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Materials for the Demographic History of Southeast Asia

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MATERIALS FOR THE DEMOGRAPHIC HISTORY OF SOUTHEAST ASIA

*Peter Xenos**

I. INTRODUCTION

There is little non-Western historical demography to be found in the global demographic literature, and within the non-Western literature that does exist Southeast Asia barely figures at all. As one example, Hollingsworth's (1969) wide-ranging review of the field a quarter-century ago contains in its 30 page bibliography only occasional references to the world outside of Europe. There are just a few references to Latin America and Africa, and the slightly more frequent references to Asia have to do mainly with India and China. There are precious few references to Southeast Asia--four out of roughly 400 by my count[1].

In the intervening quarter-century historical demography has come of age as a field of inquiry. During the decade ending in 1986, for example, the **International Bibliography of Historical Demography** amassed 6,159 entries. Even so, only 474 (7.7%) of these were on Asia, and of that number only 48 (that's under 0.1 percent of the total!) were on Southeast Asia.[2] More recently there have been halting indications of interest in Southeast Asian historical demography as a field of study.[3]

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[1]This includes one on China (Bielenstein 1947) which provides some information on the area which is now northern Vietnam. The number rises to five if we are prepared to include a study of the Cocos-Keeling Islands in the Indian Ocean.

[2]These figures cover the years 1978-1986. The overall countours of historical demography as a field are shaped similarly. Major volumes in the field refer only rarely to areas outside of Europe. Two prominent examples are Lee (1977) and Willigan and Lynch (1982). The first is a collection of papers applying "behavioral models" to historical demography and has one relevant chapter, on Japan. The second is a comprehensive review of methodologies and materials in the field; its six page subject index contains but four references to China, three each to Latin America and Japan, one to India.

[3]Some significant events can be listed briefly. There was John Larkin's 1976 AAS panel "Interdisciplinary Contributions to Philippine Historiography" (Larkin 1979), where the stress was on local and social history, including demography; Marshall McLennan's session "Historical Demography in Southeast Asia" at the 1977 Association for Asian Studies meetings; the first true family reconstitution for Southeast Asia (Ng 1979); the Australian National University's 1983 Conference on "Death, Drugs and Disease: Their History in Modern Southeast Asia" (Owen 1987), and the Social Science Research Council's 1989 Workshop on the Historical Demography of Southeast Asia (Xenos forthcoming).

The historical demography which is emerging is based primarily on the records of the several European colonial administrations: French, British, Dutch, American, Spanish, Portuguese. And, of course, there have been an assortment of travellers' commentaries on the region's pre-colonial and early-colonial populations which together provide another body of "evidence." The travellers' accounts offer essentially personal or hearsay population estimates, though occasionally they do draw upon indigenous information of a more quantitative nature.[4] All these constitute grist for the field of Southeast Asian historical demography.

A. Southeast Asia and World Population Trends

It has taken considerable time for the populations of the region to register in the global population assessments made periodically over the years. All demographers are familiar with this literature from the mid-20th century onward, sometimes including historical reconstructions from available sources. Modern examples include the first major United Nations compilation (United Nations 1953) and its more recent revision (United Nations 1973), and the work of Durand (1974), among others. These of course depend heavily on prior efforts, which Durand summarizes in a single page. Throughout the 19th century and into the twentieth the societies of Southeast Asia were barely considered at all in global assessments. It is instructive to examine one important 19th century series which appeared in the serial **Petermanns Geographische Mitteilungen**.[5] Carr-Saunders (1936) is another early but still-cited effort at global demographic compilation in which Asian coverage is essentially limited to Japan and China, though in a chapter on "other non-European peoples" the islands of Java-Madura and the Philippines are covered.

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[4]For a good region-wide review of such evidence see Reid (forthcoming).An example may convey the nature of these reports. Reporting on the island of Lombok (Indonesia) around 1850, Zollinger (1851-2) says "The princes of Matarum must we well acquainted with the number of the population of their island, since the manner of raising the taxes and regulating the military services, as well as the forced labour, obliges them to maintain a kind of census. It is evident that it was impossible for me to procure these lists of the population, and that it was prudent not to make many enquiries about the matter." Zollinger estimated the island's population at 400,000 on the following grounds. "I learnt this first from Mr. K. and afterwards from the Rajah hemself, who at an audience asked, over how many persons Mr. Mayor had authority. When I answered over 500,000, the Rajah exclaimed in great surprise "that this is then more than the population of my whole island." This is corroborated in a crude way by another estimate, from another source, that the total of men capable of bearing arms was 80,000.Along similar lines, the reader might also enjoy the story (or is it fact?), "Lombock: How the Raja Took the Census," in Alfred Russel Wallace (1869:131-46).

