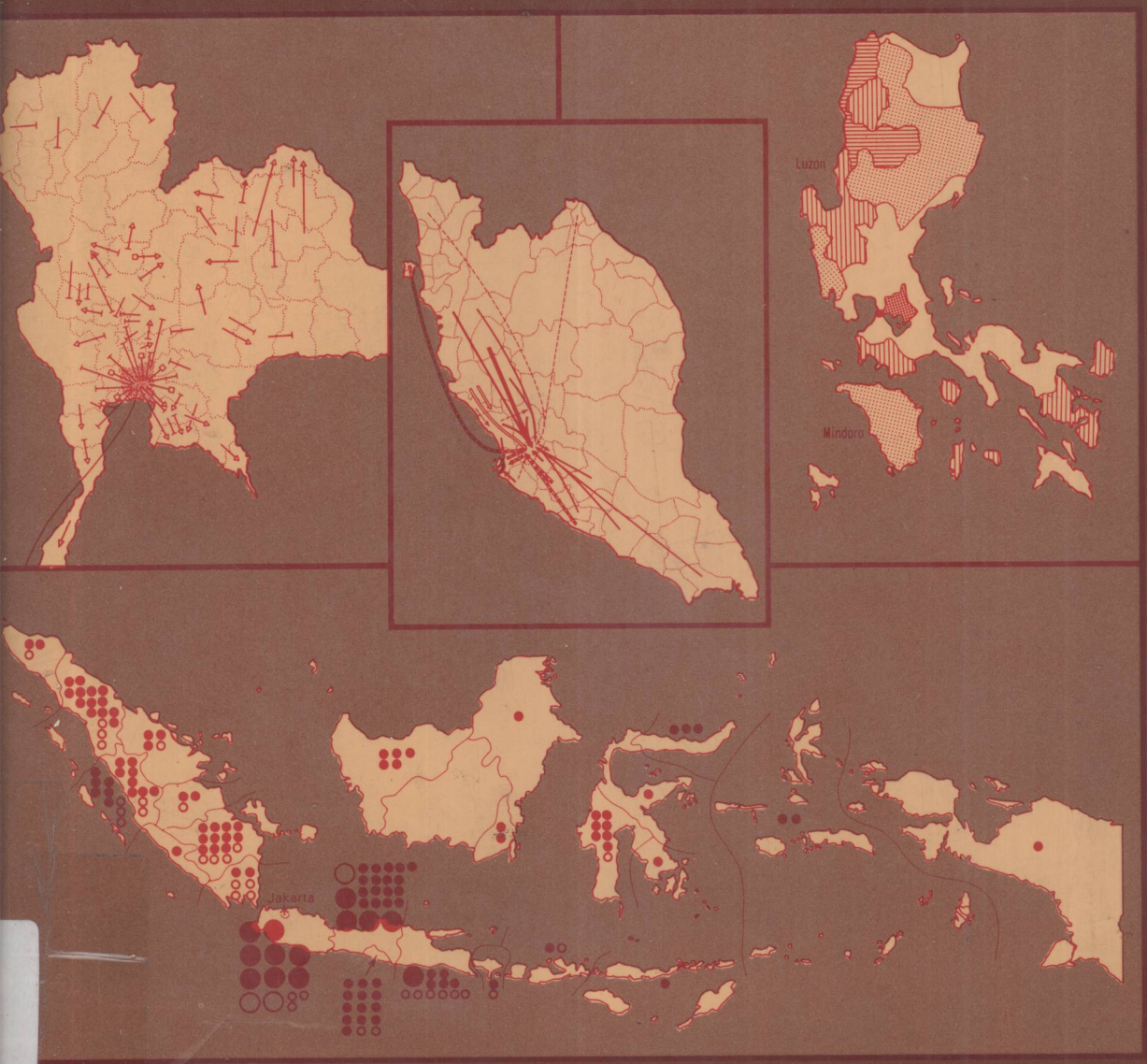
Migration and Development in South-East Asia

A Demographic Perspective

Edited by
ROBIN J. PRYOR



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KUALA LUMPUR
OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
OXFORD NEW YORK MELBOURNE
1979

Oxford University Press
OXFORD LONDON GLASGOW
NEW YORK TORONTO MELBOURNE WELLINGTON
KUALA LUMPUR SINGAPORE JAKARTA HONG KONG TOKYO
DELHI BOMBAY CALCUTTA MADRAS KARACHI
NAIROBI DAR ES SALAAM CAPE TOWN

ISBN 0 19 580420 1 (*Boards*)
ISBN 0 19 580421 X (*Limp*)

Printed in Singapore by Dainippon Tien Wah Printing (Pte) Ltd.
Published by Oxford University Press, 3, Jalan 13/3,
Petaling Jaya, Selangor, Malaysia

Acknowledgements

INDIVIDUAL sources of assistance are acknowledged in the various chapters, but the Editor wishes to gratefully acknowledge the cooperation of the contributors and their institutions, and the support of the Department of Demography and the Research School of Social Sciences at the Australian National University (ANU) for funding data collection and field work. Keith Mitchell of the Cartography Laboratory, Department of Human Geography, ANU, drew the figures in fine style from some very rough originals; and Mrs. E. M. Schock and Mrs. B. Addison typed the manuscript with consummate good humour and accuracy.

