

POPULATION AND SOCIETY IN SOUTHEAST ASIA: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

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Overview

- Southeast Asia context
 - Mélange of countries, Low pop density in pre-modern era, but rapid growth in 19th and 20th
- Pop Figures from Owen and Reid
 - Paradox of rapid growth during Colonial era
- The Frontier Hypothesis in SEA
- Migration from China and India

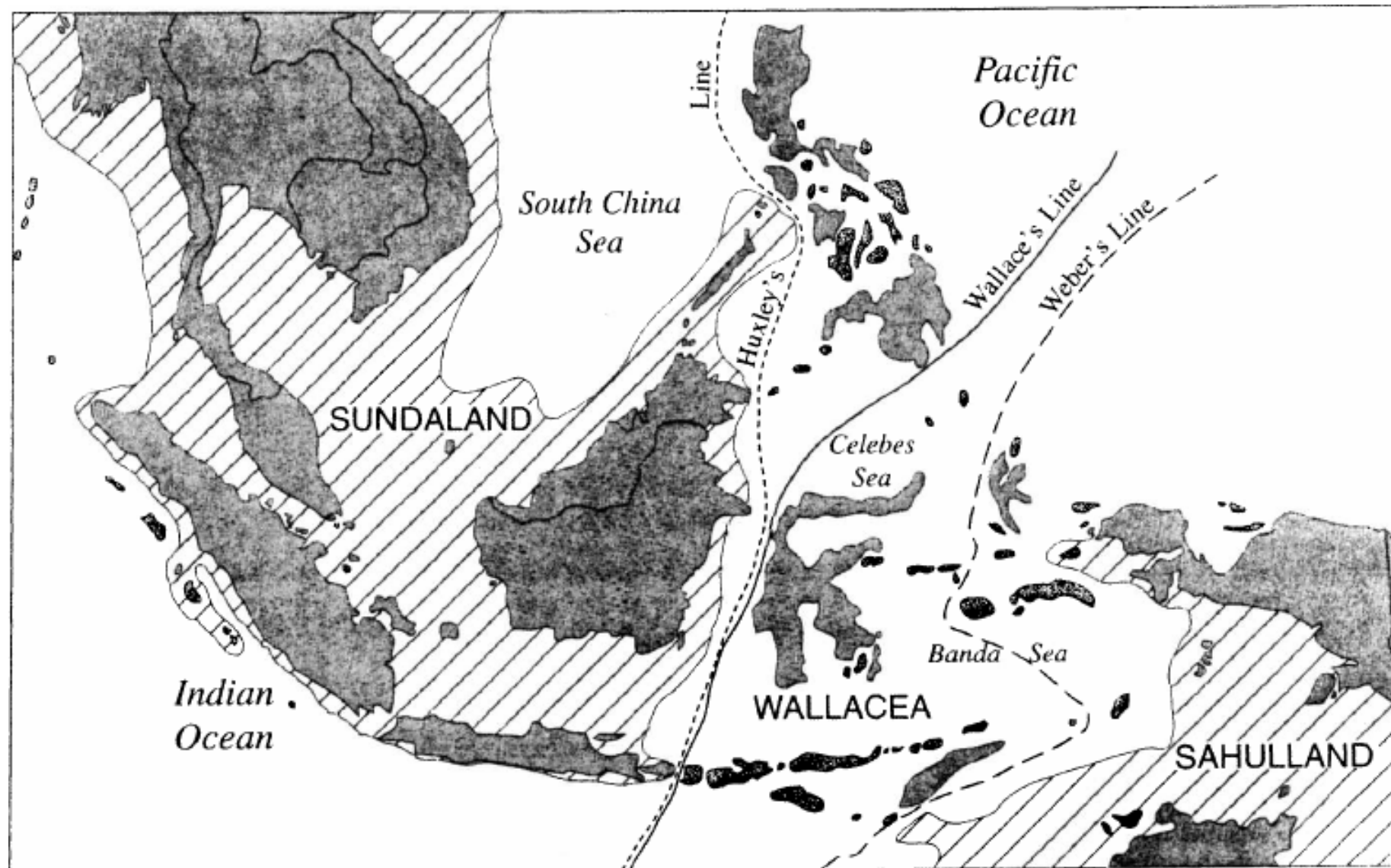


What is Southeast Asia?

