



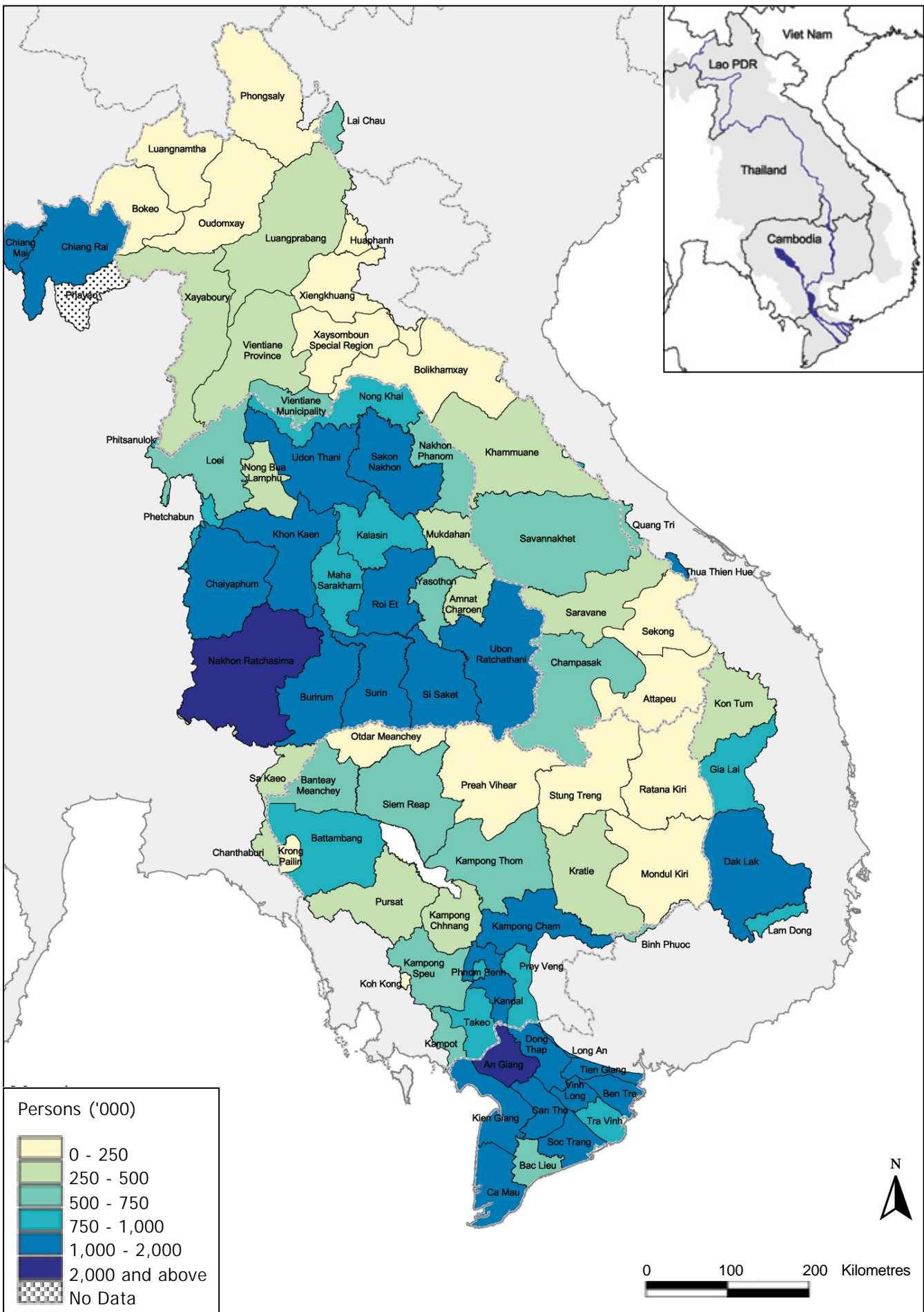
Population

Population Maps

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Map 1: Population

Provincial population



Map 1: Population

Provincial population

This map shows the distribution of people across the LMB. Approximately 53 million people lived in the LMB areas of the four riparian countries when the most recent national censuses were conducted.

Cambodia makes up approximately 18 percent of the total population of the basin, and 84 percent of its national population lives in the basin. Most of the country's people live in the rich rice-growing areas along the Mekong and within easy distance of the capital, Phnom Penh.

Almost all (93 percent) of the people of Lao PDR live within the Mekong Basin. However, the country is sparsely populated and contributes only about 8 percent of the basin's total population. The Central region, including the capital Vientiane, is the most populous, followed by the North and then the South.