[5]The series began with Dieterici's (1859) essay, followed by one by Behm and Wagner (1872) and then periodically by those authors or others on into the 20th century.

Even surveys of population numbers by regional specialists have relied on general, non-specialist sources (eg: Fisher 1964).

There are several reasons for the region's low profile in global assessments. Some societies of the region were still under indigenous administration until well into the 19th century (eg: Burma, under the Konbaung Dynasty; the Malay Peninsula under a variety of kings and princes; the Vietnamese under the Nguyen; and most prominently the Thai under the Chakri kings, who never came under European rule). These indigenous kingdoms and principalities had a variety of languages and writing systems and systems of administration, including forms of record keeping. The records that survive in these indigenous forms are limited but as immensely valuable as they are difficult to use. The work of exploring indigenous sources for historical demography has only just begun.[6] Certainly in the 19th century and even into the 20th century access to the record and understanding of them was extremely limited. The European administrations tended to put the record in recognizable forms, but still in a diversity of languages.

B. Scope and Organization of this Review

The bibliography attached to this essay is in the nature of a core reading list. The items included are by no means a comprehensive lisitng; rather, I have selected materials to give a representative overview of materials and important issues, and also geographic coverage.[7] At the same time, literature outside or at the periphery of traditional historical demography is included when I have considered it important as background to interpreting the demographic materials. My imagined audience is readers interested in Southeast Asia, though not demographers, and those conversant with the field of demography, but not with the field of Southeast Asian studies. Beyond historical demography proper, I have sought to highlight a core literature on Southeast Asian societies of immediate relevance.

My selection of these additional materials is based on the view that the framing of questions and the interpretation of empirical results depends upon a highly contextualized understanding of certain

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[6]Prominent examples include Thai cremation volumes (Olson 1992) and dynastic records in a unique numerical system (Wilson forthcoming) and postal records (Tsubouchi 1994); the sit-tan registration documents of the Konbaung Dynasty in Burma (Burney 1842, Traeger and Koenig 1979, 1981; Furnival 1919, 1924); and genealogical charts from Sumatra (Tsubouchi and Matsushita 1981).

[7]The attached bibliography of about 600 entries has been extracted from a set exceeding 1000 entries which will appear along with an extended bibliographic essay.

major themes or conjunctures in Southeast Asian history and historiography. I take as a key element of this a conjuncture which I call the "Southeast Asian Demographic System." My assertions about the features of this system constitute both organizing ideas and hypotheses for testing.

II. SOUTHEAST ASIA AS A DEMOGRAPHIC REGION

I use the term "region" to connote commonalities rather than diverse entities functionally bound together (Morrill 1970:184ff). Southeast Asia[8] as a region takes its modern demographic identity from the relatively recent past; the area carries an image of exceptional population growth rates and densities and a severe "population problem," transformed very recently over much of the region by remarkably rapid demographic transition (eg: Hirschman and Guest 1990). It is true that concerns about overpopulation had arisen by the 1930's or even earlier in Java and the Red River delta, but such views were rarely expressed until the 1940's or even the 1950's in other parts of the region. By the 1950's much of the region's colonial demographic literature was about the disaster that further population growth would bring, and ways of averting that.[9]

But when we follow this essentially modern commentary backward a very few years we discover a very different view. Large populations with rapid rates of growth are viewed as evidence of successful government. Thus much of the commentary has the character of competition among regimes to evidence prosperity as indicated by demographic vitality.[10]

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[8]The term came into use only during the Second World War. I use it throughout this essay regardless of the time period under discussion. For my purposes, and for most regional specialists, Southeast Asia encompasses modern Burma (Myanmar) and across the Asian mainland South of China through Vietnam, and the islands of Indonesia (including the Western part of New Guinea) and the Philippines. The northern part of modern Vietnam is culturally (and in a sense demographically) transitional with China but is for most purposes included. Though the geophysical boundary is clear, the cultural boundary between Burma and Assam might be disputed as well (Geddes 1942, 1947). And, some argue for a broader region for some purposes encompassing Sri Lanka or Taiwan or even Southern China or Yunnan (Bellwood 1992). For example, see Dyson and Moore (1983) for the view that India's southeastern pattern (distinct from its northern or "West Asian" pattern) is really part of a "South and East Asian" kinship pattern that extends to ("is bounded by") "the Confucian cultures of China, Vietnam, Korea, Taiwan, and Japan."