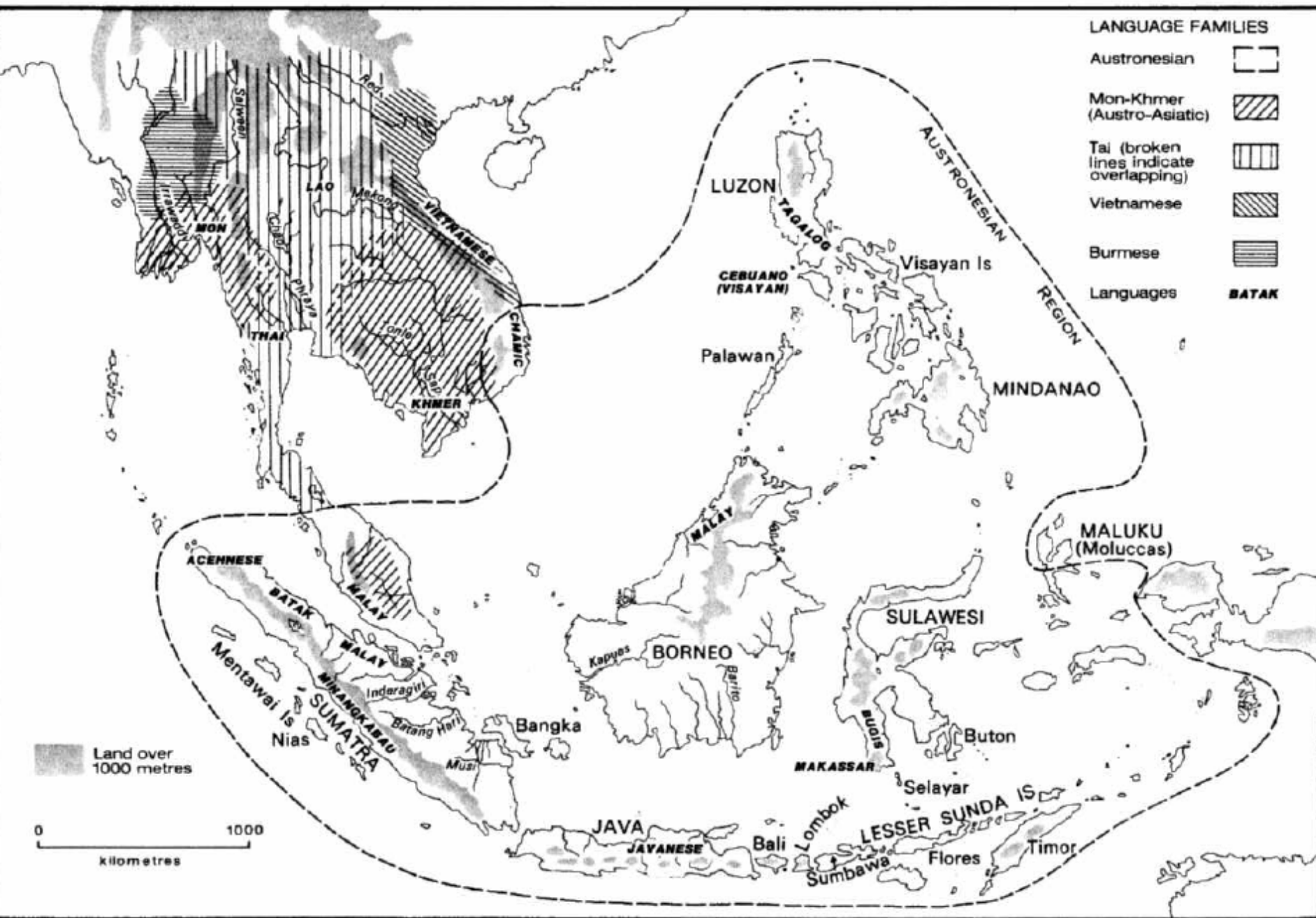
- Recent Origin of Term
 - Further India, Nanyang, Land Below the Winds
- Diversity of history, culture, language, religion
- Sources of diversity
 - forested terrain and remote hinterlands
 - Colonial experience and modern histories
- Some common features:
 - Ease of travel by sea and rivers (Mediterranean-like)
 - Predictable monsoon trade winds = trade
 - Culture: rice, stilts, bilateral kinship, gender
 - Low population density: 5 persons/sq.km in 1600



