013). To compensate for that, Thailand uses its adjustable migration regulations (Chapter VIII) to attract skilled, if not necessarily even legal, migrants from the developed countries, Japan among them.

It is at the cross-point of the above demographic and economic trends that, beating all other destinations in Asia save for Shanghai, Thailand has managed to attract an almost disproportionately large share of Japanese residents abroad to the point where it now hosts the world's fourth largest number of them. Even the 1997 Asian financial crisis did not reverse that trend, despite Thailand's economy faltering for a few years after that. If anything, the cheaper baht made Thailand even more attractive for international relocation and the now skyrocketing Japanese community. It shot up from 44,114 in 2008 thousand to 72,754 in 2017 (Japan MOFA data), official numbers by far surpassed by the actual numbers (Chapter III.4.1). In the absence of statistics for those who choose not to register with the Japanese embassy, their actual total number is estimated to be up to double that figure. The overwhelming majority of them cluster in Bangkok with much smaller communities located in the nearby industrial areas of Bang Na, Ayutthaya, and Chonburi, as well as in and around in Chiang Mai in the north of the country.

This is a reverse of the situation in the 1970s and the 1980s, when *Japayuki*, Southeast Asian sex and entertainment workers were Japan's social phenomenon *du jour* (Iyori 1987, Ito 1992). With their presence considered economically and socially necessitated, Japanese government would turn a blind

eye to their semi-legal employment or visa overstays, even if the general media discourse on them was rather negative (Yamatani 1985). Commoditised, objectified, and sexualised, Japayuki's position in Japan was explicitly of the immigrant other, even when they naturalised through marriage to a Japanese man (Mackie 1998). Japan's attempt at multiculturalism would instead essentialise and emphasise cultural differences (Nagayoshi 2015). With the tables now turned as Japanese moving *en masse* to Thailand, what stance do Thai and Japanese states take to frame and manage contemporary Japanese migrants?

In the previous historical eras, Japanese migration displayed a range of characteristics both similar to and divergent from the then dominant migrant paradigm. For example, when the West dealt with the multi-cultural paradigm to absorb immigration, Japanese *chūzai-in* expats were an explicitly temporary presence aloof and separate from the host society (Glebe 2003). Thailand's own socio-economic trajectory too made its migration policies diverge from what would be the current common wisdom elsewhere. The current prevailing global migration paradigm is transnationalism (Clavin 2005, Vertovec 2009, Castles et al 2014). However, this conclusion is made by researchers who habitually miss Japanese residents abroad in their analysis. How does the contemporary Japanese migration in Thailand, and specifically in Bangkok converge and differ from that?

From the historical experience too, there can be a disconnect between what migration policies aim to achieve and the actual situation on the ground. For example, in the heyday of assimilationism, Japanese and also other Asian immigrants in the West faced open hostility towards any effort to belong to their new home (Daniels 1977, Okihiro 1992, Campney 2019). Rather than to assume that Bangkok's Japanese simply fall into the currently trending transnationalist paradigm, this thesis will look into all the four components of what constitutes migrant belonging: the attitude and policies of the sending and receiving countries (Japan and Thailand), migrants' own self-conceptualisation, as well as their daily practices and living situation. Each of those components is dealt with from a different angle - economic, legal, social, etc. - in Chapters V to X. Before doing that, this chapter concludes with a quantitative and qualitative overview of Bangkok's Japanese community.

III.4 The current situation: community composition

III.4.1 Statistics: de jure and de facto

"There is hardly any other foreign city with so many Japanese. Seems like a lot fall outside statistics." Misae (40, Japanese housewife in Bangkok). Although they are not Bangkok's most numerous migrant community, Thailand's Japanese are the most disciplined: legally registered Japanese workers in Thailand by far exceed the number of those of other nationalities (Green 2015). According to Thailand's Ministry of Labour, they account for 18.8% of the total numbers, with the runner-up China (7%) and far ahead of the rest (Huguet and Punpuing 2005). Despite such a bureaucratic compatibility, due to a number of reasons any statistical account of the Japanese presence in Bangkok would still greatly diverge with the actual reality.

First, the transnational nature of Bangkok's Japanese community means that migrants share their lives between the two state systems and many aspects of their lives and even many individuals fall through the cracks of those systems. The number of Japanese living and often working, technically illegally, in Thailand on a tourist visa can be circumstantially surmised from the proliferation of "visa run package" ads in Bangkok's Japanese newspapers (more in Chapter VIII). Although no participants of this research had to do visa runs, everyone would know someone or had heard of someone who did. As far as statistics is concerned, such people end up accounted for as "tourists", never as "residents".

Second, even those with proper work permits or residence visas may be invisible to the system. Out of more than two million Japanese citizens residing abroad in 2005, only 800,000 were officially registered as such (Skeldon 2006:282). Many of my research participants were unwilling to register at the Japanese embassy as residents of Thailand. Such registers are the source of statistical data on Japanese presence overseas, yet the data collection method makes them only partly representative of the actual migration situation. According to a contact in Bangkok's Japanese embassy, one of the main reasons why most registered are *chūzai-in* (corporate expatriates) is that the voluminous and costly paperwork is done on their behalf by their employers. Interviewing research participants, however, revealed a number of other reasons for that. Chapter VIII deals in more detail with sojourners' attitudes to Japanese officialdom and how various legal frameworks affect their construction of belonging.

Their one-sidedness notwithstanding, the latest available "Statistical Survey on the Japanese Nationals Overseas" (2015) reveals a number of interesting tendencies and correlations. The overall numbers of Overseas Japanese in Thailand (Fig.1) are the world's 4th highest, while Thailand's community of long-term Japanese residents ranks as the world's 4th largest (Fig.2). If, for example, in Australia, the number of long-term residents remains rather low largely down to the restrictive visa regime (Mizukami 2007), in Thailand, the gap between the official and the actual number of Japanese residents is thanks to the data collection method. The headcount is based on their embassy registration, not on Thai visa and residence permit data. Although the Thai residence permit is costly and requires quite some effort to obtain, it does not seem to deter many a Japanese sojourner (more in Chapter VIII).

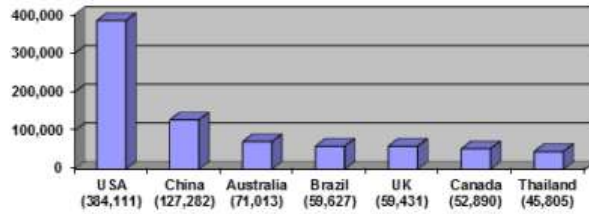


Fig. 1

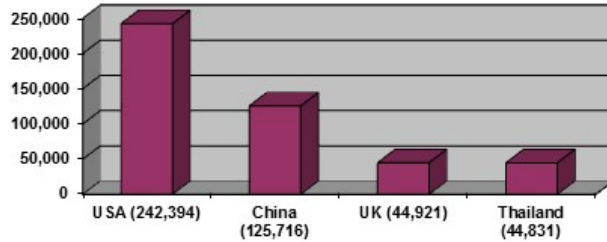


Fig. 2

In the breakdown by the city, Bangkok's overall number of Japanese residents (Fig 3.) as well as the number of long-term residents (Fig. 4) ranks the world's 4th highest.

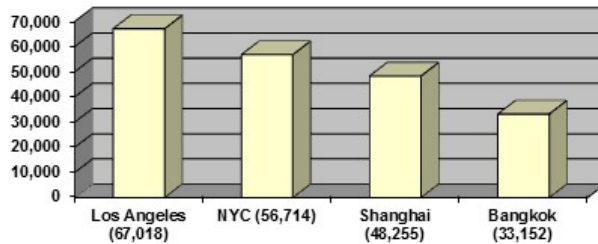


Fig. 3

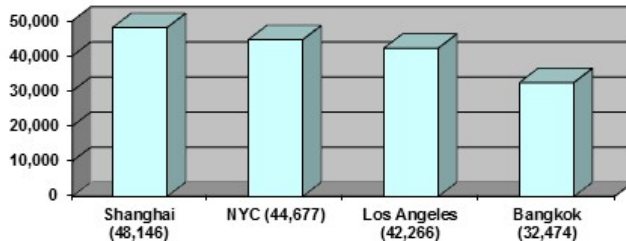
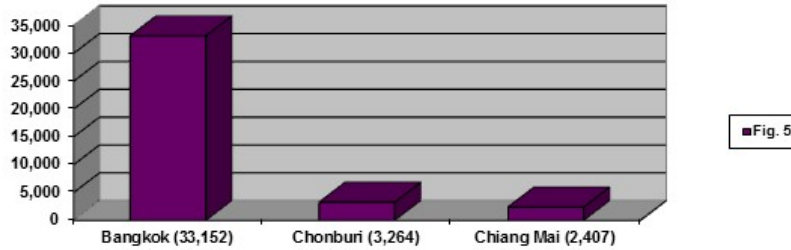


Fig. 4

The spread of Japanese population in Thailand is extremely uneven, skewed to Bangkok proportionately to its status as world's top *primate city*. Thirty-six times as large as Thailand's second city, Nakhon Ratchasima, it dwarfs the rest of the country in every possible sense. Like other global cities, Bangkok absorbs the overwhelming majority relative to the rest of the country: e.g., 73% of Thailand's registered Japanese residents live in the city (Japan MOFA data 2017). However, if the mere size were the sole attraction, Jakarta or Metro Manila would have a large number of Japanese. Nor do other controllable factors explain Bangkok's popularity with Japanese sojourners over other regional capitals. Chapter V unwraps the combination of factors that set Bangkok as a migration destination ahead of its competition in more detail.



According to MOFA, Bangkok's long-term Japanese community consists of company employees (20,928 persons) and their co-habiting family members (13,135); media-related personnel (99) and their co-habiting family members (96); private entrepreneurs (1,187) and their co-habiting family members (536). That by far does not reflect the entire variety of Japanese sojourners, their backgrounds, objectives of arrival, and modes of existence. Although the methodological slant of official statistics and the elusiveness of many residents make representative quantitative research of the bulk of the community unfeasible, it is nonetheless possible to make a list of most commonly types of the Japanese sojourner encountered by the author during his own stay, regular visits and fieldwork in Bangkok between 1996 and 2015.

III.4.1.1 Endonyms

Two prevailing endonyms are *zaitai nihonjin* (Thailand-based Japanese) and *Bankoku no nihonjin* (Bangkok's Japanese) used interchangeably. This thesis uses the latter term when referring to the entirety of Japanese residents in Bangkok. Bangkok's Japanese never refer to themselves as migrants, *ijusha* or *ijumin*. The Japanese words have strong connotations of both flight from poverty and permanency of the move, echoing one of the first sociological manifestos of transnationalism that "immigrant evokes images of permanent rupture, of the uprooted, the abandonment of old patterns and the painful learning of a new language and culture" (Schiller, Basch, and Blanc-Szanton 1992). Out of hundreds of Japanese residents in Bangkok I came across since 1995, none referred to themselves as a 'migrant' or used a hyphenated identity to describe themselves. It is a sharp departure from the previous waves of Japanese migration who naturalised, assimilated or creolised to form a new Overseas Japanese ethnicity of *Nikkei* or *Nikkeijin* (Befu and Adachi 2010) as Japanese-Brazilian, Japanese-American, or Japanese-Peruvian.

Although *Bankoku no nihonjin* (Bangkok's Japanese) is a very inclusive term, corporate expats are nearly always specifically referred to, both etically and emically, as *chūzai-in*, and their wives, half-jokingly, as *chūzai-zuma*. The former is both an official appellation and a colloquial term, while the latter is a slangy, somewhat jocular neologism. Neither is taken to have colonial or imperialist connotations as the English equivalent expat is sometimes said to do. Letting alone the desirability or even the sheer possibility of a perfectly egalitarian society with no power relations or hierarchy, the controversy about the term *expat* (Koutonin 2015) has more to do with ideological wishful thinking than any academic merit. Despite its ostensible aim of justice and fairness, the only actual effect of such well-meaning but ill thought-out euphemisms, as Orwell (1946) correctly predicted, is to "reinforce orthodoxy and defend the indefensible". Obfuscating the reality of unequal power relations

between affluent *expats* and poorer *migrants* by using a less offensive word does nothing to ameliorate the situation but once again triggers the *euphemism treadmill* (Pinker 1994) into action. For that reason, this thesis uses the term *chūzai-in expat* for Japanese corporate employees sent on overseas assignment to make distinction between from individual sojourners arriving in Bangkok of their own will.

Rongusutee (long-stay) or sometimes *ritayaa* (retiree) are both etic and emic terms for Japanese international retirees. *Zitai nihonjin* and *Bankoku no nihonjin* do not make a distinction between all the above and include any Japanese person in Bangkok, save for tourists. Among Bangkok's Japanese there is no corresponding emic term for *sojourners* or *transnationalism*, save for the aforementioned *zitai nihonjin* (Thailand-based Japanese) and *Bankoku no nihonjin* (Bangkok's Japanese) that are rather vague and deceptively inclusive. There are, however, other internal divides within the community and emic terms to reflect them such as *furute* and *arate*, *genchi-yatoi*, etc. (Chapter VII.2.1 and VII.2.2).

In the mid-2000s a new endonym emerged: *wakyo* (Overseas Japanese), a cognate with the long-established *hua qiao* (Overseas Chinese). Despite the apparent existence of the Bangkok chapter of the Wakyō-kai (The Wakyō Association) and a small crop of Japanese-language articles on the subject of *wakyō* (e.g., Watanabe 2007, Sawaki 2018, Harima 2019), in the nearly 25 years of my involvement with Bangkok's Japanese community, I only came across one person who would refer to themselves as *wakyō*. None of the interviewees was familiar with the term.

The Japanese word for *belonging* that came up a lot in fieldwork interviews, *ibasho*, composed from verb *iru* "to be, to exist" and noun *basho* "place". It thus aptly reflects the processual and spatial aspects of what it means to belong somewhere. Defined as "existential place" (Sugimoto and Shoji 2006), it echoes with the multi-dimensional way this thesis looks at Bangkok. Also understood as "both a place where one lives in society and a feeling of the place for oneself" (Ozawa 2005), it reflects the structural and individual aspects of the socio-psychological continuum of belonging.

III.4.2 Types of Bangkok's Japanese

The 2016 MOFA report counts 70,337 Japanese citizens in Bangkok. The actual numbers are said to be at least double that. It is safe to estimate that there at least 100,000 residents including permanent and semi-permanent migrants, locally born Japanese, as well as children of mixed marriage where one parent is Japanese. In addition to that, a steady flow of Japanese tourists (1,381,690 in 2015, Japanese MFA data) adds to the numbers of this part of the global Japanese ethnoscape by its highly fluid, yet constant presence. My long involvement with the community, dating back to 1996 afforded me a wide exposure to the whole spectrum of Bangkok's Japanese. Through a combination of my own observations, information gathered from my acquaintances and research interviewees, as well as official data, it is possible to make a general overview of the different types of people that make up the community.

First are the pioneers and the erstwhile backbone of the community, *chūzai-in* corporate expats on overseas assignments. For them an overseas post is often but a stepping stone towards a promotion back in Japan, however, there are increasingly common exceptions. For example, Kayoko's (43) husband chose to stay significantly longer in Bangkok as a *chūzai-in*, while Kazue (35) quit her comfortable position with a Japanese TV channel and took up on a similar local job, thus becoming a *genchi-yatoi* (local hire). Such life trajectories were unheard of among Bangkok's Japanese as recently as ten years ago: the duration of a *chūzai-in* assignment was not up to the *chūzai-in*'s wishes, whereas trading the security of a *sarariman*'s life for a Thai salary was not considered a wise move. Nowadays, as expat benefit packages shrink and Thai incomes have nearly doubled, life as a professional foreigner hired locally in Bangkok is a fairly attractive option.

Second are small-time entrepreneurs who fill in numerous market niches catering to other Japanese, residents or tourists, as well as other foreigners and Thais. Teruko (54) makes a comfortable living running a restaurant in the upmarket Sukhumvit Soi 24. Her legal status as a Japanese entrepreneur also allows her to stay in Thailand after divorcing her Thai husband, without the hassle of finding Thai stakeholders as required for most other foreign nationals. Another lapsed *sarariman* who kept eluding me despite everyone telling me about him, is the proprietor of a famous upmarket Japanese restaurant in the Thong Lor area.

Third are Japanese citizens married to Thai nationals. The prevailing tendency in international marriages is for Thai women to marry a foreign man (Ruenkaew 1999, Suksomboon 2008, Piayura 2012, Jongwilaiwan and Thompson 2013,), however, Bangkok's Japanese to an extent, buck that trend: for example, Arisa (49) and Shizuka (69) are among the numerous Japanese women married to Thai men. Some Japanese spouses are known to oscillate between shorter and longer spells in Thailand. Masao (54) married to Ann, a Thai woman working as a Japanese tour guide, does that on a tourist visa that is free, easy to obtain and, for a fraction of the cost of a residency permit, can be extended for up to 7 weeks in addition to the original 2 months. Others go for the lengthier and costlier option of obtaining a permanent residence permit. Still others go instead for establishing a small company that allows to apply for the entrepreneur's visa. For Japanese nationals, this option does not require finding the normally compulsory seven Thai shareholders.

Fourth, naturalised Japanese spouses of Thai nationals who are legally required to relinquish their Japanese citizenship and thus are never included in the official statistics. If they manage to retain both passports, which is illegal in Japan but ignored in Thailand, they do it on the sly and take double care to stay as inconspicuous as possible. However, such individuals are in the minority, with the majority keeping their Japanese nationality and applying for a Thai residence permit.

Fifth are an increasing number of Japanese retirees making use of new visa regulations that allow to bypass the financial investment or property purchase required to obtain a regular residence permit (Toyota 2006, Wong et al 2015). Faced with the rapid ageing of the population and a lack of institutionalised elderly care (Abe 2010), Japanese government has been seeking to "export" pensioners for a long time. To make this policy more palatable, it has been branded as *long-stay tourism*, "a style of staying abroad for a relatively long time in order to experience the life and culture in the place of destination and contribute to the local society while leaving economic resources in Japan" (quoted in Ono 2009:47) by the Long Stay Foundation. The foundation was established by the then Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry in 1992, amongst the media outcry over the anticipated problems of the rapid ageing of Japanese society (Miyazaki 2008). One of the strategies suggested in newspaper editorials was "exporting" the retirees to "cheaper countries", in its turn stirring a media outcry in Australia, one of the proposed destinations. After such early schemes fell through, Southeast Asia became a major recipient of transnational retirees from Japan (Toyota, Mika and Biao Xiang 2012). According to a 2008 survey conducted by the foundation, it is a preferred destination for economic and geographic reasons, however, *ikigai*, "what is worth living for", was discovered and promoted as one of the decisive factors for retirement abroad (Ono 2008).

Sixth are *sotokomori*, mainly younger people who migrate abroad often without engaging in economic activities there. They take advantage of liberal visa regulations and renew their tourist visas as long as their savings made in Japan last (Ono 2009). They are a more outgoing counterpart to the *hikikomori*, young recluses who withdraw from social life to their homes in Japan with estimated numbers as high as 600,000 (Shimokawa 2008:17). *Sotokomori* are conceptualised as an overspill of the Japanese trend for backpacker tourism that started in the 1980s on the back of the *yen* appreciation after the Plaza Accord (Ono 2009:49). Writing about *sotokomori*, Yamashita (2009) argues that contemporary Southeast Asia has become a sort of receptacle for socio-cultural "refugees", escaping the stresses of Japanese society in the name of seeking a tourist "paradise" - an historical tendency observed since at least the 16th century. Befu (1999) refers to them as "social dropouts, who left Japan out of boredom, or because they could not be employed or enter college, mostly supported by their parents in Japan." Sato (2001) was the first one to describe them as *lifestyle migrants* who leave behind a financial security back home for a more enjoyable pace of life overseas.

Seventh are the so-called *genchi-yatoi* (local hires), Japanese nationals who found employment in Thailand locally, whether for a Japanese or non-Japanese company. They can be considered the pioneers of contemporary Japanese individual migration to Asia (Sakai 2005). Some of them are in the grey (albeit tilting towards the darker side of the spectrum) area of the technically illegal but widely tolerated employment on a tourist visa (more in Chapter VIII). Their numbers appear to be on the decline, however, as the Thai government has adopted a more welcoming stance to labour from developed countries, epitomised by the shiny new building of the Work Permit Office, where citizens of mostly First World nations are fast-tracked towards obtaining a legal status in the country. That, and a lowered salary limit necessary for granting a work permit, paved the way to legal employment for many labour migrants.

Eighth are young Japanese people who enrol in Thai universities to pursue various personal projects ranging from learning the Thai language to finding a local marriage partner. A student visa is granted even for courses that only require attending one class a week. It lasts a year, is cheap and, according to my Japanese contacts on such visas, attracts no border check scrutiny. Yoko (27) enrolled into a Thai language Master's course at the Ramkhamhaeng University, whilst doing various well paid interpreting and translation stints. Her academic interest was genuine as she worked to improve her already very confident Thai proficiency, but the student visa had an extra benefit of a hassle-free long stay in Bangkok. Superbly fluent in Thai, Yoshio (24) studied an art course at the Silpakorn University, only showing up there once a week. With numerous Thai friends and a Thai girlfriend, his ambition was to find a way to stay in Bangkok permanently. He described himself as an "extreme case of *Nihonjin-banare*", 'unJapanese in appearance or character'

Finally, tourists are a major, if rarely acknowledged presence in the life of Japanese community. Japanese tourist arrivals to Thailand average between 1.2 and 1.3 million annually (UNWTO Report 2006). Their economic contribution to supporting the Japanese-gearred infrastructure (clubs, restaurants, shops, services, entertainment venues, hospitals for medical tourists) should not be underestimated, as they form a powerful vibrant presence in a constant flux. Some of them are in practice long-term residents oscillating between Japan and Thailand. At times, tourist experience becomes a source of inspiration for migration too.

Overall, the patterns of Japanese individual migration to Thailand coincide with such experiences in other countries. Between the *chūzai-in expats* on decreasingly generous corporate packages and social outcasts *sotokomori* are a majority of middle-class Japanese leaving home in pursuit of various individual ambitions. In Thailand, the considerable bulk of Japanese local hires (*genji-yatoi*) take advantage of the relative ease of working on periodically renewed tourist visas or while being enrolled in Thai universities. In Australia with its tighter immigration controls, the prevailing pattern is that of Japanese working-holiday tourists obtaining longer-stay visas and residence permits (Nagatomo 2008). In London, such migrants act as indispensable cultural intermediaries between Japanese corporations, which have recently embarked on shedding their costly expat labour force, and the host society (White and Hurdley 2003; Sakai 2012). In Thailand, they pursue their own goals of education, social mobility and personal achievement, often escaping from the pressures of life in Japan with its hectic work-oriented lifestyle (Ono 2015) and sparse welfare provisions (Tachibanaki and Urakawa 2007, Kawaguchi and Mori 2009). Like De Certeau's (1984) *flâneurs* they use their "tactics of consumption" to navigate in and between visa regimes, labour markets, and agreeable migration destinations.

Consistent with the post-war disappearance of settler emigration from Japan, *Nikkei* settlers are not present or are undetectable in Thailand, although there is evidence of Japanese soldiers and servicemen remaining in Thailand following the post-WWII expulsion (Pawakapan 2001). The bulk of Thailand's Japanese are medium- and long-term sojourners with a degree of overlap and fluidity between the categories: corporate expats and their families, spouses of Thai nationals, students who may or may not have gainful employment, local hires with or without work permits, retired long-stayers and their families, *sotokomori* with various types of economic engagement with the host

society. Although outside the scope of more detailed attention for this research, *chūzai-in* expats and tourists have been major contributors to establishing Bangkok's Japanese community. The sheer numbers, growth rate, and variety of Japanese residents in Bangkok are a testament to its attractiveness for migration from Japan. What factors set Bangkok apart domestically, regionally, and globally in terms of attracting Japanese migration and what makes it such a particular locus for Japanese transnational belonging?

IV Chapter IV. "There's something about Bangkok": global city Bangkok as a place of transnational belonging

For Manabu (45, male), an accomplished mid-career artist, born-and-bred Tokyoite who moved to Bangkok from New York, Thailand had the image of a "slow" country. Weary of Manhattan's tough pace of life, he made his midlife transcontinental move only to discover that his new home is "quite fast" too. Peppering his story with English phrases ("they come up quicker"), he describes the mixed bag of tricks that the Big Mango has turned out to be. The clear advantages for him are that it is relatively more affordable, and the art market is not yet as intensely competitive and oversaturated as in the Big Apple. However, as in any big city getting around and making human connections takes an extra effort. The language barrier is surprisingly not much of a problem: English is Bangkok's lingua franca. Although Manabu misses *okaasan ryori* (his mother's cooking), just like in NYC, there is hardly any Japanese foodstuff that he cannot find in the local supermarkets. Save for the invariably sultry climate, moving to Bangkok was not too much

Contrary to the tourist-brochure images of a laid-back tropical paradise inhabited by smiley locals, Bangkok is a bold, brash, business-minded metropolis, densely studded with skyscrapers, elevated toll ways and sprawling air-conditioned emporia. To keep this concrete capitalist dream-come-true running, its dwellers work the fifth longest hours in the world (UBS Prices and Earnings Survey 2015). The bustling capital of a middle-income constitutional monarchy, it is an important regional player in terms of economic and political clout. Globally, however, it does not stand out as much in a large and growing group of similar up-and-coming cities in the developing world. Neither the cheapest place to migrate to, nor an object of Japan's unfading cultural fascination like the USA or Western Europe, it does not seem an obvious destination for any sort of Japanese exodus. It, however, hosts the world's fourth largest congregation of Japanese nationals outside Japan (Japan MOFA 2015 data). In that ranking, it is placed just behind the established migrant magnets like New York City and Los Angeles and well ahead of such cosmopolitan heavyweights as London, Toronto, and Sydney, let alone any regional or domestic competitors (Japan MOFA 2015 data). There is a host of potentially attractive cities in Southeast Asia. However, none of them boasts as many Japanese residents. Domestically too, it beats competition from the hot spring jeweled mountains of the North and the picture-perfect beaches of the South, counting over 90% of Japanese sojourners in Thailand. What makes it such a draw for the latter-day Japanese migration and what makes it stand out above all competition? This chapter will situate the Japanese transnational belonging in a very particular locus, a first-rate global

city and a global migration attractor that only two generations ago was but a leafy tropical backwater with no modern economic growth to speak of.

IV.1 Global city and migration

One of the reasons why *global city* (Sassen 1991) as a term of analysis has gained ground in social thought is because global cities have more in common between each other than with the countries where they are situated (Friedmann 2002). Places of the immense concentration of power, their socio-economic situation sets them apart from the rest of the world. It is arguably there where *liquid modernity*, late modernity characterised by uncertainty, nomadism and estrangement begotten and percolated elsewhere (Bauman 2003). It is also there where, for all imaginable purposes, the world appears "flat" (Friedman 2005) through the prism of a perfect martini served in the electronically controlled chill of a business class airport lounge, with identical ingredients and interior design no matter if it is Los Angeles or Cape Town, Shanghai or Brussels.

Ranked as an *alpha minus global city* by the Globalization and World Cities Research Network (2016), Bangkok is not only at the top of the range amongst its peers but also the world's top *primate city* towering well above the rest of the country in every possible sense (Dick and Rimmer 2019). Thailand's greatest political division of recent years between the *red shirts* and the *yellow shirts* arguably aligned itself along the chasm between the forward-looking prosperous global city vs. the left-behind inland (Fong 2013). That sort of socio-economic division is replicated globally (Friedmann 2002), be it the Brexit chasm between London and the provincial England (Becker et al 2017, Albrese et al 2019) or the polarisation between the urban progressives and the hinterland conservatives in the aftermath of Trump's election in the US (Norris and Inglehart 2019). Around the world it appears to be making the left-right opposition of the yesteryear close to obsolete, creating a new fault line between *anywheres*, the savvy urbanites well adjusted for the post-industrial economy vs. *somewheres* the hinterland dwellers lagging behind in the aftermath of de-industrialisation David Goodhart's (2017).

The specific aspects that make *global city* Bangkok a very particular locus of constructing migrant identity are explored throughout the following chapters of this thesis. Chapter IV analyses Bangkok's appeal for global and Japanese migration and why Bangkok stands out eminently amongst its domestic, regional, and global competition. Chapter V explores how the superdiversity of Bangkok's ethno-cultural landscape inflects Japanese belonging, while Chapter VI addresses the role of Bangkok's physical landscapes of inequality in the way sojourners make their home there.

IV.2 Domestic preponderance: the Capitol vs. the Districts

In Suzanne Collins' dystopian novel *The Hunger Games* (2011), the ostentatiously rich and technologically advanced Capitol rules over the oppressed and impoverished Districts in the fictional North American country of Panem. The shining metropolis of maglev trains and Ancien Régime-

inspired fashion presiding over the rural swathes of mass destitution and subsistence lifestyle may be a work of fiction but the social dynamic of Panem is in many ways a creatively embossed picture of some realities of the latter-day globalised world.

The world's top *primate city*, Bangkok is, perhaps, a glaring example thereof. It is 35 times as populous as the country's second largest city, Nakhon Ratchasima: 5,782,159 vs. 174,332 (Thailand's Department of Local Administration data) and probably even much more so when seasonal domestic labourers and undocumented foreign migrants are factored in. Practically all Thailand's government agencies, major cultural and educational institutions, foreign and domestic corporate headquarters are located there. Such extreme centralisation has its unwelcome socio-economic consequences (London 2019). The prolonged civil unrest of 2008-2010, which saw Hunger Games-like clashes between the upcountry *red shirts* and urbanite *yellow shirts*, has been linked to an increasing wealth inequality between the capital and the provinces (Fong 2013), a global trend (Friedmann 2002). If in the 1960s that disparity was lower than in other Southeast Asian countries, in 1992 the income gap between Bangkok and the Northeast, the poorest region, was 100:22 in terms of per capita household income (Ikemoto and Uehara 2000).

As Bangkok dwarfs the rest of Thailand with its economic and political clout, it also receives an overwhelmingly large share of migrant labour, both foreign and domestic (Huguet and Chamrathirong 2014). Put simply, there is always enough money to share, albeit unequally, among its ever-growing population. If Bangkok were a building, it would be a gleaming cloud-piercing mega-tall skyscraper towering supremely over the low-rise suburbia of Thailand. Arrivals from a relatively more egalitarian Japan who tend to concentrate in the capital (Japan MOFA 2015 data) spread themselves rather uneasily along its horizontal and vertical axis of inequality (see Chapter VI).

In terms of competition for all kinds of resources: human, financial, political, Bangkok stands head-above-shoulders to the Thai provinces. However, those are by no means an underdeveloped backwater, to a certain degree also thanks to Bangkok's function as the country's wealth generator (Ayal 1992). Whatever drawbacks they may have compared to the capital, they amply compensate with a host of features potentially attractive to Japanese migrants: a slower pace of life, modern infrastructure with world-standard roads, hospitals and retail facilities, significantly less environmental pollution, lower cost of life, cheaper housing, as well as a stunning diversity of landscapes to choose from idyllic beaches perfect to relish an escape from Japan's hectic lifestyle to scenic mountains with an abundance of hot springs so beloved by Japanese people.

None of that, however, seems to nudge Japanese sojourners to leave the metropolitan helter-skelter for the unhurried joys of rural life in the Thai up-country. For Tomoko (43, Japanese language teacher) Bangkok is where her very cushy job at the Japan Foundation is but also where she "can have an interesting life" with access to cultural, culinary, and consumerist resources unmatched in the rest of the country. Seventy four percent of Japanese residents of Thailand share her commitment to the

capital and its environs (Japan MOFA 2015 data). The sheer gap between the capital and the rest of the country in terms of migration uptake once again confirms circumstantially the validity of *global city* as a useful term of social analysis for global migration. For Bangkok's Japanese sojourners Thai provinces remain weekend getaway destinations. The only two outliers are the slower-paced and relatively more affordable Chiang Mai in the North that enjoys a faithful following amongst Japanese retirees (Toyota 2006, Kawahara 2010, Toyota and Thang 2017); and the heavily industrialised Rayong on the East Coast with its Japanese corporate expat population (Japan MOFA data 2016). The two, however, barely amount to under one-tenth of the total numbers of Japanese residents in the country. Bangkok's preponderance as a migrant magnet is replicated at the regional level among its Southeast Asian neighbours.

IV.3 Regional competitive advantage

'You can drink tap water in Singapore!' Satoshi (54, businessman) spends a lot of time in Bangkok coming here to purchase products for his small business in Japan. His livelihood is built around trade with Thailand; however, it is Singapore that he cannot seem to praise enough. It is a common theme in conversations with Bangkok's Japanese. When they do not compare their new home with Japan, their wistful longing for greenery, efficiency, and thoughtful urban planning turns to Singapore. Its living standard on a par with that of Japan is often seen as the regional aspirational model: post-Thaksin Bangkok openly sets to re-imagine itself around Singapore's model, perhaps, a legacy of the ousted prime minister's "Thailand, Inc." development strategy (Phongpaichit and Baker 2004). Immaculate pavements and seamless public transportation notwithstanding, Singapore's Japanese population remains sparse and expat-centred (Ben Ari 2005). Despite the city-state's obvious attractiveness, there is nothing like Bangkok's influx of individual sojourners. "It is too much like Japan, overmanaged and boring," sighs Misae (40), after rambling for a while about her pet peeve of Bangkok's *kawatta yarikata* ("strange ways") such as its lax safety regulations, undermaintained public spaces, and lack of cultural events. Despite that, she and her Swiss husband bought a condominium in Sukhumvit and are raising their Bangkok-born daughter there. Arisa (49) and her Sino-Thai husband did consider settling in Singapore because it seemed "a great place to raise children". Both American-educated fluent English speakers with internationally transferable professional skills, they believed that they would no doubt have fit snugly there. Instead, they opted for Bangkok because the husband's family wanted them to live closer.

Regionally, Bangkok does not enjoy the same outright economical preponderance as domestically. Other Southeast Asian metropolises are of comparable or larger size, sometimes higher development level, and often enjoying a more dynamic economic growth. As early as in the 1990s up to a quarter of Singapore's GDP was generated by Japanese companies (Choy and Yeo, 1990; Cronin, 1992) with a correspondingly large expat population (Ben Ari 2005). Jakarta, presiding over Southeast Asia's largest market of more than a quarter billion people, too hosts a large community of Japanese expats. Many Southeast Asian metropolises boast very strong selling points such as Hong Kong's ease of doing business, Singapore's public safety and quality of life, Phnom Penh's affordability, Yangon's freshly opened domestic market opportunities, Kuala Lumpur's eagerness to lure foreign residents, or Ho Chi Minh City's exemplary national cuisine combined with the world's fastest economic growth (PriceWaterhouseCooper 2017 Report). Despite such strong competition, none of them beats Bangkok

to the numbers and diversity of immigrants, nor does any attract as many Japanese residents as Bangkok does. Its pull for Japanese migration is on a par with such heavyweight players as New York City, Los Angeles, and Shanghai, well ahead of such strong competition as London, Sydney, or Toronto.

Such a pattern is highly unusual in light of either Bangkok's not so remote past as a low-rise, largely agricultural backwater as recently as the 1950s; or the often troubled, struggling past of its Japanese community (Swan 1986). Historically, it had long been overshadowed by Singapore and Hong Kong in terms of attracting Japanese trade or migrants (Otsuka 1982). Rice farmers migrated en masse from Japan to Manchuria, Korea, Taiwan, and South America but in Thailand's tropical climate their professional knowledge and skills were of no use (Ishii and Yoshikawa 1988). Bangkok's low-key port activity made the prime accumulation of wealth from prostitution further invested into trade as in Singapore or Hong Kong impossible (Swan 1986), so urban Japanese migration did not take hold there either. So much the more intriguing is the recent rise of Bangkok as a recipient of Japanese migration far above all its regional rivals.

IV.4 Global catchment zone: punching above its weight

All Japanese sojourners in Bangkok I came across, save for mostly expats, have various non-Japanese as their social contacts. The mix is invariably very eclectic: Iranian engineers and Australian teachers, Singaporean businessmen and even Karen migrants from Burma. The *superdiversity* (Vertovets 2007) of Bangkok's ethno-cultural landscape is a product of both Thailand's policies to attract DFI from near and far as well as of a pragmatic migration policy more concerned with the labour market needs (Chantavanich et al 2007) and much less with 'ethnic purity', 'foreign influences', or 'cultural contamination'.

Globally, Bangkok is an exceptionally strong player in terms of both migration numbers and migration catchment area. It defies all expectations and punches well above its weight hosting sizeable migrant communities from as far afield as the Middle East (Cohen and Neal 2012, Guzzetti 2016), Africa (Lehtinen 2004), Eastern Europe, Russia and the former Soviet republics (Kryazheva-Kartseva and Idrus 2014, Cohen 2017), let alone the more established ones from the neighbouring countries, East and South Asia, and Western countries (Huguet and Chamratrithirong 2014). Estimated close to 500,000 high-salary expatriate workers are involved in its hybrid fusion economy (Webster and Maneepong 2009). No other regional capital and very few global metropolises, mostly in the Anglosphere, can boast the same universal appeal cutting across linguistic areas, religious affiliations, cultural affinities, and colonial connections.