[9] The principal means proposed until the early 1950's was population redistribution rather than fertility control which must not have seemed highly infeasible at the time. Much of the writing of Pierre Gourou on Indochina (eg: Gourou 1945,1958) is along these lines, as is the writing of Bruno Lasker on labor movements throughout the region (Lasker 1945) and Karl Pelzer (1935, 1941, 1945) on pioneer settlement of the region's uplands. The French even devised a scheme for population transfers from the Red River delta to French colonies in the Pacific and the Indian oceans (De la Brosse (1939).

[10]One example will suffice. Alfred Russel Wallace (1869:75ff) discusses Java's apparent rapid population growth in the first half of the 19th century and says "There is, however, one grand test of the prosperity, and even of the

An important feature of the regional literature, both colonial and academic, is that it is rarely about Southeast Asia as a whole, but rather about individual colonies. The region's evident diversities and the presence of many colonial administrations have made it difficult to notice common features and be confident of their importance. But the new direction of recent Southeast Asian historiography is clear. It is less and less a history driven by external influences--of Indianization (Coedes 1968), Sinicization (Fitzgerald 1972), or Westernization--and progressively more a history of internal forces and interactions among regional populations. The theme of Indianization--operating on a passive and malleable social material--has been replaced by a much more powerful set of ideas involving long-standing regional commonalities.

Specialists are frequently asked to support the claim that Southeast Asia is really a region (that is, without reference to it's being sandwiched between South Asia and East Asia which surely are regions). There are distinguishing features spanning the otherwise diverse societies, but these are difficult to summarize (for a good survey see Legge (1992). Sometimes it is argued that diversity itself is the key--that the driving processes which have formed Southeast Asia have to do with population movement and contact, cultural borrowing and syncretism. The region is, whatever else, a crossroads. The diversity within the region, and even within many of its societies, provides some startling contrasts. There is basic cultural diversity due to the early and more recent introductions of world religions (Hindu, Buddhist, Islamic, Christian), and more recently due to diverse colonial experiences (French, Dutch, English, Spanish, Portuguese, American).[11]

In the context of this complexity it would of course be most satisfying to identify commonalities rather than differences. The search for these commonalities is a longstanding pursuit which has produced some excellent works of synthesis (eg: Hanks 1972; Wolters 1982; Reid 1988, 1993).[12] All the societies

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happiness, of a community, which we can apply here--the rate of increase of the population" "It is universally admitted, that when a country increases rapidly in population, the people cannot be very greatly oppressed or very badly governed."

[11]Thailand, for example, nicely exemplifies the whole of Southeast Asia in important ways, yet reflects a particular history as well. The major religious influences include an animism which has long existed throughout Southeast Asia, Theravada Buddhism, introduced through Sri Lanka, Hindu elements absorbed from the neighboring Khmer civilization, and Confucianism and ancestor workshop among the (largely urban) Chinese. Thailand's bilateral kinship and lack of lineage and patriarchy are features shared with the region as a whole; yet, Thailand brings these features together in a distinct way.

[12]I draw heavily upon these three authors. Wolters is concerned especially with the evolution of political systems and enters than arena via a survey of Southeast Asia's indigenous "cultural matrix." Reid's recent and I believe pathbreaking two volume work is central to my arguments because in his **annalistes** approach to "total history" he devotes considerable attention to micro-level issues of family and demography. Hanks offers the classic discussion

have engaged in long-term processes of adaptation to an essentially similar environmental endowment, and this has been reinforced by a long history of contact and borrowing among the regional populations, facilitated by the presence of connecting (rather than dividing) bodies of water. The result has been an underlying set of common social arrangements and elements of culture which I will outline subsequently. Wolters (1982) writes of an underlying cultural matrix, and Reid (1988) sees "fundamental social and cultural traits." Common geophysical, climatic, hydraulic and other features have produced in Southeast Asia "...a very similar set of material cultures" (Reid 1988:iv).

Nascent in many of these commentaries, but never considered directly, is a powerful common theme which will have a special resonance for an audience of demographers. This is the view that Southeast Asia is demonstrably homogeneous--and in this respect a region--from the standpoint of its demographic "system" or "regime." We are accustomed to thinking of a Western European demographic system prior to the 19th century featuring homeostasis (Smith 1977) or autoregulation (Lee 1977), achieved mainly through a societally imposed link between marriage and inheritance.[13] As Smith (1977:20) states, "...societies strive to maintain equilibrium. Conversely, any disequilibrium tends to generate a correcting or homeostatic response." One implication is that "...the rate of population growth ...[in such regimes]... will be more constant than the components of population changes--mortality, marriage patterns, marital fertility, and migration."