SOUTHEAST ASIA	612
Brunei	0.4
Cambodia	14.4
Indonesia	248.5
Laos	6.7
Malaysia	29.8
Myanmar	53.3
Philippines	96.2
Singapore	5.4
Thailand	66.2
Timor-Leste	1.1
Vietnam	89.7



Map 2.5 Sunda and Sahul. *Source: Various.*



Map 1 Physical features and language groups in Southeast Asia

12th - 13th centuries

Khmer
Empire
at its height

Sri Vijaya
Empire

Kediri

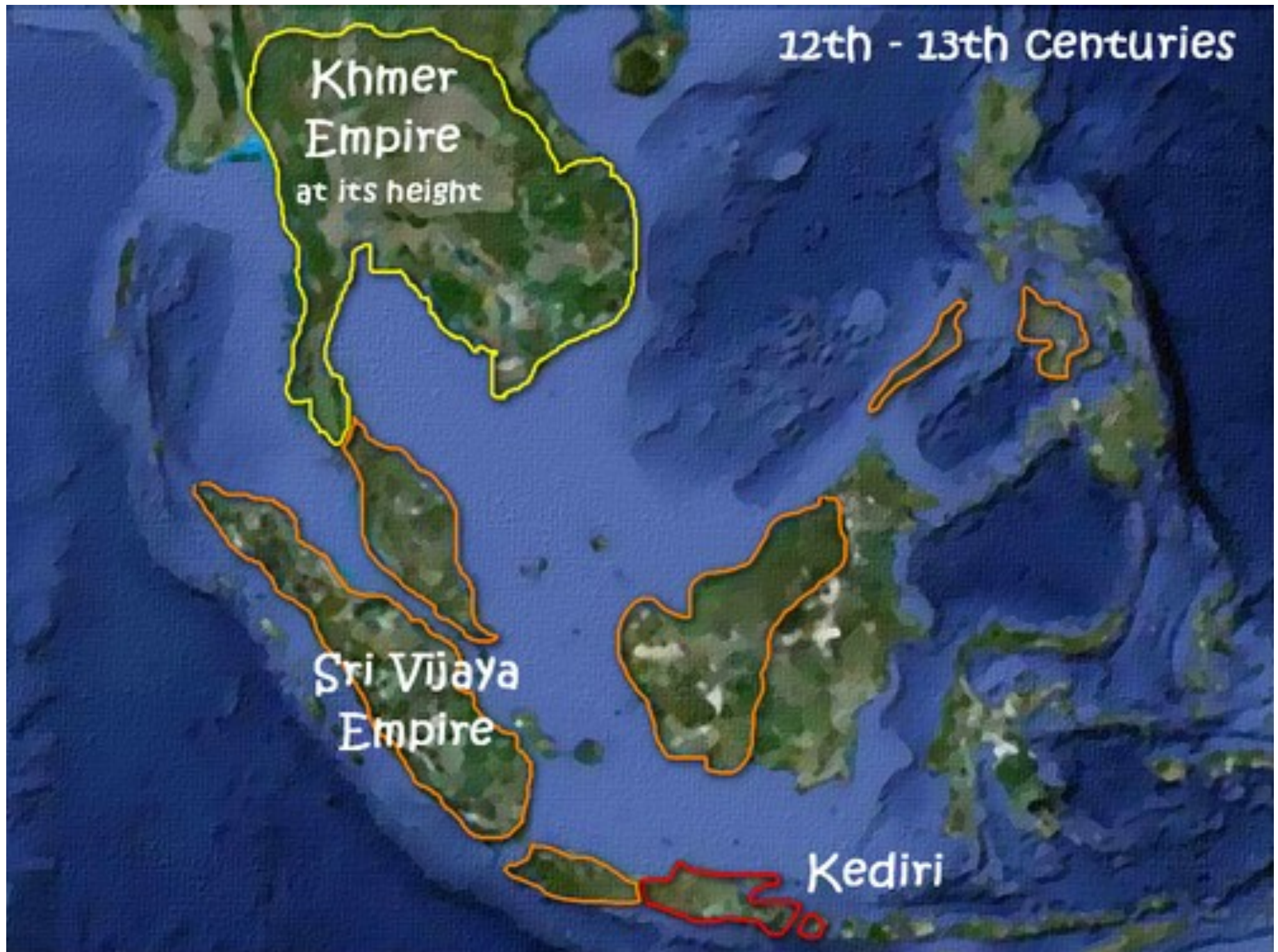




Table 2: Population Growth, 1800–2000 (in millions, based on modern borders)

Country/Countries	1800	1900	1950	2000
Myanmar (Burma)	3.5	10.0	17.8	47.5
Thailand (Siam)	3.5	7.5	19.6	60.9
Laos	0.2	0.5	1.8	5.3
Cambodia	0.4	1.1	4.3	13.1
Vietnam	5.0	13.5	27.4	78.1
Malaysia/Singapore/Brunei	0.4	2.0	7.2	27.3
Indonesia/Timor	13.0	40.0	79.5	212.4
(Java)	(6.0)	(30.0)	(51.5)	(125.0)
Philippines	2.0	7.5	20.0	75.7
Total	28.0	82.1	177.6	520.3