Bangkok's ranking as a global city and its exemplary performance as a receiver of migration tends to be explained with a strong emphasis on economic factors. For example, the pre-eminent source of global city rankings, Loughborough University's GaWC 2016 lists Bangkok as *an alpha minus global city* "thanks to its role as a major regional industrial, transportation, and cultural hub with a high degree

of integration into the global economy". The *alpha minus* status confers it to a "regional hub", way beyond its standing with regards to global migration. However, the calculation of the overall GaWC score suffers from the same problem as other similar ratings: the overall score that defines the ranking position is the average of multiple factors while city scores can end up diluted by the country data, which presents a highly skewed picture for the world's top *primate city* Bangkok. Some higher scoring factors can end up offset by lower scoring ones, the same way as the average body temperature in a hospital does not represent its patient recovery rate. As a result, Bangkok is put in the same category as cities with a comparable regional, but considerably lower global appeal such as Vienna, Taipei, Bogota, or New Delhi.

Another popular global city ranking, Mercer, is at the other end of the sociological research spectrum focusing on survey-based micro-level data of life in global cities. However, its calculation is largely based on surveys focusing on a very particular type of short-term migrants. Also known as Davos men (Ojala 2017), they are predominantly Western professional expatriates proficient in English, with certain cultural and class preferences, making up what has come to be called "transnational capitalist class" (Sklair 2012). Based on such a data set, Mercer (2018) only places Bangkok 132nd among the world's desirable destinations. That may reflect reality for Mercer's chosen sampling, but flies in the face of the sheer numbers and ethno-cultural diversity of Bangkok's migrant population. The existing methodologies of widely circulated global city rankings alone thus cannot account for Bangkok's global migration pull in general and its attraction for non-corporate Japanese sojourners, in particular. The rise of Bangkok's Japanese populations largely coincides with Bangkok's stratospheric post-war rise from a sleepy backwater to a gleaming metropolis. A short excursion into Thailand's post-war policies will shed light on what precipitated such a dramatic change of fortunes.

IV.5 The making of a global city: forces and circumstances

Since it was first published in 2005, Milton Friedman's maxim that "the world is flat", has gained a lot of traction in public debate. However, even before a large number of studies had indicated that there is no universal way of 'being global', that globalisation has changed the economic playing field but not levelled it, and that global places are inherently also tied to the local (Held et al 1999; Hirst and Thompson 1996; Tomlinson 1999). In the following decade when global cities became a hot topic in social sciences, it was time and again argued that all of them are "not global in the same way" (Acuto and Steele 2013; Bell and de Shalit 2011), or to the same extent (Parnreiter 2013: 21–4).

The story of global city Bangkok too is unlike those of its cohort. Not a mere historical accident but arguably a socially engineered world city project, it has been intentionally made open to the global financial winds for the purposes of wealth generation (Douglas and Boonchuen 2006). Having a historical precedent in the cosmopolitan Siamese capital of Ayutthaya, its modern manifestation, however, was inaugurated by Sarit's military government in the 1950s (Hewison 2003). Less celebrated than the later Neo-Liberal Pinochet-Reagan-Thatcher turn of the 1970s-80s (Harvey 2007), Thailand's socio-economic model has been essentially Neo-Liberal in practice. Unlike philosophical Neo-Liberalism that sought to secure individual freedom by relying on free market forces (Garvey

2007:20-21), Thailand's own blend economic liberalism and political authoritarianism was more straightforwardly meant to achieve more nationalist and materialist objectives of national prosperity (Hewison 2005). Rather than a mere product of foreign coloniality imposed on a subaltern country, it was a native policy, and adaptation of the dominant international development practices at the time (Yano 1968, Kawamura 2004, Easterly 2007).

Despite Thailand's often vertiginous succession of civil governments, military dictatorships, and constitutions throughout the post-war period, it has never veered from its consistent strategy of economic liberalism. Centred around its nationalist-minded military governments, Boston-born native Francophone king, and Western-trained business and political elites, the Thai state's objective has been to attract foreign capital to modernise the country. On the one hand, that helped propel Thailand to the status of a Newly Industrialised Country (NIC), achieve a steadily rising living standard. In the 1950s Thailand achieved *the modern economic growth* (Kuznets and Murphy 1966) which Japan managed as early as in the 1880s (Feeny and Siamvalla 1998). By the late 1980s a combination of government's pro-business policies and the local entrepreneurial drive initiated a rapid expansion of economy known as the *Thai miracle* (Jansen 2001). The coveted double-digit growth became a regular occurrence. On the other hand, it also left it open to the ups and down of the global economy, lacking a fair distribution of wealth, and only with a lightest provision for labour protection and social security.

As part of its open-market growth model, Thailand has been pro-active in welcoming immigration to secure an open and increasing supply of labour ever since the inception of its economic miracle in the 1980s, when the exodus of individual migrants from Japan had just started. By the time of this research, very important components instrumental in enabling, framing and managing Japanese transnational belonging in Bangkok were in place.

IV.6 Japanese Bangkok: the structures, narratives, and practices of transnational belonging in a global city

Effortlessly graceful and breezy, Kazue (35) hails from Southern Japan. A graduate of a top-rank Tokyo university, she ended up in Thailand when transferred to an overseas position by the TV station where she worked. Because her Japanese husband who she met in Bangkok wanted to remain in Thailand to pursue his career, she decided to stay with him. After completing a Master's degree at one of Thailand's top universities, she has had a number of consulting jobs at the higher end of the local media industry. She and her husband bought a condominium flat in a well-heeled central area and are enjoying a very fulfilled good-quality urban middle-class DINK life. She says they have no plans to return to Japan.

At first glance, this is a picture-perfect story of how personal ambition and determination, without relying on "big government's support", can break the "glass ceiling" and overcome borders. Everything seems possible for anyone prepared to work hard and take risks. The whole world is their oyster.

Kazue's success, however, has been enabled by a number of crucial structural factors, none of her personal making. The material base of Bangkok's Japanese, an enormous Japanese economic presence in Thailand created an ever-growing job market for Japanese speakers. The Japanese education system produces professionals with globally recognised and appreciated skills and work ethic. On the back of that, an exalted status of Japan in Asia gives Japanese migrants an enviable head start in their new home. Regularly renegotiated bilateral treaties give Japanese citizens preferential treatment in Thailand. In a myriad of ways, Central Bangkok has been made a very Japanese-friendly environment in the course of modern history. On an even grander scale where the everyday is nested in the geopolitical, the very possibility of Japanese expats and later sojourners to freely make home in Bangkok was enabled by the fact that both Japan and Thailand throughout the entire post-war belonged to the same free-world capitalist camp of Pax Americana.

With so many facets of reality instrumental in constructing Japanese transnational belonging in Bangkok, it makes sense to redeploy Victor Turner's (2017 [1969]) conceptualisation of the layers of ritual, as what the participants think it is, how they explain it, and then what the anthropologist makes of that. Belonging consists of and can be observed as and made sense from its social structures, daily practices and the social actors' narratives. The scientist's job is to make a coherent story of it, that will be judged by the standards set somewhere far away from the fieldwork site. The story starts from shedding light on Bangkok's ethno-cultural landscape where transplants from Japan land.

V Chapter V. Being Japanese in a global city: an ethno-cultural landscape of transnational belonging

In April 2015, a video by Thai celebrity Duangchai Pichithampon went viral and garnered the attention of many regional media outlets. In it she filmed unruly throngs of Chinese tourists jumping queues and behaving disruptively at the Jeju airport in South Korea (Straits Times 17 March 2015). Her indignant comments echoed a commonly shared sentiment of my Japanese respondents and interlocutors. With the rising China muscling its way into Thai economy and politics as throngs of Mainland tourists and businessmen descend on Bangkok, Japanese sojourners increasingly find themselves confronted with China's omnipresence. Perhaps ironically, given the historical indebtedness of Japanese culture to China, the overall cadence is rather negative, with less charitable epithets like *kemono* (animals) and *yabanjin* (barbarians) frequently coming up. As "locals" of Thailand, the sojourners' "gaze" (Urry 1992) of annoyance and irritation over misbehaving Mainland tourists is often mixed with more general suspicions of "China's geopolitical machinations".

Underlying the irritation about varying understandings of accepted public behaviour is the sense of being overwhelmed by China's projecting its newly found power in Thailand and around Southeast Asia. Myriads of free-spending Mainland tourists outnumber arrivals from all other countries, Chinese manufacturers undercut previously uncontested market shares with their products, just as BManabung successfully vies for Asian governments' attention with its ever-increasing investments and political patronage (Santasombat ed. 2015). In Thailand, China has accomplished in a couple of

decades what took Japan almost a century to achieve. In 2017, Chinese FDI in Thailand for the first time in history outstripped Japanese investment, pushing Japan from its hallowed supreme position ("*China becomes Thailand's top source of foreign investment for first time*", South China Morning Post 24 Jan 2020). In a related event, the Chinese language has eclipsed the erstwhile popularity of the Japanese language in Thailand (Hashimoto 2018).

Japanese sojourners are ill at ease with such developments. On the one hand, they are deeply suspicious and vocally critical of Prime Minister Abe's attempts to beef up Japan's military to counter China's geostrategic threat. Abe's hawkish tendencies do not sit well with the generally pacifist attitudes of the Japanese public both in Japan and in Bangkok. Abe-bashing was a recurring pattern in many research interviews during my fieldwork for this thesis. On the other, Japanese sojourners also often express unease at the sudden rise of China as a global economic and military power just as Japan seems stuck with its well-honed soft power-only international stance (Lam 2007).

Not only Japan's influence appears to be on the wane, Japanese residents become steadily outnumbered and outshone by Mainland arrivals in Thailand. Well-behaved and law-abiding and hence with a low media profile, Bangkok's Japanese are hardly ever in the news. Their *invisible minority* experience here is two-fold. First, as fellow Asians in an Asian city they can blend in with the local crowds, a pleasant relief in stark contrast for those sojourners who have lived before in the West. Second, abiding and economically useful, their position is made favourable by bilateral treaties, but they remain a tax-paying *politically silent minority* without representation (more in Chapter VIII). Third, unlike the flashier and rowdier Mainlanders, the typical Japanese polite demeanour helps them blend in well with the generally mild-mannered Thais, but also makes them scarcely newsworthy. Japanese residents' media and social profile is very low relative to their numbers and economic contribution to the host society.

Historically, this shift may be about China regaining the preponderant position in Asia it had occupied throughout the history right up to the Opium Wars. However, echoing Japanese sojourners' sentiment, both at the political and individual level it appears to be perceived as an economic and security threat (Broomfield 2003, Ravenhill 2006, Al-Rodhan 2007). Japan was used to seeing itself at the pinnacle of Asian modernisation and the most advanced nation in the region has been pushed by China down the rankings of world's largest economies. China even managed to outbid Japan for building the first of the geostrategically important high-speed train links around Thailand (Hong 2014, Wu and Chong 2018), the technology in which Japan is a pioneer and a premier expert. Media portrayals of China by the likes of the Economist and more regional outlets as an inscrutable communist tyranny, no doubt, also feed into the shared sense of unease and suspicion. Thailand with its newly gained confidence and sophistication as a newly industrialised country (NIC) is flooded and overwhelmed with Chinese money, tourists and products (Lum et al 2008).

China is not the only new entrant to Bangkok's socio-economic arena. Next to the top-tier superpower players, the relatively smaller, yet by no means insignificant economic and migrant presences of South Koreans, Singaporeans, Taiwanese, Australians, Russians, and many others jostling for its share of Bangkok's pie. The yesteryear model of unquestioned Western domination co-existing with Japan's formidable yet low-profile soft-power clout has given way to a brave new world of *contesting modernities*. Japanese sojourners' sense and practices of belonging in their new home are situated amongst the real, daily challenges of navigating Bangkok's ethno-cultural *superdiversity*. No matter how aware they were of the world outside Japan prior to their move abroad, the impact of sojourner's experience, sometimes the clash between expectations and actual life experience, throws them into a personal existential soul-searching. This chapter will first delve into Japan's imagination of its 'Asian brother' Thailand and Japanese sojourners' pre-arrival expectations. It will then outline how they make sense and cope with the ethno-cultural landscape of their transnational belonging in Bangkok. It will conclude by making a connection between how Bangkok's social landscape differs from Japan's not only in terms of population's diversity but also in its socio-economic inequality and what that means for Japanese transnational belonging there.

V.1 Bangkok in Japanese imagination and migrant praxis

V.1.1 Media images, post-colonial imagination and migrant belonging

"I only knew that Bangkok was the capital of Thailand. That's about all I knew about the country. I met my Thai husband-to-be in America and that's how I ended up here", says Teruko (54, restaurant proprietress) who, now married to a Japanese man, raises her two sons in a city she used to know nothing of. Misae (40, housewife) admits to having very little idea about Thailand prior to moving there, despite working in the travel industry in Japan. Both ended up in Bangkok thanks to marriage; in fact, neither at the time was even in Japan - Teruko studied in the USA, while Misae moved to Germany with her Swiss husband.

"For migration to start, the destination must be first imagined" (Appadurai 1999). Japanese public imagination of Thailand is often said to be dominated by the slogans and images of tourist brochures (Ono 2009, Yamashita 2012). Indeed, in Japan's urban areas the window cases of ubiquitous travel agencies strategically positioned at busy corners are plastered with tantalising posters of Thailand's turquoise waters, whimsically festooned elephants, and exuberant glittering temples. Ono (2014) writes how Thailand is often described with the travel industry slang *an-kin-dan*, where *an* stands for 'cheap' (also interpreted as 'safe'), *kin* for 'nearby' and *dan* for 'warm'.

"Country where everyone travels to" was Misae's (housewife, 40) idea of Thailand prior to arrival from Germany with her Swiss husband. With "no particular interest in Thailand" before moving to Bangkok, she ended up staying there seven years and giving birth to her daughter. These tourist images of migration destinations are often cited as an influence in decision-making or imagination before moving (Benson and O'Reilly 2009). The fieldwork data for this research, however, suggests that while they do appear to influence public imagination, they are not as decisive for Japanese sojourners. As much as commercial promotion probably does inform tourists' expectations, such images evidently were not as important in my respondents' decisions to move to Thailand. Many of them had travelled

to Thailand prior to migration, yet they had more mundane reasons for moving countries than chasing piña colodas on sunny beaches. Job transfer for Kazue (35), marriage for Arisa (49) and Shizuka (69), launching a professional career for Shinya1 (35) or expanding its prospects for Manabu (45) and Yūta (43), university exchange programmes for Shinya2 (23), joining an overseas volunteer project for Yuri (28), or a more-value-for-money retirement lifestyle for Terafumi (70). For Terafumi Bangkok was one of the few possible retirement destinations such as Malaysia and Singapore; having a friend in Thailand weighed in decisively on his final choice. This suggests a more complex reality of the consumption of slogans and images than is conventionally suggested. They are not simply taken at their face value from the travel agencies or the media, but rather serve as one source of information complementary to others, in order to make their decisions.

That said, "cultural reasons" or "exotic attractiveness" alone may be initially seductive. Thus, Ono's (2005) young Japanese long-stayers report to come from "gloomy" Japan to "lively" Bangkok to seek an alternative lifestyle. At the same time, other lively and sunny destinations are more expensive or have stricter visa regimes, so they lose to Bangkok in attracting Japanese migration: structural factors thus trump mere excitement and attraction. Nagatomo's (2014) lifestyle migrants in Australia are drawn to it by the perceived "laid-back lifestyle" down under. However, they remain but few in numbers because of the high cost of living and hard-to-obtain residence permits. Although there is a connection between mass Japanese tourism and Japanese migration in Thailand, it is less straightforward: the former leaves in its wake a consumerist infrastructure and a job market that makes sojourners life in Bangkok easier and more pleasant. That way, the impact of tourism on migration appears to be of a less sentimental and more practical kind.

The role of media imagery and post-coloniality in migrant imagination is a common research theme in research: e.g., Albanian youths in Italy (Mai 2001) and young Moroccans in Morocco (Sabry 2005) are influenced by the tantalising images of Western lifestyle. Research on Southeast Asia in Japanese imagination often focuses on theorising relationships between post-coloniality, tourism, and media images (Morris-Suzuki 2007, Iwabuchi 2004). The absence of direct colonial experience in both countries also invokes a strong academic interest.

Commenting on the phenomenon of lifestyle migration, Benson and O'Reilly (2009: 614) observe how tourist spots often become migration destinations, such as Spain for over a million British retirees. Looking at Japanese "lifestyle migrants/tourists" in Southeast Asia as trends in outbound tourism, Ono (2009) argues that they are attracted to the region because for the Japanese it is structurally akin to what Southern Europe is for Northern Europeans: "leisure periphery", "paradise", "healing spot", *ankindan* (a tourism business jargon for "cheap-near-warm" destinations). That relationship, however, lies outside the remit of "post-coloniality" as they have not been in a colonial relationship and structured rather by their relative gap in development and affluence. Over one million Japanese tourists travel to Thailand each year, however, only a very small fraction of them decide to settle there, with much higher numbers settling in the US and China, which in anything have painful associations with Japan's defeat in WWII.

As tempting as it might be to see historical colonial associations making the region the object of the Japanese nostalgic gaze and thus a *long-stay tourism* destination (Ono 2009:46), the research respondents did not make any historical associations even when asked directly. Propaganda tropes abandoned 70 years ago do not appear alive and well in the sojourners' minds, let alone influence their important life decisions. The connection between "colonial associations" and lifestyle tourism remains tenuous as does describing the Japan-Thailand relationship as (post-)colonial. An emphasis on the domination of media images can fail to account for the gap between how they are produced/promoted and how they are consumed: e.g., despite an established culture of stirring anti-Japanese sentiment in China and South Korea, Japan's public perception in those countries outside the media remains more favourable than not.

Yamashita (2012) writes about the ambiguity of Southeast Asia in terms of cultural distance: it is imagined both as 'far' ('different'), a remote backward place, but sometimes 'near'('similar'), the presumed original land of the Japanese people and culture. Although "warm" (the *dan* of *an-kin-dan*) is normally part of Thailand's appeal in Japanese tourist brochures, Bangkok residents complain about "heat" that in Thailand lasts "throughout the year with no difference between the seasons" (Masako, semi-retired lecturer, 54). As such, sojourners opinions about Bangkok and Thailand are replete with contradictions and uncertainties. Rather than dubious myths and long-forgotten colonialist tropes, more immediate factors that informed their ideas about Thais and Thailand, however, fit more explicitly into the "development" narrative.

Awareness of traces of post-colonial nostalgia in Japan's public imagination of Thailand Yamashita (2012) writes about may be more the case with the university types privy to the details of Japan's troubled past in the region for professional purposes. In the respondents' narratives they are, for all practical purposes, all but undetectable. When asked directly about the history of bilateral relations, two respondents mentioned Yamada Nagamasa, a 17th-century adventurer cum naturalised Thai nobleman. Another one mentioned the good relationship between the Thai royal and Japanese imperial families. No one else could recall any particular historical instance although everyone rated Thai-Japanese relations as good and favourable. All respondents are well travelled university graduates, so it is hard to call them ignorant of history, yet the past seems to have little bearing on their idea of their new home. Their daily first-hand experiences of Bangkok life that sometimes run counter to their expectations, is what supplies grist to the mill of their imagination about their new home. The Japanese occupation of Thailand and the Greater Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere are a thing of too distant a past to colour the perceptions of the latter-day migrants. At the time those two history occurrences were accompanied by massive state propaganda, which after the war was turned to processing war-defeat remorse and soul-searching for a new path for the nation. Japan had actively left behind imperial pretensions. As a result, the colonial past was not kept alive in the Japanese collective memory to the extent that Japanese war atrocities are kept in the Chinese public opinion. The focus of media and cultural research on the production and dissemination side of things can be augmented with ethnographic methodology to afford a glimpse into the consumption and interpretation of social imaginary. Injecting fieldwork findings with an obligatory dose of post-colonial theory would do nothing good for the conclusions of this research.

From the very re-opening of the country in the Meiji period, Japan has seen itself in direct competition with the "White imperialist nations". Being accepted on par, from renegotiating the 'unfair treaties' to gaining a voice in the League of Nations, was a leitmotif of Japan's early modern politics. Despite being extremely successful, in many aspects even ahead of its rivals in terms of modernisation and development, Japan is still perceived as a lightweight in global politics. On the daily level, that hardly poses a problem for ordinary people, until they move abroad where they need come to terms with and make sense of differences as part of their normal life there. Japan's shifting position in global and regional politics is closely followed by Bangkok sojourners. Japan's status is, in many ways correctly, thought to somewhat be on the wane, eclipsed by China becoming the new centre of economic activity, contrasted with Japan's own two, getting on three lost decades. Although Japan still has an extremely developed and complex economy and a well-functioning society, the pre-occupation with the flagging economic growth informs the way it is seen by both its inhabitants and outsiders.

V.1.2 Japan's view of Siam and contemporary colonial nostalgia

When Japan opened to the world in the 19th century, its intellectual elites developed a number of doctrines to conceptualise their country's stance in relation to the world and to the rest of Asia (Mendl 2001). *Ajia-ron* was the strain of political thought that saw Japan as one in the fraternity of Asian nations who should unite against Western aggression (Duara 2001). As those, however, failed to, or were too slow to modernise and fell prey to colonialism, Japan came to see itself as the saviour of Asia (Nakata Steffensen 2000). Exasperated by that, Meiji intellectual Fukuzawa Terukochi proposed a new doctrine of *Datsua-ron*, "shedding Asia", whereby Japan would leave its backward Asian neighbours behind and whole-heartedly become a Western country. As Japan's intellectual debate and policy making took a more pragmatic turn, it was *Nanshinron* ("the Southern Expansion Doctrine") that was adopted as a geopolitical strategy for many decades to come. Southeast Asia therein was seen as a target of Japanese geopolitical and economic interest with a view to exploring its natural resources and opening its domestic markets for Japanese products (Shimizu 1980). Politician Minoru Tōgō proclaimed in his 1906 essay 'Japanese Colonialism' that Japan's mission and duty was territorial expansion, as the only Asian country capable of becoming a colonial power (Kumei 1995)

Fearing to enter an open military conflict with the Western powers, Japan opted to pursue its *nanshinron* policy in Siam through other means including diplomacy, trade, and having its technical advisors in royal employment (Ishii 1988). In 1902 Klobukowski, the French Minister at Bangkok, lamented about an Anglo-Japanese conspiracy against the French in Thailand (Goldman 1972:215). The Japanese "made no mystery of their desire to expand their influence in all the countries inhabited by the yellow race or other related ethnic groups." (Goldman 1972:216) They "tried to gain political influence in Bangkok through cooperation with the Siamese government in commercial and agricultural projects" (Ibid.:218). Even the British Minister to Bangkok, Archer, admitted the influence of the Japanese in Siam (Archer to Lansdowne, September 29, 1902, PRO/FO 422/56 - quoted in Ibid: 218). Lacking at the time the means or administrative know-how, Japan also made a couple of half-hearted attempts at promoting Japanese migration to Thailand (Ishii and Yoshikawa 1987).

In 1903, Boissonas, the French Minister to Bangkok, called attention to what he believed was a Japanese ascendancy in Bangkok. He reported that the Siamese were arming themselves with Japanese weapons and were allowing Japanese officers to organize and instruct regional regiments. He complained that the Japanese Minister in Bangkok was having frequent conferences with the King and, although both gave out that they were discussing the marriage of the Siamese heir apparent to a Japanese princess, in reality the King and the Japanese Minister were considering a Japanese guarantee of the territorial integrity of Siam. The French Minister was convinced that the Japanese were plotting against the Western powers in Siam. It was around that time that bilateral agreements were signed, securing preferential treatment for Japanese citizens in Siam. Regularly renewed, they are still in force today, framing legally the experience of Japanese migrant belonging in Thailand through its provision for preferential visa treatment and company incorporation.

The *datsua-ron*, was eventually recycled as a justification for Japan's increasingly aggressive stance in its imperial expansion, positioning itself as a saviour of Asia from Western imperialism. One of its slogans *hakkō ichiu* ("all the world under one roof") was used as a motto for the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. Siam therein was an uncomfortable exception. It did not need to be saved from colonialism, in fact, itself turning into a colonial aggressor (Thongchai 1988). In the inter-bellum period, Siam first fell into the Japanese sphere of influence (Flood 1971, Beasley 1991) and then found itself included into the Greater East-Asian Co-Prosperity Zone (Swan 1994).

While playing the upper hand in Asia, on the world stage Japan was alienated and not accepted as an equal to the colonial powers despite the spectacular success of its modernisation. Japanese migrants in the West were subject to a number of oppressive laws in countries like the USA, Canada, and Australia, imposing restrictions on their arrivals, residence, and naturalisation, often on explicitly racial grounds (the term "Yellow Peril" stems directly from that age). Japanese migration to Siam never reached any substantial levels until much later in the 1990s, yet the trade activities continued and expanded. When the US and Japanese interest clashed in the Pacific, Japan entered WWII and went on to occupy large swathes of Asia and Pacific as the colonial powers' grip in the region weakens. Japanese settlers in many American countries who joined the Allies bore the brunt of often unfair racialised persecution.

That was, however, not their experience in Asia, where they had an upper hand making inroads on the back of Japan's military and economic success. The interbellum period saw the rise of Japanese involvement in Southeast Asia (Batson 1990) as Siam became drawn into Japan's Greater East-Asian Co-Prosperity Zone (Swan 1994). In WWII, despite Thailand became a reluctant semi-ally, playing both sides (Nish 2002), yet Japan eventually went on to invade and occupy Thailand from 1941 to 1945 despite an ambiguous alliance agreement (Tarling 2001). Uncharacteristically for a region traumatised by Japanese occupation, Siam's experience was relatively benign. To a substantial extent that accounts for the Japanophile attitude of contemporary Thais (Reynolds 1994:66) that Japanese sojourners frequently comment on. When Japan lost the war, all Japanese nationals, either military or civilians,

were forcefully expatriated. Thailand lost practically all of its Japanese population, while Japan had to re-invent itself economically and ideologically.

Throughout modern history, the above three ideological stances were re-used in different combinations with various weighting as Japan was conceptualising its changing position in Asia and in the world. Generally speaking, the shift was from "shedding Asia" (*datsua-ron*) back to "Japan in Asia" (*Ajia-ron*), while pursuing the annexation of Asia to the south of Japan (*Nanshin-ron*) first through military invasion and later through soft power. For the lack of empirical research, it is not clear to what extent those ideologies informed the way Japanese migrants in Siam at the time imagined their belonging in their new home. All of them, however, fall under the conceptual umbrella of a broader pseudo-scientific ideology of *Nihonjinron*, meant to explain Japan to itself through various East-West binaries. Its wide grip over the general Japanese population in the post-war period (Sugimoto 1999) has met a mixed fate amongst contemporary Bangkok's Japanese. Their self-perception and their perception of their host society, both informing their sense of belonging, displays a wide variation depending on what kind of sojourner they are.

Given such a long history, do nostalgia or colonialist sentiment in any way explain Bangkok's remarkable attraction for Japanese sojourners? Do they provide them with material for the "migration destination to be first imagined" (Appadurai 1999)? Ono (2009:46) suggests that Southeast Asia is the object of the Japanese nostalgic gaze but this begs the further question as to whether the colonial gaze part of contemporary Japanese sojourners's sense of belonging, as Postcolonial theory would have it (Gandhi 2019)?

V.1.3 Realities on the ground

The on-the-ground reality of Japanese sojourners in Bangkok, however, problematises such conclusions. The current rather unequal relationship between Thailand and Japan is down to their relative economic development and the consequent ability to project power. Japanese sojourners' belonging in Bangkok is not defined or even emically explained by any post-colonial ideology (Orientalism of one Asian nation onto another). It rather evolves in the increasingly complex ethno-cultural landscape of a global city, in response to the realities of daily lives. Power inequality is based on material (technological, financial, or cultural and social capital) advantage rather than prevaricated by

There is little awareness of the historical continuity to Japanese presence in Bangkok dating anywhere farther back than WWII and even later. Sojourners are only vaguely aware of its pre-modern history, which remain on the level of general erudition, rather than colonialist nostalgia. Whatever varying degrees of historical knowledge and sentimental longing they have, they do not seem to be even a remotely decisive factor in their decision to settle in the country. Personal circumstances like marriage

or a career opportunity combined with Thailand's attraction as a peaceful, relatively developed, Japanophile destination with the perceived laid-back lifestyle.

Far from naive islanders blindly led by either media-concocted ideas or post-colonial Orientalist tropes, Bangkok's Japanese are overall fairly informed of racial, ethnic and religious issues in the world outside their country. While often theorising on various intercultural issues in "modernist binaries", their views of Thailand are not simplistically condescending as one would expect from post-colonial theories. Generally, even while not shying away from expressing shock or indignation from some less savoury practices such as reckless driving, lack of regard for safety or bad time-keeping, respondents were trying to be understanding and reason away cultural differences.

That position differs quite starkly from the corporate expats I encountered in the late 1990s and early 2000s (Mitski 2011). Although that data goes back a while, the divide seems to be as relevant today. In the words of Makoto (70 retired, male), "it is a downfall that some Japanese expats look down (*ue kara no mokusen wo motsu*) on Thailand". That kind of condescending attitude hardly featured in the respondents' opinions about their host nation. The explanation my main informant Masako gave me was that the crucial difference between corporate expats and individual migrants is that the former were dispatched to Bangkok willy-nilly and temporarily as an often not very desirable but necessary career step, but the latter made their choice to live in Bangkok and remain there for an extended period of time. If expats lives revolve predominantly around their jobs, their small community, and their imminent return to Japan, sojourners by necessity have more exposure to wider Thai society as well as motivation to fit into the complex tapestry of Bangkok life over a long period of time. The expat-sojourner divide features prominently in a variety of other instances.

All the research interviewees had travelled abroad on multiple occasions, many have studied or lived abroad before moving to Bangkok. Such cosmopolitanism, however, is no inoculation against culture shocks. For Misae (40), a travel industry professional married to a Swiss man, it was a revelation that "Thailand was this developed". Even after seven years, she feels that a lot of "unexpected" (*omoigakenai*) things tend to happen in Bangkok, such as construction workers not preventing dust and debris from falling off scaffolding or Japanese residents doing very un-Japanese things like being irresponsible or bad at time-keeping. Resident of a Japanese cluster in Bang Na, Kayoko (43) puts a positive spin on cultural differences, citing "intercultural exchange (*ibunka koryu*) becoming possible because there are people from so many countries here" as an advantage of life in Bangkok. Empirical acceptance that life abroad is very different to Japan is part of the sojourner's experience. "When living abroad, normal is not normal" (*futsuu ga futsuu denai*) is the opinion of Hina (68) who has lived in Thailand for 44 years after quitting a career as an air hostess on Japan Airline's international routes. "I had only heard the name of Bangkok before moving to Thailand" quips Kumi (53) who now runs a popular restaurant and raises two sons by her Thai ex-husband. This individual level of cultural negotiation, where sojourners learn to adapt to their host society, co-exists with the macro-realm of cultural production intricately interwoven with economic and international power relationships.

Saskia Sassen (2016) draws attention to 'cultural-ideological links' between the sending country and the receiving country in understanding migration. Grounding cultural phenomena in political economy, she argues that 'the presence of foreign plants not only brings the U.S. or any other "western" country closer but also "westernises" the less developed country and its people; as a result, emigration to the U.S. emerges as an option' (Sassen 1988:20). The similarly unequal power relationship between Japan and Thailand, however, results in a different picture. There are significantly more Japanese migrants in Thailand than Thai migrants in Japan. The considerable Japanese economic clout in Thailand does not aim to "Japanify" it beyond introducing some consumerist ephemera such as novelty foods, fashion trends, and *anime* characters (Toyoshima 2008). Like in Hong Kong (Otmazgin 2012), Japan's "soft power" in Thailand appears more interested in a purely commercial success in the mass consumption market rather than converting Thais culturally, disseminating Japanese cultural values, or promoting a lifestyle. Although here it radically differs with the ways the Western cultural domination projects itself onto the rest of the world, in not such a remote past, Japanese imperial ideology and practices used to be decidedly more hegemonic and often outright coercive. What is surprising is how little impact that has on the contemporary Japanese presence in Thailand. So what are the realities of being a Japanese sojourner in Bangkok's ethno-cultural landscape?

V.2 Us and others of superdiversity: making sense and coping mechanisms

"When there is a *farang* (Westerner) around, the waiter will serve them first". Misae's (40, housewife) complaint is echoed by other respondents as well my Japanese acquaintances in Bangkok who note Thais' reverence towards Westerners. Slowly eroding with Thailand's growing self-confidence and more exposure to the less affluent strata of Western societies (Howard 2009, Green 2015), in daily interaction it still seems to trump Thais' general Japanophile disposition. Daily incidents thereof are acutely felt and discussed amongst Japanese sojourners. Although Japanese sojourners on the average are well travelled and many had even lived abroad before moving to Bangkok, there they find an exuberant ethno-cultural melange of nationalities, ethnicities, race and creeds unlike any comparable urban area of Japan. This wide difference in the level of cosmopolitanism has a historical precedent.

Geographically located at the crossroads of civilisations and trade routes, Thai capitals have for centuries been the mingling places for cultures and ethnicities. As early as the 16th century, the Siamese capital Ayutthaya, was a 'pre-modern global city'. Historically, underpopulated to the point that throughout the pre-modern period war booty would be foreign captives, not foreign land, Thailand's population skyrocketed from 20 million in 1950 to 69 million in 2016 (UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs data 2016). Bangkok's population shot from around one million in the 1950s to over 6 million in the late 1980s (Falkus 1993) and to 15.9 million for the Bangkok Metropolitan Area in 2017 (estimate by the National Statistics Office). In the course of building Thailand's geo-body, previously dependent and semi-independent vassal kingdoms and sultanates were absorbed (Thongchai 1994). Although a degree of national unified identity was achieved, regional identities remain significant and recently even become celebrated (Jory 1999). Seven decades of rule by a Boston-born Swiss-raised native Francophone king and a largely foreign-educated elite have been marked by Thailand's openness to Western ideas, capital, and material culture. As Thailand became one of the worlds most visited countries, tourist arrivals in 2016 reached nearly half of its population, at 32.6 million (UNWTO data). Before Thailand became a net receiver of migration on the back of the 1980s economic miracle,

significant numbers of Thai people would go abroad on temporary work contracts. Both trends for labour emigration and immigration have remained on the rise ever since. Millions of migrants from the adjacent countries were gradually absorbed into Thai nationality or allowed to remain in a semi-legal limbo to suit the fluctuations of the labour market.

Thailand's long and established history of openness to the world and happy ethno-cultural miscegenation contrasts with Japan's selective, often openly nativist attitude to appropriation of ideas and material culture from the outside world and strong self-conceptualisation as a 'unified ethnicity' (*tōitsu minzoku*). Although Japan's pre-modern history saw multiple waves of migration from the continent, absorbing numerous migrants and cultural influences from Korea and China, the ensuing 250 years of self-imposed near-isolation in its late pre-modernity left a lasting imprint on the country's psyche and self-perception. The modern era was characterised by conscious efforts to unify and colonially expand the nation and at the same time create a pure unified national identity. In that Japan does not differ from other modernising experiences, including that of early modern Siam, however, its outcomes differ dramatically. Firstly, Japan's own modern imperial expansion showed very varied degrees of success dealing with its colonial subjects. Torn between attempts to assimilate them and preserving the purity of the "Japanese race", it mostly failed to export its language or culture as an emulation model, unlike the most other (British, French, Russian, Spanish or Portuguese) colonial empires. Secondly, the collapse of Japan's empire was followed by a very rapid, thorough, and traumatic forced repatriation of millions of Japanese and colonials, abruptly severing most links between the metropolitan centre and its former subjects (Watt 2010).

After WWII individual travel abroad was banned until the 1964 Olympics. Later, overseas travel from Japan grew exponentially, however most of it has been on package tours with Japanese-speaking guides. "Flying with a Japanese airline, taking a Japanese tour bus with a Japanese-speaking tour guide to a Japanese-owned hotel, eating at the local Japanese restaurant" is how a Japanese friend described a typical Japanese tourist experience back in the 1990s. Despite a significant increase in individual travel abroad and international marriage in the recent decades, daily life in Japan, even in larger cities, still offers very little direct exposure to foreigners. The actively promoted slogans of 'internationalisation' (*kokusaika*) and 'multicultural coexistence' (*tabunka kyosei*) largely remain but political proclamations of wishful thinking (Goodman 2007, Oliver 2009). Although the myth of 'mono-ethnic nation' (*toitsu minzoku*) has been challenged by many academics (Murphy-Shigematsu 1993), with ethnic minorities of Koreans, Okinawans, Ainu, and repatriated Nikkeis constituting but 5% of the entire population, Japan remains a remarkably homogenous nation. It is the only industrialised nation that does not have an active immigration policy with all the branches of power as well as the majority of population remaining opposed to foreign immigration.

V.2.1 Asian amongst Asians: experiences of visible minority vs. invisible minority

"I lived many years in Germany. A very nice life but I always felt like a sore thumb. Wherever you go, in a cafe or in a shop, you get treated like a second-class human. Waiters ignore you, shop assistants serve German customers first. When people see you, I can hear them whisper, 'Asian

this, Asian that'. When I just moved to Bangkok, I went to a riverside cafe. There were other people sitting there and the waitress came to me first. And I realised everyone looks kind of like me. I didn't stand out. I'm just one among the crows. It was such a relief."

Misae's (40) story echoes with other respondents who have previously lived in the West. They appreciate their life in Bangkok for "not standing out visually". Although there is a significant facial features variation across Pacific Rim Asia and ethnic differences are spotted rather easily, it is easy for an Asian person to blend into Bangkok's whirlpool of nationalities and ethnicities. Besides, Thais themselves comprise very diverse ethnic stocks and facial feature variation is very wide. Sartorial preferences, especially in urban area, tend to follow global trends, probably with more variance between individuals rather than between nationalities.

