

# Urbanization and Urbanism in Thailand

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## Abstract

Urbanization is a complex process of social and economic change whereby a society is transformed from an essentially rural to a predominantly urban one. While “urbanization” has to do with metropolitan growth, urbanism is often seen as one of the consequences of urbanization.

The purpose of this study is to examine the process of urbanization and urbanism in Thailand. It is found that during the Sukothai period all the settlements including Sukothai, the capital city, were characterized as rural areas which their people engaged in agriculture. During the Ayuttaya period, only one city which began to form urbanization gradually was Ayuttaya, the capital city at that time. During the Bangkok period, in 1967 only Bangkok was the only real city. By 1981, Bangkok Metropolis was 50 times larger than Chiangmai. At present (2003), Bangkok is only 22 times larger than Nontaburee, the second largest city of Thailand. This indicates that people in Bangkok moved out to reside in adjacent cities, such as Nontaburee. In 2000 out of the ten biggest cities in Thailand one city (Chiangmai) is in the North Region, 4 cities (Nakornratchaseema, Udontanee, Kongan, Ubonratchatane) in the Northeast Region, 3 cities (Bangkok, Nontaburee, Parkgret) in the Central Region, and 2 cities (Hardyai and Surattanee) in the South Region.

With regard to urbanism, since cities produce a characteristic way of life known as “urbanism,” the larger cities in Thailand have become more urban cultures than the smaller ones. Secondary and tertiary economic activities, such as industry, commerce, and services are major factors influencing the increase in the degree of urbanization and urbanism. For example, Bangkok is one of the most dynamic and most Chaotic cities in Thailand. While crowding, traffic congestion, and pollution grow ever worse, the city is an economic, educational, and cultural, and transportation magnet not only for Thais, but for other people in the world. Thus, Bangkok and big cities in Thailand are culturally heterogeneous, and socially diverse because of increasing degrees of urbanization.

## Meaning and Characteristics of Urbanization and Urbanism.

Maurice Yeates and Barry Garner (1976: 23) state that **urbanization** is a complex process of social and economic change whereby a society is transformed from an essentially rural to a predominantly urban one. Despite considerable differences in their physical environments and cultural histories, the technically advanced nations of the world today have one thing in common: they are, with some variation, all highly urbanized. Moreover, they have become so in the recent past. Urbanization is a relatively new phenomenon, dating essentially from the beginning of nineteenth century (Yeates, Maurice and Garner, Barry, 1976: 22). In terms of cultural criteria, a **city** is a state of mind, a body of customs and traditions. In short, a city is large, culturally heterogeneous, and socially diverse (Palen, J. John, 1992: 7).

While “urbanization” has to do with metropolitan growth, “urbanism” refers to the condition of life associated with living in cities. Urbanism, with its changes in the values, mores, customs, and behaviors of population, is often seen as one of the consequences of urbanization. Urbanism is a behavioral response to living in certain places (Palen, John J., 1992: 9)

## Urbanization in Thailand

Historically, in 1257 Sukothai was the first capital city of Thailand, King Sri-Intaratit (Pau Koon Sri-intaratit or Pau Koon Bang Glang Hao ) was the first king of Thailand. At that time, no settlements became urbanized. All the settlements including the capital city were characterized as rural areas which their people engaged in agriculture. Until 1350 Ayuttaya had been established by King Utong (Pra Ramatibodee I) as the second capital city of Thailand. During the Ayuttaya period, only one city which began to form urbanization gradually was Ayuttaya, the capital city. However, a large number of populations were related to agriculture. After Ayuttaya was destroyed by Burmese soldiers in 1767, King Tarksin the Great chose Tonburee as the third capital city of Thailand. Then Bangkok was founded by King Rama I (Pra Puttayotfajulaloke) in 1782 as the fourth capital city of Thailand. Bangkok is located on the left bank of the Chaopraya River. It was built on the site of older settlements. Ten thousand Cambodian war prisoners worked to build this city as nearly as possible in the glorious image of Ayuttaya. In 1967 the only real city was Bangkok (Thompson, Virginia, 1967: 532-533).