Sources: 1800–1900, based on estimates derived from a variety of historical data and scholarly calculations; 1950–2000, taken from United Nations, *World Population Prospects, 2002 Revision*.

Table 1 Population Growth in Southeast Asia, Seventeenth–Eighteenth Centuries

<i>Country or Region</i>	<i>Population Estimates in Thousands</i>		<i>Growth Rate p.a.</i>
	<i>Earliest Estimates</i>	<i>Latest Pre-modern</i>	
Siam	1687 (La Loubère 1691: 11)	1,900 (Crawfurd 1828: 452)	+0.28
Kedah (Malaya)	1614 (Beaulieu 1666: 246)	60 (Newbold 1839 II: 20)	–0.08
Banten (West Java)	1696 (Pigeaud 1968: 64)	1815 (Raffles 1817 I: 63)	+0.16
Central Mataram (Central and East Java without coast)	1631 (van Goens 1656: 114, 225)	1,035 ^a (Ricklefs 1974: 71–72, 159)	–0.85
Bali	1597 (Lodewycksz 1598: 198)	600 (Raffles 1817: II ccxxxii)	+0.13
Luzon and Visayas (Philippines)	1591 (Dasmariñas 1591: 8)	1735 (Church figures in Le Gentil)	+0.16

Table 2 Population Estimates for Southeast Asia in 1600 (in thousands)