The literature contrasting this demographic system with such regions as China and South Asia has defined the theoretical discourse in this area of demography (eg: Hajnal 1982; Thornton and Fricke 1987). But the contrast with what one finds in Southeast Asia is equally dramatic. Until recently the region has been a settlement frontier, and this frontier character has strongly influenced much of its social organization and culture. The ramifications for demography are immediate, including pervasive implications for the organization of families and households.

A. The Southeast Asian Demographic System Historically

Now I want to summarize selectively from these ideas and connect them with demography. I begin with the material basis and move to the corresponding basic or "formal" demography, then to the emergent

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of the Southeast Asian accommodation of population to land. Also see Breman (1988) and Kemp (1988) for important contributions.

[13]Also see Hajnal (1965; 1982), Lesthaeghe (1980) and Wrigley (1977).

social structures and especially to what we can call the "social demography": Those social structures linked most closely to demographic structures and demographic change. The social demography that emerges I label the Southeast Asian Demographic System.

It is Reid (1988:6) who most explicitly makes a central point about long run population change: that the region has been, by reasons of geomorphology, relatively closed to mass migrations from the Eurasian mainland, Instead, it has been open to seaborne arrivals, religious missions, trade contacts and the like. Thus, what arrived were important ideas, religious, political and economic influences, but not great numbers of settlers. Until the last century the region's population has had to reproduce itself. Whether this internal replacement was achieved just barely or with a considerable surplus, and how, and with what implications for social organization, are among the central questions for historical demography to consider.

A second point is that various ecosystems are available in fairly close proximity in the region, making possible the gradual exploitation of these upland and lowland ecologies in a range of combinations of intensiveness and extensiveness of land use, degree of investment in water control, ratios of capital to labor to land, and the like. In the language of Wolters (1982:2), what emerged were "...continually expanding 'broad spectrum' subsistence economies."

A third point links demography with political structures and state formation. As Wolters notes, the region was in organizational terms a "demographically fragmented...continually shifting mosaic of small cultural groups..."

Thus we are describing what most historians take to have been a relatively secure subsistence environment, one offering a range of survival choices and alternatives, wherein population growth was not limited in any obvious Malthusian way. At the least, such limits must have been less important than other factors in determining population size and distribution. These features of the region produce the demographic surprise so often remarked upon: the region's low population densities prior to and even well into the 19th century (Zelinsky 1950), and in particular the lack of dense populations in precisely the areas of the region most supportive of high densities, its river valleys and alluvial plains (Adas 1974; Johnson 1976; McLennan 1969, 1980; Siamwalla 1972; Van Schendel 1991). The low population densities are an "anomaly" (Zelinsky 1950) which implies very slow long-term population growth rates and leads us to find a "paradox" (Owen 1987) in the very rapid population growth observed in the 19th century. But neither feature is really odd in view of the broader pattern of frontier demography.

We are a long way from achieving a well-documented characterization of demographic parameters during past times. Much of the work thus far has been at the aggregate level and focussed on estimating and interpreting the rate of population growth and its mortality and fertility components. The details of those controversies are at the center of traditional historical demography and are well represented in the bibliography. Here I want only to note the connection between assertions about aggregate fertility and mortality rates and the nature of the underlying demographic system. The most comprehensive, albeit very speculative statement is that by Reid (1988:11-18, 120-172) who argues that over the long period between, say, 1600 and 1800 the regional, annual growth rate was very low (Reid suggests 0.2 percent), and that this was so because the underlying mortality and fertility levels both were somewhat lower than might be expected. A moderate level of mortality prior to the 19th century Reid attributes to a beneficent environment, and in particular to relatively abundant food supplies (pp. 28-40) and to the relative absence of epidemic disease.[14]

Reid's assertion that the fertility level also was moderate, or at least not high, is more controversial. Reid writes of a Southeast Asian "cultural complex" which held fertility down somewhat relative to other agrarian regions. In Reid's scenario there was a subtle but important rise in fertility during the last several centuries because the indigenous cultural complex was gradually influenced by pronatalist ideas and behavior associated with the rapidly spreading Islamic and Christian religious traditions. Both these traditions led to a lower status for women than previously; to the removal of women from some economic activities; to more rigid and more gender-differentiated views of sexuality, and the like. Also, fertility had long been held down due to the need for women's labor in non-sedentary agriculture, whereas the shift over the last several centuries to wet rice agriculture has reduced the need for women's labor.