In Thailand, the level of urbanization increased from 9.9 percent in 1947 to 12.5 percent in 1960, to 14.4 percent by the end of 1967 (Goldstein, 1972) and had risen further to 17 percent in 1979 (Statistical Yearbook, 1979). Between 1947 and 1960, the urban population grew at an average annual rate of 5.0 percent, compared to the rural population which grew by 3.0 percent annually (Goldstein, 1972). In 1947, of the 116 places designated as municipal areas, counting Bangkok and Tonburee as a single unit, almost three-fourths had fewer than 10,000 persons and 95 percent were under 20,000. Judged by size of place, therefore, urbanization, with the notable exception of Bangkok, was at a very low level. By 1967, the profile had changed significantly. Of the 119 places, the number with under 10,000 persons was reduced to just over one-third, the number with 10,000-20,000 inhabitants remained at one-third but the number with 20,000-50,000 population increased from 4.4 to 27.8 percent (Goldstein, 1972). Thus, a considerable shift had taken place from small-sized to moderate-sized places. In 1967, as in 1947, the position of Bangkok Metropolis (Bangkok combined with Tonburi) as Thailand's primate city remained unchanged. Bangkok Metropolis's 1947 population of 781,700 was twenty-one times greater than that of Chiangmai, the second largest place in Thailand. By 1960, the capital's population had increased threefold to 1.8 million persons, equal to twenty-seven times the population of Chiangmai. In 1967, the 2,614,400 persons living in Bangkok Metropolis outnumbered the residents of Chiangmai thirty-two to one (Goldstein, 1972). By 1981, Bangkok Metropolis which contained 5,100,000 people was 50 times larger than Chiangmai (Statistical Year book, 1981).

The existence of a primate city, Bangkok Metropolis, tends to encourage further industrial, commercial, and service activities to locate in it. For example, of 2,177 new Industries established in Thailand during 1968, 1,127, more than half, were in the metropolitan Bangkok area (Goldstein, 1972). This pattern increases the attractiveness of the primate city to potential migrants from other parts of the country, and in turn detracts from the growth potential of other cities and from the positive effects which even greater decentralized urban growth might have an economic and social development in other regions of the country (Goldstein, 1972).

Surprisingly, in 2003 Bangkok which contained 5,844,607 was only 22 times larger than that of Nontaburee (270,748 people), the second largest city of Thailand. This indicates that Bangkok with the area of 1,568.7 km<sup>2</sup>. has become the highest degree of urbanization. Some urbanites had to move away from Bangkok to reside in areas of other cities adjacent to Bangkok because of overpopulation. This phenomenon has been existing in Bangkok Metropolis and its adjacent cities. Thus, today Nontaburee becomes the second largest city of Thailand, instead of Chiangmai. Parkret which once was a very small city has increased in numbers of urban population. Nowadays, it ranks seventh. It is obvious

that **the spill-over effect or the spread effect** has played a major role in a slower growth of Bangkok Metropolis and a faster growth of Nontaburee and Parkgret.

At present, there are 1,145 cities in Thailand containing 28.71 percent of the degree of urbanization. The top-ten cities are Bangkok, Nontaburee, Nakornratchaseema, Chiangmai, Hardyai, Udonrtanee, Parkgret, Kongan, Surattanee, and Ubonratchatane. It also illustrates that the Northeast Region contains four largest cities (Nakornratchaseema, Udonrtanee, Kongan, and Ubonratchatane), the Central Region has three biggest cities (Bangkok, Nontaburee, and Parkgret). Two cities are located in the South Region (Hardyai and Surattanee). Only one big city is located in the North Region (Chiangmai). The East and the West Regions have not experienced a very large city yet.