	<i>Estimate for 1800</i>	<i>Corresponding Percentage Growth p.a., 19th Cent.^a</i>	<i>Estimate for 1600</i>	<i>Corresponding Percentage Growth p.a., 1600–1800</i>	<i>Density p/km², 1600</i>
Burma	4,600 ^b	0.83	3,100	0.2	4.6
Laos (incl. Northeast Thailand)	1,200 ^c	low	1,200	0.0	2.9
Siam (minus NE)	2,800 ^d	0.8	1,800	0.22	5.3
Cambodia-Champa	1,500	1.3	1,230	0.1	4.5
Vietnam (North and Centre)	7,000 ^e	0.34	4,700	0.2	18.0
Malaya (incl. Patani)	500	1.56	500 ^f	0.0	3.4
Sumatra	3,500 ^g	0.49	2,400	0.2	5.7
Java	5,000 ^h	1.72	4,000	0.11	30.3
Borneo	1,000	0.83	670	0.2	0.9
Sulawesi	1,800	0.45	1,200	0.1 ⁱ	6.3
Bali	700	0.25	600	0.08	79.7
Lesser Sunda Is.	900	0.54	600	0.2	9.1
Maluku	400	0.41	275	0.2	3.7
Luzon and Visayas	1,800	1.30	800	0.4	4.0
Mindanao and Sulu	230	0.98	150	0.2	1.5
Approx. total					
Southeast Asia	33,000		23,000	0.2	5.7

Why Pop Growth > 1% post 1800?

- No evidence of improvement in health or living standards, but perhaps less crisis mortality
- Decline in Low Level Warfare that disrupted agricultural systems
- From Horticultural Shifting Cultivation to Sawah