One of the important elements of the indigenous Southeast Asian fertility regime is said to be a pattern of marriage timing which may well have been unique for agrarian societies. Available direct estimates of age at marriage for the 19th century Philippines (Ng 1979; Smith and Ng 1982) and the indirect evidence of contemporary reports (Reid pp. 158-60) suggest a mean age at marriage for women

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[14]Reid (1988:28-40, 57-61). My own work with the records of several dozen Spanish period parishes in the Philippines is consistent with this view (Smith 1978). A sharply contrasting view comes from McNeil (1974:100-1) in his **Plagues and Peoples**. In discussing the region's low population density he suggests that "...the comparative slowness of civilized expansion in this environment is almost certainly connected with the health consequences of trying to concentrate dense human populations within a well-watered tropical landscape."

not much below twenty years, compared with averages some five years younger, and even child marriage, in India and China.

B. The Southeast Asian Frontier

It is not sufficiently recognized that most of the lowland regions of Southeast Asia, characterized today by very high population densities and full utilization of arable land, were areas of low population density no more than a few generations ago. The point is clear, for example, for the central plain of Thailand, the Chao Phaya river basin, which was settled mainly in the late nineteenth century under the impetus of the Siamese monarchy (Johnston 1976; Douglass 1984) and many areas of the Northeast (Keyes 1976) and North (Mounge 1982) of Thailand were settled but recently as well. Other useful sources on the frontier theme include De Koninck (1987), Mikesell (1960), and Larkin (1982). Zimmerman's (1931) now-remarkable conclusion based on agricultural surveys in Central Thailand only six decades ago is worth citing:

> "...there is no district that is not within approximately fifty kilometres of another district that is under-populated even considering the present development of agricultural methods in Siam. ... In the fact of these circumstances it is impossible to believe that this country is over-populated or is in any danger of such for the next half century."

Even contemporary retrospective studies with any time depth at all (eg: Sharp and Hanks (1978), Mounge (1982) and Lauro (1980) describe the late nineteenth century history of moving frontiers. Sharp and Hanks are especially eloquent in evoking the frontier spirit of the time.

The important points are that this frontier condition was found throughout the region in the 19th century, and that movement was mainly into the areas we now regard as the heartlands (generally, the lowlands) of Southeast Asia. We have excellent studies of the Burma delta (Adas 1974), the Central Plain of Luzon in the Philippines (McLennan 1969;1980), among many others, and the process is still underway in much of modern Malaysia. Even densely settled Java saw new land being brought under cultivation until the end of the 19th century (Pelzer 1941).[15]

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[15]The island of Java and the Red River delta of Vietnam were heavily settled much earlier than other parts of the region. There are other exceptions on a smaller scale such as the Ilocos Coast of the island of Luzon in the Philippines (Smith 1981).

This frontier condition has been a shaping influence on social organization in the region for a very long time, certainly predating the wide diffusion of new religious systems. These new ideological influences have obscured the underlying cultural complex, as have, more recently, the various manifestations of colonialism, and most recently the global influences of mass communications. Add to this the significant and sharply contrasting features of Chinese culture in Southeast Asian cities, and we have the materials for a mosaic of highly complex design--a social fabric with a very rugged texture.

The task for those attempting to interpret contemporary data on societal change is to interpret evidence that typically reflects and confounds all these influences in a variety of ways. The first step toward clarity is to recognize the contribution to contemporary patterns coming from the underlying cultural complex.

C. Implications for Social Organization

There are implications at both the societal and family levels, with important links between these levels. At the societal level commentary has focused on such issues as the nature of statecraft, and ways that legitimacy is established and power accumulated and maintained in the Southeast Asian setting. One broad observation from this which is of direct relevance to us here derives from a key fact about frontiers--they are relatively land abundant and labor scarce. Power, whether in the hands of formal state bureaucracies or "big men" or "men of prowess" (Wolters 1982:5-6), stems from control over labor, from cumulating numbers of loyal followers, more than from control over land. The preceding assertion has the character of a powerful **mantra** among Southeast Asianists. Power under these conditions is relatively impermanent, rooted in individual prowess or charisma, and, being essentially personal in nature, not generally transferable across generations.[16]