### **Urbanism in Thailand**

John J Palen (1992: 9) states that **urbanism** is seen as one of the consequences of urbanization. Cities produce a characteristic way of life known as “**urbanism.**” This indicates that increasing degrees of urbanization in Thailand can change characteristics of people who live in towns and cities from rural cultures to urban cultures. That is, the larger cities in Thailand have become more urban cultures than the smaller ones. Historically, during the Sukothai period all villages and Sukothai, the first capital city of Thailand, did not have urban cultures at all. Urban cultures existed at first in Ayuttaya, especially during the Ayuttaya period. However, the degree of urbanization was very low. So, Ayuttaya contained a small urban area at that time. A major factor which contributed to increase the degree of urbanization gradually during the Ayuttaya period was the foreign trade. The accession of King Songtarm in 1611 brought a marked development in free intercourse with foreign powers. Trade was placed under the Pra Klarng, or Minister of Finance, who had godowns attached to the Treasury where he kept taxes collected in kind (Thompson, Virginia, 1967: 418). The most prosperity of foreign trade in Ayuttaya was the period of King Pra Narai the Great. At that time, the foreign traders were the Portuguese, Dutch, Chinese, Japanese, Indians, French, and English. Thus, Ayuttaya at that time was a cosmopolitan center and the tolerance of Pra Narai the Great was both extraordinary and contagious (Thompson, Virginia, 1967: 170). In Ayuttaya, which was the largest market in Thailand, moored boats form the main shopping street, “Siamese White” declared in the seventeenth century that Ayuttaya was indeed large, but there was not enough evidence to estimate the population (Thompson, Virginia, 1967: 533). Unfortunately, the urban cultures of Ayuttaya were almost completely destroyed by Burmese soldiers in 1767. Besides the foreign trade, **temples** or **wats** are one of the most important factors influencing a settled character of settlements in Thailand. Because the wats are the centers of settlements. Thompson (1967: 532) states that apart from the wats, there is nothing of a settled character about Siamese towns. All the development of agriculture and trade has not made real towns out of the old settlements, which were almost always both administration centers and market places. She also reveals that to this day the only real city was Bangkok.

Bangkok is the fourth capital city of Thailand (Tonburee was the third capital city located on the right bank of the Chaopraya River). It was established on the left bank of the Chaopraya River by King Rama I (Pra Puttayodfajulaloke) the Great in 1782. Ten thousand Cambodian war prisoners worked to build this city as nearly as possible in the glorious image of Ayuttaya (Thompson, 1967: 535). The Grand Palace and the Emerald Buddha Temple are the cultural landmark of Bangkok and of Thailand which were also established by King Rama I (Pra Puttayodfajulaloke) the Great. New Road (Jarerngroong Road), the first modern road in Thailand, King Chulalongkorn the Great gave impetus to modernizing Bangkok. It was he who created, as a sort of royal hobby, boulevards, residential quarters, new places, and public buildings (Thompson, 1967: 535). All these things are the style of hybrid European architecture. The most beautiful and widest avenue in Bangkok is Ratchadarmnern (Rajadamnern) Avenue. It links the Grand Palace with

Anantasamakom Throne Hall. Several significant buildings and places which are the valuable urban culture are located along this avenue, such as Anantasamakom Throne Hall, the Equestrian Statue of King Rama V, Suan Dusit Palace (Dusit Palace), Ministry of Education (Jarngasem Palace), Mukkawanrungsun Bridge, the former Military Academy, United Nations Building, Ministry of Communication, Ministry of Agriculture and Co-operative, Parnfaleelart Bridge, Pookaotong Pagoda, Mahagarn Fort, Metal Castle (Loha Prasart), Democracy Monument, the Ministry of Justice, and the Royal Field (Sanarm Luang). The royal palace, especially the Grand Palace has been called a complete compendium of Thai architecture (Thompson, 1967: 750). Furthermore, there are several important private buildings which their designs are also Western styles. All these buildings are needed by most Thai People to conserve them as significantly urban cultures of Bangkok. So, I strongly propose to conserve Ratchadumnern Avenue and all the buildings and places located on it as long as possible in order to keep them as valuable urban cultures for Bangkokians and all Thai people.