 - Role of religion, esp. Philippines
 - Pop Pressure, Colonial support of irrigation systems
 - Comparison of wet-rice farming Toba Batak and dry rice growing Karo Batak
 - 1930: completed family size 8 for Toba, 5 for Karo
 - 1900: 6.44 vs. 3.83

SEA Demographic History (Reid. 2001)

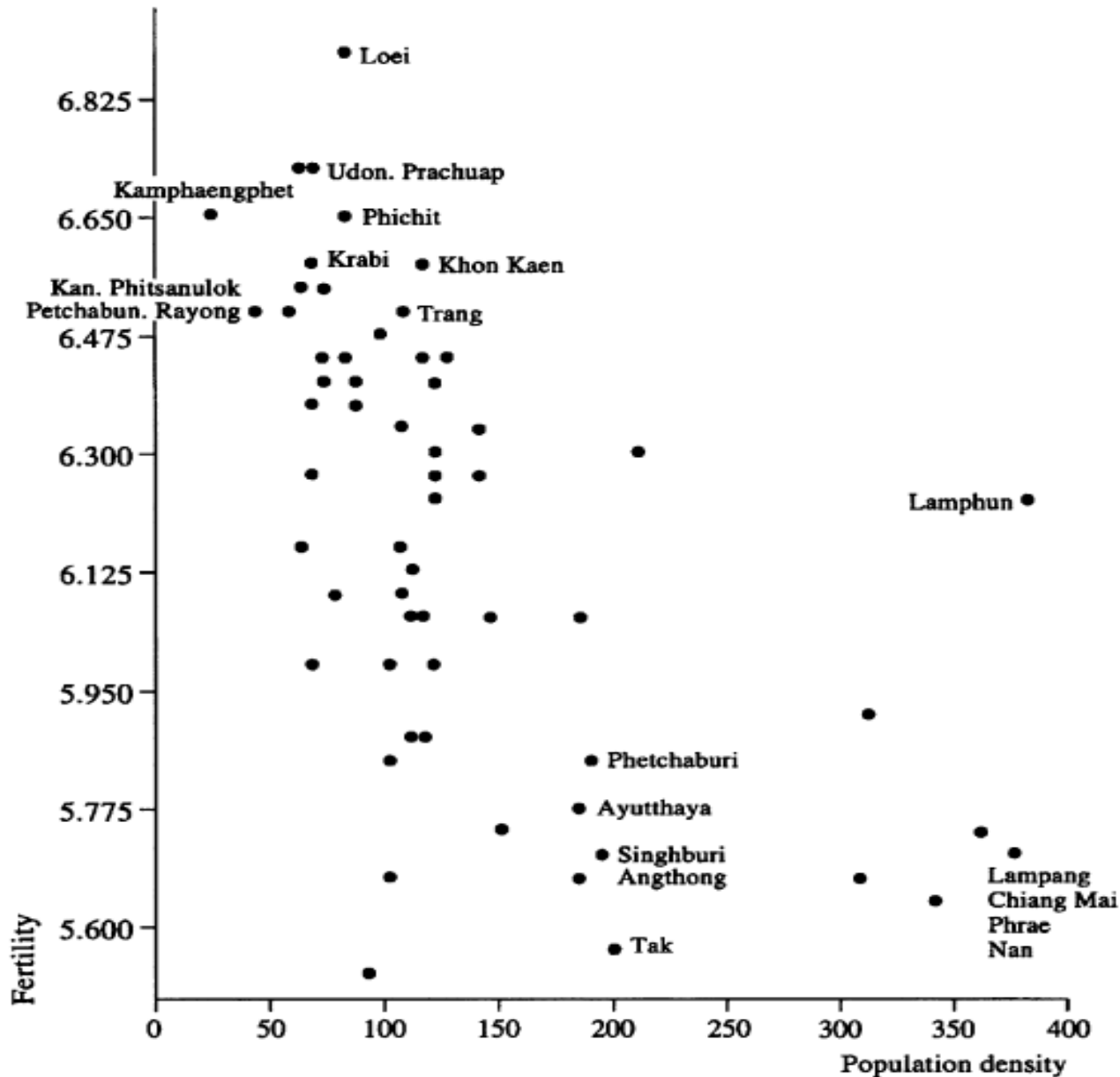
- 1500-1630: economic expansion & war
 - Pockets of high density: trading cities and sawah
 - wars & conflict offset growth in other areas
- 1630-1750: crisis
 - VOC monopoly of spice trade, economic decline
- 1750-1850: trade, immigration, less warfare
 - VOC collapse, post 1816 boom in pepper & coffee
 - China trade and immigrants: gold/tin, pepper & gambier
 - Vigorous Konbaung, Chakkri, & Nguyen dynasties
 - Tea/coffee/sugar exports to West
- 1850-1930: growth rate from 1.5 to 2.5%
 - high colonialism promoted “peasantation” (involution)
 - Intensified agriculture, plantations, rice for export sector
 - De-urbanization
- 1930-1965: crisis
 - Depression, WWII, revolutionary era in Indonesia, VN, & Burma
- Post 1970: Miraculous transformation