This volume is dedicated to my parents, for their support in *my* migration and development.

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Foreword

I have been invited—perhaps challenged—to contribute a prefatory note to this volume, placing it in the context of the 'wealth flows' demographic transition theory I have been attempting to develop. The offer is the more challenging because Robin Pryor has already designed the study in terms of the broad sweep of socioeconomic and demographic change in a region which has experienced very great change over the last forty years.

Demographic transition in its broadest sense is the story of the transformation of society from traditional villages of food cultivators or fishermen, or even scattered bands of hunters and food gatherers, to a situation where most people live in cities or large towns and are employed outside agriculture. The former are likely to be characterized by high fertility subject, at least within marriage, to little control, while the latter will eventually exhibit low fertility. The question here is whether one set of demographic parameters, fertility and mortality, is in any way linked with those defining migration and urbanization.

Wealth flow theory suggests that in pre-transitional society large families are economically best off, probably on a per capita basis and certainly in terms of the older or parental generation. The fundamental reason is that society is so structured that there is a net flow of wealth over a lifetime from the younger to the older generation. An additional, but often important, reason is that large families can afford to spare some members from the central tasks of subsistence farming and the maintenance of the household to pursue more lucrative opportunities, often at a distance.

In age-old traditional society such opportunities could hardly arise, but such conditions are now rare in South-East Asia and towns, plantations, mines, construction sites and other areas of employment are known to most villagers and are within access. It is precisely when the wealth flows still tend to be from the young to the old that the latter are likely to encourage some of the former to make use of such opportunities, which usually mean migrating, at least temporarily. There are two reasons. Firstly, the upward flow of wealth means that the old are almost certain to benefit, perhaps by regular remittances, irregularly timed gifts, help in emergencies, assistance in old age and other means. Secondly, the kind of social control that determines the upward flow also permits some guidance about movement (although this may be subtle).

The basic proposition of the wealth flows theory is that it is the social structure, especially at the family level, which determines the direction of the wealth flows and the economic impact of high or low fertility.

This is an important premise in terms of the migration of family members, because such migration inevitably causes social change. The migrant is subject to non-traditional influences merely because of his or her movement from the centre of origin, even if the move is to another traditional area. However, the chances are that the destination will be far from traditional in character. The work will be different and the minimal changes in lifestyle and attitudes necessary can be subsumed under the rubric of 'modernization'. So can the living conditions, which may well make the migrant husband and wife more dependent on each other—an important point, for the wealth flows theory argues that the changing family structure which alters the direction of the wealth flows by emotionally and economically crystallizing out the nuclear family is most likely to start with a metamorphosis of the conjugal relationship. However, the theory also argues that such changes within the family usually go a long way beyond minimal adjustment to new occupation and residential conditions, the reason being that the areas of opportunity are permeated with Western cultural values which are a vehicle for Western behaviour patterns in terms of family nucleation, conjugal relationships and parent-child relationships. Clearly this is the case in Singapore and Kuala Lumpur, originally settled by immigrant

populations within a colonial framework, and extensively in the Philippines with centuries of cultural diffusion and an imported religion.

It is also of some importance in terms of those who stay at home. The absence of the migrants changes the family structure, as does the inevitably new relationship with the migrant members (especially with the daughters-in-law). Subtler changes are wrought by the new ideas imported, as well as by the money and goods, while much stronger influences may be exerted on the migrant's parents and siblings if they use their contacts with the migrant to visit the areas of opportunity.

All these influences tend to influence mortality: the emigrant probably has better access to health facilities than he had at home; while his family of origin may benefit by his access to health facilities or knowledge or may be able to use wealth he has brought back.

Sooner or later, the net upward flow of wealth is likely to be challenged—probably sooner in the household which sends migrants forth and later in the one which does not. The migrant may place increasing emphasis on the economic primacy of his own conjugal family, with several effects. Parents in his village may be less certain of the value of high fertility. The migrant, by his new attitudes and behaviour, will almost certainly ensure that his own children are likely to demand more from him while being likely to give him less; he may, in fact, perceive this in time to limit his fertility, a recognition of the reversal of the direction of the net intergenerational wealth flow.