At present, Bangkok contains temples the most compared with other cities in Thailand. In 2000 there were 440 temples in Bangkok. These temples or the so-called “wats” still keep Thai traditions and customs even though they have strongly been affected by Western cultures and high-rise buildings including undesirable environments surrounding the temples. The most well-known temple for both Thais and foreign tourists is the Emerald Buddha Temple (Wat Prasirattanasasdam or Wat Prakaew) located in the Grand Palace. The other famous temples are Wat Prachetupon, Wat Mahatart, Wat Borwornniwet, Wat Sutattepwararam, Wat Benjamabopit or the Marble Temple, and Wat Aroonratchawararam (Wat Jang). Virginia Thompson (1967: 749) states that religious symbolism has a paramount influence on Thai architecture, as in the case of all the fine arts of Thailand. Most forms Chinese or Indian influence; but some, such as **kanok** acanthus, are purely Thai. She also points out that Bangkok’s Temples are gorgeous and not garish, and perhaps the anonymity of the artists was a factor in permitting them to unleash their imaginations. The roof is the chief glory of Thai architecture (Thompson, 1967: 750).

Urbanites in Thailand’s cities utilize urban land for the similar activities as in American cities. However, cities in each region are expressions of the culture of the region and of the people forming them and, as might be expressed, they had similarities in the manner in which the culture was expressed. Also, there are differences between cities in the same culture region, but more striking are the differences between cities in different culture areas. Ray M. Northam (1975 : 31) states that the factors of similarity or difference include population, area included in the city, pattern or layout of the city, sites occupied, social order, and special features of a particular city. For Bangkok, Ayuttaya, and Sukothai, the palaces and the temples are the most prominent elements in which they were built. But for other cities the temples are the most prominent elements. For example, Prapatomjedee Pagoda, Wat Toongpramain, and Wat Prapatonejedee are the most prominent elements of Nakornpatom City.

In terms of residential areas of cities in Thailand, residential land use consumes by far the largest proportion of the total developed land within urban areas. Characteristically, the first node of residential development was in the close proximity to business core of the city, usually within walking distance of the compact cluster of business establishments in the embryonic central business district (CBD). Population densities are very high at the center of the city and decrease rapidly from the central focus of economic activity. For example, in 2000 the most densely populated area of Bangkok was Pomprabsatroopai District (39,670 persons per km.<sup>2</sup>). This district is located in the core area of Bangkok. On the contrary, the most sparsely populated area was Nongjork District (373 persons per km.<sup>2</sup>) which is located in the easternmost area of Bangkok.

With regard to commercial areas, the origin of the central business district (CBD) in Bangkok was the areas surrounding the Grand Palace, especially the neighborhoods of Sanarm Luang, Tacharng Mahar, and in front of Napralarn which are one of the oldest

quarters of Bangkok (Kinnaree, Vol. 20 : 2 (February), 2003 : 44). After constructing New Road (Jarerngroong Road) by King Mongkut, the business districts have been expanded to suburban areas, such as Sampeng. Thompson (1967: 538) reveals that in 1909 – 10 the registration of vital statistics was for the first time made compulsory; and from the data collected Dr. H. C. Highet concluded that the mean density for the whole city, excluding the floating population, was only 78 per **rai** in Payathai District and 126.7 per **rai** in the heart of Sampeng. Today the business districts have spread out widely according to Harris and Ullman's nuclei theory of urban land use because of technological advancement, such as transportation, communication, water supply, and electricity, as well as the influence of distribution of urban population and migration to Bangkok. The biggest district, the so-called "Central Business District (CBD) in Bangkok is now located in Silom area with the most expensive land value of 600,000 baht per square wa ( $1 \text{ wa}^2 = 4 \text{ meters}^2$ ).