The Frontier Fertility Hypothesis

- Easterlin 19th c America
 - As farmers move to new land, fewer constraints on fertility (marriage, abstinence, spouse absence)
- Huge demand for rice during colonial period from cities and export economy
 - Settlement of Frontier – late 19th and 20th c.
 - Central Thailand, Mekong Delta, Lower Burma

Population pressure and fertility in pre-transition Thailand

MARK VANLANDINGHAM AND CHARLES HIRSCHMAN



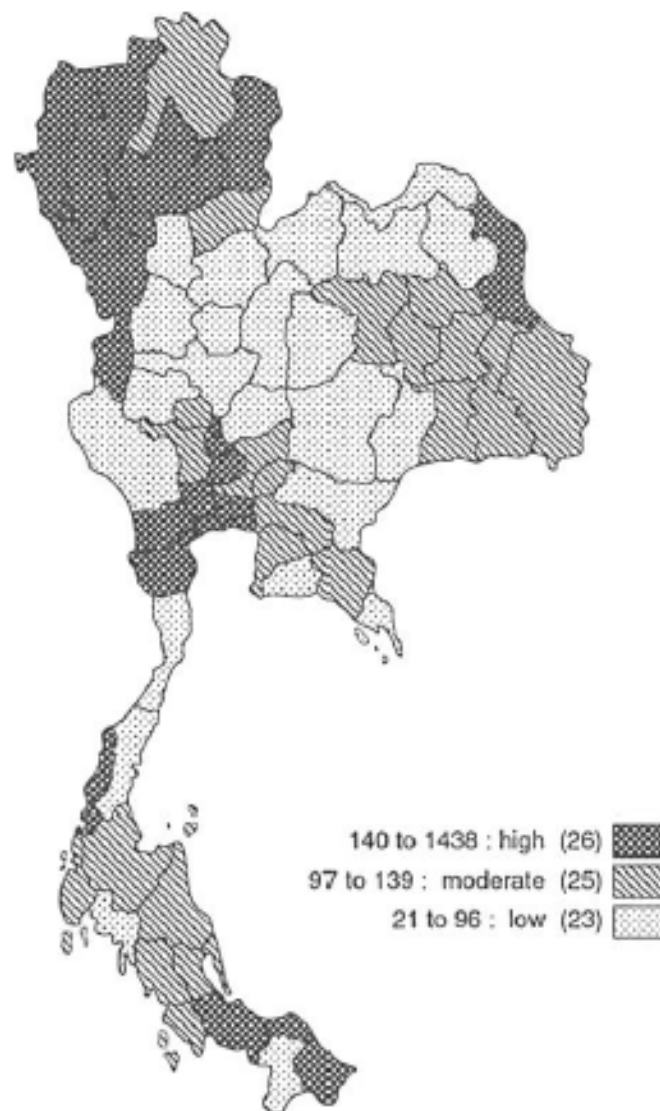


Figure 4. Population density, Thailand, early 1950s.
Source: Thai census data.

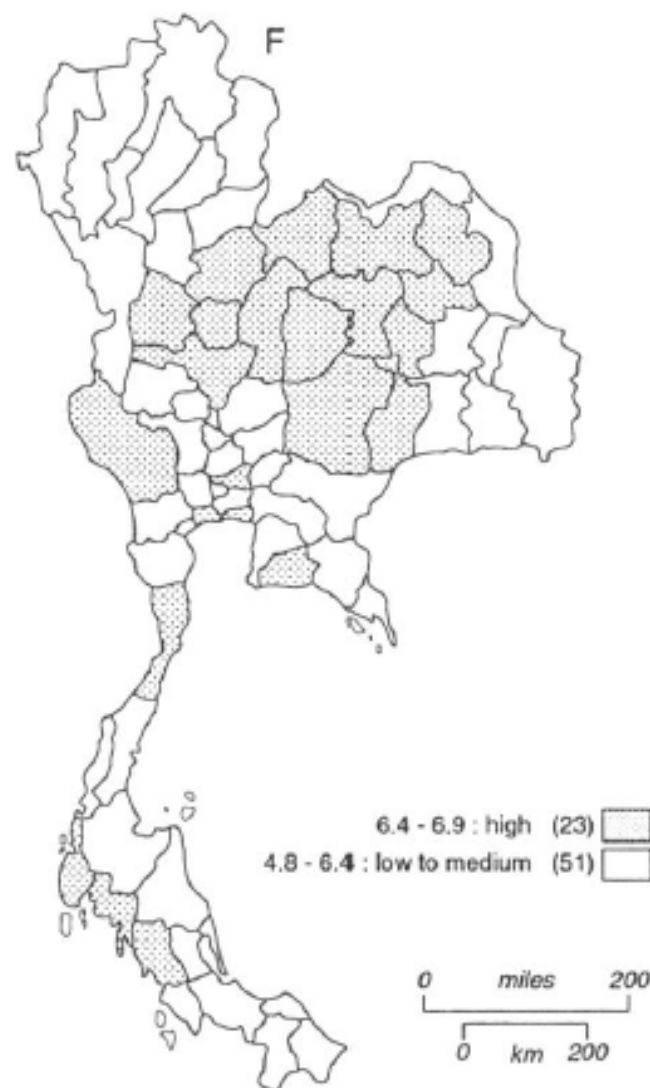


Figure 6. Total fertility in Thailand, early 1950s.
Source: Rele estimates, using 1960 Thai census and UN 1993