This anonymity of an Asian among other Asians was cited as a major factor in the 'sense of liberation' (*kaihōkan*) that many respondents, especially women reported. The crucial difference between being a *invisible minority* as opposed to a *visible minority* was understandably more acutely felt by those who had lived in non-Asian countries. "Many Japanese tourists explain that they prefer Asian destinations because they experience less cultural tension." (Buckley in EofCJC 2002:535).

Unfair treatment based on race/ethnicity and feeling alienated because of looking different has been accounted for across the board of the global Japanese ethnoscape by Japanese expats in Frankfurt (Glebe 2003) and Japanese cultural migrants in New York City and London (Fujita 2012) alike. A constant suspicion that you may be discriminated because of the way you look can sometimes make for an unpleasant, borderline paranoid experience. In Bangkok, on the other hand, respondents describe their experience as "having a sense of relief for not being stared at" and "blending in with the crowd feels good".

While respondents reported the opportunity to blend in and become invisible among other Asians as an advantage, the prestige of Japan in Thailand makes it worth for migrants playing the "ethnicity card" when it is called for. Known as "situational ethnicity" (Etzioni 1959), or "dime store ethnicity" (Stein and Hill 1977), "episodic ethnicity" (Le 2018) in earlier sociological literature it was supposed to be inferior to the "authentic identity". With the social constructionism turn, came an understanding of the contingency of both making and using of any social identity.

Being able to blend in, however, is not always an advantage. In Bangkok's *competition states* ranking the Japanese occupy the next rung right after the hallowed *farang* (White Westerners). That, and the respect Japanese skills and work ethic command in Thailand, sometimes justify *tactical deployment of identity*. Like Stein and Hill's (1977) "dime store identity", migrant's Japanese identity can be flaunted or hidden as suits the owner. A Japanese person in Thailand has a default advantage when applying for many jobs or setting up a business. This *Japanese advantage* is partly the legacy of bilateral treaties

originally signed in the 19th-century and regularly renewed up to now. However, the respect it commands is hard earned by Japanese professional skills and work ethic.

Masako (54) and Manabu (45) are working as lecturers at a top university in Bangkok without a postgraduate degree. The high reputation of Japanese work ethic and education are not the only reason for that. In Bangkok's easy-rolling capitalism, ability is valued over seniority, which is often the opposite in Japan. Lack of prospects for quick merit-based career advancement in Japan seems the main reason why many young Japanese professionals choose to move abroad where their skills find due appreciation in the labour market (Ono 2012). The pre-modern pattern of overseas *dekasegi*, Japanese tradesmen, craftsmen and mercenaries seeking fortune away from Japan, seem to repeat itself.

V.2.2 Farangs and us: Japan and the West

Japan may be Thailand's largest investor, but in Bangkok, the *farang* presence still outweighs Japanese one. The Western, in particular Anglo-Saxon, cultural clout has a universal appeal, if mixed with a spirit of competition (Kitiarsa 2010). English being Bangkok's de facto lingua franca, most signs and public announcements are doubled in English. Japanese, on the other hand, remains a niche, if substantial enough, market.

The many sojourners who have travelled to or lived in the West have ambivalent opinions about it. General admiration for culture and global dominance sits uncomfortably along with their first-hand knowledge that many visible aspects of daily life in the West do not compare well with the Japanese standards of cleanliness, orderliness, or punctuality. This compares to Fujita's (2012) Japanese cultural migrants in New York City and London similarly concluding that the West is "not really developed". Bangkok's Japanese too make their opinion of Thailand based on their daily impressions of life in its capital. Trivial observations sometimes lead to big conclusions. For Misae (40), a host of daily peeves about local attitudes to safety, customer service, and timekeeping makes her believe that Thailand "needs to try a bit harder." Hisae (69) arrived in the pre-economic boom Bangkok when paved roads were still a rarity and central areas were frequently flooded. She compares the way Thailand "improved a lot, especially in the last 10-15 years" to how Japan rebuilt itself after the World War II.

The self-image of Bangkok Japanese is tightly connected with that of their country of origin. It often appears to be mixed and in a flux: their pride in Japan's institutions and achievements clashes with their discontentment about the current course of its politics. Respondents had no kind words for any of the recent prime-ministers, feeling that they all have allowed their country to fall behind in the global rankings. The Fukushima disaster and the governments' underwhelming response to it invited a lot of ire. However, it is various theories and news about the resulting radioactive contamination draw many to a conclusion that "Japan is unliveable now". Such views may be specific to the kind of people that choose to emigrate

'Rankings', 'growth', 'losers' and 'winners' (*kachigumi* vs. *makegumi*): their views of the world seem to borrow both the vocabulary and the concepts of business competitiveness common in The Economist editorials. Despite many possible drawbacks, this world view in many ways does reflect the reality where the level of prosperity of nations and their citizens do depend on the 'efficiency' and 'productivity' of their social and economic administration. This kind of language and conceptualisation is borrowed and appropriated from the wider world and as such is not specific to Japanese sojourners. It reflects the perceived hierarchy of power in global city Bangkok. It is used, with some variance, among Thais and Bangkok foreigners alike.

V.2.3 Cultural affinities and cultural clashes

"I feel no time difference (*jisa ga nai*) between Thailand and Japan.", so my main informant Masako (54) metaphorised her experience of cultural adjustment in her new home. The numerous similarities between Thailand and Japan were important in determining her choice to sell up in Tokyo and move to Thailand and not elsewhere. Cultural affinity (*bunkateki na kyōtsūten*) with Thais would often come up in conversation with Japanese sojourners: sometimes as a reason for moving to Bangkok, sometimes as a factor in their decision to stay, most often as an advantage (*chōsho*) of living in Thailand that outweighs the disadvantages (*tansho*). The breakdown of such a general term as cultural affinity most commonly featured the shared religion of Buddhism, a hierarchy-minded society, and a great social importance attached to emotional restraint, face-saving and politeness.

"Religion: none." All but one questionnaire respondents chose that option confirming the oft-repeated, if controversial dictum that "the Japanese have no religion" (Ama 1999:8). Echoing that sentiment, in a Yomiuri Shimbun survey on religious consciousness among the Japanese (2008), 71.9% of the respondents answered that they did not have any religious belief. However, in my fieldwork interviews sojourners would almost invariably come up with Buddhism, as a prime example of cultural affinity between the Japanese and Thais. Although none, save one, of the questionnaire respondents reported having been raised a devoted or practising Buddhist, the sense of closeness with their adopted home for Japanese sojourners is often associated with Thailand being a Buddhist country. The only self-described Buddhist Masako (54) too reported on feeling more affinity with Thailand over other Asian countries for the same reason.

Despite the fact that the dominant schools and practices differ widely in both countries, there are certain common traits. The place of religion in the social and political life of Thailand is omnipresent and conspicuous, a significant part of the national unity narrative (McCargo 2004, Keyes 2019). Its flavour on top of a substratum of indigenous spiritual beliefs permeates every aspect of Thai life (McDaniel 2006). *San phra phum*, small temple-shaped structures on an elevated platform, host the spirit of the adjacent building, even for newly built skyscrapers (Pearce 2011). Giving food to monks and temporary monastic ordainment for boys is widely practised by Thais from all walks of life. It is still common for both urbanites and villagers to turn to both the official as well as alternative Buddhist

schools for spiritual nourishment (Taylor 2016). Buddhism is also seen as feeding into many commonly accepted social concepts. Its emphasis on self-control and moderation informs a culture of putting a value on emotional restraint, *negative politeness* practising the Thai social virtue of restraint and mild manners (Intachakra 2012:624). Accepting social inequalities and injustices tends to be explained through the Hindu-Buddhist concept of karma (Engel 2005). Even the ubiquitous *mai pen rai* ("it doesn't matter") phrase is interpreted as a by-product of Buddhism's insistence on the impermanency of all creation (Panpothong and Phakdeephassook 2014)

In Japan, the dichotomy of Buddhism runs between its prevailing use for ceremonial rites referred to as *soshiki Bukkyō*, "funerary Buddhism" (Tamamuro 1963) and the active social and even political role of various role Buddhist New Religion movements (Toyoda and Tanaka 2002). One of them, Soka Gakkai, is even closely affiliated with Japan's second most prominent political party, Kōmeitō (Fisker-Nielsen 2012). The aforementioned claim of "the Japanese having no religion" flies in the face of the growing membership of *shinshūkyō*, Japanese new religions, and their successful proselytising activities both domestically and abroad (Clarke 2013). Japanese Buddhism too co-exists with many indigenous beliefs: the local equivalent of *san phra phum* spirit houses, *hokora*, is a ubiquitous sight in Japan (Iwata 1963).

The many ostensible commonalities, however, run parallel to wide differences. If the Japanese, Bangkok's sojourners being no exception, commonly and almost proudly present themselves as non-believers, Thais do it rather rarely. Although no Thai constitution made Buddhism a state religion, the official version of it sanctioned by the Sangkha presided by the reigning king, is vital part of the Thai national identity (McCargo 2005). Japan abandoned the institution of Shintō as state religion after the war, and presently there is no one official Buddhism (Anesaki 2012). Religion is thus much less prominent as part of the contemporary Japanese national identity.

In sojourners' daily life, cultural commonalities and differences are blended in a more complex tapestry. What matters at this level are more mundane social realities that can rarely be categorised as "absolutely the same" or "completely different", so they arouse mixed feelings as often as more clear-cut reactions. A good example of such ambivalence is varying understandings of manners and politeness. For Jitsuko (37) the common ground between Thais and Japanese is that both are reluctant to express what they think directly (*omotta koto wo chokusetsutekini iwanai*). Thai indirectness (Srinarawat 2005) and Japanese indirectness (Nakai 2012), however, may be ostensibly very similar, however, there is also a serious divergence in objectives. Overall, Japanese sojourners positively relate to Thai preoccupation with manners and propriety. However, just as often they offer examples of mutual misunderstandings around those.

If Japanese *keigo*, the polite speech register, is mostly concerned with formality (Wetzel 2004) and social distance as "protective armour" (Hendry 2017), Thai politeness to a significant extent focuses on a 'consideration or concern for others' feelings' (Intachakra 2012). In doing so, a Thai person may

choose to withhold potentially unpleasant news in order not to cause emotional distress to the other party. In Jitsuko's past as a *chūzai-in* expat in Bangkok that tendency would run against what she perceived as efficiently in running a business. Her expectation was that unpleasant news would be communicated directly but wrapped in formal expressions. For her Thai colleagues formality would not do the job of "not causing offence" if the content of communication was potentially distressing.

Hisae (69, former stewardess) lamented about Thais' "insincerity" (*nimensei*) when it comes to responding to requests. Her understanding that if one owes a favour then one is bound to return them was, in her view, breached by Thais only responding to requests when they feel like doing that. This acute sense of a balance of social favours and the need to maintain its fairness has been noted in ethnographic literature starting from Benedict (1946). For Bangkok Japanese, it clashes with Thai pragmatic "bamboo-in-the-wind" opportunism (Klausner 1987), the kind that on the state level kept Siam aligned to both the Allies and the Axis in WWII (Kislenko 2002).

The differing understanding of indirectness is not the only area where differences tend to prevail over similarities. Two more areas where, despite some significant developments in the last three decades, the twain will not seem to see eye to eye are temporality and food habits. Conflicting perceptions about keeping time and promises seem to wedge Japanese sojourners and their hosts apart. Kazue (35) feels annoyed (*ira ira*) about her Thai TV production company co-workers' attitudes to appointments and deadlines. Even for Shinya (23), as an exchange student not particularly driven by tight schedules, "Thais are laid back and think little of being late" (*chikoku nado mo heiki*). Bangkok may be the skyscraper-studded capital of an industrialised country, but as the refitted Bushido values have never been imposed on Thais, modern timekeeping failed to arise from the capitalist mode of production (Sriussadaporn 2006). Nor does Bangkok's perennially gridlocked traffic allow such modern habits to take root.

"Sino-Thais like Tai Chi, ethnic Thais prefer yoga." Misae (40, housewife) commented that "ethnic Thais prefer to practise yoga because it is about sitting passively on the floor and meditating, but Sino-Thais opt for Tai Chi because it is more active". This clear-cut binary harks back to , although if for Sino-Thais grannies doing their wee-hours full form in Lumpini Park, it is part of their cultural heritage, the yoga trend among younger ethnic Thais seems to have been re-imported from the West.

A large proportion of Bangkokians are of Chinese ethnic origins, descendants of the late 19th early 20th century migrants from China. By far the most assimilated Chinese minority in Asia (Tong and Chan 2001), many of them, however, do maintain a sense of distinct identity from "Thais proper". Many occupy prominent positions in the country's business elite. Bureaucracy and politics was traditionally considered the domain where ethnic Thais are dominant, however, in the recent three decades ethnically Chinese Chuan Leek Pai, Banharn Silpa-archa, Chavalit Yongchaiyudhand, Taksin Shinawatra became the country's primer ministers. Bangkok's Japanese are aware of the distinction and often rationalise them in the somewhat essentialist terms of earlier research (Deyo 1975). Many

respondents refer positively to Sino-Thai's work ethic and business acumen, whereas ethnic Thais are thought of as laid back, lacking the entrepreneurial spirit, and even "lazy" (*namakemono*).

As their time in Bangkok goes on, Japanese sojourners' habitual griping about locals' tardiness, however, gradually, gives way to varying degrees of acceptance. Kazue's (35) begrudged toleration - "there's nothing you can do about it (*shikata ga nai*)" – sits uncomfortably with her working in the time-sensitive TV production industry. Others even find furtive enjoyment in not having to always be on time. "In Tokyo they will never talk to you again if you're 15 minutes late for an appointment once. I am no longer sure if it really makes much sense", reflects Arisa (49). She is, however, still very punctual, albeit without the typical Japanese earnestness about it. Jitsuko (35) who had spent some time in Bangkok not working and then studying for a postgrad degree says she is flexible and can adjust her time-keeping attitude depending on the other party.

This kind of cultural osmosis shows in other avenues of life too, such as food habits. As the twenty first century gastrodiplomacy gave boost to the popularity of each other's cuisines in Japan and Thailand (Zhang 2015), the way Bangkok's Japanese are integrated in the city's food scene has evolved a great deal over the years too. The love-hate relationship has been going through stages as the makeup of the community underwent major changes. In the 1990s Japanese expats' pet peeve about Thai food was the perceived lack of hygiene in Thai restaurants (Mitski 2011). Eating at street food stalls was practically unanimously cited a definite no-no. The minimum benchmark in choosing a place to eat was the presence of an air-conditioner in the restaurant as a promise of stricter hygiene standards.

In the early 21st century, the erstwhile scare of Thai street food gave way to their acceptance as a convenient and inexpensive way to satisfy hunger with the added bonus of astounding diversity of choice. The relatively less pecunious and more culturally adventurous sojourners took to the exuberant world of Bangkok's culinary roadside scene *en masse*. Every other meal I shared with my main informant Masako, a smart and health-conscious socialite, were cheap and hearty *pad thai* or *kuai tiao* whipped up by cart-pushing chefs. For the interviewed sojourners, Thai food constitutes between 10 and 80% percent of their meals. The great variance appears to be down to individual differences explained by aversion towards high spice content or economic concerns. Most sojourners do not cook Thai food at home, commonly citing the ease and cheapness of dining out in Bangkok. The taste matters too: "once you've found the right stall for grilled chicken and *somtam*, or *kuai tiao*, you cannot recreate the same flavour, no matter how hard you try" (Arisa 49).

Contemporary sojourners' concerns have shifted towards nutritional values and healthiness. In the Thong Lor teahouse where I conducted many fieldwork interviews my collocutors would spend time pondering over the wide choice of drinks and desserts. For Arisa (49), like for many of the sojourners, there is one reason "I avoid drinks and cakes in Bangkok because there is often way too much sugar". There is arguably a connection between Japanese food habits and Japan being the slimmest industrialised nation (Senauer and Gemma 2006). Sojourners commonly conceptualise their concerns

about the excess of sugar, fat, or spices, as “Thais' lack of interest in healthy food”. That is demonstrably not true as it has been a major area of interest at least for many middle-class Thai urbanites and the target of much marketing effort at least for the last two decades (Roitner-Schobesberger et al 2008, Sangkumchaliang and Huang 2012). However, preferences towards spicier or blander food become engrained on the physiological level and cannot be traversed socially (Trachootham et al 2018).

Not every aspect of Bangkok life, however, finds at least some degree of positive interpretation by sojourners. Adherence to rules, public safety, attitudes towards professionalism are commonly derided. In 2019, Japanese school student Megumi Morimoto became a media sensation in Thailand when she stood in the way of motorcycles taxis speeding over pavements in a Bangkok suburb (Bangkok Post 22 Aug 2019, “Japanese student blocks motorcycles on pavement “). She said to have “done that several dozen times during her six-year stay in Thailand”. Thais’ somewhat cavalier attitude to traffic rules and high accident mortality rate (Suriyawongpaisal and Kanchanasut 2003) for many sojourners are a bigger reason not to drive a car in Bangkok than the notorious traffic jams.

"There are no professionals in this country." Kazue's (35) categorical statement defies Thailand's quick rise to the NIC status. However, it makes sense in the light of the Japanese often extreme standards of professional performance. Punctuality is seen as a mainstay thereof. Main informant Masako's exegesis echoes other sojourners’ take on the gap in professional attitudes: "Thailand became industrialised one hundred years later than Japan. It takes time to develop an industrial attitude to time." Complaints about customer service attitudes and timekeeping, nevertheless, abound and big conclusions are drawn from minor incidents. “It could never happen in Japan”: for professional housewife (*senkyō shufu*) Kayoko (43), a recent case of a network engineer standing her up for an internet installation appointment is yet another sign that Thailand “needs to catch up”.

Although sojourners frequently hark back to the advantages of living in Japan, not every cultural difference is taken in Japan's favour. Respondents are acutely aware of how gender relations are different in Japan and Thailand. Hisae (68) notes that “male domination is weak (*dansonjohi ga usui*)” in Thailand. She, however, is quite content being a housewife, which in Japan has no pejorative connotation and is. For restaurant proprietress Kumi (45), in Bangkok it is “easy to work for a woman, unlike in Japan”. “In Japan working full-time while having a child is unthinkable but is the norm here.” Mother of two Jitsuko (35) not only relishes her career options here but also feels “freed from the Japanese-style femininity here”. “I never felt workplace discrimination because I am a woman, however, legally there is no protection against sexual harassment and sometimes horrible things can happen.” Ex-hospital marketing manager Arisa (49) remains tight-lipped on the details. According to the World Values Survey (2010-2014), Japanese society is second only to South Korean in gender role polarity. However, disadvantages women experience in the workplace contrast with the female strong position in the household, where wives are most of times in control of the family's finances (Sugimoto 2014).

Cultural differences in gender relations are not limited to the work sphere. Hisae (68) notes how in Thailand friendships between men and women can go on even after marriage, something she feels is not common in Japan. If gender-mixed socialising is the norm in Thailand, Japanese *homosociality*, females and males socialising separately, is quite common in Bangkok. In my fieldwork, a quite clear gender separation was apparent in a variety of social situations, whether at long stayers' club gatherings (all-male), university alumni meetings (female-unfriendly), or social outings (either male or female-only, unless there were non-Japanese in the mix). Thai urbanites' social gatherings tended to be markedly more co-ed than Japanese ones.

The "cultural-ideological links" between the senders and the recipients of migrants that Sassen (2014) writes about can extend further than religious or cultural similarities. "Both Japan and Thailand are capitalist democracies. Both are constitutional monarchies" (Terafumi, retired, 70). Both countries have also been Cold War pivots of the capitalist camp in Asia, even if their prevailing attitudes to their royalty are vastly different. According to my main informant Masako's exegesis of her countrymen's ways, such similarities may have no practical bearing on the migrants' lives, yet being aware of them creates an "emotional comfort zone" (*kanshōteki ni kokochiyoi ibasho*). This emotional landscape, hard to assess as it is or account for in a 'scientific' way, is an important part of the sense of migrant belonging. The emotional construction of a place of belonging is discussed further in Chapter V.6

"We, Thai and Japanese, think of each other as very different. But at a deeper level there are more similarities than differences. Both Japan and Thailand are capitalist Buddhist constitutional monarchies". This level of insight by Makoto (70, retiree) is not exceptional. My respondents' accounts echo theorisation introduced by some Japanese scientists. For example, Iwao Sumiko's "shared sensibilities" (1994: 74), Honda Shino's "East Asian psyche" (1994: 76), or Igarashi Akio's "cultural sensibility" (1997: 11) all attempt to explain the success of Japanese cultural exports to Asia anteceding Otmazgin's (2008) "regional paradigm".

Otmazgin (2008) is correct in proposing a regional paradigm of cultural similarity that traverses the "area boundaries" between East and Southeast Asia. Deep structural similarities run deep, if not always immediately apparent. The *bakuhatsu* system, the politico-administrative setup of pre-modern Japan (Bo 2009), bears a strong resemblance to the mandala states of classic Southeast Asia (Wolters 1999). The elaborate, multi-level registers of polite speech in both Thai and Japanese reflect the strong hierarchical structure of both societies. At the same time, the many cultural differences are significant enough to cause perennial cultural frustration in Japanese sojourners. Reconciling the differences and the similarities as a day-to-day coping strategy, Japanese sojourners find relief in identifying and relishing in the commonalities between their own culture and the ways of the host society. Even when those are only partial, as it is in the case of Buddhism as common religion, the shared point of reference provides an emotional "comfort zone", perhaps, the way Lebanese Maronites might relate to Icelandic Lutherans as fellow Christians.

Inventing and inculcating the national codes of behaviour, social manners and dress codes, was an important theme in Thai and Japanese nation-building. Many modern Thai manners and body habits - from the iconic *sawaddi* greeting to the exquisite national dress were invented by a handful of high-ranking individuals such as PM Phibun's wife La-iyad and Queen Sirikit (Kislenko 2004, Peleggi 2008, Jory 2015, Tangsantikul 2016). Japan too, Meiji intellectual circles were responsible for turning the very class-specific and nearly moribund Bushido moral values and norms into the fundamental values of the nation (Benesch 2011). Whether products of nation-state building or cultural heritage, such attitudes to social hierarchy and manners is what respondents noted often as similarities between the two people.

Acknowledgements of deep cultural similarities such as Terafumi's, however, run against other equally common, if not completely borne out by scientific evidence narratives: Japan as a society made of 90% middle-class people, the Japanese having "no religion", Japan being a different kind of Asia. Thailand's political stability, one of the major considerations in attracting Japanese investment, is perceived as decreasing in the recent years. Frequent coups, government changes, new constitutions are the butt of dinner-table jokes: my main informant Masako sarcastically referred to a recent military overturn as "Bangkok's biennale". At the same time, despite the violent clashes in Bangkok and the Suvarnabhumi airport in recent years, Thailand is ranked as safer than before for corporate expats, thus shedding its status as an undesirable destination and the accompanying relocation perks. While Japanese investment sharply fell, tourist arrivals fluctuate but never tumble, while the numbers of Japanese residents are on the rise.

V.3 The live and let-live of global city's liberalism

Politically and economically, global city Bangkok is a locus of contesting modernities: Thai, Western, Japanese, etc. Its economic openness and demand for foreign labour brings about ethno-cultural superdiversity, unrivalled by any Thai or Japanese city. For Japanese sojourners that means that on the daily level they encounter far more ethnicities and races that would be possible in any urban centre in Japan. Despite the undeniably shifting role of the nation-state and its tropes in the global order, the narrative of the "ladder of civilisations" defines the pecking order. However, its contemporary reincarnation is definitely much less racialised and is rather about development and the ability to project (various types of) power, theorised as the "competition states" system (Cerny 1990, Evans and Lunt 2010).

Even more does it defy the image of Thailand in the Japanese media: that of a tropical paradise, an inexpensive destination with smiley "little Asian brothers". The harsh and brash pulse of the global city Bangkok is kept alive by the world's third longest working hours (Swiss Bank survey data 2015). Capitalism may be the global dominant economical model and "capital has no nation", yet capitalist work ethic is not a global universal but a localised cultural phenomenon. Japanese sojourners' expectations of "normal" things, that is "normal back home", naturally run into a culture shock. Notions of temporality and keeping agreements vary and cause misunderstandings and clashes.

In Bangkok Japanese sojourners find themselves in a superdiverse community where, in contrast to Japan, multiple contesting modernities co-exist. For one, it is very different from Japan; for two, it is a microcosm of global economic and ideological shifts. Bangkok's global city status is underwritten by its "connectedness to the world economy". That high level of economic integration can also result in high exposure to everything else. The global rankings of nations still inform the access to certain privileges - economic, legal, or daily-life - however, the racialised Victorian ladder of civilisations has given way to the *competition states* ranking, where what matters is the "development and prosperity" level. Therein, Japan is no longer Asia's prime superpower and paragon of advancement. The hard-earned exalted position of Japanese abroad is still high, yet it is being contested by the newcomers from Asia and farther afield.

Japanese sojourners re-imagine and negotiate their place in their adopted homeland by various techniques of adaptation. They use their advantage as an *invisible minority* to blend in and enjoy the anonymity of urban life abroad, in contrast to Japanese experiences in Western countries where being a visible minority is sometimes fraught with frustration. The tactical deployment of Japanese identity earns them easier access to jobs. The respect Japan commands as an economic power and a *Kulturmacher* in Thailand percolates to the level of personal interaction. They rationalise their experiences into an interactive national self-identity narrative, sometimes through Modernist binaries, which in their own self-narratives are, however, generally subtler and more sophisticated than the typical dualistic tenets of *Nihonjinron*. In Thai society they find an array of affinities and cultural differences, through which they navigate and negotiate their own sense of identity and practices. An increasing degree of acceptance and adaptation can be observed in the course of their stays. However, their self-perception as Japanese remains fairly strong. They are confident in their ways and values, even if when they are very aware of advantages of living outside Japan and when they report that their ways and beliefs have changed because of living in Thailand. English is the *de facto* lingua franca of the global city Bangkok. For international communication, Japanese and Thai are on the fringes of its socio-linguistic continuum. Friendships and social connections are made both within and across linguistic and cultural differences, yet there is little cross-over into communicating in Japanese with non-Japanese or in Thai with Thais. The relative difficulty of both languages compared to "Globish" makes the latter the preferred medium of communication.

Bangkok's Japanese sojourners have to depend on their own means for migration and appear to go through deeper and more far-reaching cultural and personal adjustments, which vary from developing an extreme version of one's national identity (the *hyper-Japanese* identity or cultural extremism/fundamentalism), to *selective cosmopolitanism* and the *strategic deployment of identity*. Those ostensible opposites can, however, co-exist in the same individual, evolve in response to exposure and experience, and manifest themselves when circumstances call for that.

Bangkok's brand of multiculturalism largely lacks cultural or religious anxiety that seem to have become the political preoccupation in many Western countries. Foreign labour is managed through

taxation, visa regime, and access to naturalisation. In a near absence of a social security system, Bangkok's migrant population becomes engaged in economic survival/competition, where the measure of achievement is financial success rather than a pre-existing ethno-cultural paradigm. Its ideology overriding ethnic cultural and religious difference. The unifying supra-national ideology of Bangkok's economic liberalism and its handmaiden multi-culturalism is that of pursuit of happiness through striving for personal material success. In establishing at least a semblance of non-discriminatory meritocracy, it overrides, if does not eliminate, ethno-national and religious difference. It rearranges inequality along different lines, less racialised or ethnicised. With enough income, anyone can earn a place under the sun in a global free-market city, thus partially fulfilling the promise of the Mont Pelerin Neo-Liberalism (Turner 2007). As a social system that "can't help but produce social difference" (Baudrillard 1980), Bangkok structures hierarchy along the income rather than ethno-national lines.

Not only is Bangkok more diverse than any city in Japan, but it is also pronouncedly more unequal. With the exception of diplomatic and media corps, there is a wide prosperity divide between and within migrant communities. If many Japanese typically occupy the upper rungs, labourers from the Greater Mekong Subregion and seasonal workers from Thai provinces are engaged in low-paid jobs. At the same time, a considerable number of Japanese *sotokomori* live on the fringes of Japanese Bangkok (Ono 2012), both economically and geographically. In the city where urban planning is purposefully delegated to the commercial sector, access to commons, such as green spaces, public transportation (Richardson and Jensen 2008), or cleaner air (Thavisin 2001) is highly commodified. The next chapter explores the micro-geographies of arrivals from a country known as "90% middle-class Japan" finding their place of belonging in the towering hierarchy of inequality in a starkly unequal global city?

VI Chapter VI. The making of Japanese Bangkok: the physical space of transnational belonging

"Bangkok is even more comfortable than Tokyo." I never expected such a statement from Misae, the chatty and amicable Japanese wife of a Swiss resident of Bangkok. Meticulously planned and managed Tokyo with its compulsory green zones, strict pollution controls, unfailingly punctual public transportation, and world-record public safety seems a far cry from the chaotic sprawl and hustle-bustle of Bangkok. What Misae meant by Bangkok, however, was the Central Sukhumvit area "between Chidlom and Phra Khanong", long an expat hideout, uncommonly for the city blessed with both the monorail and the underground as well as a fine international dining scene and a plethora of upmarket retail emporia. Benchasiri, one of Bangkok's far-and-between public parks is also here, complete with a publicly accessible swimming pool, and a tennis court, a pleasant anomaly in a city starved of public facilities. High-rise condominiums with 24-hour security, marble floors, and tennis courts stand here next to spacious urban villas and cheaper low-rise blocks of flats. With little public space, chaotic mass transit, and crumbling pavements regularly trespassed by cars spilling over from the never-ending traffic gridlock, however, it is "the First World indoors, the Third World outdoors" according to a Japanese man I one day chatted with on an underground train.

In Bangkok, Japanese sojourners find themselves in an urban terrain both very different from and surprisingly similar to their home country. Both countries started modernising at about the same time but the paths they took to achieve that, resulted in very different urban concepts. Bangkok's highly commercialised and deregulated urban space occupies a bafflingly complex organic grid of ownership types and usages, which complicates attempts at more centralised planning (Askew 2004). Post-war urban planning has had to balance the free-market approach with the escalating needs of an exponentially expanding metropolis (ibid.). The economically liberal stance of all successive governments since Sarit has managed to turn a snoozy thatch-roofed backwater into a fast and gleaming, if congested and haphazard metropolis of glass and concrete, largely by attracting various strains of international capital to develop its projects in the city (Douglass and Boonchuen 2006). The overarching administrative tendency was towards encouraging and accommodating the growth of private developments rather than organising and regulating them according to a masterplan (ibid.).

Thai political ethic has long been shaped by the necessity to "bend with the wind like the bamboo" to play off more powerful external players (Kislenko 2002). In the pre-modern era (and even during WWII) that was done through double allegiances, the early modern period saw survival through balancing foreign military menaces, the post-war/post-colonial period heralded attracting and managing competing foreign financial interests to fuel the economic growth. Farming out many development projects to foreign companies and governments has shaped the current face of Thailand's economic and physical landscape (Douglas and Boonchuen 2006). As part of that trend, the physical space of Japanese Bangkok has come to be shaped by the big and small Japanese players alike. That is how Bangkok has ended up with an idiosyncratic cityscape where Japanese sojourners make their home. Three main themes of Japanese belonging in Bangkok's physical and social space that emerged from fieldwork interviews and interactions with Japanese residents are the social inequality; the impact of Japanese soft power; and the *comfort infrastructure*. This chapter explores the making of the three and how Japanese sojourners belonging is framed by them.

VI.1 Japanese Bangkok: the micro-geographies of inequality

Bangkok lacks one central area, having instead the overlapping mandala structure with business (Silom and Sathorn), administrative (Rattanakosin), and foreign influence (Sukhumvit) centres. (*Reminiscent of the essentially medieval layout of Central London where the royal, legislative, executive, legal, media and financial centres are separate with none decisively dominant.) Its historical centre in the Rattanakosin island, with the royal palaces, main temples and many government offices stays aloof and logistically disconnected with its current business heart in Silom/Sathorn. The prime commercial and residential area Sukhumvit is located along the eponymous road. As the road itself technically goes as far as to the Cambodian border, it is its early stretch, roughly between Ploenchit Road and Ekamai that is highly sought after and commonly known simply as Sukhumvit. In the 1950s it was on the fringes of the built-up area (Askew 2004), which now extends uninterrupted into the adjacent provinces. The housing is a mix of high-rise luxury condominiums, and low-rise apartment blocks and town houses from various post-war periods.

The so-called Little Tokyo (see map in Appendix D) occupies roughly the area between Sois 22 and 32 off Sukhumvit Road. It is the area of a very high concentration of Japanese-run and Japanese-gearred establishments. Both symbolically and conveniently, here is where a branch of the well-established and well-funded Japanese Association of Thailand is located too. Not far away, a de-facto Japanese exclave around Thong Lor (Sukhumvit Sois 53 and 55) is famous for its trendy dining and nightlife scene. A substantial share of businesses here are Japanese-run and themed, although they cater to all kinds of typically cosmopolitan Bangkok's clientele.

Slightly further afield, a fairly dense Japanese presence can be found around the general Sukhumvit area stretching roughly from the swish up-market Ploenchit to the relatively more residential and low-key Ekamai. This is the area that is "more convenient than Tokyo", replete with life's conveniences and arguably Bangkok's most vibrant dining and shopping scene. Despite its up-market status, it has its micro-geographical idiosyncrasies too. Fancy condominiums are spliced with low-rent blocks of basic flats. Picturesque shanty communities stretch along the Saen Saeb canal. Some patches considered less desirable, such as the northern stretch of Soi Nana, are continuously becoming gentrified and sought-after.

Despite a high concentration of Japanese residents and establishments, neither Little Tokyo nor Thong Lor are solely Japanese. Both have been long favoured by better-off Thais and foreign nationals. According to the lore I have heard repeatedly over the years from unrelated individuals, the choice of these localities appears to have been originally down to Japanese-run realty agents serving the Japanese corporate expatriate community. They tended to favour a very particular area and certain types of luxury high-rise condominiums, in much less supply at the time and considered advantageous in terms of safety, comfort, and ease of access to both the outlying Japanese factories and the local Japanese-gearred infrastructure. Such buildings have been veritable "vertical gated communities", towering oases of a First-World life standard in a chaotic city lacking strong policies of urban planning. Physically, their "visible attributes of happiness" (Baudrillard 1970) - marble-floored lobbies, multi-level parking lots, swimming pools, and tennis courts - are guarded by cast-iron fences and watched over by private security.

VI.1.1 Wealth distribution and sojourners' spread across Bangkok's mandala of inequality

"It was shocking how wealth and poverty always face each other (*tonari-awase*) here" (Misae 40). Thailand's wealth gap (*himpu no sa*) is a pet peeve of Japanese sojourners, often coming up in conversations. Bangkok's Japanese may be huddled towards the top of the pyramid; however, it is far from an island of Japanese affluence in a sea of Third World poverty. Global city Bangkok offers economic opportunities for both success and failure, unequally distributed across the rungs and niches of its social order. In addition to various social strata of local people, that also includes the global middle class and the international working class. The former comprises the local professional class and numerous cosmopolitan migrants from the West and increasingly other Asian countries, while the

latter, poorer Thais and migrants from developing countries. With their global cultural capital from a high-income country, many Japanese sojourners are well geared to occupy a relatively privileged position and enjoy higher than the average income and lifestyle in a highly globalised city with a high degree of Japanese economic involvement.

As the spread of Bangkok's Japanese community radiates as a *mandala-state* from its centre, the privilege and prosperity peter out with distance. Thus, the most visible middle-class bulk of the Japanese community in Little Tokyo is surrounded by the less well-paid *local hires* in relatively cheaper areas like Pratunam or Ari as well as struggling Japanese "misfits" and "floaters" (*sotokomori*) who even farther afield settle in the low-income neighbourhoods (Ono 2005). "Bangkok seems to attract the wrong kind of people, the riff-raff, good-for-nothings and shady characters, thus tarnishing the image of the Japanese Empire abroad" (Ishii 1988) as an early 20th century Japanese diplomat lamented.

Predictably, for Japanese sojourners the income and the distance from the central areas directly correlate. For the poorer sojourners, the closeness to a train station is not even an issue as Terafumi (70, retired long-stayer) observed that many of the *sotokomori* cannot afford the fare anyway. As tempting as it would be to contrast the relatively flatter hierarchy of Japan with the strikingly unequal Bangkok, the recent phenomenon of the "working poor" (Sekine 2008, Obinger 2009), working university graduates who cannot afford the rent, cast a deep shadow on such a facile trope. It is those disgruntled by the rising cost of living and lagging salaries that often end up as *sotokomori* (Ono 2014). In the more unequal Bangkok, the worse-off Japanese sojourners find themselves a survival niche in the cheaper outlying districts where they can make a less stressful living than anywhere in Japan. Thus, paradoxically, inequality in Bangkok creates opportunities even for those who ostensibly would be disadvantaged by it. This kind of lifestyle of course, has its trade-offs. However, they seem to be offset by enough advantages to be attractive for Japanese *sotokomori* sojourners (Ono 2014).