There is a countervailing consequence of this stress on control over people: an important role for warfare in Southeast Asia, with the military goal most often being the capture of people rather than the taking of territory. This led to institutionalized "bondage" in Southeast Asia and a recognized gradient in civil condition from free to slave (Reid 1983; 1988:129-36; Turton 1980; Feeney 1989; Hoadley 1983; Lasker 1950; Scott 1991; Worchester 1913). These are opposite tensions, with the general population

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[16]Hanks (1972:90ff) also sees the labor-scarce situation as having a set of important consequences at the societal level, including a relatively undifferentiated society with a weak and flexible division of labor. He also suggests a substantial degree of movement of population and turnover of resources in the form of high social mobility and low stability of wealth.

being both valuable "objects of competition" and subject to efforts at control from above. In Reid's words, the rural poor had the "...option of choosing a dangerous freedom over a more secure bondage..." (Reid 1988:26).

An aspect of this that has received attention recently is the relative lack of corporate character in village communities (Breman 1988:20-27; Kemp 1988). The corporate model presumes "A fluid superstructure and a social basis consisting of separate cells in which the bulk of the agrarian population, fragmented into units of no more than a few hundred individuals, lived together generation after generation." [17] Breman describes this as a major misunderstanding with broad ramifications. I note here only the implications for constructing a Southeast Asian framework for demographic analysis, and for interpreting historical statistics at the local level.

The corporate view suggests individuals absorbed by the collectivity; village societies as immutable; populations with little geographic mobility (and, we should note, the prospect of local population registers which are gratifying complete). Breman cites Boeke's view, in reference to colonial Java, that village communities were essentially stationary in size, since technological stagnation precluded intensification of land use. When population began to grow steadily, "...branching off became inevitable. A younger generation, or a faction or clan would break away and form a new nucleus cultivating more distant wasteland." "According to the literature, colonization, like land flight, took the shape of group movement and in effect ratified the collectivity mystique." Thus, migration is essentially conservative and population growth due to migration involves only mechanical increase in scale. No real social dynamism is necessarily involved.[18]

The revised view proposed by Breman stresses the dynamic and changing nature of village society, change marked by differentiation and inequality and individual responses to these. Breman assigns a central place to migration in Southeast Asian society: he views migration as "inherent to the pre-colonial system," with "a structural effect...not restricted to calamitous times of continual food shortages, war, or other ecological or social-economic disasters." I am convinced that migration in pre-colonial Asia should not be uunderstood as the mere movement of peasants from one location to another,

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[17]In colonial context, this view justified the colonial attack on Indianized central political structures, which were seen as superimposed on and exploiting the natural village units. In this view, the true Southeast Asia was in the villages, and these were well defined corporate entities in territorial terms (Breman 1988).

[18]For elaboration on this important distinction in the context of a classification of migration types, see Petersen (1970:271-90).

as a temporary moment of action representing a break in a 'normal' situation of stasis. I consider mobility to have been an essential part of the rural system under the **ancien regime** in which the village, as a social formation, played a subordinate role only."

This logic of voluntarism and mutability carries through from the societal to more local levels and, among other implications, accounts for the "looseness" of social relationships, even to relationships among kin and at the level of household organization.[19] The essential fluidity of Southeast Asian households is captured well by Hanks (1972:81):

> "Each generation calls out the particular personnel for its own household and expects the group to be so rickety after a generation of joint living that a successor must rebuild entirely. This rebuilding in each generation characterizes the kinship systems that Murdock (1960) among others, calls "cognatic" (or bilateral), in contrast to "lineal" systems where social architects have organized groups that survive several generations of buffeting."

He adds (p. 82), "From the foregoing the first principle of forming a household becomes apparent: all members join voluntarily."

Hanks and others have viewed these voluntary kin relationships as founded on the principle of reciprocity. He sees a family-level analogy to the accumulation of allegiances and thus power at the societal level, suggesting that households with more resources attract more reciprocities, and that these reciprocities are more likely to be enduring ones. Households, he says, strive to maximize the numbers of active reciprocities. This description, Hanks believes, can be applied in varying degrees throughout much of Southeast Asia.[20]

At the micro-level, pioneering and land abundance rather than land scarcity have driven kinship and resource control. In particular, the urgent problem of endowing the next generation is handled throughout the region within a framework of bilateral kinship, partible inheritance and movement out of parental households by most offspring. Lineage principles are absent on the whole.

The prevailing household cycle in the region can be puzzling when viewed through the lens of cross-section survey data, since what one sees are mostly nuclear households with a limited number of

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[19]The notion of "loose social structure," introduced by Embree (1950) in reference to Thailand, has long been a highly contentious idea in Southeast Asian studies (Evers 1969) and is subject to serious misunderstanding (eg:Todd 1985).