Such change does not necessarily slow down the rate of migration; it may well accelerate it, for now the potential migrant is likely to reap a larger share of his earnings and to be more likely to initiate his original movement.

Internal migration almost certainly hastens fertility decline, though initially it might provide an additional support for high fertility. It probably also hastens mortality decline, even though some rural-urban migrants live in terrible conditions. Migrations may also be a response to declining mortality in rural areas—it may help to create the family that can afford to export some of its members to areas of greater opportunity. Ultimately, all these demographic movements will be seen to be parts of the same great twentieth century demographic transformation of the world.

This foreword is an essay which has doubtless trespassed well beyond the limits set for this book—a book which is in the best of the traditions that Robin Pryor and his colleagues within the Demography Department of the Australian National University and outside it have established for migration studies and for work in South-East Asia. Doubtless, too, they will eventually test most of the propositions put forward here and help to establish better migration and better demographic transition theory.

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J. C. CALDWELL

Preface

POPULATION redistribution within countries, particularly in the form of urbanization and the rapid growth of the larger cities in the Third World, has attracted increasing attention in recent years as national governments and city administrations attempt to cope with burgeoning squatter communities, unemployment and underemployment, and the provision of housing, health, educational and other infrastructure. There have been other programmes designed to keep the population 'down on the farm', or to attract rural migrants by opening up frontier lands, highly capitalized agricultural settlement schemes, the Transmigration programme in Indonesia, and regional development projects which seek to integrate the expansion of urban and rural employment opportunities.

Such trends, problems, and projects place a premium on analyses of internal migration, and many countries in South-East Asia have introduced relevant census questions for the first time during the 1970 Census round, or have expanded the range of migration-relevant questions, and some have conducted separate or complementary surveys to gain further insights into population mobility. It is important to emphasize, however, that only a very small proportion of all mobility is tapped by censuses: most changes of residence occur within a province, rather than across provincial boundaries; and seasonal movements such as harvesting and fruit picking, circular mobility based on employment in both urban and rural areas, tourism, and some forms of long-term commuting are all ignored by censuses which focus on a somewhat arbitrary definition of what constitutes a significant residential change.

For the first time, this volume brings together a series of migration studies utilizing data from the 1970 Census round in Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia and the Philippines. Census information is supplemented by sample surveys of migration in all countries, although residential mobility in Singapore is somewhat restricted and stereotyped in comparison with the variety of migration patterns and migrant characteristics in the other four countries.

The definition of South-East Asia in this volume is derived from the pragmatic factors of data availability and current research activity, and where authors are not Asian nationals, they have all lived and conducted field research in one or more countries of South-East Asia for some years. Geographic contiguity and some common threads of historical experience also link these countries. Vietnam (now called The Socialist Republic of Vietnam), Cambodia (now called Kampuchea) and other countries in the border region have been omitted, not because of the insignificance of internal migration—indeed South Vietnam plans to resettle 10 million urban dwellers in rural areas,[1] and a similar policy was implemented in the Khmer Republic—but because data of comparable scope and reliability are unavailable, and because the recent military situation in these countries had created very different causal patterns and development problems. Refugees have crossed into Thailand on foot, and by sea to Malaysia, and some internal movements in northern Thailand undoubtedly reflect the security situation there, but this form of forced migration falls outside the aims of the book.

The volume has been planned in three major sections. Firstly, as well as introducing the theme of migration and development, Chapter 1 provides a perspective on the demographic and mobility transitions, and on the regional patterns of internal migration characteristic of countries in the 'transitional' stage of economic development and social change.

Secondly, the series of country studies has been assembled to document four interwoven themes:

1. Regional patterns of migration within each country (Chapters 2, 7, 14 and 18).

2. Migration to large cities or growth centres (Chapters 3, 5, 15, 19 and 20).

1. Quoted in *The Canberra Times*, 4 June 1976; on the dynamics of migration to Saigon 1964–72, see Goodman and Franks (1975).

3. Migration differentials or selectivity, using censuses and surveys to describe the main demographic characteristics of internal migrants and, where possible, comparing them with non-migrants (Chapters 4, 8, 12, 13, 15 and 16).

4. The interrelationships of migration with social and economic development and national planning: multivariate analyses describe the links between indicators of migration and development (Chapters 9, 12 and 21); and development strategies which influence population redistribution processes are discussed for individual countries (Chapters 5, 6, 10, 13, 17, 20 and 21), and in a comparative study of all five (Chapter 22).

Finally, Chapters 22–24 draw together the migration experience and development planning practice in the region by focusing respectively on national development plans, urban planning, and land settlement. The concluding chapter attempts to summarize the major patterns of population redistribution and the main problems of planning, and indicates certain policy and research options and needs.

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