With respect to Chinese culture in urban areas, Chinese immigration into Thailand has been going on for centuries, usually for trading purposes, its character changed in the second half of the nineteenth century. Between 1840 and 1850 Chinese immigration averaged fifteen thousand annually, and this rate was steadily increasing. In the time of Pra Narai the Great, there were only three thousand Chinese settled permanently in Thailand (Thompson, 1967: 104). Their blood relationship with Thais is so pronounced that many marriages that have occurred between Chinese men and Thai women have had to bridge only a small racial gap. The offspring of these mixed marriages are called **lookjeen**, and they are proud of their Chinese blood (Thompson, 1967: 104).

The Chinese came to Thailand almost wholly from southern China; the majority was from Kwangtung, and most of the rest from Fukian. The Bangkok Chinese came chiefly from Swatow, with a sprinkling from Amoy and Hainan (Thompson, 1967: 112). In 1967 about half a million of the 2,500,000 Chinese in the country lived in Bangkok and larger towns; and the rest were scattered in fishing villages along the coast, in the mining centers, and in the North Region. Economically, the Chinese in Thailand are distinctively urban, with minor agricultural activities largely confined to fruit and vegetable specialties for the Bangkok market and some regional pepper and sugar cultivation (Thompson, 1967: 112). Thus, all towns and cities in Thailand have streets filled with Chinese stores, which sell all kinds of goods. Nowadays, Sampeng and Yaowarat Quarters have become the biggest Chinatown in Thailand. The Chinese still keep their old tradition and custom. This subculture is the most prominent in commercial areas or downtown areas of Bangkok and large cities in Thailand.

In terms of Indian culture in urban areas, Indians began settling in ancient Thailand in the early Christian era. In the thirteenth century Hinduism waned before the rising influence of Buddhism, which was brought to the peninsula by Asoka's missionaries along with Pali literature and Indian forms of architecture. Descendants of the early Brahmans, called Prams, constitute nowadays a small community in Bangkok who live together near the Wat Bode Pram, Bangkok. In the days of the absolute monarchy, these Brahmans held a high position at court. They presided over the major ceremonies and acted as official astrologers and even as lay teachers in the Buddhist **Wats**. Many Thai festivals, such as the Topknot and swing ceremonies, are Brahmanic in origin, though they now include a number of Buddhist practices (Thompson, 1967: 138). In 1967 the Indian community in Thailand numbered about 100,000 and was very amorphous in character. The majority are now merchants in Bangkok, mainly in Pahurat Quarter, and other towns or cities. The most famous places of Indian culture in Bangkok are the Wat Bode Prams and the red Giant Swing. Their locations are the vicinity of the Headquarters of Bangkok Metropolitan Administration City Hall and Wat Sutattepwararam. The Prams will use these places to perform the New Year ceremony, the so-called Pitee Tree-yumpawai. Indian subculture also makes Bangkokians's way of life become cultural heterogeneity and diversity.

One of the urban cultures which is greatly different from Western urban culture is that merchants or businessmen usually live in the same dwellings which they sell goods in

the commercial areas. They use their shophouses or **hongtaos** as both living and selling goods. Some urbanites use the second floor and the third floor of their shophouses as bedrooms and use the first floor for selling goods or services. So, the **hongtao** is regarded as an excellent investment. However, the urbanites who are not merchants or businessmen will reside near the commercial areas. Because they need to live close to their workplaces, as well as going shopping conveniently. Thus, all income-class people tend not to be extremely segregated unlike Western residential or commercial areas. That is why the Burgess Concentric-Zone Model of urban land uses cannot explain the phenomenon of urbanism as a way of life in Thailand. According to the Burgess Model, it states that residential patterns will be concentrically spread throughout the city, with the highest income residential area at the periphery (Yeates, Maurice and Garner, Barry, 1976: 239). Nonetheless, it might fit Bangkok's urban land uses in the near future because of being greatly influenced by Western cultures. For example, in the central business district, Silom Squarter, most office buildings are provided mainly for commercial purposes, not for residential ones. Both owners and workers tend to live in suburban areas of Bangkok. High-income people occupy large, expensive houses whereas low-income residents live in slum areas or squatter areas near workplaces, such as Klongtoey, the biggest slum in Bangkok, and Bangsue slum area.