[20]Again, general features are manifested differently across settings. The Thai Theravada Buddhist stress on merit or Bukhun and its accumulation as the guiding principle of interpersonal relationships is a specific rendering of the notion of reciprocity.

additional kin. Rare are the large vertically and/or horizontally extended households of many other developing areas including India and China. Still, ethnographic materials document regional variation around a general pattern which might be called "modified extended." Foster's (1975) "folk model" of the Thai family development cycle, which can stand as a statement for much of the region, includes bilaterality in kinship, equal heirship by sons and daughters, lack of concern with genealogy, personal choice of marriage partners, initial residence with parents (usually of the wife) after marriage, but only until another sibling marries or circumstances encourage movement away.

The demographic control system in this setting clearly operates via outmigration from localities (as well as by involution; cf Geertz 1963; also, Kahn 1985, Metzner 1982, Muizenberg 1975, White 1976), rather than via delayed marriage as in Europe (Hajnal 1965; 1982). Though marriage is late relative to agrarian societies generally, I believe this reflects the regional stress on gender equality and women's work roles, which compete with early marriage, rather than a societal strategy of demographic control through marriage delay. As is discussed elsewhere (Smith 1980; Xenos and Gultiano 1992), there has been a twentieth century shift toward even later marriage which, in the more recent epoch, may well be a demographic control mechanism.

The kinship and inheritance system of traditional Southeast Asia encouraged gender equality in such important matters as land holding and control over personal decisions. Additional evidence reviewed by Reid (1988:162-72; 1988) points to substantial roles for women in commerce, diplomacy and statecraft, as well as a high level of female literacy. Moore (1973) makes the following comment on gender in Southeast Asia:

> "the cultural manifestations of this sexual equality are, for example, a bilateral kinship structure; equal inheritance rights of sons and daughters; post-marital residence patterns emphasizing neolocality and/or residence (often temporary) with either set of parents according to considerations of convenience; the lack of substantial material transactions in marriage contracts and approximately equal contributions to marriage costs from both parties; a large element of free choice of marriage partners; tolerance (bur rarely approval) of premarital and extramarital sexual relations; male-female equality in social intercourse; and the lack of strong preference for children of one sex."

Yet, powerful influences toward gender differentiation are also reflected in contemporary data, producing complex and often puzzling patterns (see, for example, Reid 1988, Esterik 1982, Blanc-Szanton 1990, Atkinson and Errington 1990, Boserup 1970, and Chandler, Sullivan and Branson 1989).

III. CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

Throughout the bibliography colonial materials predominate, particularly from the period of high colonialism (generally the 19th century), but there are a few pre-colonial or indigenous sources that warrant mention, many of which have never been examined for demographic purposes (see my discussion earlier) and of course there are numerous traveller accounts of varying plausibility as previously mentioned. The Western colonial records include a great variety, since the region had no fewer than five colonial systems in place at one time or another.

There is seemingly a fundamental discontinuity, certainly in demographic terms, between the 20th century and what came before in Southeast Asia. This magnifies the importance for us of connecting 19th and 20th century trend lines of social and demographic change. The frontier, the land-abundant premise of Southeast Asian social organization, came to an end in the 19th century or early in the 20th century throughout much of the region's lowlands. In some areas, such as the Ilocos Coast in the Philippines (Smith 1981), and of course Java and the Red River delta, the saturation point was reached relatively early. Elsewhere land continued to be available until much more recently. Historical demography must be linked up with contemporary demography and anthropology to assess the changes in villages, in families, and in individual lives.

To this end, the earliest of the modern census materials deserve much more attention than they receive. Many of the older censuses are actually superior in some respects to their successors. These censuses can provide a time series of changes in marriage patterns (Smith 1980; Xenos and Gultiano 1992), educational attainment, land use (Richards and Flint 1994), and perhaps other aspects of change as well. Another important view of long-term change comes from village level genealogies such as those undertaken by Lauro (1979) and Sharp and Hanks (1978) for Thailand.[21] Other sources include large scale retrospective surveys such as the Malaysian Family Life Survey and the Asian Marriage Survey, which collected life histories. Analysis of "modern" civil registration data on vital events has been relatively unproductive thus far. Finally, there may be some value to comparisons of 20th century swidden and sedentary wet-rice populations, along the lines suggested by Reid (1988).