The Sukhumvit area and Little Tokyo in particular remain at the symbolic heart of Bangkok's Japanese presence. However, even the better-off sojourners are being steadily pushed out by the increasing cost of living but also other considerations. For Arisa (49), her home she owns with her Sino-Thai husband in the low-rise, leafy parts of Sathorn is expensive, yet not as outside of reach as a comparable property in Sukhumvit. It also gives easier access to transportation, shopping, and business districts. Shizuka (69) ended up in the central Phaya Thai thanks to her marriage to a Thai man when the area was not yet either central or prestigious. For Yoshio (stage lighting engineer 24), the once low-key and nondescript Ari area now made accessible by the advent of the Skytrain is where he made his home in Bangkok alongside with other relatively less moneyed young Japanese media and IT professionals. For those in an even lower income bracket, such as local hires, students, low-budget retirees and *sotokomori* (floaters), cheaper high-rise blocks in the gritty Pratunam/Rajaprarop area offer affordable and fairly central housing. Every now and then, I come across a Japanese person living in the more remote residential suburbs on both sides of the river such as Thonburi or Minburi. My main informant Masako lives just across the Chaopraya river from Silom, next to a Skytrain station. A substantial number of corporate expats and their families live closer to work farther afield next to the Japanese-

managed factories in Bang Na and Nonthaburi and even beyond that in Ayutthaya and Rayong, also major industrial areas with a significant Japanese business presence.

VI.1.2 Vertical inequality

The typical setup of a Bangkok high-rise condominium has the first few lower floors given to residential car parking. As it accommodates the middle-class need for a private car in a city with grossly inadequate public transportation (Charoentrakulpeeti et al 2006), it also gives the residential floors the advantage of being raised above the street-level noise and pollution. As such, wealth distribution within Bangkok has a vertical dimension too as high-rise condominiums are built as a way to escape the congested and polluted urban environment on the ground level.

Most Japanese in Bangkok live in high-rise residential blocks. The Little Japan area is mostly built up with condominiums from the 1980s and 1990s, more generously laid out, reminiscent of the American style luxury housing with spacious kitchens, perimeter balconies, rooms for live-in house help, tennis courts, winter gardens, etc. The 21st century crop of Bangkok's residential towers typical for the up-and-coming areas around Skytrain and Metro stations is much less sumptuous. With the average area of flats nearly half as that in the older buildings, the balconies can barely fit a clothes rack and an air-conditioner's fan unit.

Partly a sign of the global overpopulation, partly the consequence of an extreme concentration of capital and whimsical zoning laws in global cities, the proliferation of high-rise luxury residential towers has of late become synonymous with the rise of the global city and the inequality it typifies (Yeh and Yuen 2011). Three hundred residential skyscrapers rubber-stamped by London's ex-mayor Boris Johnson will for many decades to come blight the city's skyline with their unseemly design whilst serving as receptacles of dubious foreign investment (Guardian 2016-04-10, Evening Standard 2018-04-18). In Dubai, already famous for its ambition of building ever higher skyscrapers, residents of the vertiginous sky-high condominiums will be blocked from lift access should they forego their rent payment (Arabian Business 10 Feb 2014). The new crop of New York's ultra-thin and ultra-high residences keeps beating new records for the most expensive properties ever sold in the US (Guardian 2019-02-05). Bangkok proudly stands at the forefront of this trend: amongst the 250 never-to-be-finished high-rise buildings left in the wake of the 1997 financial crisis crops up a new generation of gleaming edifices with futuristic designs. With an oversupply of office space in the city, a growing share of them is for residential use. Another global trend that Bangkok is part of, is the commodification of access to the commons (Lee and Webster 2006).

VI.1.3 Inequality and access to commons

Less obvious than location, yet equally vital in Bangkok, is access to the commons: clean air, potable water, green public spaces, unobstructed views. Artificial scarcity makes them commodities with a

tradable market value, a "marker of social difference" (Baudrillard 1970), but also a life necessity. Thus, in Sukhumvit's many luxury condominiums pre-installed air purifiers and central air-conditioning systems provide clean air at a comfortable temperature and humidity. The overwhelming fumes, smells and noise of the city are cancelled by expensive soundproof windows. As Bangkok's tap water is generally considered unsafe for drinking, purified water is delivered in plastic vats. Some newly built places advertise having a central water-filtering system. Safe drinking water is a market commodity, not a public service.

As a hark-back to the times when power cuts were a common occurrence, some older buildings still have their own power generators. The received wisdom is that the higher floor you live on, the better air you avail yourself of and the more removed you are from the noise and chaos in the streets. Although, the inner-city villas with large plots of land are Bangkok's ultimate luxury, they go back to the days when the latter-day prestigious central areas were oases of verdure and tranquillity.

Such luxury comes at a price: monthly rent here is 3-10 times as much as the average local salary. Thus, physical exclusion here goes hand in hand with a degree of *structural violence* (Farmer 2004) that creates these isolated micro-worlds onto themselves. As the material aspects of Bangkok's overall life standard keep improving, structural exclusion remains a symbolic tool of social difference. It is worth noting that such accommodation is within the reach only for the most well-heeled segment of Bangkok's Japanese. However, symbolically, it reserves for the whole community a place at the top of the city's perceived social ladder. The spread of inequality in Bangkok is also controlled by access to public transportation (Richardson and Jensen 2006, Liu et al 2017).

VI.1.4 Transportation and inequality

'Do you know that they have no urban trains in Bangkok?' Back in 1995, I announced to my Japanese friend cum host mother Kayoko that I would be travelling to Thailand at the end of my academic year. Quite used to Japan's seamless public transportation, that was an unexpected turn for a still inexperienced traveller. 'How do they get around then?' 'By bus, takes them forever.' In Japan, all populated areas are pivoted on train stations, part of the comprehensive rail network that reaches every nook and corner of the country (Aoki 2000, Calimente 2012). Japanese local community life is centred on the large railway station complexes (Zacharias et al 2011). Such sprawling edifices are replete with every imaginable facility from English conversation schools and grocery shops to restaurants and beauty parlours, overflowing into the *shitamachi* area around them. Even the Japanese collective sense of time is synched with train timetables (Tsuji 2006).

Bangkok, on the other hand, had for a very long time relied "on a poorly planned road network" (Hanaoka 2007). The Metropolitan government prioritised maintaining private car travel speeds over public transport and environment (Rujopakarn 2003). Five years after my first visit, in 2000, Central Bangkok finally received an elevated train system with sleek clean-smelling carriages quietly whizzing

above the din and exhaust of the practically permanent traffic gridlock in the streets. Jubilant Japanese expats hailed it at the time as Thailand finally joining the ranks of developed countries. With fares often running up higher than the taxi fare for the same distance, it added mobility for those prepared to pay for saving their time (Jenks 2003). Such prohibitive pricing still bars many from joining its ridership that almost two decades later lags well behind its projected numbers (Chalermpong and Ratanawaraha 2016). Apart from emerging as a modernisation icon and a status symbol for the global city Bangkok, the Skytrain also aligned itself along the vertical axis of Bangkok's inequality as its passengers are literally elevated above "the dirty and noisy streetscape" (Richardson and Jensen 2008). The vertical separation, however, is not as cut-and-dried as it would be tempting to theorise: the owners of expensive foreign-made cars are still stuck in the same traffic as the passengers of the 5-baht-a-ride ramshackle buses.

Given how train-centred is Japan, it is no surprise that the majority of Bangkok's Japanese tend to live within the reach of a Skytrain or underground station. "Bangkok's main drawback is that the area covered by public transportation is limited": for Kayoko (45, housewife) living in a heavily industrialised Bang Na area of the adjacent Samut Prakarn province public transportation equates with trains. This is not merely a Japanese habit, the Skytrain and the Bangkok metro are the only means to get around the city reliably fast. The other comparably swift one is the canal and river boats (Hossain and lamtrakul 2007). The former's coverage, however, is limited to a sole line along the Saen Saeb canal from the Gold Mount Temple to Bang Kapi. A string of commuter boat piers on the Chaophraya River lies outside the major business areas. Bus or car journeys are often excruciatingly slow, with the daily average commuting time for Bangkokians hovering around two hours (Ratanawaraha and Chalermpong 2016).

Bangkok's city grid still largely follows the original layout of mostly filled in water canals (Ouyyanont 1999). The smaller side streets (*sois*) "flow" into the larger trunk roads (*thanon*). Often dozens or more of densely populated *sois* feed traffic into a single clogged two- or four-lane *thanon*. The *sois* are largely privately owned, with the owners resisting their broadening or creating throughways (Douglass and Boonchuen 2006). Surprisingly for a city so heavily reliant on private cars, public parking is non-existent (Hanaoka 2007). Consequently, the tree-like structure offers very limited to non-existent short cuts or alternative routes, contributing to a seemingly incurable transport gridlock. Newly constructed urban highways and bypasses try to circumvent the city planning impasses, but merely keep feeding into the same layout never meant for mass overground transportation (Hanaoka 2007).

In a city where urban planning is largely relegated to "the invisible hand of the market" encouraged by its pro-actively welcoming stance to FDI, urban development is disproportionately skewed towards private commercial projects such as residential accommodation and retail complexes at the expense of public amenities or social space (Douglass and Boonchuen 2006). The Bangkok Metropolitan Authority (BMA) only came up with its first urban planning code in 1992. With rudimentary sidewalks crowded with food and retail stalls, largely absent bicycle lanes, few green areas, and constant traffic snarl-up, home and work location becomes crucial for the city dweller's survival. The top-brass of Thailand's ruling elite responsible for the post-war development choices were educated in the US

through US government-run programmes around the time when the automobile was the mobility choice and the public transportation was on the way out in the USA. The ideas influenced the way Bangkok's urban transportation was shaped with trains and public transportation in general relegated to the bottom of the policy priority list.

The Sukhumvit area where many Japanese sojourners reside benefits from multiple types of mass transit, rather uncommonly for the city. Ultra-modern air-conditioned trains whiz above decrepit low-rise buildings and worn-out public buses from the past eras. It is wedged between, on the one side, the invariably gridlocked Sukhumvit Road with a Skytrain line and numerous bus routes, and on the other, by the fetid Khlong Saen Saeb canal plied by speeding commuter boats. The considerable distance between the two sides is served by *paratransit*: motorcycle taxis and soi buses (Tangphaisankun 2010).

The perceived ranking and usage of the above means of transportation by Sukhumvit's Japanese is hardly different from other occupants of the area (Braun 2011). The canal boats and the buses are a "servants' backdoor" to the fancy Sukhumvit: they haul over the backstage staff for the grand spectacle of the area's hi-so life from the cheaper outlying areas and whisk them back away when their help is not needed any more. The Skytrain, the underground, and the taxis are the "polite main entrance": the average fare for all of them is not very dissimilar and often out of reach for the low-waged house help, sales assistants, and security officers.

Private cars are much less common among the more centrally located Japanese residents compared to other groups. For example, for the dwellers of the better-off suburbia of privately developed modern "villages" (*muban*) a personal car a survival necessity, as such areas are nonly served by sparse bus connections and short-distance motorcycle taxis (Charoentrakulpeeti and Zimmermann 2008, Karnchanaporn and Kasemsook 2008). The two most commonly cited reasons of low car ownership among Japanese sojourners are traffic congestion and locals' rougher driving style. Kazue (35) is one of the few Japanese who own a car in Bangkok. She cites convenience for shopping and farther trips inside and outside the city. Jitsuko (37) reminisces nostalgically about the days when *chūzain's* packages for her and her then husband-to-be used to include chauffeured cars. Nowadays, there are a privilege enjoyed by very few top-level expats. At the same time, she continues, Bangkok has since become safer and cleaner but also emotionally closer now that as a locally hired post-expat she navigates her way around as a local. One of the signs of becoming a proper Bangkokian is the courage to use *motosai* (motorcycle taxis).

The wild and unruly *motosai* remain popular as many sois are not served by any other means of transportation (Pongprasert and Kubota 2017). Because in many areas they are also the only way to beat the traffic, *motosai* are a great mixer of classes. They are favoured by practically all social strata save for, perhaps, the daintiest and the faintest of heart. Their drivers frequently sport magic *khom* tattoos on their napes, by which they believe spirits will yank them out of any traffic accident into

safety. Many local Japanese take them with a mix of suspicion and relief, often as the last resort to make it on time for an appointment or get to a far-flung soi.

By virtue of their relative affluence but also thanks to the train-centred Japanese culture, the spread of Bangkok's Japanese follows that of the urban rail, elevated and underground, along Central Sukhumvit and up north from there. The leafy back lanes of Sathorn now also served by the Skytrain have gained popularity among Bangkok's Japanese as a place of domicile. The recent Skytrain extension over the river has seen Japanese unprecedentedly venture there: that is where my main informant Masako (54) bought her place. A relative minority of Japanese sojourners on lower incomes, such as *sotokomori* floaters, some *rinji-yatoi* local hires, and the struggling students, are sparsely dispersed farther afield along the horizontal axis of Bangkok's inequality. When the entire area of Japanese presence in Bangkok, beyond the residential area, is considered there emerges a particular pattern.

VI.2 Physical space: the export of a Japanese urban pattern

VI.2.1 Uchi and soto: replication of Japanese urban patterns

Superimposed on Bangkok's concentric circles of affordability and accessibility, the physical layout of Japanese Bangkok follows the typical Japanese urban pattern centred around the urban railway system (Shu and Shi 2008). Inherited from the expat-dominated times, it follows the *soto /uchi* (outside/inside) division, a fundamental anthropological dichotomy in Japan (Bachnik 2019) and also typical for virtually all Japanese urban areas (Sorensen 2004). The daytime business cum nighttime entertainment quarter (*soto*) in Silom is connected via a monorail link (still a rarity and a rather recent luxury in Thailand but an integral part of nearly all inhabited areas in Japan) to the Phromphong and Thong Lor residential clusters (*uchi*) in mid-central Sukhumvit. Just like most train stations in Japan, the Phromphong station is turned into a continuous commercial space directly linked with two large department stores. Also away from the residential "uchi" of the community, is Soi Thaniya in the Silom area, with its massage parlours, hostess bars, exclusive Japanese restaurants, and Thaniya Plaza, Thailand's largest congregation of overpriced golfing equipment shops. Similar to the urban nightlife areas in Japan, it is located in the low-rise undergrowth of the high-rise office buildings.

The monorail extends further eastwards, outside the city, into the Bang Na area with many Japanese-run manufacturing facilities. It serves well the needs of expats, however, the rise of individual sojourners with severed or non-existent corporate links has watered down the *soto/uchi* structure. The Silom/Thaniya nexus of business and entertainment is of little use or interest for them, very few have business in Bang Na, and their habitat increasingly spreads over Bangkok well outside the traditional Japanese areas.

A microcosm of urban Japan, the physical layout of Japanese Bangkok can be conceptualised as a case of overseas "spread of the Japanese neighbourhood", echoing Befu's (1994) "spread of the Japanese

village", even if only in a narrower reference to the physical layout. The chaotic, organic, planning-averse Thai approach, where market forces are entrusted with urban development (Douglas and Boonchuen 2006), contrasts here with the more rigid and rational centralised Japanese approach (Sorensen 2002). In a deregulated organic city, the Japanese rationalising drive leaves a conspicuous imprint, materialised in the billion-baht's worth of infrastructure, commercial and residential development. Where Bangkok's structurally pre-modern city layout emerged around its complex land ownership patterns constrains modernising choices (Askew 2012), Japanese infrastructure development imposes itself on top of (the Skytrain) or underneath (the Underground) it. However, the relationship between those two is not necessarily that of opposition and power struggle.

VI.2.2 Little Japan and global middle class

One aspect of Bangkok urbanity where the blend of Thai and Japanese is nearly effortless is urban architectural aesthetics. Cityscapes in both Japan and Thailand are characterised by a highly functional, no-frills architectural style evolved throughout post-war Asia. Its relative lack of aesthetics is mostly due to the necessity to rebuild war-ruined or build up undeveloped cities and expand them rapidly in the wake of various economic miracles (Noobanjong 2003). The post-war Asian nation-states were thus preoccupied more with either the restoration of war-damaged cityscapes or the accommodation of the economic growth (Pernice 2014). The Japanese approach is more planned reflecting the close relationship between the Japanese state and private capital, whereby ideologies and policies were produced and implemented by educated bureaucrats with a long-term vision in relation to the overarching objectives of the nation-state (Coaldrake 1996). Only a select few areas in Bangkok were developed with a visible concern for a modern national architectural style as a symbolic statement of national unity, power, or identity (Askew 1994, Noobanjong 2003). Most decision-making in urban planning was mostly delegated to developers who had to work around a very complex framework of land ownership in Bangkok (Douglass and Boonchuen 2006, Askew 2012) while pursuing the maximisation of return on investment rather than the loftier interest of the common good. Born out of such *urban slippage* (Dovey and Polakit 2006), the urban space of Bangkok with its organic blend of different types of land ownership and use (Askew 2004), follows its internal logic, rather than considerations of rationality, planning, or aesthetics.

Japanese Bangkok is where these two very different tides interpose to create a very particular physical space combining elements of both. The heart of the Japanese community, Little Japan does have a high ratio of Japanese residents, but it is not an ethnic ghetto a mixed environment, equally popular among wealthier Thais and Westerners. It is becoming steadily beyond the reach of many Japanese sojourners as the Thai living standard and the cost of living have doubled over the last decade. Japanese sojourners increasingly move to its more affordable edges such as Ekkamai like Manabu (artist/lecturer, 45) did to save on the rent. Even the *chūzai-in* (corporate expats) are paid less than they used to be, also having to put up with diminished fringe benefits. Muzue (35), a former expat herself, explained that it happened because a more developed Thailand had stopped being an undesirable destination for *chūzai-in*. The average condominium size has decreased too, from the yesteryear American-style palatial abodes with resplendent all-round balconies and a dedicated, often windowless house help room to Hong Kong style functional shoe-boxes with a railing in front of the window in lieu of a balcony.

No condominium or a restaurant in Little Japan is exclusively Japanese, unlike in the expat-only Thaniya (Kusaka 2000). However, the price tags and exotic menus in some establishments geared towards senior Japanese expats with expense accounts can be an obstacle for the non-Japanese to enter. Traditional institutional nodes with a strong backup by the Japanese state and corporations, however, are often strictly Japanese-only: such as the Japanese Association of Thailand (Nijonjinkai) and Japanese schools. The entrance criteria are very restrictive. Leniently enough, the Nihonjinkai requires at least some kind of family ties with Japan: for example, if you married to a Japanese citizen. On the other hand, Japanese nationality is an absolute prerequisite to study at one of Bangkok's two Japanese schools, despite a high interest in Japanese education among Thais and the Japanese MEXT (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology) heavily promoting their scholarships for Thais to study in Japan. Such two-mindedness undermines Japan's own effort to use Japanese language education in its foreign policy strategy (Hiromi 1997). The importance of such Japanese-only institutions, however, is challenged by the influx of individual sojourners whose views, life objectives and lifestyles differ to those of *chūzai-in expats*. Chapter VII explores how that affects Bangkok's Japanese belonging to their community.

Despite cultural differences, Japanese, Western and Thai middle classes in Bangkok unite over increasingly shared consumerist patterns. Mixed-nationality party at the restaurants and clubs in Little Japan, wider Sukhumvit, and other similar Bangkok areas are a norm rather than an exception. English language proficiency too acts as a powerful unifier. Such an organic blending of Bangkok's communities over shared consumption patterns is, perhaps, one of the secrets behind the city's successful brand of multi-culturalism. Despite the outward *laissez-faire* appearance of Thai attitude to their foreign residents, Bangkok's Japanese presence and other migrant populations is legally and politically regulated in exchange for some economic freedoms. Chapter VIII looks into the mechanisms of such "taxation without representation". At the backdrop of this managed "harmony of nations", Japanese soft power, however, doesn't miss a chance to make a statement about its presence and contribution, even if it is by far not the only creator of Japanese Bangkok.

VI.3 The making of Japanese Bangkok

VI.3.1 Infrastructure projects as permanent billboards

The billboard-like sign of the Thai-Japanese Association School, one of the two Japanese schools in Bangkok, can be easily spotted from afar and even from the top of an elevated highway in the Rama IX area. In the city where most signs are in Thai and English, this one is bilingual in Thai and Japanese. Financed by Japan, a flyover in the notoriously busy intersection of Rama IV Road bears trilingual signage "Thai-Japanese Friendship Bridge". Quite a commotion was stirred when it was closed for maintenance back in 2013 as a lot of central Bangkok traffic owes a degree of its fluidity to this vital structure.

Japan's aid to Thailand, channeled mainly under the auspices of the Japanese International Cooperation Agency's (JICA), may be just as 'tied' to Japanese business as that from its Western counterparts to their respective national business, yet its many infrastructure projects in Thailand bring indirect benefits in terms of Thais' positive perception of Japan (Yoshihara 1989, Söderberg 2012). Official development assistance (ODA) is "surely a source of soft power for Japan in Asia" (Söderberg 2010: 52). The Bangkok MRT underground railway system as well as are a palpable Japanese contribution that Thai people experience in their daily lives (Choocharukul and Sriroongvikrai 2013). Next to the eponymous MRT station, the Thailand Cultural Centre, a performing arts centre, was built in 1987 from a Japanese grant in a city that previously had never had a theatre or opera house (Chua 1996).

The long-standing presence of Japanese capital has carved out a very particular space for Bangkok's Japanese community. A small enclave of corporate expats immediately began building an infrastructure for itself (Ishii 1988): from real estate agents and book shops to schools and supermarkets. To a considerable extent, it was motivated by the very particular needs of Japanese expats that could not be met by anything available at the time: Japan-endemic foodstuffs, Japanese reading habits, the need for expats' children to continue education identical to what they would get in Japan. The advent of mass tourism from Japan heralded a further profusion of Japanese-gearred commercial spaces. Massive expansion by Japanese department stores chains saw varying degrees of success (Meyer-Ohle 2014). While some such as Isetan and Kinokuniya prospered, others, such as Sogo and Yaohan had long withered. Recent years have seen a new wave of commercial expansion when the food courts and supermarkets of upscale Thai department stores came under Japanese management. The proliferation of such outlets and the commodification of Japanese foodstuffs not only changed urban Thais' eating habits but also transformed the way Japanese sojourners relate to their new home (see. Chapter VII).

Flagship development projects such as the Bangkok Metro and the Rama IV Flyover are prominent features of Bangkok's cityscape and their Japanese provenance is heavily emphasised with conspicuous bilingual or trilingual signage. Numerous outlets of global Japanese brands such as Uniqlo and Muji capitalise on Japan's positive image in fashion-conscious Asia. They are too international to be any kind of community nodes like Japanese supermarkets (see Chapter VII) but as research participant Misae (40) noted "they provide Japanese residents with the style of clothing they are used to and that makes life in Bangkok easier". However, Japanese corporate interests are not the only engine behind such developments. Small-time Japanese entrepreneurs are as influential in saturating Japanese Bangkok's consumerist market with more targeted niche offers, creating the comfort infrastructure for Japanese belonging in Bangkok.

VI.3.2 The comfort infrastructure of mom-and-pop shops: getting the full Japanese experience

During my fieldwork, I found myself navigating through Sukhumvit's overheated labyrinthine back lanes, trying to get the feel of the recent developments in the Japanese enclave. Back in the days when I lived in Bangkok, the area already had an all-bases-covered Japanese infrastructure, where I had no

hard time finding an obscure edition of my favourite manga in a second-hand bookshop or a very specific Japanese-made sauce. However, then it was a very Thai cityscape interspersed with some Japanese shops. This time around, making my way for the first time to the Nihonjinkai's newest annex office made me feel as if I were in Japan. Building facades festooned with vertical stacks of Japanese shop signs would not be out of place in Osaka or Nagoya. Typical Japanese multi-purpose commercial space buildings had an air of being somewhere next to a suburban railway station in Japan. The sheer numbers of Japanese-run shops seemingly doubled or even tripled, against the odds of military coups, flagging economy, and an abrupt, unheard of before, fall in Japanese direct investment in 2014.

Individual entrepreneurs were the pioneers of the Japanese community in Bangkok in the late 19th century, well before Japan's big business turned its interest to the region in the interbellum period. After WWII, it was the turn of the big business to re-establish Japanese presence in the city. Soon the small fish followed. Numerous small enterprises from bookshops and travel agents to restaurants and bakeries came to serve the ever-growing expat community and mass tourism. With the growth of popularity of all things Japanese in Thailand, the market expanded to the Thai middle classes hooked on sushi and the latest Tokyo fashions. In recent years, it has come to a point where it is entirely possible to have "the full Japanese experience" in Bangkok with every imaginable aspect of life catered for by Japanese-owned establishments (Guardian 11-03-2018, *Getting the full Japanese experience – in Bangkok*).

Kumi (49) runs a smart and breezy restaurant in the fancier corner of Southern Central Sukhumvit, some distance away from Little Tokyo. It is not the kind of tacky sushi-and-grilled-meat eatery named Tokyo or Samurai, improbable anywhere in Japan but common in the places less familiar with proper modern Japanese cuisine. It serves the typical modern Japanese meals, which are harmonious mixtures of native and foreign styles, catering to the savvy clientele lunching Japanese office workers and evening-time Thai diners. The high level of Japanese dining in Bangkok is upheld by both Thais' discerning palates and the presence of numerous Japanese-run eateries that do not compromise on the quality or authenticity of their fare: no Philadelphia cheese rolls or bizarre ingredient substitutes. Japanese entrepreneurs are not the largest segment of Bangkok's Japanese but their contribution to the well-being of the community is hugely disproportionate to their numbers: practically all respondents state they dine out regularly in Japanese restaurants and they never fail to find any Japanese ingredient in Bangkok.

Although she originally started the restaurant together with her ex-husband, it was easier for her to do that and keep running it on her own as a Japanese citizen, thanks to various mutual treaties, outlined in the *Legal underpinnings* section of this chapter. Smaller businesses like Teruko's fill in the gaps overlooked or avoided by larger Japanese companies. It is high-risk investment and sojourners often invest their life-time savings in their business. The profit margins are quite narrow, at best it provides a decent living, however, it is also often a work of passion or lifetime dream.

Her husband is the editor of Bangkok's most popular Japanese "free paper" *Daco*. Established in 1988, it features a lot of paid advertising and classifieds alongside light editorial articles. Many respondents would mention it as a source of information without any solicitation on my side. When looking for research participants I had the highest response rate from there, whilst online forums and bulletin boards had a zero yield. In the age of the moribund printed media, Bangkok's free Japanese papers are doing well and are even increasing in numbers. Bucking the global trends as usual, the migrants from the high-tech Japan shun the online world. The Bangkok *Shuho* established in 1976 as the main media outlet for the community has a much lower circulation rate, despite being backed by the *Nihonjinkai* and Japanese enterprises.

Over the decades, Japanese Bangkok became filled by a growing number of smaller independent Japanese businesses: restaurants, pastry shops, booksellers, travel agents, etc. Recruitment agents not only have positions for those already in Bangkok but actively canvass for potential work migrants in Japan as well as seek Japanese-speaking Thais to fill positions in Japanese companies. Just like the larger Japanese retail outlets, Japanese owned small and medium enterprises cater to customers outside the Japanese community. For those sojourners without an expense account, upscale sashimi and *teppan-yaki* restaurants are a special treat where very particular dishes can be enjoyed "just like in Japan". At the lower end of the market there is a proliferation of affordable Japanese eateries. Be it Okinawan noodles or Japanised Western dishes such as *niku-jaga* or *karashi mentaiko* spaghetti, a diverse range of Japanese specialties rarely seen outside Japan "makes Bangkok feel more like home". The current proliferation of small Japanese businesses seems to owe to the influx of individual sojourners in the last three decades but in fact the groundwork for the comfort infrastructure had been laid earlier. The security of big corporate backing allowed larger projects to take root before small-time private entrepreneurs felt safe to invest in starting their businesses. The dearth of capital that plagued the community around the turn of the century was overcome on the back of Japan's economic growth and overseas business expansion that first introduced to Bangkok Japanese *chūzain* expats, then mass tourists, and later individual sojourners.

VI.3.3 Historic community and comfort infrastructure

A number of communal institutions became the legacy of the early days of the modern Japanese community that managed to survive even the forced expatriation of all Japanese nationals in the wake of Japan's defeat in WWII. Practically from the very inception, the Japanese in Siam were busy organising themselves, initially with little support or oversight from their government. In 1912 the Japanese Club for Businessmen was established in Bangkok as the world's first organisation of this kind. In 1935, it acquired a plot of land on what was believed to be the site of the 17th-century Japanese settlement in Ayutthaya and established a memorial site there, to be converted into an open-air museum in 2012. In 1936, the Club rebranded itself as the Japanese Association in Thailand (*Zai-Tai Nihonjinkai*) and received generous corporate and government support that continues to this day (Ishii 1987). Although its erstwhile preponderance is now past its peak, it still serves as the backbone of official activity in the Japanese community.

Rather unappreciated remains the impact of Japanese tourism on Japanese Bangkok. Only ten years after Japan's ban on private travel abroad was lifted in 1964, Japanese tourist arrivals to Thailand hit the one-million mark. Constantly on the move but nevertheless a constant presence, Japanese tourists in Thailand number nearly 1.9 million in 2019 (TAT data). Servicing such a high number of engaged consumers has brought about an equally sophisticated infrastructure that took decades to develop. The proliferation of Japanese-run department stores, bookshops, restaurants, golf clubs, and entertainment venues in Central Bangkok geared mostly towards tourists, soon found an unplanned use among the Japanese expats and later among sojourners.

As Japan's education system became rapidly standardised in the latter half of the 19th and the early 20th centuries (Shibata 2004), Japanese schools were established in Bangkok early on to educate Japanese and mixed Japanese-Thai children alike (Ishii and Yoshikawa 1987). This requirement of Japanese heritage and/or citizenship in order to become a student continues to this day. Japanese schools abroad thus help *chūzai-in* parents ensure that their children will be prepared to rejoin the national curriculum education upon return. Many sojourners, however, have very different life trajectories. International marriages and foreign-born children change the context within which parents make education choices for their offspring. Some other elements of the Japanese community's extensive and comprehensive infrastructure such as the chamber of commerce, clubs and associations, online and offline notice boards have had various formal and informal thresholds that keep non-Japanese participation at bay. That often precluded the Japanese *chūzai-in* and their families from socialising with Thais (Shibayama 1996) who see them as aloof and unapproachable. The situation, however, started shifting as the numbers of individual sojourners kept increasing.

Chapter VII expands on how the changing community composition has transformed the role of community institutions, which, in its turn, inflect the way Bangkok's Japanese formulate and live out their belonging. The Nihonjinkai's shifted social significance reflects the way Japanese sojourners relate to the community. The diminished role of Japanese supermarkets a community node also points towards larger societal changes in Japanese Bangkok. The long-term irreversible consequences of sojourner parents' educational choices for their children reformulates the way they see their future in the city.

VII Chapter VII. The shifting community structures and belonging: institutional nodes of convergence vs. networks of affinity

'If you have no business value, they won't even talk to you.' My main informant Masako's quip to my lamentations about my repeated failure to recruit any expat informants was harsh but correct. Although not the main target of my research, my lingering sociological angst initially made me think of securing some as a control group to check back my data collected from lifestyle sojourners. That, however, never came to pass. No matter what I tried, not a single expat yielded to my requests.

I was not merely singled out and ignored as a pesky foreign intruder. Most sojourners reported limited contacts with Bangkok's *chūzai-in* expatriates. Even those who started off as *chūzai-in* or their partners themselves to later try and venture as independent migrants, told me their social circles had changed together with their lifestyle change. Similarly, sojourners would also mostly only hear about the relatively destitute *sotokomori* floaters living on the fringes of their well-to-do world.

The boundaries between different types of Japanese migrants in Bangkok have a degree of porosity and fluidity, even if interaction between them may be limited. For example, Ono (2012) writes about former *chūzai-in* expats who downshifted to the *sotokomori* lifestyle in Bangkok as a way to escape the pressure of the corporate world. Their choice necessarily breaks them apart from their former social circles. However, that happens even when the move is lateral, in terms of either class or income. Jitsuko (37) came to Bangkok twice as an expat but ended up quitting the job and studying for a post-graduate degree. Kazue (35) started off on a corporate assignment but went on to find a similar local job. The social divides in the community more often than not do not follow the lines of typical sociological categories.

"There seems to be a big divide (*daibetsu*) between those who attend Nihonjinkai events passionately (*nesshin ni*), and those who won't be seen there at all." Makoto's (male, 70) himself oscillates between the two cohorts. A former civil servant, he is rather comfortably retired. After a couple of years enjoying a degree of social inaction, he started spending a fair deal of his free time volunteering for various Japanese events. His conclusions about the wider community are confirmed by other research participants and my own long-term observations. New arrivals and people younger than their 50s - *arate* ("new hands") as branded by Hina (69), a community stalwart and a *furute* ("old hand") herself - are often not interested and sometimes even opposed to Nihonjinkai's activities. "Old hands" (*furute*) with 10 years in Bangkok behind them, are more inclined to dedicate a lot of time and energy to organising various events or be members of circles under the aegis of the Nihonjinkai. Both retired and with grown children, Hina (69) and Shizuka (68) volunteer for multiple regular and one-off community projects and are extremely hard to get hold of. A bona fide *arate*, Manabu (45, male artist/lecturer) talks about such "officialdom stints" with a fair dose of thinly veiled disdain, 'Frankly, I got nothing on those gatherings'. His sentiment is shared by invariably all *arate*, whose participation in the community life is but perfunctory.

Another divide is between those reluctant to register at the Japanese embassy, the original source of the government's statistical data on Japanese citizens abroad, and those considering it their civic duty. If the *chūzai-in* expats are added to the register automatically by their company HR department, it is a matter of choice for everyone else. For practically all *furute*, there seems no question about it. "It is not particularly important. You just do it." Shizuka (68) does not think there is anything else to delve into, as I keep trying to dig deeper in the issue. This unquestioningly law-abiding attitude may be what makes Japanese such a welcome presence, almost a "model minority" in Bangkok. However, it is more complex. The majority of *arate*, are averse to such bureaucratic rites, not attaching much importance to it just like Shizuka and her ilk. When asked about their reasons, they justify their decision by the

lack of any obvious benefits. It is not a compulsory procedure and adds little to their legal status in the country.

Embassy registration is not a mere question of choice or a administrative whim. Statistically, Bangkok's Japanese appear as the most disciplined migrant community with the most officially registered residents (Howard 2009). However, a long-term ethnographic insight reveals a picture where a generational divide coincides with very different views on Japanese officialdom. So there are probably more "undisciplined" Japanese in Bangkok than "disciplined" ones, once the ever-elusive *visa-runners* working on regularly renewed tourist visas are factored in.

The same divide became apparent in conversations about Japan's contemporary politics. The recent swing to the right towards neo-liberal economics and as-of-yet cautious militarism under Prime minister Abe's administration, the government's response to the Fukushima disaster, and Japan's perceived lack of political direction internationally all invite a practically universal condemnation and long political rants from the *arate* types. The *furute* types are either considerably milder in their discontent or much more reserved about expressing it.

Such differences in opinion on seemingly trivial and abstract matters amongst Bangkok's Japanese community belie a more important divide: that of participation and interest in its affairs and consequently the sojourners' sense of belonging to it. The conventional ethnographic task of documenting the social structure of a community, for this research is complicated by Bangkok's Japanese being anything but a tightly knit congregation. For a 100,000-plus dispersed across the urban chaos of Central Bangkok and beyond, the only traceable social structures are the institutional nodes of convergence such as Japanese supermarkets, schools and events on the one hand and informal networks and gatherings on the other.

This chapter traces the social evolution of three long-established community nodes that function as "parallel institutions" (Befu 2010) for Bangkok's Japanese: the Japanese Association of Thailand (Nihonjinkai), Japanese supermarkets, and the (mostly) biannual Thai-Japanese mass dance event Ramwong Bon-odori Taikai. It explores the relation between the changing community composition and how sojourners construct and exercise their belonging to the community through relating to and using its various nodes of convergence.

VII.1 Institutional nodes

VII.1.1 Nihonjinkai, the erstwhile community backbone

Some institutions have provided a backbone for Bangkok's Japanese community since its establishment in the late 19th century. By far the most revered, hallowed and time-honoured

institution of Japanese Bangkok is the Japanese Association of Thailand, Taikoku Nihonjinkai (further, the Nihonjinkai), established back in 1902, the first institution of its kind in the world. It has two main locations: the headquarters in the business district Sathorn and a more recently established annex in the residential Sukhumvit.

During my first stay in Bangkok in 1996-2002, neither myself nor any of my Japanese friends there, all younger people who left Japan at their own will, were associated with the Nihonjinkai. Its presence, however, loomed majestically over the community. It was very active organising events and running clubs, circles and classes. Its printed outlet Bangkok Shuho, the oldest Japanese-language newspaper in Thailand, featured prominently across the city's newsstands. It kept coming up in after-the-hours conversations with my Japanese business contacts.

Given its history and status, it seemed to hold a lot of clues to understanding the workings of the community. However, with no previous connections there, approaching it was not something to be taken lightly. After securing a recommendation from Shizuka (68) who once used to be on its executive board, I sent a painstakingly constructed e-mail in Japanese to the Nihonjinkai's executive secretary. I hardly expected a response, so I did not wait long to make my way to the Sukhumvit annex as the Sathorn HQ were closed for renovation at the time. Situated on the marble-clad ground floor of a breezy luxury condominium in the dusty back lanes of Little Tokyo, its security was unusually tight by Bangkok standards. I was asked to sign in and show my ID before proceeding inside, while usually a polite nod would suffice to enter most places in the city.