Recreational areas are one of the important types of urban land use in medium and large cities of Thailand. At present, urban populations realize that the recreational areas help them have good health or better quality of life. Unfortunately, most mayors and city managers had not planned to occupy a large amount of land for establishing recreational areas. This is the reason why many cities do not have any parks and other types of the recreational areas, such as Nakornpatom, Nakornchaisee, Sarnpran, Gumpangan, Tragarnpuedpon, and Srimuangmai. The large cities like Bangkok, Nontaburee, Nakornratchaseema, Chiangmai, and Hardyai have a few recreational areas, compared with the proportion of the number of urban population in the cities. In Bangkok there are fourteen important Parks provided for Bangkokians, such as Loompinee Park, Jatujark Park, Rama IX park, Benjasiri Park, Sarntichaipragarn Park, Chalerm Pragiat Somdej Prasrinakarindara Borom Ratchachonnanee Park, and Tanon Uttayarn Park. These are the lungs of Bangkok Metropolis. Loompinee Park is the first and most important public park of Bangkok. Formerly, it was a rice field, namely "Toongsaladang." It contains 360 rais (1 rai = 1600 m.<sup>2</sup>) or 144 acres (1 acre = 2.5 rais). The interior is designed to meet multi-purposes. Urbanites visiting the park will find it the center for all sorts of recreational pursuits including the Bangkok Metropolitan Senior Citizens Center where advice on healthcare is dispensed (Tabhun, Nipaporn, 2003: 106 – 107). Loompinee Park is located on Rama IX Road in Patoomwon District, close to Silom Road. It largely serves urbanites that live densely in this area, especially the CBD of Bangkok.

In terms of the movement, urban populations in large cities like Bangkok, Nakornratchaseema, Chiangmai, Hardyai, Udonrtanee, Parkgret, Kongan, Surattanee, and Ubonratchataneer have four main categories. These are trips to and from home, trips to and from work, social and recreational trips, and trips for shopping, school, and personal business purposes. However, journey to work tends to be the most important purpose whereas journey to school, shopping, and personal business is the second most important one. Palen (1992: 402) states that Bangkok, with 7 million persons, is one of the most dynamic and most chaotic cities in Asia. While crowding, traffic congestion, and pollution grow ever worse, the city is an economic, educational, and cultural magnet not only for Thais, but for other Asians. Presently, Bangkok still has the most traffic congestion in the nation. In other large cities, such as Nontaburee, Nakornratchaseema, Chiangmai, Hardyai, Udonrtanee, Parkgret, Kongan, Surattanee, and Ubonratchataneer also have the traffic jam, especially in the morning (6.30 – 9.30 A.M.) and in the evening (3.30 – 7.00 P.M.) as the rush hours. In 2002 Bangkok had totally 5,241,802 vehicles. Out of the total vehicles, there were 2,019,680 cars, 785,892 vans and pick-up trucks, 69,458 taxis and service cars, and 2,352,762 motorcycles (Statistical Data of Thailand, 2002: 325). If the

traffic congestion problem cannot be solved urgently, urbanites in the large cities will waste time and money economically, as well as being mentally sick all life.

One of the strategies which the government had tried to solve the traffic congestion in Bangkok is to construct the mass rapid transit. The BTS is the first electric rail of Thailand. It began to serve urban populations in Bangkok on December 5, 1999. There are two routes. Route 1 (Sukoomwit Route) begins from Sukoomwit 77 (Onnoot Road) to the Northern Terminal (Mawjit Market). It is the elevated route with the distance of 16.8 kilometers. Route 2 (Silom Route) begins from King Taksin Bridge (Satorn Bridge), Satorn Road, to the National Football Stadium. It is also the elevated route with the distance of 6.9 kilometers.