There are certainly many obstcles in the way of the comprehensive view we seek of long run demographic change. In the end we are likely to have but an aggregate overview for any significant

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[21]See Lefferts (1975) on the prospects for genealogical reconstruction through interviewing as a form of Southeast Asian historical demography. There are also possibilities for archival genealogy (Langhan 1938, 1939).

number of localities, and really detailed micro-level information for just a very few localities. We can expect variation temporally and across localities to be considerable, making generalization from a few such places, chosen opportunistically, risky at best. Moreover, the populations we want to describe often are internally diverse as well. Diversity is, after all, a Southeast Asian theme. Indic influences have diffused from the upper strata downward, while Sinic influences have diffused mainly from the cities and towns outward. Thus, behavioral differences across social strata as well as by degree of urbanism may reflect cultural as much as economic impacts.

This is not to mention upland/lowland and other minority group interactions which are almost certainly beyond our reach empirically. Even for relatively homogeneous village populations, simple extrapolation backward from more recent trends would be hazardous. We have already seen that the 20th century marriage trend may not run backward very far (Smith and Ng 1982; Owen 1986), and the late 19th century episodes of crisis mortality probably do not extrapolate to similar severities in earlier times (Smith 1978). There may have been long swings in both marriage and mortality, and perhaps in fertility and population size as well. Regional and even local variation on all the demographic time series is likely to be considerable, and within this we must identify the temporal and regional regularities. For a host of reasons, then, generalization will be difficult, even foolhardy, though at times tempting, and ultimately necessary.

Two broad regional issues arise in light of the knowledge we now have of long-term change in Europe. One is the question of volition regarding fertility at the individual and couple level, and the other is the issue of homeostasis or systemic demographic control at the level of community or society. The first might be considered to be imbedded within the second. What characterizes the Southeast Asian "demographic control system," or alternatively, is this European notion and the related idea of homeostasis at all useful in Southeast Asia? In Europe the control system centered on marriage and inheritance. We may find that in Southeast Asia the control system has centered either on migration (though in a way that is also closely related to the life cycle and to marriage) or involution, and that both these control systems allow substantial rates of population growth rather than the local population stability we observe in historical Europe.

Other general items for a research agenda can be identified as well. Perhaps in the longer run we can we develop the rudiments of a Southeast Asian family history analogous to that now in hand for Europe. This history will have to include a model of the household residential cycle and resulting household size and composition at points in time, a model of household labor allocation, and more. The

ethnographic "folk model" of Foster's is a convenient starting point. As a closely related question, what has been the life course demography of the region, compared with the life course configurations found in other regions and in Southeast Asia more recently?

A broad problem in the historiography of the region might be termed "demographic periodization." What periods seem appropriate for each society? Are these roughly the same periods across the whole region? Do these periods correspond meaningfully to periods defined on political, economic or other grounds? For example, does the rough periodization utilized by Reid bear up as more detailed research is reported?

Because of the profound ecological and population transformations of the last few decades the region's contemporary demography virtually conceals the region's underlying demographic system, that is, the demographic system under which the cultural complex took it's shape. But this underlying demography is brought into view only when we examine early patterns and long-run changes. Historical demography should in the end give us more insightful contemporary demographic models for the region.[22] The importance of demography in the region's social and economic history is apparent in much recent writing by historians, anthropologists, and others. Reid's (1988; 1993) evocation of Southeast Asia during the Age of Commerce, for example, presents a set of propositions which must be tested in considerable measure in demographic terms. And, the intense debate between Geertz and others over agricultural involution has turned in part on issues of historical population change. The recent findings of social, including demographic, historians have been the stuff of the argument. In his recent effort to summarize, Geertz (1984) comments that "Any discussion of culture and change in Indonesia that did not have the past, present, and future of Javanese demography constantly before it would hardly be worth much." This observation applies equally to much of the region. We can hope in the end to have contributed to these debates--to have produced not "divergent" but "convergent" evidence,[23] data which describe individuals who are, in the language of Geertz (1984) "...directly involved in one another's lives; people, who, in a marvelous phrase of Alfred Schutz's, 'grow old together'."

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[22]An Example, I think, is Fegan's (1978; 1979) notion of a 20th century bureaucratic frontier. This model incorporates the urban and rural occupational transformations, the rise of female urbanward migration, the shift to later marriage, and in particular the supply-side (kinship) forces underlying these population trends. The whole constellation of changes can be seen as a continuation of the region's earlier population history.

[23]Geertz defines "divergent" data as what "...one gets from polls or surveys, or censuses, which yield facts about classes of individuals not otherwise related."

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