Its reception area looked like that of a typical Japanese medical practice from a neatly managed notice board and the bland pastel colour scheme to the shoe shelf for indoor slippers and a hole-in-the-wall receptionist window. Clean smelling and looking, its silence was only disturbed by a gospel choir practising somewhere in the back. Admitting that I was neither Japanese nor married to one changed the receptionist's attitude from generically polite to icily dismissive. She advised me to e-mail for information on the Nihonjinkai's activities. When I pointed out that my emails were not answered, she told me to keep trying and became engrossed in Excel spreadsheets on her computer monitor. It took me another try a couple of weeks later with Hina (69), an eminent presence in the community, to have a peep inside and be introduced to some members. Hina royally ushered me past the security and the reception and gave me a tour of its club activities.

Only three of my interviewees, Hina (68), Shizuka (69) and Makoto (70) took an interest and an active part in the Nihonjinkai's events and activities. Everyone else I met was dismissive of the Nihonjinkai, stating they have no interest whatsoever in its activities. As the younger generations of individual sojourners are becoming the majority, its sway over the community is on the wane. The old hands mention it with pride and seem to make up the bulk of its membership. Anyone in their 50s or younger, however, showed little interest, with sometimes even a hint of disdain. Their events are commonly spoken of as "over-organised" and "boring". Misae (housewife, 40), described one Nihonjinkai event,

the Bon-odori Ramwong Tournament, as "made up" or "put on" (*tsukurareta*). Although much of the Nihonjinkai's activities are interest-based clubs, sojourners tend to perceive it as a bulwark of officialdom. For many a sojourner, that alone seems to be enough to want to avoid it. That chimes well with the general sense of disappointment with the current political course of Japan that I gathered from my respondents. The failure of many successive governments to deliver the world's third largest economy from a prolonged stagnation - known as two lost decades (*ushinawareta nijunen*). Tokyo's failure to respond adequately to the 2011 Tohoku Earthquake created a sense of disenchantment often surfacing in my fieldwork conversations. To explore the empirical reality of Bangkok's Japanese interaction with their community's most hallowed institution I attended one of its largest and high-profile events, the biannual Bon-odori Ramwong Tournament.

VII.1.2 The Bon-odori Ramwong Tournament

Just one week into my fieldwork, an ad in the *Daco*, Bangkok's most popular free Japanese-language newspaper, alerted me to the next instalment of the Bon-odori Ramwong Tournament. Perhaps, the grandest Japanese event in the country, it has been held since 1987 under the aegis of the Nihonjinkai after the success of a similar event in Malaysia (Hiromi 1997). It usually takes place every two years, save for a few times when it was cancelled because of floods of political unrest in Bangkok.

My main informant Masako, dismissed it as an "old fogies get-together" but such a prominent event was too good to miss. Once at Skytrain's Siam Square Station, I only had to follow a steady stream of people in flowery Japanese summer clothing to find my way to the National Stadium, where the tournament was taking place. What I thought would drag on without much pizzazz in a quiet corner, with a bunch of old-timers doing a fuddy-duddy line dance routine (*bon-odori*) as an excuse for socialising over beer and whiskey, proved to be a grand mass rally sprawled across a bustling track-and-field stadium.

VII.1.2.1 The set

As I entered the open-air venue for a rather nominal 30 Baht (GBP 0.60) entrance fee, a large crowd was already assembling between two rows of *tekiya* tents selling Japanese food and drink on both sides of the well-tended lush green turf. There was even a typical Japanese funfair attraction *kingyo-sukui*, "saving a goldfish", where you pay a few pennies for the chance to catch a sprightly baby gold fish with a quickly disintegrating paper scoop. Tantalising smells of freshly cooked food wafted through the balmy tropical air, throwing me in a bout of nostalgia for my student days in Japan. All tents dealt in exclusively Japanese fare, with not a single offering anything Thai or international: *takoyaki* (fried octopus balls), *kare-raisu* (Japanese-style curry and rice), *wata-ame* (cotton candy), *yaki-samma* (grilled Pacific saury), *ringo-ame* (candy apple), *kakigoori* (crushed ice), *daigaku-imo* (honey-glazed sweet potatoes roasted over charcoals) and even Okinawan pork *ramen*.

On the opposite side from the entrance an elevated stage was decorated with strings of red *chochin* electric lanterns with Japanese characters for "the Japanese Society in Thailand" emblazoned on them. An elevated *yagura* bandstand in the middle of the stage sported a set of Japanese *taiko* drums and a gigantic sound system, playing a bland compilation of popular Japanese music. The area in front of the stage was kept clear for, as it turned out later, performances and mass dance. Right on its front edge camped a busy-looking bevy of camera-wielding people.

At the height of the event, there were estimated between 2,000 and 3,000 people; the stadium was full to the brim, with the crowd overspill filling the tribunes too. Most were either lounging picnic-style on the meticulously well-tended grass or arranged in orderly and very long queues to procure food from the shop tents. On the naked-eye-estimate, the Thai-to-Japanese ratio appeared about equal with all genders and age groups represented. The crowd consisted of groups of youngsters, extended (mostly Thai) and nuclear (mostly Japanese) families with children, middle-age and elderly people alike. In the course of the whole evening I spotted four or five Westerners in the crowd, all male with Thai female companions. All announcements and signs were in Thai and Japanese only, with not a single word uttered or written in English.

Many present were dressed in Japanese summer gowns known as *yukata*. It is a lighter form of kimono, usually made of quality cotton. After enjoying popularity as a fashionable summer garment in the Edo period (1603-1868), for a long while it became a kind of relaxed home-wear garment worn without or, perhaps, even in lieu of underwear (Mack 2014). In modern times, however, it has regained its status (Honma 1986) and has become thought of as something to wear to enjoy seasonality, a great tradition of enjoying each season in a particular way that, with some degree of social and cultural variation, traces back to the Heian period's leisure classes mimicking the Tang court's ways in that regard (Ackermann 1997). Most of the *yukata* I saw were of traditional design: delightfully floral and colourful for women and of sombre base colours (grey, white, navy) with fine geometrical patterns for men. A conspicuous minority of *yukata*, worn by youngsters, featured themes from popular culture, mostly manga characters, complemented with zany Harajuku-style hairstyles or wigs. The only people dressed in Central Thai or Isarn national costumes were professional dancers, who arrived from the Northeast specifically for the occasion.

VII.1.2.2 The setting

The programme started with welcome speeches by the president of the Japanese Society in Thailand as well as no less than Thailand's Minister of Culture, translated respectively into Thai and Japanese by two female presenters. A common theme in both was Thai-Japanese friendship and mutual amicability, professed as a *fait accompli*, rather than something yet to achieve. That can be to an extent traced to Thailand's relatively benign experience of Japanese occupation in WWII compared to the rest of Asia-Pacific (Reynolds 1990:66). The speeches were followed by a group of female *taiko* drummers and a few upbeat performances by an Isarn folk dance, very warmly received by the audience.

The mass dance itself proceeded as such: a group of yukata-clad Japanese women and men wearing blue-and-white *happi* jackets would move counterclockwise on the stage around the *yagura*, making a sequence of dance motions to the sounds of three quaint-sounding *enka* records played one after another. Although the music sounded like a hark-back from the olden days, in fact, it was commissioned specifically for this event by the organising committee. *Taiko* drummers would spice up the songs with highly energetic, deeply reverberating percussion called *ondo*. Several attendants would then rush into the crowd with bilingual signs inviting the audience to join the dance. I was pulled into action by the Japanese MC who found it very amusing that I spoke Japanese. A hundreds-strong crowd then would follow the stage dancers on the ground, mimicking their dance moves to the best of their ability. The choreography was reasonably uncomplicated, designed for the occasion by a Japanese dance teacher to suit the chosen songs (it was pre-published as a YouTube video for the benefit of visitors). Each circumambulation would last 20-30 minutes, interrupted by professional dance performances, when everyone would retreat clearing the area in front of the stage for the dancers.

The mass rhythmical movement to an enthusiastic swinging beat and a catchy tune produced a sense of mild elation. Looking around, I saw a multitude of excited faces and starry eyes. The atmosphere felt electrified. A very similar experience I had had in 2012 took place at another organised mass event with music and rhythmic movement, the Diamond Jubilee celebration concert in the Ely Cathedral. A local orchestra played a selection of patriotic songs to an increasingly excited audience, reaching its culmination with the Marches of Pomp and Circumstance and Rule Britannia when a full choir joined the performance. As ticker paper started falling from the ceiling, the crowd, encouraged verbally by the conductor, took to humming, singing along, and bobbing up and down in a synchronised rhythm. An atmosphere of elation and excitement felt almost palpable in the air and easily observable as I looked around to see the brightened faces of the attendees. After the show, the crowd would still linger inside and outside the cathedral basking in the afterglow of the celebration. The sense of elation achieved through music, movement and shared emotion at mass events is known as *communitas* (V Turner 1969) felt out of fashion with social researchers for a while. However, as anthropology revisited old and branched out into new fields of human activity, it has become impossible to ignore such a commonly occurring phenomenon in raves (Rill 2006), at sport events (Ingham and McDonald 2003), or during pilgrimages (Coleman 2012). As "the sense felt by a group when their life together takes on full meaning" (E Turner 2012:1), it is something that occurs outside purely religious contexts and can be evoked for a variety of secular purposes.

In Bangkok, the mass performance felt even more moving than in Ely, enhanced by involving the participants in a more elaborate dance routine and using a much more pronounced and catchy upbeat rhythm. The role of percussion in ceremonies keeps reappearing in ethnographical and ethnomusicological literature (Needham 1962). Some studies, however, confirm a universally human, cross-cultural physiological and psychological response to melody and rhythm, which is apparently encountered among non-human primates too (Hauser and McDermott 2003, Bispham 2006). In actual lived human experience, however, both the process and its outcomes can vary. Based on my own observational data, it appears that other participants were having an experience of feeling moved by

the music and the vibe comparable to mine. One person I managed to ask about it in person, Misae (40), however, was less enthused about the event. Her focus was on letting her Bangkok-born half-Swiss daughter do a "typical Japanese thing", while at the same time scoffing at its very premise, content, and purposes. In her eyes, it reeked of officialdom (*oyakusho-kusai*), which did not stop her from attending it with her family: "I only wanted to grab some Japanese food and let my daughter put on a *yukata*. Overall, wasn't impressed." Her pragmatic, with a tinge of cynicism attitude had, perhaps, interfered with giving in to the joint elation of *communitas*. Most sojourners I asked about the Tournament, sometimes vehemently, their lack of interest in this particular event. Kumi (53, restaurateur) "went there for catering from a *tekiya* tent. Was too busy to care what was going on." Makoto (70, retiree) was invited by organisers to help out at the food stalls. Although it was his first time doing that in his nine years in Bangkok, he wishes it had been a better opportunity to mingle with Thais.

The purposes of staging such group or mass activities vary. In Rabinow's (1977) account of a Moroccan ceremony, an overnight singing and dancing is performed to heal, successfully, a sick child. In Nazi Germany, where Nietzsche's ideas were frequently quoted and used, his insight that "singing and dancing, man expresses himself as a member of a higher community" (Nietzsche 1993) was an inspiration for staging mass rallies and dance festivals to create and foster a spirit of nationalistic unity, the binding factor for a still relatively young "'imagined community" of all Germans. In the British wartime dance halls, set routines performed to upbeat or romantic tunes, sometimes by hundreds of dancers at a time, "raised the spirits of the people", being "the escape from the mundane, the misery of rationing and the hard physical work most people did" (Mee 2003). Rhythmical music and dance are common features in many religions to achieve the desired spiritual experience, from shamanic practices and Hindu festival processions to the whirling dervishes and Gospel churches. Where cultural or moralistic reservations exclude rhythm and dancing from religious practices like in many Christian denominations, joint singing takes their place. The mechanism at work in many of the above appears to be in connecting a strong emotional affect produced by one's individual experience of joyful elation with certain group values and tenets, allowing for their efficient internalisation and creating a deeper bond with the *minimal group paradigm* (Tajfel 1972), be it religious or nationalistic affiliation. At the same time, certain experiences seem to be only possible in coordinated group activities: the "moving of the Holy Ghost", a powerful spiritual experience common in Pentecostal and Southern Baptist churches, which I was lucky to witness and experience personally in Memphis in 2011, is something achieved by collective praise, a religious service of devotional singing and dancing. That creates a self-perpetuating cycle of habitus and praxis: group activities (praxis) anchor group values on the pre-conscious level (habitus), while shared values then validate and inform group activities and a sense of sharing.

In the Bon-odori Ramwong Tournament 2014, that very mechanism too was meant to activate through involving Thais in the bodily and emotional experience of bon-odori, literally making them "dance to a Japanese tune" and effectively initiating a deeply reaching experience of common value-sharing. This was explicitly confirmed, albeit without invoking any of social or critical theory, in my interview with Shizuka (69), who is a member of the Tournament's steering committee. In her own words, there was nothing religious or spiritual intended, only a promotion of better bilateral relations between the

countries. Although she did not comment on the *communitas* experience, operationally it was without doubt achieved to the ends that she stated.

VII.1.2.3 Bon-odori through the time: a shift in social meaning

Bon-odori is originally part of *bon* celebrations that take place in July and August throughout Japan. The English translation of the festival's name vary: the Festival of Souls, the Feast of the Dead, or the Festival of Lanterns. Most often it is referred to as the Bon Festival. Introduced to Japan during the late sixth or early seventh century, it is thought to have been grafted onto an indigenous Japanese harvest festival with a basic type of folk dance (Smith 1962:36). The Confucianist motifs of filial piety, invested into the dance at that point, echo with similar ancestor-worshipping celebrations in East Asia (cf. China's Hungry Ghost Festival) and elsewhere. The Bon Festival is not an official holiday but most people get a leave to go home and visit their parents; it is hence the time of a great annual exodus from the cities, infamously abound in jammed highways and packed trains. The word *bon* (sometimes *o-bon*) itself is derived from the Buddhist Sanskrit term *ullambana*, literally "hanging upside down", in the sense of "great suffering" of the diseased people in afterlife realms. Based on my asking several Japanese respondents, the folk understanding of the purpose of the *bon-odori* dance seems to let the dead come to have fun with the living. Not every Japanese, however, does the *bon-odori*, and not everyone who does invests a spiritual meaning into it. In fact, none of the Japanese people I asked sees it as a spiritual practice. Responses varied from "being the done thing in the summer" to "wishing to acquaint children with what being Japanese is about".

Children-oriented *bon-odori* takes place in schools during the summer, also without any spiritual connotations, simply as a "summer ritual", the "done thing" for this time of the year. Bangkok-resident Japanese parents also reported taking their children to the Bon-odori event to experience a "Japanese custom" or a "Japanese summer festival". Particular details of the dance vary from locality to locality in Japan: sometimes the dance represent the characteristic work of the region, like in the Ghanaian *azonto*; sometimes props like fans and tools are held by dancers; or like in case of the Okinawan *Eisa*, the entire practice has been reinvented in the memory of the living generation (Johnson 2008). The leading dancers on the *yagura* stage are almost exclusively middle-aged and senior women (the usual "upholders of the tradition"), sometimes joined by mature males.

Using the *bon-odori* for political or diplomatic purposes seems to originate in the late 1970s in Malaysia, where a joint activity of the Tournament's kind, was organised by the local Japanese expat community (Hiromi 1997). There the intercultural communication is inevitably clouded by a very negative experience of Japanese occupation during WWII: the Japanese army conducted arbitrary executions of Malaysian Chinese out of fear of possible Communist insurgency. The Chinese community in Malaysia being the main driving force in business, it was only logical for Japanese businessmen to try to achieve some kind of reconciliation.

VII.1.2.4 *Ritual and the carnivalesque*

In the Tournament, the balance between the bon-odori and the ramwong was greatly skewed towards the Japanese dance. Both dances concepts are, in fact, quite similar, however, if the ramwong was presented in its very polished and minutely choreographed version by a professional dance troupe as something to look at, the bon-odori was given much more time and was staged as a mass performance by as many attendees as possible. Despite the supposed equality of the Thai and Japanese components, the former seemed treated as a "younger brother" in need of care and instruction by the "big brother", a sentiment shared by some of my Japanese respondents and rather upsetting for my Thai respondents to find out about. Effectively, the Tournament's purpose would be to share Japanese values and involving Thais in a Japanese activity on Japanese terms, and not on the other way around or any equal terms.

Bakhtin's (1984) observation that a carnival ceases to be such, loses its main point, when it becomes a spectator's sport, like in such celebrated cases as the Rio Carnival or the Notting Hill Gate Carnival, both highly publicised tourist attractions. Carnival in its true sense is meant to be an opportunity for a temporary reversal of social roles and subversion of social norms for the participants. It is to provide a relief from the constant daily pressure of presenting one's social self (Goffman 1959) and experiencing the tension between one's inner urges and what is (perceived to be) expected from one by society, the root cause of various neuroses (Freud 1930). Less known, and hence less commercialised carnivals, such as Martinique's Carnival still bear more *carnivalesque* traits with participants inverting their social roles just for the event duration (Murray 1998).

Bangkok's Bon-odori Ramwong Tournament has retained some of that with an opportunity for dressing up and acting differently, as well as for physical participation in the mass dance. Despite its departure from its spiritual and religious roots - both organisers and participants clearly confirmed that - its purpose has shifted in response to the demands of the time and place. In its original form, its social function was, irrelevant whether the observer believes whether the diseased actually come to dance with the living at the festival, to enact bodily a possibility of that: the very fact of taking part in it means that on some level one must agree it must somehow make sense. In a way, it also can be a reminder that there is more to life than is visible to the naked eye. Like social facts, which the scientist endeavours to discover to explain reality, it is a phenomenon of a different order than tangible, physical objects: its existence would be revealed only to those who seek it or use it to try to understand the ways of the world.

VII.1.2.5 *Bon-odori and nationalism*

In pre-modern Japan the Bon festival and bon-odori, celebrated privately and locally, were hardly the subject of state regulation or even interest. Allowed to develop and be practised organically in a loosely federated and geographically divided country, that has resulted in the heritage of a great regional variation: perhaps, the only universally common features are the 2/2 *ondo* rhythm, the time of the year when it is held and its mass character. The age of nationalism saw the transformation and re-thinking of the Bon, as a newly established cult of the emperor absorbed various aspects of Japanese animism united under the rubric of *Shinto* for its purposes. During the Pacific War, the state

propaganda tried to co-opt or even turn the Bon into the worship of the *eirei*, the deceased heroic souls of war soldiers fighting for the emperor, instead of "ancestors who merely passed away on the *tatami*" (Hamada 2008:231).

With the *mu-shukyo* (non-religiousness) trend and the dismantling of the emperor's worship in the post-war period, the Bon festival kept on as a familiar part of the arsenal of "Japanese things to do", as an aspect of the minimal group paradigm dynamic where the collective cohesion is sustained through shared identities and activities, by entering the school curriculum and summer celebrations organised by local municipalities. That "Officialdom Lite" tendency has, however, co-existed with a centuries-old variety of local observances conducted by neighbourhood temples. Like in Freud's famous metaphor of a city's periods co-existing on different archaeological levels, with ancient remnants buried in the ground but present and sometimes even remaining visible nevertheless, the Bon's meanings and practices are varied and evolving; there're no clear-cut turning points or replacements, rather a gradual growth of layers like in a sedimentary rock.

VII.1.2.6 Ramwong: performing Thai nationalism

A relatively smaller, yet quite prominent part of the Tournament was given to the *ramwong* dance performed by a group of professional dancers. Its 'invention' is credited to Plaek Phibunsongkhram (usually referred to as Phibun in English-language sources), Thailand's exuberant *duce*-style Prime Minister of Thailand from 1938 to 1944 and again from 1948 to 1957, to counter the influence of the contemporary Western dances. Phibun was a mastermind behind the *Ratthaniyom* or Cultural Mandates, numerous inventions and prescriptions used in creating the symbolic and performative inventory of Thai nationalism. His contributions are a peculiar amalgam of hyper-Thai essentialism and longing for the "ambiguous allure of the West" (Harrison and Jackson 2010). He is credited, *inter alia*, with changing the country's name from Siam to Thailand and conjuring the now ubiquitous, yet previously non-extant *sawaddi* and *khop khun* greetings, and making Thais wear Western-style clothing and hairstyles, as well as with enforcing the use of Standard Thai based on the Central Siamese dialect and temporarily annexing three Cambodian provinces away from French Indochina.

Ramwong, literally meaning circle dance, did not appear out of nowhere. It was based on *ramthon* ("drum dance") from Northeastern Thailand, which Waeng (2002) claims Phibun and his wife La-iat observed on their trip to Petchabun in search for a location for a new Thai capital. Petchabun's position on the crossroads between the Central (Siamese) and the rather recently incorporated Lanna and Isarn provinces was in line with Phibun's aspirations to forge an inclusive Pan-Thai identity, not at all dissimilar to Italian irredentism, German *Kulturnation* or *Erinnerungsgemeinschaft*, a community of remembrance (Smith 2011:238), or, for that matter, the Japanese nationalist trope of *toitsu minzoku* "the united nation". As was the case with many modern nationalist projects that used dance for nation-building purposes (Franko 2006, Dör 2003), in 1944 the Fine Arts Department was commissioned to create ten *ramwong matrathan* ('standard circle dances'), six of them (wrongfully, according to Waeng 2002:127) credited to Phibun's wife, to become prescribed as leisure time activities for Thais. A mass circular dance, it is performed to slower tunes and in male-female pairs,

with no physical contact between dancers. The artificial primness of such a setup is in contrast to the original *ramthon*, whose social function, like many other group dances in many cultures, is flirting and courting between genders and a socialised opportunity to choose a partner. In the 1950s, coinciding with Phibun's departure from politics, *lukthung*, a newly popular style of countryside songs, emerged on the back of the *ramwong*'s substratum. However, *ramwong* had taken root and its status as "the national folk dance" persisted so that at least according to Valentine Chu (1968), it could "be seen at country festivals, where all the villagers join in". Presently, it is perceived to have a strong countryside flavour. On the domestic evolutionary ladder of *siwilai*, countryside (*ban nok*) is one rung lower than city (*krung*), if above the nearly "barbarian" *chao phu khao*, mountain tribes (Thongchai 2000). Based on personal communication with my Thai informants, after a once-in-a-life-time experience as part of compulsory extra-curricular activities at school, no true *dek thep*, born and bred Bangkokian, or an inspiring newcomer, would be seen dancing it in public.

VII.1.2.7 Mass ritual and carnivalesque in the age of transnationalism

Departing from the Bon's local roots and meaning when celebrated abroad, has given it a chance to acquire new meaning and form. Instead of fizzling out into oblivion as some practices and observances do, it has found a new life and expanded beyond its native area. Although it would be tempting to describe Bangkok's *bon-odori* biennale as a corporate-sponsored vehicle of the *soft power* propaganda like Japan-themed events in France (Guichard-Anguis 2003), or a post-modern multicultural pastiche for individual enjoyment and family quality time, such emotionally and ideologically charged moralistic language distracts from the very likely possibility that the presumed authentic celebration of the yesteryear may not have actually been a pristine pastoral celebration of unadulterated ancestral belief and communal spirit we could nostalgically imagine it to be. Bakhtin's (1984) *heteroglossia* is a useful term of analysis to bear in mind when trying to understand how social events unfold in real life, how intended meanings become interpreted and experienced differently by each participants, or how they can mean more than one thing at a time for the participant too. The empirical data collected through interviews in this research confirms the messy and contradictory interaction of meanings and experiences.

Not only the Bon's meaning but its shape and form have evolved too. What was community- or temple-sponsored, very local and held annually in mid-summer in Japan, in Thailand has become corporate-sponsored, intercultural and held every other year in December, to make the best use of the more agreeable cooler weather. Serving as an embodiment of national values, the nation-work (Surak 2012) in the age of transnational mobility, acquires transnational meanings. The Bon in Japan would often finish off with a *tōrō nagashi*, floating offerings to the dead, often candle-lit lanterns, on a river or any other body of water, very much like in the Thai *Loy Krathong* festival. In Bangkok, the last half an hour was given to distributing corporate sweepstakes, in its turn, a common feature of modern Thai festivals and pageants, followed by a grand fireworks display, almost a symbol of summer in Japan. It also has become enriched by inclusion of local cultural practices, such as the *ramwong*, even if in the form of institutionalised showcases of "traditional culture". Tradition survives and lives on, but nether unchanged nor necessarily the way it was intended to.

The age of transnationalism heralds the diffusion not only of cultural assets by giving them new meanings, as it happens with *bon-odori*, but also of the consumerist patterns of food consumption. Introducing global audiences to local foods has seen big and small success stories like sushi taking over whole nations by storm (Bestor 2001) or *ceviche* and *poke* becoming urban staples across global cities. The commodification of Japanese food in Bangkok over the last three decades has, however, unforeseen consequences for the social glue of the Japanese community there.

VII.1.3 Commercial hubs: supermarkets

VII.1.3.1 Japanese groceries in Bangkok

One sunny January afternoon my main informant Masako in a collectable designer dress and myself went on a grocery shopping date. According to her, the go-to supermarket for most of Bangkok's Japanese is now the Gourmet Supermarket on the fifth floor of the Emporium A luxury department store, it is connected, in a fashion typical for Japan but still a novelty in Thailand, via an air-conditioned walkway to the Phrom Pong Skytrain station. True to its name and location, the supermarket is a heavily air-conditioned ostentatious cornucopia of the choicest victuals this planet has to offer. Eye-catching displays of fresh seafood and perfect-looking fruit alternate with aisles lined with foodstuffs from all major cuisines of the world. The sheer sophistication of food display was worth marvelling at.

With the prices to match, comparable to those of Central London, this, however, is not where every Japanese in Bangkok would go for their daily shopping. Misae (40) and Atsuko (35) shared that they only go there occasionally, for special treats or for things they can't find elsewhere, not necessarily Japanese foodstuffs. Why, despite its prices, it is still such a magnet for Japanese residents is, up to a degree, because the Sino-Thai-owned and managed Emporium farmed out the management of its supermarket to a Japanese team. Its layout, the wide range of world foods is a replica of Japan's upmarket equivalents.

However, on the day of our visit it was in equal measure crowded by non-Japanese, including Thais, Westerners, and other nationalities. Although this decidedly exclusive supermarket may not be the daily staple for all Japanese, other areas in Bangkok have similar, if more affordable setups at mid-of-the-range supermarkets of the Thai-owned The Mall chain. Somewhat more relaxed they, however, boast a considerable range of Japanese foods, as well as Japanese management teams. However, even in such decidedly down-market outlets as the ubiquitous Big C, Japanese foodstuffs are represented to an extent unknown back 20 or even 10 years ago, and rarely matched in the West. Much less frequented by Japanese, Big C caters mostly to local lower-income consumers, testifying to how common Japanese food has become in Thailand. This mundane consumerist news, however, belies a major shift in Bangkok's Japanese community institutional structure that has been established in the last few decades.

Daimaru, Bangkok's first Japanese department store with a supermarket in Bangkok opened its doors in 1964. For a long time, this air-conditioned marvel of polite modernity with multiple electric escalators and fixed-price tags set the tone for high-end shopping in the capital (Wilson 2004:56). As the Thai consumer's purchase power took off dramatically starting from the late 1980s, Japanese department stores and supermarkets in Bangkok experienced a great expansion (Okamoto 1999). Many Japanese retail giants set their shops in the Thai capital. With their focus on quality and high-standard service, they targeted affluent Thais as well as Japanese tourists and residents. In the late 1990s two Japanese supermarkets dominated Bangkok's retail market of Japanese foodstuffs: UFM Fuji Super and Isetan, and, to a much lesser extent, the now defunct Sogo and Yaohan. However, the situation has shifted dramatically since individual sojourners started arriving in increasing numbers.

VII.1.3.2 Fuji Super: a waning community node

Japanese migrant communities are well known to centre around Japanese food shops and markets. For Japanese-Brazilian repatriates in Yokohama, Tropical Supermarket is a hub of their communal life (Reyes-Ruiz 2005). Bangkok's UFM Fuji Super located in the geographical heart of Little Japan in Sukhumvit has been a medium-sized independently run retail outlet carrying a variety of Japanese products not available even in the higher-end Thai chains. In the 1990s it catered mostly to the local Japanese expat clientele and a small smattering of Japanophile Thais. Not large, but immaculately clean and modern, it had an air of exclusivity, with Japanese expat wives arriving with their maids or chauffeurs. With no economy of scale, a strong yen, and a weak baht at the time, its price levels were remarkably higher than elsewhere in Bangkok, out of reach for most consumers. As a place where most Japanese residents would converge at some point of the week, Fuji Super's entrance hall featured a very active community message board with various classified ads. It enjoyed an almost cult status, being the go-to place for community news. A lot of small talk and gossip (*idobata kaigi*) also took place here. Overall, Fuji Super served both as a place for groceries and a node of convergence for the turn-of-the-century Japanese community.

Makoto (70 male, retired) came to Bangkok in 2010 does his Japanese grocery shopping at Isetan, a 15-minute walk from his apartment in the Rajprarob area. Before Japanese foodstuffs became a common staple in Thai supermarkets, it was Fuji Super's main competitor, vying for the attention of the local expat community and Japanese tourists alike. The parent company of Isetan Supermarket is a major chain of upper-middle-class department stores with a very strong presence in Japan as well as in East and Southeast Asia. From its inception, Bangkok's Isetan Supermarket was marketed differently than Fuji Super. Located on the 5th floor of the Isetan Department Store, at the World Trade Centre (presently Central World) in the midst of Bangkok's largest and busiest central shopping area of Pratunam, it drew a great number of Japanese tourists who would come here for an extended section of daily prepared Japanese hot food, a rarity in Bangkok at the time. On the floor above, a branch of Kinokuniya Bookstore, a major Japanese bookseller, would cater to the Japanese reading habit. Many would enjoy the frowned-upon yet perennially popular pastime of *tachiyomi* (reading without buying) in a pleasantly air-conditioned space. Throngs of Japanese tourists would descend upon it for a respite from Bangkok's sweltering heat. The economy of scale of both the parent company and the customer footfall allowed the prices to be kept perceptibly lower than Fuji Super, if still often higher than Bangkok's average.

However, as the share of local Japanese proportionate to the overall customer flow was not as significant as in Fuji, Isetan has never had a Japanese community message board, nor was its clientele exclusively Japanese. Throughout the years it enjoyed a dedicated following of Bangkok's Japanophile middle classes who found Japanese flavours more easily likeable than, say, bland Western fare or overwhelming Indian curries. Also, because Isetan's parking is a giant multi-level area shared by the entire World Trade Centre, it did not have a communal, local feel like Fuji Super did in its heyday thanks to its ground-level parking, where customers could be seen and met also around the supermarket. Frequented also by local Thais and foreign tourists alike, Isetan is a very generic and functional international retail outlet. Its giant neon sign stands out prominently as a symbol of powerful Japanese commercial presence in Bangkok but it lacks a social or cultural significance for Bangkok's Japanese community.

VII.1.3.3 Commodification of Japanese food and community belonging

The only Japanese ingredients Kazue (35) misses in Bangkok are organic *miso* paste and yoghurt starter. Misae (40) "cannot think of any Japanese foodstuff not available in Bangkok." By the late 2000s, the income gap between Japan and Thailand dwindled and many Japanese products become known to and favoured by the mainstream Thai public (Thienhirun and Chung 2015). Thai supermarket chains started carrying an increasing variety of Japanese products as the prices fell. Some Thai department stores such as Emporium and the Mall/Central have outsourced running their supermarkets to Japanese management teams. Up went the share of individual migrants, who are less prone to cluster around the fancier sections of Sukhumvit. Their numbers have by far outrun the more tightly connected expats who would know each other from work connections. Fuji Super has lost its privileged marketing position. These days it is visibly less crowded compared to either its prime or other supermarkets presently. With the shrunk customer base, its upkeep has gone down and its product display is a far cry from the resplendence of its halcyon days in the 1990s. It no longer acts as a community node too. As online message boards had finally caught up with Bangkok's Japanese, Fuji Super's offline message board lost its popularity and eventually disappeared altogether. Some aspects social interaction migrated to social media. In the era of convenience and digitised communication, there is less need for face-to-face interaction or a sense of community.

The gradual commodification of Japanese foodstuffs in Bangkok has made "ethnic supermarkets" such as Fuji Super largely obsolete as the community's nodes of convergence. Local Japanese have not abandoned their embodied practice of Japanese-style mixed diet of Japanese and international classics. However, the daily food-related habits such as grocery shopping and Japanese dining out have become decentred from the original few communal nodes and to a considerable degree lost their social aspect. They no longer bear a strong mark of national culture, having become part of the global dining experience, dissipated across Bangkok's urban scape (Toyoshima 2013).

As the longing for homeland's food is not obstructed by a paltry choice in the supermarkets, Japanese sojourners have been liberated from having to congregate around the same outlets selling familiar food from the home country, as is often the case with Japanese migrants or repatriates elsewhere or

previously (Tsuda 2000, Reyes-Ruiz 2005, Yamada 2017). That was followed by a re-arrangement of some social linkages in the community. Another strong link that undergoes a major transformation in the lives of Japanese sojourners in Bangkok is the choice of education for their children. Just as the once dreaded status of *kikoku shijo*, or returnee children, started becoming more accepted in Japan (Goodman 2003), a new crop of foreign-born and raised Japanese children, or *kaigai shijo*, gained prominence in Japan's social debate (Kano Podolsky 2004). The centrepiece of both phenomena, however, has remained the same: to what extent can or should such children fit back into Japan's very demanding and strict school curriculum, which will eventually determine all their subsequent education, career, and life choices (Fry 2007). As more and more Bangkok's Japanese parents are long-term individual sojourners or spouses in international marriage, the question of whether their offspring would go to a Japanese or international school comes to head more often.

VII.1.4 Japanese schools

Bangkok's first Japanese school was established in the late 19th century to "ensure instilling Japanese moral values in the younger generations of Japanese in Siam" (Ishii and Yoshikawa 1987). With a second school added in the 1960s, for a long time they remained a mainstay for educating children of Japanese and mixed heritage. It was particularly important for fixed-term Japanese expats whose children would need to re-join the Japanese education system, where missing out on a few years of the curriculum is thought as a "flaw in becoming proper Japanese" (Fry 2007). However, many Japanese sojourners nowadays have a difficult choice to make for their children, often born abroad or in international marriages. Increasingly more of them are enrolled into international schools with American or British curricula. It is a very serious decision implying that they do not envisage their offspring's future in Japan.

Teruko's (54) sons from her Thai ex-husband were born and brought up in Bangkok. For her the painful choice to make for them was between an education based on the Japanese national curriculum that will ensure their smoother transition to life back in Japan as *kikoku shijo* (repatriated children) or an international education that will prepare them for a successful life abroad but will forever make them alien to the Japanese education and employment system as *kaigai shijo* (overseas children) (Fry 2007). This "Sophie's choice" is truly tale-telling about different forms of belonging Japanese sojourners develop in Bangkok. Arisa's (49) own early adulthood experience of studying in the USA and her subsequent international marriage and life abroad determined the choice of international education for her daughter. Despite her very cosmopolitan pedigree Arisa sees Japan as her final destination in life (*hone wo uzumeru*), but for her multilingual daughter the wider world is her oyster as she prepares to do her undergraduate degree in Edinburgh. With her Swiss husband and many years of living abroad Misae (40) may be as cosmopolitan as Arisa, but she envisions a more Japanese future for her Bangkok-born daughter: returning to Japan in time to enrol her in school there.

Japanese-themed events run by the Nihonjinkai, Japanese schools and supermarkets are no longer as central to community life or referential for the sojourners' daily lives or sense of belonging. With the role of the erstwhile institutional nodes waning, Bangkok's Japanese, however, do not simply become

atomised into disconnected individuals. Instead, they find different ways to connect with each other via the informalisation of communal links.

VII.2 Informal networks and connections

VII.2.1 Nihonjin-dōshi de: amongst us Japanese

"There are a lot of weird people (*fuugawari no hito*) among Bangkok's Japanese", laments Misae (40). For her, that category includes "irresponsible" (*musekinin*) and "unreliable" (*ate in naranai*) people - the kind of qualities commonly frowned upon in the wider Japanese society (Yamamoto 1990). Such people are best avoided because dealings with them are bound to be "fraught with trouble" (*mondai darake in naru bakari*). Misae's opinion echoes with Hisae's (68; former stewardess, now housewife) who articulates the distinction with a qualifying line: "*Furute* (old hands, people who arrived a while ago) know each other well, are trustworthy (*shinyou ga aru*) and have regular, sorted lives (*kichinto shita seikatsu*). However, there are a lot of liars (*damashitari suru hito*) amongst *arate* (new arrivals, fresh off the boat)". Such opinions are not mere sanctimonious binary moralising. In an acephalous community in constant flux into which you arrive as an adult, making sense of your new environments and navigating it successfully takes an extra effort. *Chūzaiin* expats who are in Bangkok only in body, with their minds, careers, and home back in Japan, can rely on the security of their work circles for social contacts during their fixed-term stay. Sojourners, however, are building their Bangkok lives and social circles practically anew. The choices they make individually snowball into social divisions that form a new structure for the community.