The urban mass transit by subway is operated by Mass Rapid Transit Authority of Thailand (MRTA). It is the first subway of Thailand, namely Chulalongkorn Railway Station serving Bangkokians on July 3, 2004. It begins from Hualumpong Railway Station (Bangkok Railway Station) to Bangsue Station with the distance of 20 Kilometers. In the future, Thai government plans to construct 10 more routes of electric rails in order to solve the traffic congestion, as well as helping people in Bangkok and adjacent cities to commute more conveniently and comfortably.

### **Summary and Conclusion**

With regard to the process of urbanization and urbanism in Thailand, it is found that during the Sukothai period all the settlements including Sukothai, the capital city, were characterized as rural areas which their people engaged in agriculture. During the Ayuttaya period, particularly the period of King Pra Narai the Great only one city which began to form urbanization gradually was Ayuttaya, the capital city at that time. During the Bangkok (Rattanakosin) period, only Bangkok was the real city in Thailand in 1967 although 116 places was designated as municipal areas in 1947 (Bangkok and Tonburee as a single unit.) Almost three-fourths of the 116 places had fewer than 10,000 persons and 95 percent were under 20,000. Therefore, urbanization, with the notable exception of Bangkok, was at a very low level. By 1981, Bangkok Metropolis had grown more rapid than other cities in Thailand. So, it was 50 times larger than Chiangmai, the second largest city. At present (2003), the rapid growth tends to slowdown. The evidence is that Bangkok is only 22 times larger than Nontaburee, the second largest city of Thailand. This may be because urban population in Bangkok moved out to reside in some other cities adjacent to Bangkok because of overpopulation. This phenomenon has been existing in Bangkok Metropolis and its adjacent cities, such as Nontaburee and Parkret. Thus, today Nontaburee which is only 20 kilometers north of Bangkok becomes the second largest city, instead of Chiangmai. Parkret which once was a very small city has increased in numbers of urban population, Nowadays, it ranks seventh. It is obvious that the spill-over effect or the spread effect has played a major role in a slower growth of Bangkok Metropolis and a faster growth of Nontaburee and Parkret. It is also found that in 2000 the top-ten biggest cities in Thailand were Bangkok, Nontaburee, Nokornratchaseema, Chiangmai, Hardyai, Udonrattane, Parkret, Kongan, Surattanee, and Ubonrattachanee, respectively.

With respect to urbanism in Thailand, it is found that the larger cities have become more urban cultures than the smaller ones. Secondary and tertiary economic activities, such as industry, commerce, and services are major factors influencing the increase in the degree of urbanization and urbanism. During the Ayuttaya period, the foreign trade and temples were major factors influencing the formation of urbanism. During the Bangkok (Rattanakosin) period, the two factors have also contributed greatly to urbanism as the urban way of life. The Grand Palace and the Emerald Buddha Temple (Wat Prakaew) become the cultural landmark of Bangkok and of Thailand. At present, Bangkok contains temples the most, compared with other cities in Thailand. In 2000 there were 440 temples

in Bangkok. These places still keep Thai traditions and customs, as well as Thai architecture.

With regard to secondary and tertiary economic activities in cities of Thailand, urbanites utilize urban land for similar activities as in American cities. However, the cities in each region are expressions of the culture of the region and of the people forming them and, as might be expressed, they had similarities in the manner in which the culture was expressed. Also, there are differences between cities in the same culture region, but more striking are the differences between cities in different culture areas.

One of the urban cultures which is greatly different from Western urban culture is that merchants or businessmen usually live in the same dwellings which they sell goods in commercial areas. Hence, the commercial areas are parts of the residential areas in all cities of Thailand. In commercial areas of towns and cities have streets filled with Chinese stores, which sell all kinds of goods. In Bangkok, the biggest commercial areas which are dominated by Chinese culture are called **Chinatown**, such as Sampeng and Yaowarat quarters. Indian culture is also an urban subculture in Bangkok. The majority are now merchants. They mainly live in Pahurat Quarter. The most famous places of Indian culture in Bangkok are the Wat Bode Prams and the red Giant Swing.

Thus, Bangkok and big cities in Thailand are culturally heterogeneous, and socially diverse like Western cities because of increasing degrees of urbanization.

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