(b) *Linear regression model of the effects of predictor variables on total fertility in Thailand, 1950–54*

		Total Fertility 1950–54			
Predictor variables		Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7
Population density (*1000)	unstd b	–2.2	–2.1	–2.2	–1.2
	std beta	–0.56	–0.54	–0.55	–0.31
	p	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.01
Proportion living in agricultural households	unstd b		0.46	0.72	–0.013
	std beta		0.12	0.20	–0.004
	p		0.29	0.12	0.98
Land quality	unstd b		0.00034	0.00016	–0.00054
	std beta		0.07	0.03	–0.11
	p		0.52	0.77	0.28
Sex ratio of young adults (men per woman)	unstd b			0.50	–0.54
	std beta			0.18	–0.19
	p			0.16	0.17
Proportion of women married (age 20–54)	unstd b				5.1
	std beta				0.60
	p				0.0001
Adjusted R squared		30%	30%	31%	48%
Significance of F test		0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
(N)			(59)		

Notes. The sample includes 59 of the 71 provinces existing in 1960. Excluded provinces are Bangkok, Thonburi, Samut Prakan, Samut Sakhorn, Phuket, Samut Songkram, Mae Hong Song, Kalasin, Narathiwat, Pattani, Satun, and Yala. Variable definitions and sources of data are reported in Table 1.

Table 1. Major long-distance migration flows, 1846–1940

Destination	Origins	Number	Auxiliary origins
Americas	Europe	55–58 million	2.5 million from India, China, Japan, Africa
Southeast Asia, Indian Ocean Rim, South Pacific	India, southern China	48–52 million	4 million from Africa, Europe, northeastern Asia, Middle East
Manchuria, Siberia, central Asia, Japan	Northeastern Asia, Russia	46–51 million	

Sources: See Appendix.

Table 2. World population growth (millions) by regions, 1850–1950

	1850 population	1950 population	Average annual growth (%)
Receiving			
Americas	59	325	1.72
North Asia	22	104	1.57
Southeast Asia	42	177	1.45
Sending			
Europe	265	515	0.67
South Asia	230	445	0.66
China	420	520	0.21
Africa	81	205	0.93
World	1200	2500	0.74

Sources: Colin McEvedy and Richard Jones, *Atlas of World Population History* (London: Penguin, 1978).

Migration to Southeast Asia

- Adam McKeown. 2004. "Global Migration, 1846-1940." *Journal of World History* 15:155-189.
 - ~29m Indians to SEA: 15 Burma, 8m Ceylon, 4m Malaysia
 - ~19 Chinese to SEA: 11 to SS (1/3 to DEI & 1 m direct), 4m Siam, 2-3m Indochina
- Ly Pan, ed. 1999. *The Encyclopedia of the Chinese Overseas*. Harvard U. Press. Table 2.2 (62 from Zhu 1994).
 - 1801-50: 200,000 to SEA
 - 1851-1875: 45,000 Philippines, 350,000: Malay Peninsula, 250,000 East Indies
 - 1876-1900: 20,000 Philippines, 360,000 Malay Peninsula, 320,000 East Indies
 - 1901-25: 125,000 Malay Peninsula, 300,000 East Indies

From Immigrants to Descendants

High return migration, high mortality, few women

- Mary Somers Heidhues estimates ~1970:
<20m
 - 3.5m Malaysia, 3.4m Thailand, 3.1m Indonesia, 1.5m Singapore, 1.4m VN, .4-.5 in Philippines, Cambodia, Burma

Conclusions

- 1600: < 25m pop in SEA– mostly frontier
- 1800: 28m (Owen) 33m (Reid) – mostly frontier
 - Average annual growth rate (r) $\sim 0.2\%$, negative in Java
- 1900: 82m – 1800- 1900: $r = 1.08\%$
- 1950: 178m - 1900 to 1950: $r = 1.54\%$
- Interpretation
 - warfare, religion, permanent settlement
 - int'l. migration
 - settlement of frontier