When asked what kind of people are Bangkok's Japanese, respondents would often first describe them as close to their own type, then going on to mention other kinds of sojourners. For Kumi (52, restaurant proprietress divorced from her Thai husband) Bangkok's Japanese are often "business owners and people married to Thais". For Misae (40, housewife) it is "regular people" (*nami no hito*) who share the Japanese common-sense values even if there are also plenty of those who do not fit the bill. The former are seen to make up the core of the community, while the latter are to beware of. Although *sotokomori* floaters do not seem to necessarily belong to the latter category, no one I met knew any personally. Takafumi (70, retired) for economic reasons lives in an inexpensive apartment block in the central but gritty Rajprarob area where some *sotokomori* live. He is the only one with some kind of insight, if not first-hand, into the *sotokomori* lifestyle. His reasoning that Sukhumvit Japanese do not get the chance to cross paths with *sotokomori* because their lifestyles are too different: "they do different things in different places" and that is often "down to the differences in income".

However, assessments of "what Bangkok's Japanese are like in general" would often go beyond the mere like-attracts-like paradigm. Jitsuko's (37) impression is that "Bangkok's Japanese live in a closed world with no interaction with outside". They generally "stay in Thailand on a business visa or a family dependant visa". Fluent in English and close to completing a Master's degree at a Bangkok university, she, however, is the opposite of the type she described. Her experience of being an outgoing

cosmopolitan one, contrasted with her past as a *chūzaiin-in* expat in her own right, seems to have coloured her view of the community.

From a very different type of sojourner's perspective, Makoto (70, retired) insists that "Japanese in Bangkok live in their own world with little relation with the outside". Although he is aware of the Japanese community's diversity, his regular dealings with his age and social position cohort have left him overexposed to his own sojourner type. It is often not the case with the relatively younger, more English-proficient sojourners, who also often have experienced living abroad elsewhere. Yoshio (24, lighting engineer) "spends more time with non-Japanese" than with his own countryfolk, both for work and social purposes. Brought up in the era when every railway station in Japan had an *eikaiwa gakko* (private English conversation school with native speaker teachers), he is not as shy of foreigners and unconfident about his English as his parents' generation is. He does not seek specifically other Japanese to socialise and has a very vague idea of what the community is like. Such a diversity of background, objectives, levels of cosmopolitanism, and life trajectories among Bangkok's Japanese tends to end up with the like flocking with the like, forming a sort of *intentional community bubbles* of people with similar interests and lifestyles. Interaction between such bubbles is neither precluded nor discouraged but happens less commonly than intra-bubble social activities. As I attended various gatherings and events, I kept seeing the same set of sojourners: relatively affluent, English-speaking, culturally open-minded, with varied interests and hobbies. That, however, also kept me from snowballing my sampling outside that circle. I had to rely on the hearsay to gauge the current state of Japanese Bangkok's other social bubbles.

The numbers, spread, diversity and elusiveness of Bangkok's Japanese community makes them mysterious even to themselves, let alone a researcher. The geographic and social separation of various types of Bangkok's Japanese confines sojourners' imagination of their community to their personal experience, which varies significantly from group to group and also individually. Personal accounts of either number estimates or more qualitative descriptions differ wildly. The official statistics maintained by the Japanese embassy too is widely considered to reflect only part of the reality. *Chūzai-in* expats are not only overrepresented in those records but also stay outside the individual sojourners' social bubbles too.

VII.2.2 Intra-communal divide: *chūzai-in* vs. individual sojourners

Two largest subsets of Bangkok's Japanese are *chūzai-in*, corporate and, to a lesser degree, diplomatic and media professionals, stationed in Bangkok on a temporary assignment for usually between two and five years, and on the other hand, individual migrants who for various, often complex reasons moved to Bangkok on an indefinite-term basis. That social cleavage naturally framed my fieldwork to zero in on the latter who proved more socially available.

The common thread in their self-reported belonging to their new home that distinguishes and unites them is the indefiniteness of their stay: although they insist they do not have plans to return to Japan in the near future, and they do, indeed, stay in Bangkok for years, decades, or even their entire adult

lives, they almost invariably say that should it come to serious illness, divorce, or death their next or last port of call will be Japan. Even those married to Thai nationals or having significant roots in Bangkok in the form of property or business insist that the end of their life will be spent in Japan: even if they "stay tomorrow", they may still leave the day after tomorrow. The only man, a retiree, who explicitly stated that he "came to die in Thailand" would still have his ashes shipped to Japan. Thus, the term *sojourner* (Siu 1952), harking back to Simmel's *stranger* (1908) who "comes today and stays tomorrow", reflects the long-term yet non-finite character of their migrant experience that sets them apart from the earlier waves of Japanese migrants who, if not forcefully sent back, all assimilated or creolised. First theoretically elaborated by Paul Siu in 1952, it had gained a wide acceptance in social sciences. According to Siu, sojourner has a "job", a distinct purpose to their sojourn abroad, s/he "adjusts but does not assimilate", has strong in-group tendencies, and "moves back and forth" between their new and old countries. This succinct and apt list of migrant characteristics found multiple applications with reference to post-war Japanese migrants (e.g., Befu and Adachi 2010, Mizukami 2007).

Although both individual sojourners and *chūzai-in* can be described as transnational sojourners, there are two important distinctions with widely varying consequences. Firstly, the non-*chūzai-in* Japanese made their decision to move abroad out of their own will, while *chūzai-in* are sent by their bosses. Secondly, the non-*chūzai-in* sojourners may travel back to Japan but return home to Bangkok. With their roots/links spread almost evenly between the two nations these sojourners are truly *transnational*. *Chūzai-in*, on the other hand, may be based in Bangkok, travel between Bangkok and Tokyo but returns to Japan. Their belonging stays faithful to Japan, in Bangkok they are accidental long-term guests on a mission. Their social umbilical cord is their career back in Japan, for which their Bangkok assignment is a compulsory stepping stone. They build their lives in Japan, while being individual sojourners in Bangkok. Sojourners proper, however, may have some family, property in Japan as a backup, or even a plan to return there to die, but they build their lives in Bangkok, and only visit Japan occasionally. An important social glue that maintains a degree of cohesion in their community is informal information exchange, gossip.

VII.2.3 Uwasa: gossip and communal cohesion

"Do you know, there's a Japanese person here in Bangkok who is lying about his *gakureki* (education history)? You know him." A leisurely chat, whilst enjoying a picnic in the shady Lumpini park, took a sudden turn. Masako then regaled me with a story of how she had just discovered that a mutual acquaintance of ours landed his Bangkok job by lying about his stint at a major US university. A complex web of connections between that person, Masako and her business associates meant that this information was more than just a conversation piece. Despite my tangential relationship to the concerned parties, Masako chose to treat me like an insider and warn me off any further dealing with the alleged fraudster.

In a community with a relatively high turnaround of members, social links and community ties in Japanese society are tested and confirmed around gossip-sharing conversations. The common name for them is *uwasa-banashi* and they are sometimes facetiously referred to as *idobata kaigi* ("wellside conference"). As information shared therein often involves exchange of rather private personal

information and opinions about other people, it is understandably difficult to become privy to them fresh-off-the-boat and expressly a temporary presence as I was during my fieldwork. With more trust established with my main informer Masako, I came on the receiving end of some of the information flows of the community. Collocutors with whom I established more rapport would sometimes share with me some bits and pieces of *community uwasa* without naming involved people.

During my original long-term stay in Bangkok around the turn of the century, I was made part of such conversations more routinely. Oftentimes, the discussion concerned a very remote acquaintance, or even someone who you would barely have heard the name of. The depth of detail or the sensitivity of the discussed issue, however, would be quite impressive. Until now I still sometimes receive news about the going-on of this or that particular person via the transcontinental grapevine. More than mere idle gossip, such exchanges revolve around establishing the trustworthiness of various community members, with potentially both negative and positive outcomes. Pronouncements on someone's social worth are mostly made after the mutual sharing of what each conversation participant knows about the discussed person. The participation in such *idobata-kaigi* is only limited by one's ability to be part of the conversation, which presupposes a near native or native proficiency in Japanese. Language proficiency in general too does affect how Bangkok's Japanese construct their belonging in the city.

VII.2.4 Language and the city

Misae (40) came to Bangkok from Germany because of her Swiss husband's job transfer. With neither particular interest nor objection to living in Thailand, from the very start she made an effort to learn Thai. Just like for many other compatriots, years of weekly lessons did not bring her confidence in her Thai competence. Thai tonal phonetics proved particularly baffling. Eventually, when her husband bought the condominium flat that they had been renting, she found herself having to deal with various issues related to their property directly with Thai people. A real-life necessity made her venture out on her own and negotiate in Thai quite complicated issues. When her daughter was born, they hired a Thai maid to help with house chores. That daily exposure to the language helped Misae build even more confidence in her Thai. However, for more extended conversations with her Thai social contacts she uses English "because it is easier".

It is entirely possible to live long-term in Bangkok, and even be rather successful economically and socially, without speaking or reading Thai. Jitsuko's (37) observation that she uses mostly English when talking to her Thai friends is echoed by other respondents. Kazue (35) made friends with her Thai Master's course group mates through doing various study projects where teamwork was required. All communication was done in English. With little English proficiency "communication can be difficult" (Kumi 54) or "limited to bare necessities" (Kayoko 43). The non-English-speaking migrants can end up largely excluded from the *global city community*, or their participation is limited to purely professional/commercial interactions, as is, for example, the case of Japanese long-stayers in Chiang Mai (Kawahara 2010)

Bangkok as a functionally bilingual city (Huebner 2006) makes life easier for Japanese sojourners with as little as a smattering of English. The Thai school curriculum includes many years of English education and most street signs are Thai-English. English, sometimes very basic on both sides is often a fallback option for communication between new and old Bangkok denizens. The internet may abound with funny usages of Thai-tinged English like "same-same" but such a pidgin does do its job. Most Thais employed in the tourist-related service sector or places frequented by tourists will be able to communicate in English. Better educated Thais tend to master English as a second language with various degrees of fluency.

However, any deeper incursion into the local life will inevitably run into linguistic barriers. Japanese sojourners experience that very soon into their overseas life. Thailand is not an officially Anglophone country like its neighbours Malaysia or Singapore where English is an inter-ethnic lingua franca. At the same time, Bangkok is foreigner-friendly enough to make living there without speaking or reading Thai quite possible and even comfortable but only up to a degree. A lot of daily encounters such as shopping or using public transportation require next to no verbal exchange. While other global cities grumble about the influx of the English language, Bangkok (*German minister says too many people are speaking English in Berlin* BBC 14-Aug 2017, *Don't say cheese: Amsterdam turns against English usage in shops* Guardian 26-Jan-2018), Bangkok embraces its functional, if not perfect bilingualism. Signs on the Skytrain or the metro are thoroughly doubled in English, although city buses and canal boats until recently had no English signage. Taxi drivers, often seasonal workers from the provinces, however, often speak no English, so it is a running gag that for many Bangkok's Japanese the first Thai phrases are *liao sai, liao khwa, jod thi ni* ("turn left, turn right, stop here"). For most *chūzai-in* expats Thai proficiency often stops there, but sojourners tend to make more effort. Very few Japanese, however, speak Thai to a high standard, and vice versa. Even many Japanese *furute* (old hands) are not fluent enough in Thai to enjoy a relaxed conversation with Thai people. Despite decades of promoting Japanese language education in Thailand, Japanese-fluent Thais are still very few and far between too.

Kayoko (45) diligently attended a Thai language school for a number of years after her arrival in Bangkok after her Japanese husband's work transfer. She struggled with the five tones and numerous Thai sounds non-existent in Japanese. The fact that she lives well outside Bangkok's centre in the industrial area of Bang Na did expose her to the necessity of dealing with Thais in Thai for various daily affairs such as communicating with the condominium office or plumbers. However, Kayoko never felt confident about her Thai skills. Nor is she anywhere close to fluent in English. Her social circles are, somewhat unusually for a sojourner, practically all-Japanese. It is hard to say whether it is the cause or the consequence of her linguistic competence but it seems that the complexity of the language contributed a lot to the situation.

Japanese sojourners have various levels of English and Thai proficiency, mostly enough at least for daily communication. Three participants pursued advanced degrees taught in English at Thai universities, while three are university lecturers teaching such degrees with English as the language of

instruction. Having lived or studied abroad, often in the Anglosphere, is quite common, with correspondingly high levels of English fluency. Both sojourners and expats take almost obligatory Thai language courses, staying enrolled between a few weeks and two years. That, however, rarely leads to a high proficiency in Thai whose phonetics are exceptionally difficult for Japanese people.

Contrary to the often-reported aloofness of Japanese expat communities abroad (e.g., Glebe 2005), Bangkok sojourners report very international social circles that include other non-Japanese foreigners as well as Thai people from all walks of life. The prerequisite of being part of such circles is a degree of English proficiency. Contact with non-English speaking Thais or other nationalities is limited to bare necessities (sales assistants, services, house help). Japanese expats, despite being well-off and professional, are not part of this global community. English proficiency in Bangkok thus becomes a factor of inclusion and acceptance into its cosmopolitan circles.

Many, if not all, sojourners's social circles enclose far more non-Japanese as close friends than would be possible in Japan. That does not simply happen simply by virtue of living abroad as *chūzai-in expats'* example demonstrate. Kayoko (43, housewife) states the language barrier as the reason for socialising almost exclusively with other Japanese. A *chūzaiin's* wife herself, her connection to the more outgoing sojourner circle is through her *taichi* classes. For most sojourners, however, language is not a problem. Yoshio's (24, student) proclamation that he is "not here to hang out with other Japanese" may be an extreme example but sojourners overall report making social connections based on common interests and personal affinity, rather than around "imagined community" tropes or linguistic limitations. Teruko (54, restaurant proprietress) says that "it happens a lot that my restaurant customers become my friends. Otherwise, I meet people through my interest in dance." Hobbies help making cross-over across social lines that crop up in Bangkok along the class/income and *arate* vs. *furute* (new-comers vs. old-comers). At the same time, other factors like foreign (mostly English but also Thai) language proficiency level, food predilections, interests, and income create communal links reproducing the nation-body creation, with Japanese sticking more to other Japanese because of their lifestyle similarities, ease of communication, or other Japanese-specific affinities.

Understandably, people who consciously made the effort to move and build their lives abroad are bound to be different from those who stayed back in Japan. Teruko (54) is "not interested in Japanese-only gatherings, would like other nationalities to join too." Although such an explicitly cosmopolitan attitude is not a given for every sojourner, most respondents mentioned having people of multiple nationalities in their social circles. Having lived abroad before or having a foreign partner is fairly typical among sojourners - Teruko met her Thai husband in the USA and Misae her Swiss one in Germany, so here we are dealing with people inclined towards international mingling in the first place. That bias makes them well predisposed to become part of the multi-cultural sojourner circles in Bangkok. Not bound by tight-knit social links, sojourners, however, choose to stay in control of their involvement in the community life. Some count that as one of the biggest perks of their Bangkok life.

VII.2.5 Liberation and social control

"In Japan, you feel that people judge you if your dress inappropriately. For example, you are expected to wear more sombre colours in winter and brighter colours in summer. In Bangkok there are no seasons, and no one cares what colours you wear." For Kazue (35), one of the advantages of living in Bangkok is "the freedom to put on whatever clothes you want". Like so often in conversations with many other Japanese sojourners, she would use the word *kaihōkan*, "the sense of liberation".

As Bangkok seems to give ample opportunity to escape the pressures of being part of the Japanese community, each respondent interpreted it slightly differently. Misae (40) too mentioned the freedom to wear what one feels. Both Misae and Kazue explained that although no one will tell you off directly in Japan, it is *seken* (public opinion) that one feels obliged to abide by or live up to. It, they opined, has a much looser grip in Bangkok. As both Misae and Kazue for varying reasons opted for relatively superficial involvement with the local Japanese community, *seken* is more palpable for those who are more involved with other community members and/or Japanese events and activities. Terafumi (70 retiree) and Hina (68, former stewardess) both made frequent references to the local community's *seken* as a positive force, as well as made statements where they themselves acted as its vehicles. This shared base of opinions on various matters produced and consumed by enough, if not all community members is what can be seen as a major component in the intangible social glue that gives a disparate congregation of international transplants a degree of cohesiveness. However, community life is not only defined by its internal dynamic. Since extraterritoriality for Japanese citizens has been log abolished, as a foreign enclave, it is subject to Thai laws which seek to regulate it in a very certain way. That sets an important framework within which, Japanese sojourners' practices and sense of belonging are shaped.

VIII Chapter VIII. The legal underpinnings of transnational belonging: visas, passports, citizenship

A half-page ad in one of Bangkok's many Japanese-language 'free papers' is pitching a "visa run package tour" to Penang, Malaysia. A "peace-of-mind deal", it includes transfer by an air-conditioned van, accommodation, help with applying for and picking up the visa. Neatly scheduled and timed precisely to use up as few working days as possible, it is targeted at those Japanese who work illegally in Bangkok on tourist visas. However, it is also handy for other types of sojourners, such as *sotakomori* floaters, who want to stay beyond the three months and three weeks that a tourist visa allows. The very existence and the regularity of such ads in this and other media outlets testifies to the numbers of such documented, if not technically legal migrants as well as to the robust state of the industry that caters to them.

Japanese nationals are visibly a minority amongst those applying for such extensions at the noisy and crowded Suan Phlu immigration office, a short and breezy motorcycle taxi ride down the leafy back lanes of the Silom business area in Central Bangkok. This way of staying and working long-term without

work permits or permanent residency in Thailand is popular among other nationals too (Green 2015). As gusts of air from formidable ceiling-mounted fans are keeping the crowds of applicants cool, the scale of operations at the Suan Phlu office is practically industrial, as is its efficiency: well organised queues proceed speedily, coveted stamps are dispensed without delay, provided all the paperwork is in order. The officials cannot be ignorant of the fact that they are not giving visa extensions to thousands of starry-eyed tourists so enchanted with the Land of Smiles that they have chosen to stay there for years, with their entire families and no apparent source of income, on uninterrupted successions of tourist visas. However, only those breaking the explicit regulations such as visa overstayers or owners of expired passports are denied extensions. The benefits of such an arrangement for the applicants are obvious, but why does the Thai state tolerate such an openly duplicitous situation with multitudes of foreign nationals making Thailand home semi-legally?

Topics of visas, work permits, and permanent residency would invariably come up in conversations with my respondents. All of them live in Bangkok on various types of long-term visas: spousal, retirement, work, student, etc. Thai migration controls, updated and streamlined multiple times in the last three decades, offer a variety of ways to stay long-term in Thailand legally without naturalisation. The path to obtaining Thai nationality for sojourners, however, is more restrictive than in many developed countries - perhaps, ironic for a country that historically has subsumed and absorbed multitudes of ethnicities. Although the basic requirement to have lived in Thailand for five consecutive years with some source of income is quite reasonable, the main stumbling block, particularly for Japanese citizens, is the stipulation to abandon one's original nationality.

Some respondents shared with me the perceived fragility of their situation in Bangkok even on "proper visas". They are wary of encounters with local laws or officials: being foreigners with rather limited rights they technically can be expelled, should anything go wrong. Even the much coveted, expensive and not-so-easy to obtain permanent residence that allows one to remain in the country interminably is, in fact, "*taxation without representation*": the holder is liable in every sense economically, however enjoys few political rights.

Why do Japanese sojourners choose to live in a country that will not allow them to become fully fledged members of society, the presumed aim of every migrant and the target of the conventional assimilationist migration policies of so many states? How does that affect the way they construct their belonging to both Thailand and Japan? This chapter argues that, instead of the conventionally assumed oppression vs. resistance relationship between migrants and the host state, Bangkok's Japanese and the Thai state accommodate each other symbiotically, tolerating each other's drawbacks whilst opportuning themselves of the advantages. That fine balance of power, agency and mutual opportunism maps out the structures of transnational belonging, creating a base for how sojourners relate to both their new and old countries.

VIII.1 Taxation without representation: economic rights vs. political rights

Onan Hiroshi, an amateur Japanese cartoonist who publishes weekly caricatures of Thailand's life on his Facebook account (<https://www.facebook.com/onan.hiroshi>) has a steady following. With trilingual captions, their fandom is truly cosmopolitan attracting all nationalities of global Bangkok. Mr. Onan's scathing views of both trivial daily occurrences and major political developments of Thai life represent a sometimes condescending and decidedly frustrated view common among Bangkok's expats, exasperated with cultural differences, perceived inefficiency and unreliability, and the general "stupidity" of their host society. The views are often framed in Nihonjinron-inspired dichotomies of Japan ("normal country") vs. Thailand ("where everything goes wrong"). If the Japanese-language print media shies away from any social commentary, focusing instead on community news and niche-marketed consumerism, social media offers an outlet for civic frustration.

Mr. Onan is a typical Japanese sojourner: very interested in the politics of his new home country yet precluded from any participation in it. If most keep their opinions to themselves or their social circle, Mr. Onan vents his frustration and observations to the entire world. The political role of the Japanese community in Thailand is restricted to the soft power of the Japanese capital in the country (mirroring Japan's global position where its economic clout by far outstrips its political influence). Japanese sojourners generally do not engage actively in Thailand's political life. That does not come from their lack of awareness or interest but rather from their throttled legal status. Even when those with permanent residency have very few political rights. At the backdrop of fiercely polarising political life in Thailand at the time that pitched the "yellow shirts", middle-class urbanites reaping most of the benefits of Thailand's increased life standard vs., "red shirts", the countryside dwellers who feel left behind and not represented by the national liberal elite (Ungpakorn 2009), Japanese sojourners take no sides. Some fear reprisals for participating in politics.

It is hard to confirm if such fears are founded but the Thai government does employ a variety of ways to keep the political aspirations of its migrant populations on a short leash. It is not alone in doing that in the modern world characterised by new forms of migration and shifting arrangements between governments, populations, and outsiders (Turner 2016). Thailand's neighbours, Singapore and Malaysia economically practice contingent denizenship like (Ong 1999). The Gulf states limit political or religious expression as an effective way of controlling migrant populations (Weiner 1982, Malecki and Ewers 2007, Sater 2014). Although Thailand is rather well known for what is, perhaps, the region's most successful incorporation of its large Chinese minority (Pongsapah 2001), the current arrangement between the Thai state and Japanese sojourners makes it impracticable for the latter to play any role in the country's political life. This lack of political representation, however, contrasts with the generous provision for economic rights. An inheritance from the past of Thailand's manoeuvring between expansionist empires, the Japanese enjoy a preferential treatment secured by the bilateral treaties regularly renewed since 1898. After decades of diplomatic wriggling, they were finally signed just as Japan achieved the status of a regional aggressor, whilst Siam's own colonialist aspirations were forcefully curtailed by Britain and France. Despite the steadily narrowing development gap between Japan and Thailand, those treaties are still in place. Thanks to them Japanese citizens can stay longer, with fewer restrictions in Thailand, on a par only with US citizens. They can start a business without the usually required seven Thai co-founders, and many choose to do so to obtain the business visa as

a way to obtain Thai residence rights. The right to buy property in Thailand, if barring land purchase, provides another strong ground for Japanese sojourners to become rooted and feel at home in Thailand. All long-stayers I interviewed own their own place in Bangkok.

Granted secure property and residence rights, Bangkok's Japanese become a godsend for the Thai state. The obvious economic benefits are at least threefold. First, many sojourners transfer their lifetime savings to a Thai bank account in order to secure permanent residency. Second, they contribute to the capital's property market when they buy their homes there. Third, long-stay retirees' pensions paid by generous Japanese pension provisions end up being spent in Thailand. All those financial flows go opposite to the typical "remittance economy", as people's personal money in this case are moving from a richer country to a poorer one. On the ground, the proliferation of Japanese-run businesses in Bangkok too creates both consumerist diversity and adds to the GDP.

The hallmark of sojourners' political impairment is not being able to vote. While some countries grant even non-naturalised migrants some limited voting rights such as participating in local elections, under Section 99 of the 2007 Constitution of Thailand, a naturalised citizen does not gain the right to vote until five years after naturalisation. Under Sections 101, 115, 174, and 205, naturalised citizens also have no right at all to stand for election to the House of Representatives or the Senate, or to be appointed as a minister or a justice of the Constitutional Court.

Having a political voice yet no chance for it to count or be heard is a major factor in Japanese sojourners' sense of belonging. The volatile and sometimes unnerving nature of Thai politics is a common topic of conversation amongst the Japanese. With their lives exposed to the dramatic vicissitudes of Thailand's domestic politics, they take a considerable interest in the country's political news. Japan's sophisticated parliamentary democracy, albeit with a unique national flavour and a generally very high standard of education are reflected in the opinions Japanese sojourners hold on politics in both countries, fairly nuanced and light on the Nihonjinron flavour. However, with no opportunity for political participation in the host society, Bangkok's Japanese instead often take to sarcasm and conspiracy theories. Any acquaintance made beyond the one-hour questionnaire-based interviews, would end up in sharing jibes about politicians or rants about recent political events. Even if the elaborate and detail-rich rumours of state-sponsored organ trafficking in Thailand I was regaled with could be dismissed as having no factual basis, they did not seem so fanciful after the news of widespread slavery in the Thai fishing industry broke in early 2018. Coming from a country with a rather steady and predictable political life, my main informant Masako gave the regular coups overturning Thai civil governments the moniker of "Bangkok biennale".

The way Bangkok's Japanese deal with their new home's dramatic politics seems to have evolved from over-sensitivity to somewhat cynical indifference. In the 1990s, the Japanese embassy's warnings to stock up on bottled water and tinned foods during coups-d'état were rather diligently acted on by many a Japanese expat. Contingency plans such as escaping to Singapore were earnestly discussed. In

2015, Masako would cavalierly dismiss the danger of protests and skirmishes as *chushinbo no ichibu ni kagiru*, "limited to a patch in Central Bangkok", the Rattanakosin area where most government ministries and agencies are, at a safe distance from where most Bangkok's Japanese live. Even the lengthy and violent 2008 siege of the Suvarnabhumi international airport did not seem to faze sojourners' stoic attitudes. All Japanese businesses in Sukhumvit stayed open as usual, no Japanese I know would budge a finger to stock up on tinned food.

Corporate Japan, however, preferred to err on the side of caution. If the Japanese DFI to Thailand took a major hit in 2014 in response to the unusually violent civil unrest, sojourner arrivals bucked the trend, with their numbers at an all-time high and still on the rise, reaching over 70,000 officially registered ones in 2016 (MOFA data). This is another area where the disconnect between Bangkok's expat world and the sojourners is quite conspicuous. The capital swiftly reacts to news even if reporting tends to be sensationalist with a strong selective bias, while sojourners' on-the-ground knowledge tells them to ignore it. Contemporary transnational capital, existing solely as electromagnetic impulses on banks' hard drives, has inherently much higher mobility than transnational work force such as Japanese sojourners. No Japanese person I have met in Bangkok was triggered to move back to Japan or even so much as to adjust their lifestyles because of the recent political instability. As Japanese investments took flight, it was 'business as usual' for Japanese sojourners. Non-political legal status thus overlaps with non-political daily practice.

Mainland Chinese migrants and tourists may have recently become Thailand's important source of income, however, they are far from being as popularly respected as Japanese ones. Chinese migrants in some Western countries have distinction of being the "model minority" (Ip and Pang 2005, Wong and Wong 2006, Wong and Halgin 2006), however, in Thailand, it is the Japanese ones, even if without many minority rights. In that sense, they are even a cut above Westerners, who in recent years have lost their allure in Thai eyes (Green 2015). A combination of the economic benefits Japanese sojourners bring and their limited political expression is topped up with their law-abiding, tax-paying and well-mannered ways. The most officially registered foreigners, Japanese have the highest number of officially registered aliens (Green 2015).

Their presence suits well not only the Thai state but also Japan's interests in the country. With their localised social and cultural capital such as intercultural awareness, language proficiency, work skills and ethic, links with the host society and even mere symbolic presence, they act as a cultural buffer between the Japanese soft power and the host society, at a lower wage rate than *chūzai-in* expats. Numerous entrepreneurs running Japanese-gear and themed shops create a more pleasant, livable environment for either Japanese sojourners themselves or any of their non-Japanese clientele, contributing to the exciting multi-cultural fabric of global city Bangkok.

At the same time, a significant number of Japanese sojourners are falling through the cracks of the system: *sotokomori* floaters (Ono 2015) and visa-runners gainfully employed while on tourist visas.

Although they cause a low-level diplomatic concern in Japan, the Thai state has so far turned a blind eye to their presence. Arguably the best behaved amongst other foreign nationals, they are too a less visible part of Thailand's model minority.

VIII.2 Nationality and visa regime

I struck an immediate rapport with Mariko, a Japanese woman I met back in 1998 while working as a Japanese interpreter for the NHK during the Asian Games in Bangkok. Despite our short acquaintance, she quickly confided to me that, despite having a Thai passport, she had secretly kept her Japanese one. It requires quite some sleight of hand when passing the border controls at airports but afforded her "the best of both worlds", living married to a Thai man with children in Bangkok whilst keeping a "First World passport". What she was doing is illegal on both sides of her world and definitely not something most sojourners practise.

Both Thai and Japanese naturalisation procedures are complicated and demanding. Both countries explicitly forbid dual citizenships. One interlocutor compared acquiring Thai one to "burning the bridges" with Japan and all but one expressed the desire to be die (*hone wo uzumu*) in Japan. Japanese passports are among the "strongest" in the world, allowing for visa-free access to 172 countries. The ease of travel is also at the top of cited reasons for keeping the Japanese passport. Two of the interlocutors, one married to a Thai man, the other one to a Japanese man, have lived in Thailand since 1968 and 1974 respectively, yet both retained their Japanese citizenship.

Japanese sojourners' legal situation in Thailand is not created by the Thai state alone. Japan's stance on citizenship, one of the most restrictive in the developed world (Morris-Suzuki 2003) upholds a very powerful legal link that allows no legal compromises between being only Japanese and not being Japanese at all. Hence, Japanese residing abroad have generally two legal options: to keep one's passport or relinquish it for good. According to my respondents, such a stance is a big factor influencing various decisions: from choosing one's children's school to planning one's eventual retirement.

Since the *sakoku* policy was lifted and the Meiji government assumed a pro-active stance towards population flows, Japan has gone through an evolution of attitudes towards migration and migration policies (Stanlaw 2006). The agents at play were the state, corporations and individuals. The scope and intensity of their activities varied greatly depending on perceived necessities and the current sociopolitical situation. The main factors at play were overpopulation, colonial expansionism later replaced by economic expansionism, improving or worsening economic conditions, and the willingness of foreign powers to accept immigration.

In modern history, a number of competing and sometimes conflicting discourses on Japanese citizenship have evolved. The current legislation adopted in 1950 stipulates the loss of Japanese citizenship upon adoption of any foreign one (Japan MOJ data). For many migrants their Japanese passport remains a powerful link with their homeland. Unlike Mariko, most of them avoid adopting a foreign citizenship for fear of losing their Japanese one and thus not being able to return to Japan or even make visa-free family visits. Torn between two citizenship regimes, sojourners are "sitting on the fence with both feet firmly on both sides" (Masako, 54). This ambivalent situation is a power component in keeping sojourners' socioeconomic and identity links with Japan.

Apart from playing its part in the established institutional nodes such as the Nihonjinkai and Japanese schools, the Japanese state has adopted a light-touch to no-touch approach towards Japanese sojourners in Thailand. It is partly inflected by the presence of "undesirables", *sotokomori* floaters, who might potentially tarnish Japan's image abroad the way Western low-income "marginals" did for the West's reputation (Howard 2009). It is not something it can control so official Tokyo opts to assume the observers' position in relation to individual migration. Nor does it explicitly acknowledge the contribution of Bangkok's long-term Japanese dwellers to the success of corporate Japan in Thailand. The Thai state, however, takes a more active, if not explicit, stance on the presence over 100 thousand foreign citizens within its border. It has a good reason to.

Thailand has a long history of successful migrant assimilation. In the underpopulated pre-modern Southeast Asia abduction of population was the more common war booty than acquisition of land. Thus, people from Khmer, Burmese, Lao, Lanna, Mon and other ethnic groups were often forcibly moved and incorporated into Siamese polities. The many foreign residents in historical Ayutthaya, including the Japanese, had eventually blended in to the point of disappearance. In modern times, such organic naturalisation gave way to more organised bureaucratic processes. The Thaification of the ethnic Chinese as part of the nation-building project has arguably been a success story (Tejapira 2009). The rapid demographic growth in the 20th century and especially after WWII, made land resources scarcer and populations more difficult to manage, if offset by more effective administrative technologies. The ideological demands of ethnonationalism made various qualifications for citizenship required a priori to gaining one.

The modern Thai state's relationship with its immigrants and ethnic minorities has evolved as a difficult balancing act between national unity as a sovereign state, religious and ethnic diversity, and economic necessity (Chayan 2005). Sixty-two ethnic minorities are officially recognised in Thailand, and the Japanese are not one of them. The Thai naturalisation procedure makes it virtually impossible to obtain it without marrying a Thai national. At the same time, Japanese nationals enjoy preferential visa treatment negotiated in the regularly renewed Japan-Thailand Trade Treaty first signed in 1897. It allows for longer stays on various types of visas than nationals of most other countries and offers more lenient conditions for setting up a business in Thailand. Some Japanese take advantage of this, starting a company with no intention to make profit, simply to obtain a residence permit.

In the 1980s, for the first time since the 19th century wave of Chinese immigration, Thailand became a net importer of foreign workers but it only implemented a regularisation policy in 1995 (Chalamwong 2002). In 2008, it was followed by the Alien Employment Act, a more sophisticated and comprehensive, if also more restrictive piece of legislation. Despite that, torn between business demands for labour in the form of regular petitioning by the Thai Chamber of Commerce, and its nation-state imperative of tighter borders, Thailand's controls of international migration often resort to uneasy and contradictory, if pragmatic compromises when, for example, "registered (but "illegal") migrants were still allowed to work in low-skilled sectors pending deportation" (Huguet and Chamrathirong 2011:19). Such occurrences, however, are not mere bureaucratic lapses or systemic failures. In fact, Section 17 of the 1979 Immigration Act provides the Minister of Interior with discretion in applying (or not applying) the structures of the Act (Paitoonpong and Chalamwong 2012:19). This pragmatic stance stays within the Thai political culture of adaptive response to complex circumstances: dealing with the changing uncertainty of international and domestic politics by way of the flexible ambiguity of institutional response (Kislenko 2012). This attitude, sometimes decried as baffling and two-faced by outside observers, has served Thailand well either in manoeuvring between the encroaching colonial powers or the warring sides in WWII. In both cases, Thailand stood nothing to gain from taking sides explicitly, yet to lose less by avoiding just that.

Even when the letter of the law is actually pursued, the situation can be complicated by a lack of cooperation with the neighbouring countries, where most undocumented unskilled and low-skilled workers come from. Sporadic crackdowns rarely, if ever, target illegal or semi-legal (i.e., those working on tourist visas) migrants from the developed countries, including Japan. Exceptions are made for outright overstayers who are weeded out on a regular basis because many of them are either washed-up floaters or "social misfits". In fact, the limitations on visa runs implemented in 2009, clearly single out the less affluent workers, by denying entry or limiting the number of permitted re-entries for those crossing the overland check points as opposed to airports. Those travelling by air are reported to be treated more leniently by both Thai embassy and border officials.

In business and policy parlance, Thailand acts as the focal centre of the Mekong subregional corridor (Fau et al 2014). In practical terms, that means it is on the receiving end of mass labour migration from the continental Southeast Asian countries (Burma, Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam) as it is the most affluent of them. Bangkok is an intentional global city, actively welcoming investment and migration (Douglas and Boonchuen 2006). But openness does not mean putting down all defences and controls. Instead of hollowing out by yielding to the pressures of the global capital, the Thai nation-state rather adjusts itself to benefit from the ever-changing global winds of finance, services, products, and labour. Just like in the past when Thailand made calculated concessions to accommodate and withstand the pressure of the colonial powers in order not only to survive but to even benefit from their proximity (Kislenko 2002), this time around Thailand does its best to catch and make use of the tailwinds of the global finance. Thailand's open-market stance is much less about wholesale deregulation than about regulation aiming at very certain outcomes to ensure the success of its economic model, such as attracting investment, boosting trade, and regulating labour supply. Such regulation does not necessarily need to be exercised by controlling socio-economic processes but by allowing things to take their natural course if that benefits the state's goals.

Visa runs are Thailand's time-hallowed institution (Howard 2009, Green 2015) for foreign nationals who cannot or do not want to obtain work permits and can afford to leave the country every three months, while living and working illegally on a tourist visa. Originally a preferred method of prolonging one's stay for international, mostly Western floaters (Howard 2009), later it grew in popularity among local hires of different nationalities, employed in middle-class occupations such as office workers or English teachers (Methanonpphakhun and Deocampo 2016). Some companies have been reported to prefer keeping their foreign employees on this visa routine to going through a lengthy, costly, and sometimes unpredictable procedure of applying for a work permit. Not having to pay a 35% tax on the salary is a major boon, while the 30,000-baht minimum monthly salary required for obtaining a work permit proves insurmountable for many of those hired at the local wage level. For those living in semi- or full retirement in Thailand without the financial means to qualify for a retirement visa, visa runs are the only option to stay legal. As a result, based on the embassies' own data and estimates, the numbers of foreign nationals from developed countries living on a tourist visa by far exceed the numbers of legal residents (Wilde and Gollogly 2014). Circumstantial evidence, such as newspaper ads, suggests that Japanese nationals in Thailand doing visa runs remain numerous although the exact numbers are unknown.

Thailand's arguably most popular online forum amongst its foreign residents, ThaiVisa.com, was initially founded for discussion and updates on the visa run situation, which is prone to unexpected changes of regulations and flexible interpretation by various Thai embassy officials. The forum has branched out into all aspects of life in Thailand since, but visa issues remain its perennial mainstay. The regular crackdowns on visa runners send waves of shock across the wide community of foreign nationals living in the legal grey area. Such operations, however, seem to largely elude Japanese nationals. Media statements by immigration officials that accompany such crackdowns are the only explicit indication of the government's designs in that regard. For example, according to Pol Lt Gen Surachate's, the aim is "separating good guys from bad guys" (Bangkok Post, 16 Dec 2018). Thailand's "host gaze" (Urry 2002), forever preoccupied with potential undesirables, allocates Japanese nationals appear into the former category, while the poorer migrants from the neighbouring countries but also from South and West Asia as well as Africa, into the latter.

Not all sojourners fit snugly in the system and there are more ways for them to remain legally or semi-legally in Thailand without the expense or effort of obtaining the permanent residence. Many live and/or work on tourist visas that need to be renewed every three months. Some Thai language schools are authorised to obtain student visas for their students, as are universities where the requirement for student status is a mere one course per term with little provision to control attendance. Retirement visas are a good option for pensioners as they offer a carefree unlimited stay in a "tropical paradise" in one's autumn years. Those with enough means to purchase real estate have an easier path to residency. Work visas can be granted for relatively easy jobs, such as teaching a university course. Such jobs are rather modestly paid but provide a legal status. The situation has recently become trickier with rolling job contracts that need to be renewed every six months instead of one year, meaning more hassle and expenses.

VIII.3 Economic denization and mutual accommodation

There is a two-way connection between Japanese sojourners' legal status in Thailand and their sense and practice of belonging. Thailand's visa regime is selectively lenient in allowing a variety of migrants to make their way into the country. Among them, Japanese nationals probably have it the easiest settling in Thailand. It is underwritten by the regularly renewed bilateral treaties but also by opportunistic Thai labour regulations that aim at attracting migrants while controlling their numbers according to the current economic need. The Thai popular imagination of the Japanese as law-abiding well-mannered people that cause no trouble excuses even Japanese *sotokomori* floaters from any pejorative connotations, unlike their Western counterparts widely referred to as *farang khi nok* ("bird droppings whities"). The legal provision for Japanese nationals allows them to become rooted deeper in the new country through purchase of property, starting a business, having a gainful employment, or being granted permanent residence.

However, the social contract that sojourners get is that of *taxation without participation*. Despite enjoying wider economic rights, they are barred from participating in the political life of the country whilst the path to naturalisation is extremely hard and restrictive. With residency rights granted based on the migrant group's perceived market value, the Thai model of incorporating foreigners into the country's social fabric is that of *contingent economic denization*, not dissimilar to the Gulf states' migration policies (Malecki and Ewers 2007, Al-Moosa and McLachlan 2017). Japanese sojourners therein are a transient *model minority* without a minority status. Kept from political participation by their restricted legal status, they are hard-working, law-abiding, and self-sufficient. Japanese sojourners in this situation do not express feeling oppressed or being interested in resistance. The relation between the host state and sojourners is based more on mutual accommodation than oppression and resistance, when long-term, in practice indefinite right to reside is traded for economic benefit and convenience. In exchange for not pressuring Japanese sojourners to assimilate and granting them various economic rights, the Thai state gains their labour skills, entrepreneurial effort, and cash flow.

Both parties tolerate the shortcomings of the situation. Japanese sojourners are neither expected to assimilate or naturalise, nor do they intend to, partly framed by Japan's requirement to abandon Japanese citizenship when a foreign one is adopted. Also, practically no sojourners relinquish the idea of eventually returning to Japan. Their legal status is a mixture of contingency on the receiving country's side – allowed to stay as long as there is an economic benefit – and flexibility and convenience for Japanese sojourners – allowing for long-term residence without the ultimate committing of naturalisation. My main informant Masako described sojourners' general sentiment about belonging in their adopted home country as *asakarazu, fukakarazu*, "not too shallow, not too deep". Intimately concerned about the internal matters of Thailand and deeply rooted there, ultimately, they are not fully fledged citizens and such are doomed for living on both sides of the proverbial fence.

Such a situation results not only from Thai government's conscious pragmatism but also from the ongoing refining and strengthening of the administrative expertise aimed at managing immigration (Huguet and Chamrathirong 2014). Thailand's migration policy is heavily influenced by business interests (Chantavanich 2007) but is also formulated with sometimes competing input from various government agencies (Revenga et al 2006: 65) Gradually quicker and more targeted responses to the changing economic and political situation are becoming possible thanks to the electronic data management and the officials' improving work expertise. In a greater scheme of the relationship between Thailand and its Japanese sojourners, more penetrative and invasive administrative technologies seem to be the trade-off of the improving standard of living in Thailand. As both Thai state and economy become more sophisticated, more technology brings more comfort but also more bureaucratic oversight.

The nationality regime that controls who and how is granted Thai citizenship, is a powerful external factor that maintains a divide between "becoming Thai" and "staying Japanese" for Japanese sojourners. Although it only directly addresses the legal aspects of belonging, its far-reaching repercussions also frame how Japanese residents relate to their new home emotionally. It can also be seen as hindering a shift towards more hybrid or cosmopolitan identities, or towards assimilation into the mainstream Thai society. That, however, does not keep Japanese sojourners from displaying varying degrees of departure from some tropes and values of the Japanese national identity.

Japanese migrants' rather privileged position in Bangkok is, in many ways, underwritten by generous legal provision favouring their presence and extended stays. However, perhaps, even more importantly, it is bolstered by Japan's soft power involvement in Thailand. Japanese sojourners lack political rights but enjoy a strong, if indirect backing of the Japanese capital, (in)famously intricately interlinked with the Japanese state. Lacking political representation, they are however amply backed by Japan's economic clout.

IX Chapter IX. Belonging and the many faces of transnational capital: Japan's economic clout and sojourners' cultural capital

"You know, the Bangkok Underground was built with Japanese money." Hina's (69) face briefly lights up with quiet, confident pride. Unfailingly efficient, spacious, and somewhat expensive - one ticket costing as much as the initial taxi charge, the Metropolitan Rapid Transit is known among Japanese residents simply as *chikatetsu* (underground train). Inaugurated in 2004, it has been slowly but surely facilitating the spread of Japanese sojourners further away from Little Tokyo (see Chapter VI for the geographical expansion of Japanese Bangkok). More and more Japanese residents I come across refer to the area where they live by the name of the local underground station. One of the Japan International Cooperation Agency-led *tied aid* infrastructure projects (Soderberg 2012), the Underground is even jokingly said to have been built specifically to make the life of Japanese commuters in Bangkok easier. What it has undoubtedly accomplished is modelling parts of Central Bangkok after the Japanese urban *uchi/soto* pattern (Chapter VI.2).

In sharp departure from the dire early days of the Japanese community a century ago (Chapter III.1), Japanese multi-faceted economic presence pervades every aspect of the sojourner's life: from the ubiquity of all imaginable Japanese foodstuffs (Chapter VII.3) to the developing extensive Japanese funded and geared infrastructure around Central Bangkok both as highly visible statements of Japanese presence and wide-appeal consumerist hubs (Chapter VI.3). This chapter argues that Japanese sojourners' relatively position in Bangkok both as a group and at the individual level rather closely follows the wax and wane of Japan's economic clout. Unlike many other migration flows caused by poverty in the country of origin, Japanese migration to Thailand appears to increase and its social position there to improve with the rise of Japan's fortunes and vice versa.

However, the advantages of being representatives of a major economic power are not limited to benefiting from the tangible material manifestations of Japan's soft power in Thailand such as financial investment, retail outreach, and technological savvy. Sojourners' own internationally transferable *individual cultural capital* is what allows them to transplant and adapt themselves in Bangkok with relative ease. At the same time, Japan's prestige based on its economic power, *national cultural capital*, reflects in multiple aspects of their belonging in the host society. All forms of Japanese capital in Bangkok are an "accumulated labour" (Bourdieu 2010:81), created in a slow build-up with a due share of setbacks and restarts. This chapter will trace this process and its effects on Japanese belonging in Bangkok.

IX.1 The projection of Japanese economic clout and Japanese belonging

Compared to other Overseas Japanese communities, Bangkok's Japanese pioneers were having a hard time taking root in Siam (Ishii and Yoshikawa 1987). Lack of start capital and Japanese products' weak market penetration kept them from improving their economic standing (Swan 1986). However, Japan's ascendance as a world economic and military power soon allowed it to impose its own unequal treaties on Siam (Ishii and Yoshikawa 1987). That gave a distinct legal advantage to the Japanese residents, but the community's influence still kept lagging behind other more established ones, while the Siamese royal court remained mostly uninterested in hiring Japanese technical advisors. The situation only significantly improved once the Western powers embroiled in WWI lost grip of the Siamese market for manufactured goods and allowed cheap and inferior Japanese products to take over a substantial market share (Swan 1986). In 1942, there were around 40 Japanese trading companies and by the end of WWII around 3,500 Japanese citizens were resident in Thailand (Toyoshima 2013). It is during those years of increased prosperity that many communal institutions such as the Nihonjinkai or the Japanese schools were established and strengthened (Ishii and Yoshikawa 1987). The community's organisational skills, Japan's pursuit of diplomatic advantage, and the steadfast overseas expansion of the Japanese business sector all contributed to the relatively privileged social standing of Siam's Japanese.

Japan's 1941-1945 occupation of Thailand could be seen as a high point of Japanese expansion and influence in the country. Japanese residents' countrymen effectively ruled the country for nearly five years; however, the aftermath was disastrous for the community. Even if "[t]he general attitude of Thai officials and citizens toward Japan just after the war's end was relatively sympathetic" (Reynolds 1990:66) the Allies forcefully removed all Japanese citizens from Thailand and their hard-gained influence was reduced to zero. Japan itself was all but subjugated politically and ruined economically and consequently its ability to project its power overseas all but disappeared (Dower 2000). The abrupt decline of Japan's clout coincided with the practical demise of its migrant community in Thailand.

As Japan was stripped of its military power and aspirations of territorial expansion were no more possible in the rapidly decolonising world, it had to opt instead to regain its international clout by way of economic expansion (Watanabe and McConnell 2008). It only took a single decade before Japan started re-establishing itself internationally in earnest. Starting from the mid-1950s Japanese economy achieved a double-digit growth. Despite the initial shortage of capital in Japan at the time, the Bank of Japan adopted a practice of over-loaning via commercial banks to industrial borrowers beyond their capacity to repay (Yasuda 1993). The eventual capital surplus went to be exported, with Thailand becoming one of the first beneficiaries (Schaller 1997). Japan became Thailand's largest investor and remained so right up to 2019 (*China becomes Thailand's top source of foreign investment for first time*, South China Morning Post 24 Jan 2020). Manufacturing facilities created from this financial largesse enabled a rapid expansion of the Japanese industrial base in Thailand in the 1960s (Phipatserithem and Yoshihara 1989). Yurime Akamatsu's (1962) *Flying Geese Paradigm* was published only 17 years after the country faced a humiliating a defeat, the first ever foreign occupation, and two nuclear bombs dropped on it in addition to the Allies' carpet-bombing raids that reduced its cities and industries to rubble. In that book that dominated the Japanese governmental imagination at the time, Japan's economic role was conceptualised as leading the skein of Asia's developing economies where Thailand was assigned to the third tier, accepting the relay baton of development and modernisation from Japan via South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore and Hong Kong (Ozawa 2003).

As the in-flesh representatives of that demilitarised Pax Japonica in Asia, Japanese corporate employees (*chūzai-in*) were sent to stay with their families on mid-term (2 to 5 years) overseas assignments. In 1955 their numbers in Thailand were a mere 379 (Japan MOFA data). The Japanese Association of Thailand resumed its activities and in 1956 a second Japanese school was established for the *chūzaiin*'s children (Ishii and Yoshihara 1987). Next two decades saw the economic expansion of Japan in Thailand through investment, development projects, building extensive production facilities. Through a combination of its own effort and the US instigation, Japan was regaining its lost position in the region and specifically Thailand (Yasuda 1993). The transnational movement of Japanese capital was closely followed by a movement of Japanese labour. Japanese residents in 1975 increased to 5953 but they still were exclusively corporate, government and media *chūzai-in* expats (Japan MOFA data) just as Thailand had become a mass tourism destination for the increasingly affluent Japanese consumers. Since the 1970s, their arrivals never went below one million a year. Around this time a second Japanese school was established (Ishii and Yoshikawa 1987) and Japanese department stores took a foothold in Bangkok (Toyoshima 2013).

Since the 1970s Thailand has taken a development turn from its focus on agricultural exports to export in manufactured goods, largely underwritten by Japanese investment (Tambunlertchai 1991). This strategy proved successful in achieving higher rates of economic growth and increasing material prosperity in the following decades. Japanese corporate interests quickly followed up on this opportunity. At the very height of the Thai economic miracle in 1993-1996, for example, a new Japanese factory would open in Thailand every three days (Phongpaichit 2006). The resulted job creation benefited not only the local labour but also laid ground for the Japanese to come to manage production facilities and trade operations. By the time individual sojourners started making inroads, in 1995 Thailand's Japanese population grew up to 21,745 (Japan MOFA data).

Increased presence of Japanese economic and human capital paved way for establishing Japanese-geared 'comfort infrastructure' in Bangkok (Chapter VI.3). That created a multi-faceted slipstream for Japanese individual migrants to settle in an urban environment "more convenient than Tokyo" with all creature comforts and consumerist options imaginable. However, it is not only the physical and social base that had already been prepared for them by the previous generations of Bangkok's Japanese. The intangible benefits also include preferential visa treatment secured by treaties signed and renewed ever since the late 19th century (Chapter VIII). A relatively benign experience of the 1942-45 Japanese occupation made Thailand uniquely Japanophile in the Pacific-Asian region (Chapter III.1) where, save for Taiwan, the opposite attitude stemming from the past wrongs flares up every now and then (Tian and Pasadeos 2012, Zhou and Wang 2017). Numerous Japanese development projects, sometimes calculatedly positioned in conspicuous locations like the Rama IV flyover bridge at one of Bangkok's busiest intersections, or the Thai-Japanese school whose sign is visible from a popular urban highway, daily and nightly demonstrate to rank and file of Thais the level of Japan's commitment to Thailand's development (Chapter VI.3.1).

However, prominent infrastructure projects, popular retail facilities, and a vibrant labour market for Japanese jobs are the effects of but one type of Japan's transnational capital, economic, that frames Japanese sojourners' belonging in Bangkok. The other two types that frame Japanese sojourners' belonging are the *national cultural capital* and *individual cultural capital*. On the one hand, Japan's perceived power, underwritten by its economic (if no longer military) clout, translates into the aspirational and prestige value of its language, lifestyle, and cultural output. They become symbolic markers defining sojourners' own sense of belonging and the way their relative social position in the host society is perceived. On the other hand, sojourners' internationally transferable *individual cultural capital* comprises their individual assets of labour skills and work ethic. That capital carries not only the prestige of the "made in Japan" brand but also a premium job market value. The combined power of the two kinds of cultural capital is what allows Japanese sojourners to make a lateral or even upward social move when relocating to Bangkok.

IX.2 Global city and transnational cultural capital

Masako, my main informant, is a part-time fashion design lecturer at one of Thailand's top universities. Although she has no post-graduate or teaching degree, she excels at her job organising interactive workshops to inspire young Thai designers with samples of Japanese fabrics and clothes. Her fashion expertise finds an enthusiastic welcome from her students. Manabu (45), an established artist re-launching his career after moving from New York, is also a full-time lecturer in Communication Design at the same university as Masako. His professional expertise trumps his lack of formal teaching qualifications. The university is very happy about their contribution to the curriculum as it keeps renewing their contracts year after year. Arisa (49) has had a very busy professional life in Bangkok, working as a marketing manager for a famous Thai hospital, a psychological counsellor and, finally, a professional Tai Chi teacher. In all her professional manifestations, she has been highly valued and handsomely remunerated in exchange for her superb work ethic and professional expertise. None of the three ever had a problem finding employment in Bangkok without working knowledge of Thai. Bangkok's lingua franca is English but not being a native speaker has not been an impediment in finding employment either (see *Language and the city* in Chapter VII).

If for some migrants lack of cultural and symbolic capital inhibits their ability to move out of low-skill and low-pay positions in the first and sometimes even subsequent generations (see for example Card and Raphael 2013), the majority of Japanese sojourners do not have that kind of experience. They possess higher levels of transnational cultural capital and thus are well-positioned to benefit more from Bangkok's liberalised flow of capital and labour. To a certain degree, their freedom is, indeed, enabled by the free market, just the way the original philosophical Neo-Liberalism envisaged it (Harvey 2007). Their desirability as human capital in the region preoccupied with sourcing foreign talent to service its developing knowledge-based economies (Yahya and Kaur 2010), makes them a welcome presence in Thailand that is known to tune its migration laws to suit its economic needs (Chantavanich 2007).

That, however, happens on the back of the capital that the Japanese nation-state provides: education and the work ethic and skills enabled by it, health and the knowledge of how to maintain it, the safety net provided by the family that is nested with the nation-state's framework. Seen over a longer time span, transnational cultural capital can be theorised as the outcome commodity of a long-term investment by the state in the country of origin, that can be converted into career or more education opportunities elsewhere. The migrants themselves are not the only beneficiaries of such a setup. Just like the operations of overseas Japanese transnational capital are bolstered by the presence of educated Japanese workforce elsewhere (see for example Sakai 2012), Japanese corporate presence in Thailand relies on the labour pool of Japanese hires (Niwa and Nakagawa 2015) but also on Japanese-speaking Thai professionals (Maeno 2014). What can be easily lost out of sight in this arrangement is the formative role of the nation-state and its institutions in rearing such highly skilled workforce. It can be argued that corporate interests here capitalise on something they do not invest in, reaping without sowing.

In Bangkok, Japanese transnational economic and cultural capitals co-exist in symbiosis. The corporate capital creates a job market, comfort infrastructure, but also takes advantage of Japanese sojourners' internationally transferable skills such as native command of a commercially important language such as Japanese, a degree of English proficiency, internationally appraised university degrees, work experience and work ethic. Such personal attributes as diligence, responsibility, attention to detail deliberately cultivated are also a product of socialisation within a national system of education that puts great emphasis on cultivating strong moral values, originally inspired by the Bushido code (Khan 1997, Hoffman 1999). It is the sum of an individual's globally recognised skills and knowledge, *transnational cultural capital*, as well as, if to a lesser degree, social connections (social capital) that allows them to move internationally without a loss of, or sometimes even with a gain in their relative social position.

IX.2.1 Sojourners' individual cultural capital and employment opportunities

Just like Masako, Manabu and Arisa, the majority of Japanese sojourners in Bangkok are middle-class university graduates. Their already relatively privileged position in Japan translates in their comfortable position in Bangkok. Even those *sotokomori* who choose to downshift to a less affluent lifestyle in Southeast Asia consciously trade a higher salary and job security back in Japan for more personal freedom in Thailand (Ono 2015). Despite some ostensible differences in lifestyle and affluence, both groups of sojourners possess *transnational cultural capital* and can be seen as part of the *transnational capitalist class* (Sklair 2001). They equally benefit from the knowledge and skills that help them make it in a foreign city, successfully navigate the concrete jungle as the modern-time hunters (Baudrillard 1970). Such knowledge and skills are not a "natural" part of being Japanese, they have been developed as Japan's nation-state institutions were getting better at rearing a particular kind of citizens starting from early education (Hendry 2015), with a continuous stress on moral education (Khan 1997, Hoffman 1999) to produce that very particular kind of conscientious, hard-working, and responsible individual that is both in demand in the global labour market and is welcome as a "model minority" migrant. Contemporary Japanese sojourners are no longer like the early Meiji agricultural migrants, so uncouth and unworldly that they had to be given instructions how to behave themselves once abroad not to tarnish Japan's international reputation (Dresner 2006).

The shift from Japanese agricultural migration to an urban one occurred within the broader context of rapid global urbanisation after WWII (Befu and Adachi 2010). The high concentration of Japanese sojourners in Bangkok as opposed to the rest of the country can be partly attributed to the demand for the kind of transnational cultural capital they have. Due to similarities in the economic setup of many of the world's global cities with their emphasis on the service sector, demand for certain skills there has over decades become somewhat standard in its polarisation between elite and low-skilled labour: financial professionals and celebrity restaurant chefs need baristas and taxi drivers while both sides occupy opposing income brackets (Sassen 2001, 2018). However, such global uniformity does not necessarily result in a smooth social transition for migrant labour: many a qualified professional from the Second or Third Worlds have a tough time proving their professional credentials in a First World global city. Even doctors and engineers from developing countries can end up in menial jobs, such as security staff or cleaners, because their qualifications are not recognised internationally.

That is not the case with Bangkok's Japanese. Japanese business presence in Thailand creates jobs for Thais and Japanese expats, but also depends on the expertise and labour of *genchi-yatoi*, locally hired Japanese professionals (Niwa and Nakagawa 2015), who form a cultural intermediary between the host country and the corporate. Compared to the expats, local hires are more inclined to stay in the country long-term, are more prone to learn the Thai language, generally speak better English, and are often more immersed into and aware of the local culture. Their labour is considerably cheaper as they are mostly content with the mid- and upper-range of local salaries, which are still much lower than regular Japanese pay packages (Niwa and Nakagawa 2015). In Bangkok they form a buffer between the Japanese corporate presence and the host society fulfilling the needs of both. This situation is replicated, with a degree of local variance but important similarities, in other global city locations such as London (Sakai 2012), Hong Kong (Wong 2005), Singapore (Ben Ari 2005), and others.

Their presence is bolstered by generous legal provision including rights to work and start a business (see Chapter VIII). However, as they are free from the obligations of loyalty and cultural assimilation to the Thai state, the latter is equally free from the obligations of political rights or easy naturalisation to its Japanese sojourners (see Chapter VIII). This differs from many Western countries where there is a growing push for a converse arrangement where civil rights and citizenship are given without requiring allegiance or assimilation (Bloemraad et al 2008). For Bangkok's Japanese their financial, physical, and legal security is solely in their hands. If the *chūzai-in* expats still enjoy extended, if recently diminishing, corporate packages, individual sojourners are expected to provide for themselves. Their freedom to choose where and how long to stay comes at the price of some security and certainty of their sojourn in Thailand.

IX.2.2 Japan's national cultural capital and sojourners' belonging

Japanese sojourners may carry their transnational cultural capital assets when they move countries, but they do not arrive in a *tabula rasa* kind of place either. In Bangkok, they do not need to prove their worth because their country's reputation, Japan's *national cultural capital*, has already done it for them. The prestige of being Japanese affords Bangkok sojourners a privileged perceived position, in the glow of Japan's prosperity and the power it projects (as discussed in Chapter V). It does not happen solely on Thais' admiration of the aesthetic finery of Japanese art or the sophistication of Japanese literature. Those cultural assets have existed for a long time, but they alone did not secure Japan's place as a globally admired major power. The attractiveness of Japanese cultural artefacts, ranging from raw fish on rice balls to the whimsical world of anime, lies not solely in their aesthetic or consumerist value, but is actively promoted abroad, with a particular focus on East and Southeast Asia (Otmazgin 2012). A host of well-funded and highly active Japanese government agencies and industry associations have been in charge of extending the appeal of Japanese culture and lifestyle abroad. The Japan Student Services Organisation (JASSO) promotes studying in Japan, the Japan Foundation organises Japanese language courses and cultural events, and the Organisation to Promote Japanese Restaurants Abroad (JRO) carries out *gastrodiplomacy* (Zhang 2015), whereby national foods such as sushi are promoted internationally to "win hearts and minds" as well as for economic gain (Sakamoto and Allen 2011).

Japanese government has heavily invested in promoting the Japanese language in Thailand (Hashimoto 2018). Alongside English and more recently Chinese, it consistently ranks in the top three in popularity for language learning among Thais. Generous MEXT (formerly Monbusho) scholarships allow Thai students to study in Japan all the way from the graduate to the doctoral level (JASSO data). Shizuka (69) met her Thai husband when he studied in Japan on such a scholarship in the late 1960s when it was still a rarity. In 2017, 3985 Thai students were studying in Japan (JASSO data). The Technology Promotion Association (Japan-Thailand) known amongst the general public by its Thai abbreviation Sor. Sor. Thor. (ส.ส.ท.) not only sponsors a large number of Thai professional apprentices and trainees to study in Japan but also publishes by far the best quality dictionaries, references books, and language textbooks in Thailand.

Such generous provision is not entirely selfless. It both fulfils a powerful PR function maintaining pro-Japanese sentiment in Thailand, but also increases the pool of Japanese-speaking local professionals to fill positions at Japanese companies (Maeno 2014). Although it is sometimes soured by labour disputes or the perceived haughtiness of Japanese expatriates (Swierczek and Onishi 2003), Thais' favourable disposition towards the Japanese makes sojourners feel more at home. For my main informant Masako (54), in Bangkok there is no need to look over the shoulder or avoid speaking Japanese in public as might potentially be the case in other countries with a historical luggage of anti-Japanese sentiment (Lam 2007).

The combination of Japan's transnational economic and cultural capital both frame and enable sojourners' experience and production of a place of belonging in an urban environment where one's position in the monetary exchange system defines practically all aspects of one's life experience. The role of the nation-state in this complex equation of various forms of capital is not diminishing but rather shifting. Japanese *transnational cultural capital*, despite its ostensible global "post-national" flavour, is a product of the modern Japanese nation-state, with its robust education system. Japan's high per-capita GDP achieved through the nation-state's long-term sustained consolidated effort, not only allows Japanese migrants to enjoy a strong economic base to fall back on back at home but is also a source of cultural power, admiration and respect for the Japanese economic success and the "secrets" that enabled it.

The Thai state here is not a passive recipient of Japanese investment largesse and labour exports. In a new kind of transnational citizenship, *economic denization*. The very presence of Japanese sojourners in Bangkok is underwritten by the ample provision of economic rights, albeit at the expense of political ones: a Neo-Liberal update of "taxation without representation" (see Chapter VIII). Even if Japanese sojourners' *preferred nation status* can be seen here as supported by the renewed Thai-Japanese "unequal treaties", it is the Thai state that benefits from a law-abiding and tax-paying Japanese "model minority", to whom it owes no social *embedded liberalism* obligations like education, healthcare, or pension provision.

In this new evolving arrangement between the nation-state and the global capital called *variegated governmentality* (Ong 1999) instead of becoming "hollowed out" and discarded to the dumpster of history as sometimes theorises, the nation-state outsources economic decisions to corporations, while stepping up its *pastoral power* (Foucault 1982) involvement in rearing its citizens fit for the demands of the labour market. For Bangkok's Japanese who live between two nation-states, the above is the remit of their homeland, whilst their adopted home Thailand creates a ground where their cultural capital can be put to use, while framing the scope of their belonging through their legal and economic regulation.

Sojourners' ability to support themselves through employment or entrepreneurship and enjoy a convenient life in the city, is thus embedded in a broader multi-factor structural context: that of the material base of the global reach of Japanese economic power, Thailand's economic liberalism and the concentration of capital in global city Bangkok relative to the rest of the country. Numerous Japanese-speaking job opportunities, a strong pro-Japanese sentiment, a highly developed Japanese-gear infrastructure have all been made possible by Japan's economic involvement in Thailand. Sojourners' ability to participate in Thai economy and choice of personal lifestyle that can range from comfortable retirement or quiet floating (*sotokomori*) to active entrepreneurship or gainful employment, are also underwritten by the complex combinations of various forms of Japanese capital.

At one level, Japanese individual migration to Thailand can be conceptualised as mobile labour following mobile capital to a consciously created global city, where it finds a convenient consumerist infrastructure and a clement socio-political environment. It is also about various forms of transnational cultural capital paving way to successful migration. However, transnational belonging is not built on or defined by that kind of economic or power rationality alone. The way sojourners *feel* about their new home and community is just as important a factor in the way they build their relationships with it. Is it impossible to find out reliably what goes on in their collective subconscious, however, their ideas and emotions about Bangkok and Thailand that they shared with me display a few recognisable patterns that can help outline some parts of the emotional landscape of this community.

X Chapter X. The emotional construction of belonging

In the end chapter of Chapter IV of this thesis, Kazue's (35) shared that although physically her life is rooted in Bangkok, her emotional connection with Japan stays strong. Her confession is illustrative of the complex allegiances that sojourners develop in the course of their transnational experience. Towards the end of each interview, I would ask a very intimate and hence very revealing question "where would you prefer to be buried (*hone wo uzumeru*)?". After a varied length of deliberation, each and every one answered "in Japan". One notable exception was Terafumi (70, retired) who, unprompted, ventured to inform me that "he came here to die". No matter what connection one had with Bangkok - a successful career, property ownership, material comfort, locally born and brought

up children born and brought, Thai spouses, most adult life spent in the country - none of those seems to have the final say on the choice of the place to end one's earthly existence. As described in the above chapters, the sojourner's transnational life materialises into existence through a complex dynamic of structural and agential factors. However, material aspects alone do not define one's belonging. An intricate, sometimes self-contradictory web of values, beliefs, and impressions is where the feeling, idea and awareness of belonging as an "emotional attachment" (Yuval-Davis 2006) appears to reside. This final chapter unpacks some of the common themes of emotional belonging that arose in my communication with sojourners.

X.1 Kaihōkan and seken: liberation vs. social control

"What is the best thing about life in Bangkok?" My straightforward question begets a straightforward answer. "I feel liberated here." Kazue's (35) face takes on a pensive tinge. "Nobody knows me here. I'm a complete outsider. I don't need to worry what people think about me." A common thread in most conversation about Bangkok life is *kaihōkan* ("sense of liberation") from *seken* ("public opinion"). "Back home I always need to mind what I do because there are certain expectations." Misae's (40) in Japan she felt stuck in her social role of being a certain type of person defined by her gender and background. The rebuke for diverting from the perceived norm is not always expressed directly. "I can't wear bright colours in autumn because it is not appropriate. My *manshon* (apartment) neighbours won't say anything but I know what they think." Bangkok is a refreshing change. "There are no seasons here and I don't have to care what I wear. Freedom!" Kazue's (35) sartorial style and mannerisms, indeed, remind of a Nikkei from Hawaii or Brazil, rather than a native born-and-raised Japanese.

Memories of Japan in sojourners' narratives inevitably bring up their feeling under the scrutiny of social control by neighbours, colleagues, and even friends. Even those who come from big cities where one would expect more social disconnection than a sense of community, the perceived judgment of *kinjo no hito* (neighbours) would make itself felt in a variety of ways. 'In Japan, before you leave home you always run a mental check if your clothes are appropriate', reminisces Misae (40). 'If you wear the bright colour in winter or sombre colours in summer, people will judge you.' This echoes with the data on Japanese female retirees in Western Australia and Thailand who "find freedom" in their life abroad (Thang et al 2012). Not having to comply with norms and expectations was often brought up as an advantage of living in Bangkok. At least three female respondents mentioned that it felt great to wear whatever they wanted: back in Japan, they would, for example, feel compelled to make season-appropriate choices. When asked who pressures for such choices, Misae (40) explained that even if nobody in your Japanese *kinjo* may criticise to your face, you know that privately they all do.

Seken, "public opinion" as a medium of social control, seems to pervade every aspect of life in Japan (Abe 1995, Kurihara 2007), however, in Bangkok it, at least at first glance, disappears. 'It is completely normal to hire a maid for a middle-class person in Bangkok. In Japan, they will call you a 'lazy wife' behind your back.' Kazue (35) also enjoys the freedom from the house chores, for which she employs visiting help. However, the absence of *seken* in Bangkok is, of course, an illusion. 'People probably do

talk about you but it does not bother me as much here.' Misae (40) lives in a Sukhumvit condominium she and her husband bought a few years ago. They have no Japanese neighbours. When I asked my main informant Masako (54) whether this falls under the rubric of a famous Japanese phrase *tabi no haji wa kakisute* ("cast away your shame when travelling"), she deferred that living in Bangkok is nothing like a *tabi* (travel). 'When you live here, you inevitably end up making social connections and that was *seken* is made of.' The inherent temporality of Bangkok life for even long-term residents, however, does to some degree desensitise them from the pressure of the local *seken*, which is out there but "does not matter as much as in Japan'. According to Misae (40), 'back home, they judge you harsher and they never stop doing that (*kiri ga nai*). Here you can stop thinking about it'. That experience, however, is not shared universally among sojourners. For Kayoko (45) who lives in Bang Na with its tightly knit community of Japanese *chūzai-in* expats, "it feels like I always need to mind that other Japanese might be looking". That typically contrasts with the experience of Jitsuko (37) who lives in cosmopolitan Sukhumvit: 'life in Bangkok taught me to express myself (*jibun o daseru you ni natta*) because I can care less about what people think of me'. The sense of individual freedom is not the only payoff of living in Bangkok.

X.2 Tabi no haji: the joys of living abroad

"At least you are never bored (*semete taikutsu wa shinai*)". Hina (68) cited cultural difference is both an advantage (*chōsho*) and a disadvantage (*tansho*) of living abroad. She never felt sad about leaving Japan because she had "had always wanted to experience life abroad anyway". It is for that reasons that she became a flight attendant in the late 1960s, just when the international travel trend in Japan was gathering the momentum. The excitement of living abroad, or a lack thereof, is a significant constituent part of many sojourners' belonging, making good for the challenges of life abroad. Manabu (45) expressly left Japan for the "joys of international living". Feeling sad about leaving his family and friends did not stop him from moving first to NYC and then to Bangkok. He ended up spending most of his adult life abroad, only returning to Japan for family visits. New York life always had something exciting to offer and Bangkok, which he used to expect to be quiet and laid back, proved to be full of stimulation too. The chance to do "do things in Thailand once can't do in Japan" proved important enough for Kumi (53) to stay in Bangkok after divorcing her Thai husband, even at the price of "growing distant from Japan". "I go back to visit to take care of my parent's graves. Otherwise, my life is here."

Leaving Japan "seems a distant memory" and many long-time sojourners do not have a compelling attachment to their homeland, even if they often recount the advantages of life there. Having lived abroad before is not necessarily a prerequisite for this kind of "cosmopolitan unrootedness". Kazue's (35) move to Bangkok was her first international relocation, however, she "did not feel any sadness" about saying goodbye to Japan. The only possible reasons to move back for her would now be something as dramatic as a divorce or a serious illness. Misae (40) too "did not feel said" leaving Japan first for Germany. She would only move back if her husband wanted to get a feel of life in Japan (it actually came to pass a couple of years after my fieldwork).

A common theme among practically all respondents was their original personal interest in living abroad or international marriage (*kokusai kekkon*). It would be then safe to suggest that cosmopolitanism starts within. Ono's (2012) control group of Japanese people who chose not to move abroad unlike the focus group of her research, voice their strong, well-argued opposition to doing that, even in the face of various objective disadvantages of staying in Japan, of which they are well aware. (Qualitatively varied) cosmopolitanism thus seems a personal choice, exercise of individual agency, at least when emigrating from a prosperous peaceful and well managed country.

X.3 Shiki no natsukashisa: seasonality and climate

"A lot of Japanese in Bangkok seem to have drawn here by a warmer climate" (Makoto, 70). The *dan* (warm) of *ankindan*, a travel industry lingo for destinations like Thailand is, indeed, part of its attraction for tourists. At the same time, Japan's four seasons (*shiki*) seems like something sojourners miss despite such advantages as "never having to wear layers" (Teruko 54) or being able to "easily (*kigaruni*) pop outside at any time" without checking the weather forecast: after all, there are only the hot season and the hotter one" (Masako 54).

Shiki is mentioned with both pride and nostalgia. On the one hand, it requires three sets of clothes: summer, winter, and inter-season. On the other, "all months blur and blend together and there is no sense of time" Terafumi (70). Masako explains the international success of Japanese fashion with Japan's varied seasonality in contrast to Thailand, where one can "get away with wearing a T-shirt and jeans the whole year around".

Thailand's hot and sunny climate, the *dan* part of the *ankindan* slogan of tourism advertising campaigns, seems less of an advantage for residents than for tourists. Shinya (24) would go to great lengths to avoid leaving home in the middle of the day when the heat is at its fiercest. He tries to find advantages to waking up early: "If you get up and go out in the wee hours, you get to see the unseen life on Bangkok like street sweepers, garbage collectors, and alms-collecting monks." Putting a nice spin on it does not change the fact that Bangkok's natural heat coupled with the massive amounts of hot air pumped out of the air-conditioned hi-rises, makes city life physically hard.

"Japanese July lasts the entire year in Bangkok" (Terafumi, 70). Japan is no stranger to industrial-level use of air-conditioning to keep its cities cool, yet it is only needed for a couple of months a year. In Bangkok, office work cannot be done without it all year around. Keeping cool comes at the price of "water getting sapped out of your body" (Kazue 35).

Learning to stay hydrated in the year-around heat takes time and physical effort. "If you are not used to this climate, your kidneys can't cope." After several years Masako (54) still struggles with drinking

enough water to cope with the high air temperature but also with the air-conditioning that "not only chills your entire body like a chicken in the fridge but also sucks your body moisture dry". Her other concern is air pollution, which used to be a major problem in Japan when she was growing up. She religiously checks on the weather report that in Bangkok routinely includes the AQI (air quality index) and shares it with a circle of like-minded Japanese sojourners on Facebook. It is not a mere middle-class anxiety or post-colonial hauteur. Bangkok's pollution has been linked to increased hospital admissions with respiratory problems (Phosri et al 2019). The city's layout ubiquitously features "urban street canyons" with little vegetation that contribute to the exacerbation of heat and pollution (Takkanon and Chantarangul 2019).

The effects of Bangkok's hot climate and air quality on one's body are a source of worry for many sojourners. Arisa (49), who used to work for a hospital in Bangkok, tries to avoid keeping the air-conditioning all the time, even it takes a lot of discipline in the relentless sweltering heat. Takafumi (70) likens central air-conditioning to living in a fridge: "it chills the entire body to the bone, like a piece of meat". Despite some advantages, for Japanese sojourners heat proves to be a negative point of life in Bangkok.

X.4 *Ibasho*: where does one's heart belong?

"Thailand is easy-going and warm but the air is polluted, the traffic is bad, and the general attitude is too *mai pen rai* (happy-go-lucky)", complains Teruko (54). Japanese migrants are fairly vocal about the differences and inconveniences of living in Thailand compared to Japan. Airing out such frustrations would often segue to another common theme: that at some point of time one would like to return to Japan, in a few years, once they got their fill of living abroad, for retirement, or when it is time to die. Japanese lends itself easily to asking questions about belonging with a very convenient and multi-layered word *ibasho* that can be translated as "place where one belongs". Another word that allows to accurately trace one's inner emotional concept of home is the verb *kaeru*, which means specifically "to return home". Respondents' answers and their own exegesis thereof, however, were not as straightforward.

Resolving the tension between homesickness and the compelling realities of a new life is part and parcel of transnational lifestyle. After all, even one's heart can dwell in two places, one's body can only be in one place at a time. In a kind of coping mechanism, one's memory of life back in Japan is often constructed in comparative opposition to one's life in Bangkok. It is not necessarily expressed in simple Nihonjinron-style binaries that are, for example, the analytical framework of making sense of one's life abroad for Yoshino's (1992) Japanese businessmen. For Misae (40) "Bangkok does not even feel like abroad", because "it is nothing like living in the West". In the same breath, however, she says that Bangkok is where her patriotism grows (*Nihon in taisuru aikokushin ga sodatsu*) and her *ibasho*, after half an adult life spent abroad with a Swiss husband, is ultimately Japan. This kind of paradoxes are not illogical, as experiencing ostensibly clashing feelings is part of the human experience.

The belonging of sojourner's heart can also be split equally. After nearly four decades in Bangkok, Hisae (68) says that her *ibasho* is in equal measures both Japan and Thailand. Her initial breezy attitude to leaving Japan and passion for life abroad never translated into "giving up on being Japanese" (*Nihonjin-banare*). She may "no longer be as perfectionist as when she lived in Japan", but her pride about the Japanese ways of doing things, proper and thorough, "is not going away anywhere." Despite her much shorter involvement with Bangkok, for Jitsuko (37) both Thailand and Japan "feel as home to about the same degree". She can easily see her and her family's future in either country. Arisa (49, Tai Chi teacher) "would love to return to Japan by 60 if possible", although "Thailand feels more like home now". Her international school educated daughter, in the meantime, went to do her Bachelor's degree in Europe, effectively cutting any prospect of finding any regular job (*nami no shigoto*) in Japan. For Kazue (35) "the only reasons to go back to live in Japan would be divorce or serious illness." Casting his nearly 20 years in New York away, Manabu (45) feels that both Bangkok and Japan are his *ibasho*. For Yūta (43), on a long-term research assignment from his Japanese university, Bangkok is surprisingly his *ibasho*.

A common feature in sojourners' reporting of their belonging is its underlying uncertainty, the slow-motion transience of never completely belonging in a place where you will end up spending most of your adult years. It seems to be the price of transnational life, the freedom to consciously pick the advantages of being part of both Japanese and Thai societies, but also making the choice to accept the disadvantages. Worries about the air pollution and the effects of Bangkok's hot climate on one's body are the most frequently cited but not the only source of frustration for sojourners. Despite the fact that everyone I talked to was in Thailand on a proper, mostly residence visa, there is a distinct backdrop of various levels of anxiety over the inherent uncertainty about one's situation in Bangkok. Makoto (70) believes that "if you run afoul with the Thai police, even over a minor traffic violation, your days here are most definitely numbered". It is hard to ascertain how true this is, but variations of this sentiment seem rather widespread among sojourners. Mistrust of the local law enforcement and judicial system happens despite Japanese residents' relatively privileged legal situation (Chapter VIII).

Apart from the tradeoff of uncertainty, the floating world (*ukiyo*) of enjoying a generally comfortable and affordable lifestyle abroad appears to always have a strong umbilical connection with the real home (*jikka*) in Japan. Save for some very rare exceptions, cultural assimilation or being buried (*hone wo uzumeru*) in Thailand is never a definite, inevitable, or even desired outcome. Theoretically, any Japanese sojourner can at any time uproot themselves from their adopted land and move back to Japan. Even for those who have relinquished their Japanese passport, there is a legal path to claim it back again - at the expense of abandoning their foreign one. However, "if Japanese residents do not leave after the first few years, you stay pretty much for the rest of your life here" says Hisae (69). "This [life in Bangkok] becomes your life."

"Decentered consciousness" (Said 1985:14) might be taken for granted in anyone living a relatively cosmopolitan lifestyle, jumbling together qualitatively different experiences of biracial and bicultural

people with those who live abroad long-term but were raised in one culture/heritage. Among Bangkok's Japanese transnational sojourners "decentered consciousness" is a matter of degree, rather than a diametrical opposition. It mostly lies between the extreme *nihonjin-banare* of Paris Japanese who only feel themselves Japanese when renewing their French residence permit (Yatabe 2001) and the deliberate hyper-Japaneseness of some Japanese expat wives in the 1990s Bangkok (Mitski 2011). Although there surely seems "a positive correlation between the transnationalisation of life worlds and the cosmopolitisation of attitudes and values" (Steffan Mau et al. 2008), allowing oneself a degree of freedom of choice having escaped the dreaded *seken* is not quite the same as being a free-rolling *citoyen du monde*.

XI Conclusion. Ibasho: the construction of Bangkok's Japanese individual transnational sojourner belonging

Since Meiji Japan opened to the world in the latter half of the 19th century, modern Japanese migration has been part of global population flows. However, due to both Japan's unique domestic circumstance and its international standing, it has often buckled many global socio-economic trends in general (Chapter 1.2.2) and all historical migration trends in particular (Chapter III). Historically poised between the developing non-Western and the developed Western world, its migrants were classified as both Yellow Peril and "honorary White": depending on the time and circumstance they were both an unwelcome and welcome presence, at times enthusiastic or even ruthless colonisers as in 1930s Manchuria and at times the persecuted and repressed subaltern as in 1900s North America.

Contemporary migration out of Japan is qualitatively different from the previous waves of Japanese emigration (Befu and Adachi 2010) and other non-Japanese lifestyle migrants (Mizukami 2007, Nagatomo 2015). Generally subsumed under the umbrella of lifestyle migration, a growing global phenomenon (Benson and O'Reilly 2009), it has been described in an expanding body of research literature (Sato 2001, Wong 2003, Ben Ari 2003, Machimura 2005, Thang, Goda, and MacLachlan 2006, Mizukami 2007, Hasegawa 2007 and 2009, Nagatomo 2008 and 2015, Kato 2009, Fujita 2009, Sooudi 2010, Aoyama 2015, Ono 2015, Kawashima 2018 and 2019). Its spread is focused mostly on Pacific-Asian global cities as well as London and NYC. Bangkok hosts the world's fourth largest number of Japanese residents, a majority of whom are lifestyle migrants of various sorts (Japan MOFA data 2015).

Bangkok's Japanese lifestyle migrants display a degree of variation from other Japanese lifestyle migrant communities elsewhere (Chapter I.3.3). There are no Nikkei settlers like in the Americas, yet Bangkok boasts many long-established and prestigious institutions (Chapter IX.1) such as Japanese schools, the Japanese Association of Thailand, and an extremely developed Japanese-geared consumerist infrastructure (Chapter VI.3.2). The Japanese historical presence in Siam/Thailand has gone through extreme ebbs and flows from two complete eliminations to a military occupation (Chapter III), yet it has grown into a constant and growing presence, currently over 100 thousand (Chapter III.4.1). While the majority of Thailand's migrants have been historically naturalised and absorbed into the Thai nation, Bangkok's Japanese keep their Japanese passports (Chapter VIII.2) and,

with rare exceptions, plan to relocate back to Japan at some point in time in the future (Chapter X.4). At the same time, their lives are in many ways rooted in Bangkok too: this is where they buy homes, have careers, send their children to school, and spend the better part of their adult lives. Unlike both historical migration from Japan and many contemporary migrants in general, Japanese lifestyle migrants in Bangkok are strongly individualistic: they move of their own will (Chapter III.4.2), do not cluster socially or geographically (Chapter VI.1.1), and their participation in communal life is often minimal (Chapter VII.2).

These three characteristics of Japanese lifestyle migrants' belonging in Thailand: individualism, transience, and ambivalence allow for their categorisation them as *individual transnational sojourners*. Individualism, transience, and ambivalence manifest at the interconnected macro- (structural), meso- (institutional), and micro- (individual) levels and originate from a number of historical developments, nation-state policies, specific to Japan and Thailand as well as to the Thai-Japanese bilateral dynamic. These characteristics allow for both the expansion and the contestation of the definition of Japanese lifestyle migration in particular (Chapter I.3.1) and contribute to the understanding of contemporary global lifestyle migration in general (Chapter I.2.2).

XI.1 Macro-level structural factors: the political and economic construction of sojourner transnationalism

The macro-level (structural) factors that frame the Japanese individual transnational sojourner experience in Bangkok are often the result of ongoing economic and geopolitical power asymmetry between Japan and Thailand, although the gap has been recently shrinking. A number of big political decisions and past events have created the unique circumstances to make Bangkok a very particular locus of Japanese transnational sojourners experience: a cosmopolitan, economically dynamic metropolis standing out globally, regionally and domestically in terms of attracting Japanese migration (Chapter III).

Thai-Japanese bilateral treaties, regularly renegotiated since the late 19th century (Chapter III.1), ensure a special visa and economic status for Japanese nationals in Thailand (Chapter VIII) even though their exalted position in Bangkok's ethno-cultural hierarchy has been recently challenged (Chapter V.2). The Thai government's steady economic liberalism has consciously turned Bangkok into a free-rolling cosmopolitan metropolis (Chapter IV.5) where Japanese sojourners enjoy extensive economic rights (Chapter VIII.1) whilst living as an "invisible minority" among fellow Asians (Chapter V.2.1) in, uniquely for the region, an unreservedly Japanophile country.

One of Japan's modern nation-state attributes, its strong national identity, is another factor in the ambivalent and transient character of Japanese sojourner belonging (Chapter V.2). As Meiji Japan built its modern judicial system after the Roman law-derived Franco-German model, Japanese citizenship was defined as *jus sanguinis* ("right of blood") rather than the Common law *jus soli* ("right of soil").

Sojourners' very strong self-identification as Japanese, even when aware of how living abroad has made them different to those who stayed in Japan (Chapter V.2), is a very strong component of their migrant transnationalism. Out of all endonyms that sojourners use to refer to themselves as a community not one includes a hyphenated identity such as Japanese-Thai (Chapter III.4.1.1).

It is not only the Japanese strict citizenship regime that keeps Bangkok's sojourners split between the two countries, never fully committing to the new one. The Thai state too uses the legal constraints of its migration regulations to allow its Japanese residents a high degree of economic freedom while curtailing their political rights and making the path towards naturalisation practically as complicated as it is in Japan (Chapter VIII.3). This approach of *economic denization*, taxation without representation, that is a kind of unwritten social contract whereby Japanese sojourners are not expected to assimilate into the host society, appears to suit both parties. As both Thailand and Japan do not recognise dual citizenship and make the path towards naturalisation rather arduous, this leaves sojourners in a situation where, to quite some extent, transnationalism is a logical outcome of their situation rather than a deliberate choice.

Another important macro-factor in many ways framing the individual transnational sojourner experience is Japan's economic clout and the way it manifests itself in Bangkok, setting it favourably apart from other migration destinations (Chapter IX.1). Massive Japanese post-war investment in Thailand has not only created a vibrant market for Japan-related jobs for the many sojourners who find employment in Bangkok (Chapter IX.1) but also made the Japanese language the second (if recently pushed down to the third position by Chinese) most studied in Thailand (Chapter VII.2.3). It is thus possible to get by speaking just Japanese in Central Bangkok more than in most other places outside Japan.

Japanese capital has also modelled parts of Central Bangkok on the Japanese urban pattern (Chapter VI.2.1) and developed an extensive consumerist infrastructure, first meant for Japanese mass tourists, but now enjoyed by Bangkok's Japanese and other Bangkokians alike (Chapter VI.3.3). The combination of the above allows sojourners to live a life in many ways not very different from Japan as Central Bangkok is "more comfortable than Tokyo" (Chapter VI).

Japanese migrant transnationalism is thus underwritten by Japan's economic transnationalism, whereby the "mobile labour" of sojourners, many of whom are employed, follows the "mobile capital" of Japanese DFI in Thailand. The calculated way the Thai state accommodates its foreign migration gives economic freedoms where it withholds political or citizenship rights. This interplay of structural forces make Japanese lifestyle migration in Thailand truly transnational in character. In addition to that, a set of institutional meso-factors defines the ways sojourners relate to their community in an increasingly detached, individualistic way.

XI.2 Meso-level institutional factors: the material and institutional base of sojourner individualism

Mizukami (1996, 2007) connects the rise of Japanese sojourner migration to the ascendancy of individualism in contemporary Japan. The crumbling lifetime employment ideal has eroded the Japanese social contract of surrendering one's hopes and desires in exchange for a lifetime of guaranteed cushy employment. The subsequent shift towards a more individualist view of one's life has given rise to Japanese middle classes pursuing a more desirable lifestyle abroad for themselves and their families. Many of them end up living in Bangkok (Chapter III.4.1).

Just as in similar Japanese communities elsewhere (Chapter I.3.3), Bangkok's Japanese sojourners display individualistic behaviour, in that they mostly shun communal institutions (Chapter VII.2), do not cluster in one single area (Chapter VI.1.1), and connect through hobby- or acquaintance-based informal networks (Chapter VII.2) and much less through established institutional nodes (Chapter VII.1). In other words, they behave very differently from both historical Japanese migrant communities (Nikkeis or *chūzai-inexapts*) and many contemporary migrants who tend, or tended, to display more collectivist behaviours and communal solidarity for survival in the new country.

Bangkok offers a very developed material base to support the realisation of such an individualist lifestyle where one does not need to rely on the community to enjoy a very comfortable lifestyle (Chapter VI). There is a variety of areas for sojourners from different income brackets into which they fan out from the commercial and psychological community centre of Little Tokyo (Chapter VI.1.1), often following the expansion of the rail-based transit systems: the Japanese-built monorail and metro (Chapter VI.1.4). The physical setup of the core of Japanese Bangkok follows the Japanese urban pattern with its business-cum-entertainment cluster in Silom/Sathorn areas and the comfort infrastructure cluster in Phrom Pong and Thong Lor (Chapter VI.2.1). This development is a tale-telling material embodiment of both economic and migrant transnationalism whereby foreign capital transforms a crucial part of Bangkok's cityscape into a foreign-designed oasis of advanced urban planning, promptly populated by foreign sojourners.

Institutionally, even though sojourners often profess a dislike for the officialdom of Nihonjinkai and Japanese schools (Chapter VII.1), those are often used as prime or fallback options for various Japanese-gear activities (Chapter VII.1.2) or children's education (Chapter VII.1.4). Sojourners may increasingly connect with each other through informal networks (Chapter VII.2) but the well-established Japanese institutional nodes remain the backbone of the community. As one fieldwork respondent remarked, 'I take my children to Japanese events to show them what being Japanese is about'.

Unlike the strictly Japanese-only Nihonjinkai (Chapter VII.1.1), schools (Chapter VII.1.4) and some entertainment and retail establishments in Thaniya Plaza, Japanese consumerist infrastructure is equally enjoyed by non-Japanese Bangkokians. Sojourners are also often quite cosmopolitan and do not enjoy exclusively Japanese products and services. This growth of the consumer base has allowed, for example, for Japanese food to become commodified to the point where Japanese supermarkets have stopped acting as community node thus contributing to a further community shift towards individualism and informal networks (Chapter VII.1.3.3).

Affordable, nearby and warm (*ankindan*), Thailand is to Japan what Spain is to Northern Europe, however, tourism does not necessarily lead to migration here. None of my fieldwork respondents or Japanese residents I came across in the nearly three decades of my involvement with the community followed that path (however, Ono 2009 sites such a trend). The oft-observed switch from tourism to lifestyle migration, both Japanese and global (Mizukami 2007, Nagatomo 2008, Yamashita 2008, Ono 2009, O'Reilly 2013, Igarashi 2015), in Japanese Bangkok, however, has had an unexpected twist: the vast Japanese tourist-gear infrastructure has come to serve the local resident community (Chapter VI.3.2). While Japanese tourist arrival numbers have remained relatively stable (UNWTO Report 2006), the sojourner numbers have increased exponentially (Japan MOFA data 2015), so it is fair to say that the tourist infrastructure has been taken over by sojourners. Thus, the transnational capital of corporate Japan inadvertently creates a base for Japanese migrant transnationalism.

The substantial long-term effort behind the institutional nodes, consumer outlets, and reshaping parts of Central Bangkok the Japanese way, represents a long-standing Japanese ability for organisation. For example, the currently all-mighty Nihonjinkai was founded in 1902 as the first of its kind in the world, when Bangkok's Japanese community was still in its infancy, and persisted through all the upheavals of the 20th century. Despite the ostensible lack of communal cohesion, geographic concentration, or discernible social structure, Bangkok's Japanese are a prominent fixture of the city's socioscape thanks to their organisational acumen exemplified in their "parallel institutions" (Befu 2010).

In the age of ascending Japanese individualism, the latter-day sojourners vastly benefit from more than a century of effort by the successive generations of Bangkok's Japanese who have left a superbly organised communal and physical infrastructure behind them (Chapter VI.3.3). The sojourners, however, are not mere passive recipients of that heritage. In their turn, they contribute to the finer fabric of Japanese Bangkok with their expertise when taking employment in or establishing small business enterprises. The rich tapestry of various niche-market-tuned Japanese-owned small businesses catering to the needs of the entire community, tourists and locals alike (Chapter VI.3.2) are run almost exclusively by Japanese sojourners or lapsed expats. This interplay of individual in the foreground and institutional in the background is a strong feature of Bangkok's Japanese community. It continues to manifest in other ways at the micro-level of the individual factors that constitute the Japanese sojourner experience in the city.

XI.3 Micro-level individual factors: individualist migration choices, transnational cultural capital and split belonging

Bangkok's Japanese transnational sojourners comprise very different types of people (Chapter III.4): love migrants (international spouses), students, retirees, *sotokomori* floaters, local hires *genchi-yatoi*, lapsed expats, individual entrepreneurs, etc. What unites all those ostensibly disparate types and also distinguishes them from other waves of Japan-leavers on the individual micro-level are six traits with important consequences as to how their life abroad is built and how their belonging is constructed on both the individual and structural levels.

First, with the notable exception of many, if not all, retirees, their relocation was not encouraged or facilitated either by the Japanese state as was the case with the pre-war Nikkeis, or by corporate Japan as has been the case with *chūzai-in* expats. In fact, their move abroad is counter-intuitive with regard to the interests of either Japan grappling with rapid ageing and depopulation or Japanese companies wishing to benefit from a wider pool of human resources. Among Bangkok's Japanese there are many lapsed *chūzai-in* who opted for the freedom and precarity of living abroad over the "golden cage" of their jobs in Japan, whilst it is often the well-educated and entrepreneurial who leave Japan as individual sojourners (Chapter III.4.2). As transnational sojourners can only rely on themselves for their migration choices and outcomes, it takes a particular kind of personality to become one: like Fujita's (2009) cultural migrants, a clear majority of them take an interest in foreign cultures and living abroad and like Kato's (2013) temporary residents in Canada they are strong on individualism and independence. Those personal traits inflect their migrating and belonging choices.

Second, sojourners are what Sato (2001) calls "motivational migrants" as they choose to migrate out of their own will, unlike *chūzai-in* expats with whom they co-exist in Bangkok. Also unlike the expats, it is quite common for sojourners to learn Thai, send their children to international schools, buy property in Bangkok, or develop at least part of their social circles beyond the Japanese community.

Third, sojourners' stay abroad is neither explicitly short-term like for *chūzai-in* expats, nor permanent like for Nikkeis. If the former could not wait to return to their career in Tokyo, the latter could not wait to leave Japan behind for good. Sojourners' life abroad is built on its inherent uncertainty: while most talk about returning eventually to Japan at some point in time in the future, the majority stay in Bangkok for most of their adult lives. As they build their life there, they also hedge their bets by maintaining strong emotional, social and financial links with Japan. This ambivalence to their belonging also results in some very important choices about how they construct their belonging such as visa/citizenship status or the degree of cultural integration.

Fourth, their objective is not naturalisation as it was for Nikkeis, or the next career upgrade and the relief of return to Japan like for *chūzai-in* expats. Their motivation to move and stay varies widely from person to person but is always very personal: love, family, wanderlust, desire for a change, a better lifestyle, education, or business opportunities, etc. (see Appendix A). Although there are many structural factors to their sometimes involuntary transnationalism as I explain above, the connection they have with their new country, therefore, is contingent on very individual circumstances.

Fifth, the way they connect socially with their old country and their new social circles has been greatly affected by the technological strides in communication and travel. The satellite TV and e-mail in the 1990s were followed by exponentially growing connectivity through social media and mobile phones. Practically free video links with family and the possibility to manage one's bank account intercontinentally did shrink some important distances in life to the point where being physically apart is no longer an obstacle to maintaining social and emotional connection, thus practising migrant transnationalism. At the same time, the ability to find and stay in touch with one's social circles through various social media further enabled a shift away from communal nodes towards informal networks (Chapter VII.2).

Sixth, very much like many other Japanese lifestyle migrants, Bangkok's sojourners are almost exclusively middle-class. While not a surprise coming from a country where a steady 90% keep identifying as such, the Japanese middle-class education, job experience, and work ethic - transnational cultural capital - make sojourners extremely well equipped to succeed abroad on their own without relying on community support (Chapter IX.2).

At the crux of this migrant individualist motivation, ambivalent loyalty, and impermanent stay abroad is forged a very particular strain of migrant belonging. Kazue (35), the TV production professional who opted for local employment in Bangkok over a career back in Japan*, is a good example of how Japanese transnational belonging is a product of both individual agency and structural factors (Chapter IV.6). Despite being snugly settled in her new home, for Kazue "physically (*butsuriteki ni*) Japan is home" (Chapter X.4). At the same time, she concedes that "the place where I belong is where my partner is." As her husband says he has no intention of leaving Bangkok, her belonging in the city is very ambivalent and contingent on her very personal circumstances. Despite all the favourable structural conditions that made Kazue's life in Bangkok not only possible, but comfortable and rewarding, her allegiance is ultimately defined by a very personal emotional connection, not necessarily in direct correlation with either Bangkok's political economy or its post-colonial power balance. Yet even that sense of belonging is not definitive and straightforward, with her links to Japan remaining alive and strong.

Kazue's case is not isolated. Other respondents of this research also display complex patterns of split loyalty that scarcely fit into either the multiculturalist "we can all get on and be friends" or the isolationist "migrants are a threat to the nation-state" narratives. Transnational belonging is not a

simple political dilemma but a multi-layered process where individual narratives and practices are woven into existence through the mutual workings of structural factors and sojourners' agency. Some factors make belonging a distinct possibility, others need to be overcome, and yet others shape it into something less expected. The way sojourners respond to their circumstances ranges from quietly ignoring to enthusiastic involvement, based on contingently applied rationalities.

XI.4 The making of Japanese transnational sojourner belonging

This thesis has looked at the making of Japanese individual transnational sojourner belonging in Bangkok to understand what makes this particular strain of contemporary migration out of Japan similar and dissimilar to other comparable Japanese communities. By analysing the interaction between the structural and agential factors of that process, it has identified a number of particularities that make Bangkok's Japanese experience unique but also part of a wider trend of Japanese and global lifestyle migration.

By drawing on a case of migration from a relative outlier in terms of global trends and migration theory, this thesis contributes to a wider understanding of contemporary global migration in general and lifestyle migration from Japan in particular. This thesis is also part of a wider public debate about latter-day migration: examining a less well-known case, this thesis presents an alternative insight into the intricate workings of contemporary population flows.

Appendices

Appendix A: Interview participants' life data

Name	Gender	Origin	Age	Education	Occupation	Marital status	Settled in Bangkok since/staying until	Reason to come to Bangkok/Purpose of stay/Visa status	Religion
1 Masayoshi	M	Tokyo	23	Tsukuba University	Postgrad student	Single	One year only	Student exchange. Interested in learning Thai massage/Student visa	Jōdo Buddhism
2 Shizuka	F	Tokyo	69	(Unnamed) University	Japanese Pet Hospital Volunteer/ Former Executive Office Head at Nihonjinkai	Married to Sino-Thai	46 years /permanently	Married to a Thai national who came to study to Japan/Permanent visa	Buddhism
3 Jitsuko	F	Yamaguchi	37	Tokyo University	Master's student at Chulalongkorn University; part-timer	Married to Japanese	7.5 years/1-2 more years	First, husband's overseas post, then own overseas post, presently husband has been posted in Bangkok again/O visa – Business visa dependants	None
4 Manabu	M	Tokyo	45	Rikkyo University	Artist/Designer/Part-time university lecturer at Chulalongkorn	Thai girlfriend	2.5 years/not sure	VacationàExhibition àWork/Working visa	Multiple
5 Hina	F	Shizuoka	68	Aoyama Gakuin University	Ex-JAL flight attendant	Married to Japanese	44 years /Indefinitely, unless circumstances	Marriage to a Japanese man living in Thailand/Permanent visa.	None

							nce take back to Japan		
6 Arisa	F	Mie	49	Kanda Juku University, Emporia State Grad School	Ex- Psychologic al counsellor/ Ex marketing section head for a private hospital/ Taichi teacher	Marri ed to a Sino- Thai	20 years/If possible, back to Japan by 60/non- resident	Married a Thai in Japan, moved 3 years later. /Permanent visa.	?
7 Misae	F	Toyam a	Bt w 38	Kanda Foreign Languages University	Housewife	Marri ed to a Swiss man	Seven years/ Planning to return to Japan soon.	Husband's work/Business dependant visa.	None.
8 Kayoko	F	Shizuo ka	43	Kyoto Women's University	Self- reported as unemploye d; housewife	Marri ed to Japan ese	10 years/ No plans to return to Japan.	Husband's job transfer/Business dependant visa	Buddhi sm
9 Kazue	F	Kagos hima	35	Keiyo University, MSc in Int'l Dev't from Chulalongk orn University	Thai TV broadcast department director (previously same position with a Japanese TV channel)	Marri ed to Japan ese	5.5 years/Pla ns to stay and continue her work.	Job transfer from Japan/Non- immigrant O-visa	None
10 Daisuke	M	Wakay ama	30	Osaka Seikei University	Artist	Singl e	2 months for to set up an exhibition / Planning	Wanted to have a small exhibition abroad. Current work was based on	None

							to return to Japan after that	Thai experience/ Tourist	
11 Yuri	F	Ishikawa	28	Hokuriku University	Japanese language teacher	Single	Half a year/ 1.5 years left till the project is over	Sent by the Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers/ Thailand was not her choice.	Buddhism and Shinto, not a deep believer
12 Yūta	M	Hyogo	43	Rakuno Gakuen University Postgraduate School	Mahidol University Staff	Married to Japanese	Four years/ Returning to Japan next year	Work/Employee visa.	Buddhist
13 Teruko	F	Hyogo	54	Kansai University	Restaurant proprietress	Divorced from Sino-Thai	26 years/Intends to remain	Married a Thai man/non-immigrant visa	Unspecified
14 Makoto	M	Aichi	70	Nihon Fukushi University	Retired. Ex-regional public officer.	Single	9 years/ "Came here to die".	Retirement as a second life. Thailand out of other SEA countries, because of a Thai friend/Retirement visa	Agnostic
15 Masako	F	Tokyo	54	Bunka Gakuin University	Retired. Socialite. Part-time university lecturer at Chulalongkorn	Single	12 years/Plans to remain.	Retirement in a country with cultural affinity/Permanent visa.	Buddhist

在タイ日本人を対象とした学術研究におけるアンケート調査

このアンケート調査は私 Artour Mitski、ロンドン大学の東洋アフリカ研究学院の博士論文の一部として、在タイ日本人を対象とした研究のために行うものであります。どのような人がどうして、何を目的として「在タイ」に至ったのかということ把握し、本研究のテーマである日本人の海外移住についての社会科学的見識を広めることに貢献できるのではないかと希望を持っております。

どうぞ趣旨をご理解いただき、ご協力戴ければ幸いです。全ての研究データは匿名化され、学術目的以外には使用されません。守秘義務は遵守されますので、ご安心下さい。大変お手数をおかけ致しますが、ご記入頂いたアンケートを artour.mitski@soas.ac.uk までお送りになって下さい。

質問

個人情報

1. お名前はイニシャルのみ使わせて頂きます：
2. 性別：
3. 出身地：
4. 年齢：
5. 学歴： 1) 高卒、2) 大学卒 (大学名：) 4) 大学院卒 5) その他 (詳細をご記入ください)
6. 職業(リタイアメントの方は以前の職業)：
7. 宗教：

個人的経験

1. 渡タイの理由・きっかけ・インスピレーション：
2. ご家族はどちらにお住いですか？何人家族ですか？お子さんはいらっしゃいますか？配偶者はどちらの国の方ですか？
3. 在タイ歴は何年ですか？今後のご予定は？
4. タイではどのようなお仕事をなさっていますか？

5. タイのビザについて：
1) 学生 2) 永住 3) 非居住 4) リタイアメント 5) 観光 6) その他 (詳細をご記入ください)

バンコクでの生活

6. お住まいはバンコクのどちらのエリアですか？どのような居住スタイルですか？
7. レジャータイムは何をなさいますか？
- A) あなたのタイ語能力の自己評価は？例：専門的会話、読み書、日常会話、単語のみ、、観光客レベル等。
- B) 日常生活の中ではタイ語をコミュニケーションとしてどのようにお使いですか？
例：配偶者、メイド、友人、その他 (詳細をご記入ください)
8. 日本食について：
1) 自炊と外食の割合は？
2) 日本食の買い物はどの店でなさいますか？
3) 外食の場合は何を食べにどこに行きますか？
4) 一週間推定予算はどれくらいですか？タイで手に入らない日本食は？
9. タイ料理について：
1) 自炊と外食の割合は？
2) 外食の場合は何を食べにどこに行きますか？
3) 一週間推定予算はどれくらいですか？
4) どうも気に入らない料理はありますか？
10. 日本料理とタイ料理の相違点と共通点は？
11. タイと日本料理以外の料理について：日本料理とタイ料理とその他の料理の割合は？
12. 交際の範囲について：ご友人・お知り合どのような方がおられますか？
例：日本人・タイ人・その他外国人/ 駐在員・主婦・アーティスト・学生等/ 同僚・友人等：
13. バンコクの日本人向けの施設はどのような種類をお使いですか？
(例：スーパーマーケット、ビデオレンタル、書店、日本人学校等)
14. どのタイと日本で発行されている日本語新聞・雑誌をお読みですか？

15. どの同窓会・県人会・日本人協会・サークルのメンバーですか？
16. 日本人向けのイベントに行かれたことがありますか？どのような感じでしたか？
17. 日本人協会の盆踊りラムウオン大会には？どのような目的で、だれと行かれましたか？（タイ人、日本人、家族、友達）どのような感じでしたか？

タイの日本人社会

18. バンコクの日本人の方とはどのような交際の機会を持っていますか？
（例：趣味・友達・同僚・ボランティア等）
19. あなたの印象ではバンコクに長期滞在の日本人はどのような人が多いですか？
20. あなたの感覚では、バンコクに日本人はどれくらいると思いますか？
21. その方々はバンコクのどのエリアに住んでいますか？
22. あなたの感覚では、一般的にバンコクの日本人はどのような風に滞在許可を手に入れていると思いますか？

日本について

23. 日本での生活の長所と短所は？
24. あなたが日本を出られた理由は？
25. 日本での生活は五つの言葉でご説明下さい。一番先に思い浮かぶので結構です。
26. 日本を去るのはどのような感じでしたか？

27. 在タイをやめて、帰国するとしたら、どういった理由ですか？

28. 日本では誰と、そしてどういう風に連絡をとっていますか？

タイについて

29. タイの生活はいかがですか？タイにお住いの長所と短所は？

30. タイの生活を五つの言葉でご説明下さい。一番先に思い浮かぶので結構です。

31. タイに来て、カルチャーショック、違和感を感じたことはありましたか？どんな風に？

32. 渡タイの前のタイのイメージは？

33. 男性・女性としてタイにいる長所と短所は？

34. 日本人としてタイにいる長所と短所は？

日タイの色々

35. 日本とタイの相違点と共通点は？

36. 日タイ交流の歴史については何をご存知ですか？

37. 現在の日タイ関係についてはどう思いますか？

38. あなたの感覚では日本人に対してのタイ人の態度は？

自分自身について

39. タイに引っ越してからは自分自身が変わりましたか？ どのような風に？

40. 自分自身を五つの言葉でご説明下さい。

41. 海外で暮らすのはどのような感じですか？ その長所と短所は？

42. タイと日本、どちらを「居場所」だと感じますか？

アンケートをご記入頂き、誠に心から感謝申し上げます。
大変お手数をお掛けしてしまいますが、ご記入の上のファイルを
263691@soas.ac.uk 迄
お送り頂くようお願い申し上げます。

どうもありがとうございます。

Appendix C: informed consent form

「在タイ日本人ライフスタイル移住者に関する研究」の説明および同意書

本研究を次のとおりにて実施いたします。研究の目的や実施内容等をご理解いただき、本研究にご参加いただける場合は、同意書にご署名をお願いいたします。研究に参加しない、あるいは一度参加を決めた後に途中で辞退されることになっても、不利益を被ることはありません。あなたの意思で、研究にご参加いただけましたら幸いです。

18. 研究の意義・目的

この研究は、在タイ日本人ライフスタイル移住者の方における生活様式を明らかにすることを目的として、実施いたします。それが明らかになることによって、社会科学に貢献できるのではないかと考えております。

23. 研究方法、研究期間

この研究では、質問紙にご記入いただいた後、インタビューをさせていただきます。質問しては、中断することなく、ご自由に話していただくという形になっておりますので、インタビュー時間は場合によって異なりますが、平均 60 分程度だと期待しております。インタビュー内容は IC レコーダーで録音し、逐語録を作成して分析いたします。インタビューは一回予定しておりますが、分析をするなかで改めてお伺いしたいことが出てくる場合があります。その場合、追加インタビューをお願いすることがあります。研究期間は 2015 年 3 月 15 日までを予定しております。

29. 研究対象者として選定された理由

この研究は日本人としてタイランドに移住した経験のある方を対象とさせていただきます。そういった経験のある方であれば、性別・年齢・健康状態は問いません。

35. 研究への参加と撤回について

研究の趣旨をご理解いただきご参加いただければと思いますが、参加するかどうかはご自身で決めてください。説明を聞いて、お断りいただくこともできます。お断りになったり、一度参加を決めてから途中で辞退されることになっても、何ら不利益な対応を受けることはありません。途中で参加を辞められるときは、それまでに収集したデータをどのようにすることを希望されるのか、分析対象としてよいのか廃棄を希望されるのかをお聞かせいただければ、それに従ってデータを取り扱います。

37. 研究に参加することにより期待される利益

この研究に参加することにより、直接的にあなたの利益となることはありません。日本人海外移住者のことを明らかにすることによって、国際移住の理解が進み、社会に貢献することを期待しています。

6. 予測されるリスク、危険、心身に対する不快な状態や影響

この研究の参加には、何ら身体的な危険は伴いません。しかし、インタビューを進めるなかにて、過去のつらい経験を思い出されることがあるかもしれません。お話になることがつらい場合、お話しになりたくないことが質問された場合は、無理にお話しいただかなくて結構ですし、お申し出いただきましたらいつでもインタビューを中断いたします。

7. 研究成果の公表の可能性

この研究の成果は、博士論文としてまとめるとともに、○○学会にてポスター発表を行なう予定です。論文や発表ではお名前や勤務先情報は、個人が特定できない表記にいたします。

また、以下のご希望があれば資料をお送りいたしますので、ご希望をお聞かせください。

39. インタビューの逐語録の確認 (希望する ・ 希望しない)

40. 博士論文の概要報告 (希望する ・ 希望しない)

43. 「希望する」の場合の資料送付方法

E-mail:

郵送 : 工

8. 守秘や個人情報、研究データの取り扱いについて

①連結可能匿名化を行う場合

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②連結不可能匿名化を行う場合

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③匿名化しない・匿名化できない場合

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10. 研究者、および問い合わせ先について

この研究は、ロンドン大学東洋アフリカ研究学院・博士課程の Artour Mitski が行ないます。研究内容に関するご質問は、以下の連絡先までご連絡ください。

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研究参加の同意書

私は、「在タイ日本人ライフスタイル移住者に関する研究」について以上の事項について説明を受けました。研究の目的、方法等について理解し、研究に参加いたします。

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（本人との関係）

日付： _____ 年 _____ 月 _____ 日

Appendix D: map of Japanese Bangkok



XII Bibliography

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