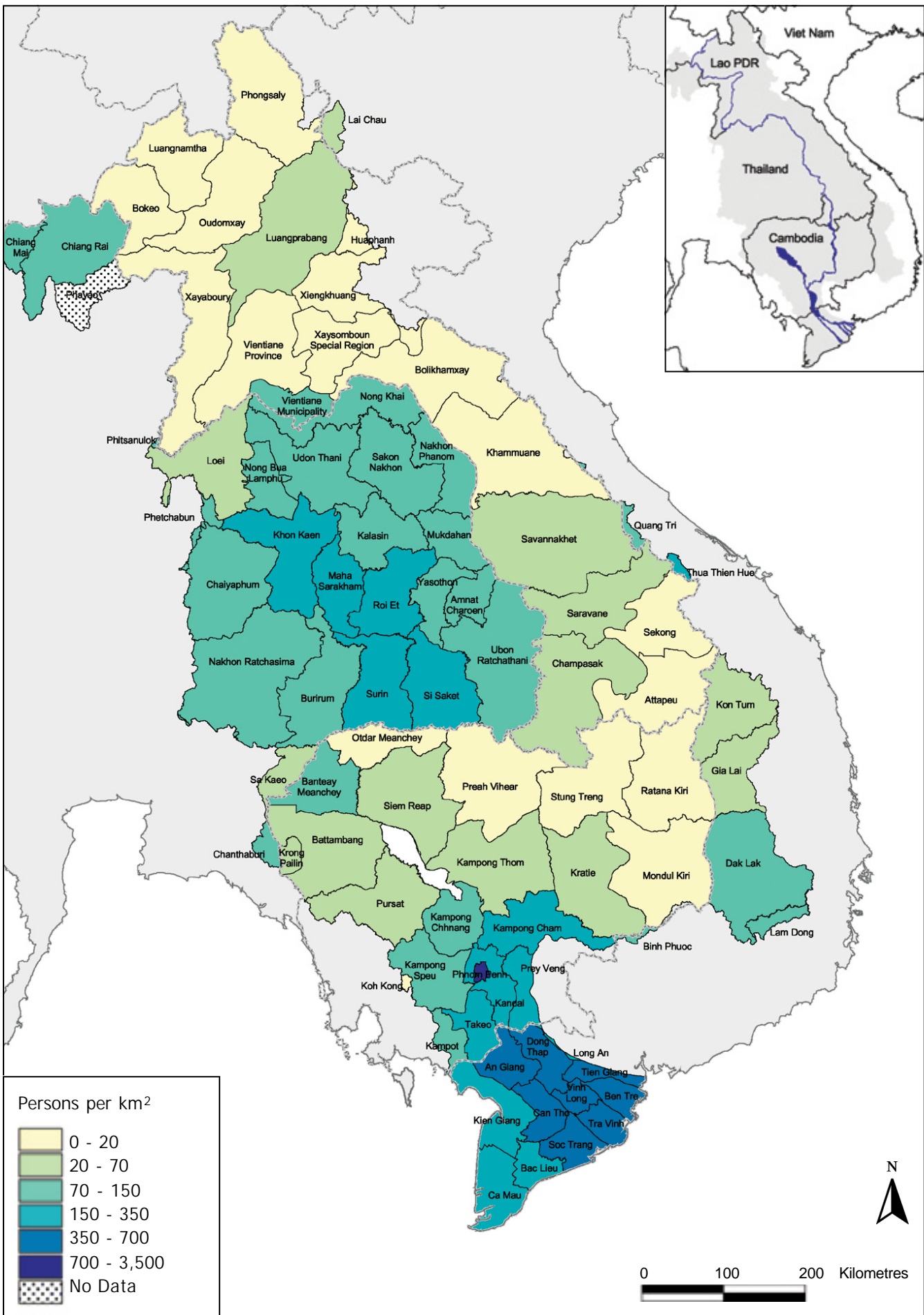
Thailand's Northeast is the most populous region of the country; together with the parts of the North region in the LMB, it is home to 37 percent of the Thai population. In total, Thailand represents 42 percent of the basin-wide population.

The Mekong Delta region in Viet Nam is one of the two main population centres of the country. The other is the Red River Delta, around Hanoi in the North. The Central Highlands is also becoming an increasingly important population centre because of government-sponsored migration policies. Around 20 percent of Viet Nam's population lives in the Mekong Delta and the Central Highlands, making up 31 percent of the LMB population.

Country	Indicator Definition	Source	Table
Cambodia	Provincial population (1998)	Population Census 1998	PopMap
Lao PDR	Provincial population (1995)	Population Census 1995	Table 1B
Thailand	Provincial population (2000)	Population Census 2000	Key Ind.
Viet Nam	Provincial population (1999)	Population Census 1999	Table 1.5

Map 2: Population Density

Number of persons per square kilometre



Map 2: Population Density

Number of persons per square kilometre

Population density varies widely across the LMB. The range extends from 2 persons per km² in Mondul Kiri in the eastern Cambodian uplands to almost 3,500 persons per km² in Phnom Penh. Thailand and Viet Nam are the more populous countries, with generally higher population densities.

The lowest densities occur in the upland regions of Lao PDR and the heavily forested northern and eastern provinces of Cambodia. The relation of topography to population density is clear in Lao PDR. In the low-lying districts of the Mekong Corridor, where urban centres are frequently located, density is significantly higher than in the remote mountainous districts to the east.

Population densities are comparatively low in the Tonle Sap region and the northern part of the Central Highlands. However, government sponsored in-migration policies have bolstered population growth in the Central Highlands in recent years.

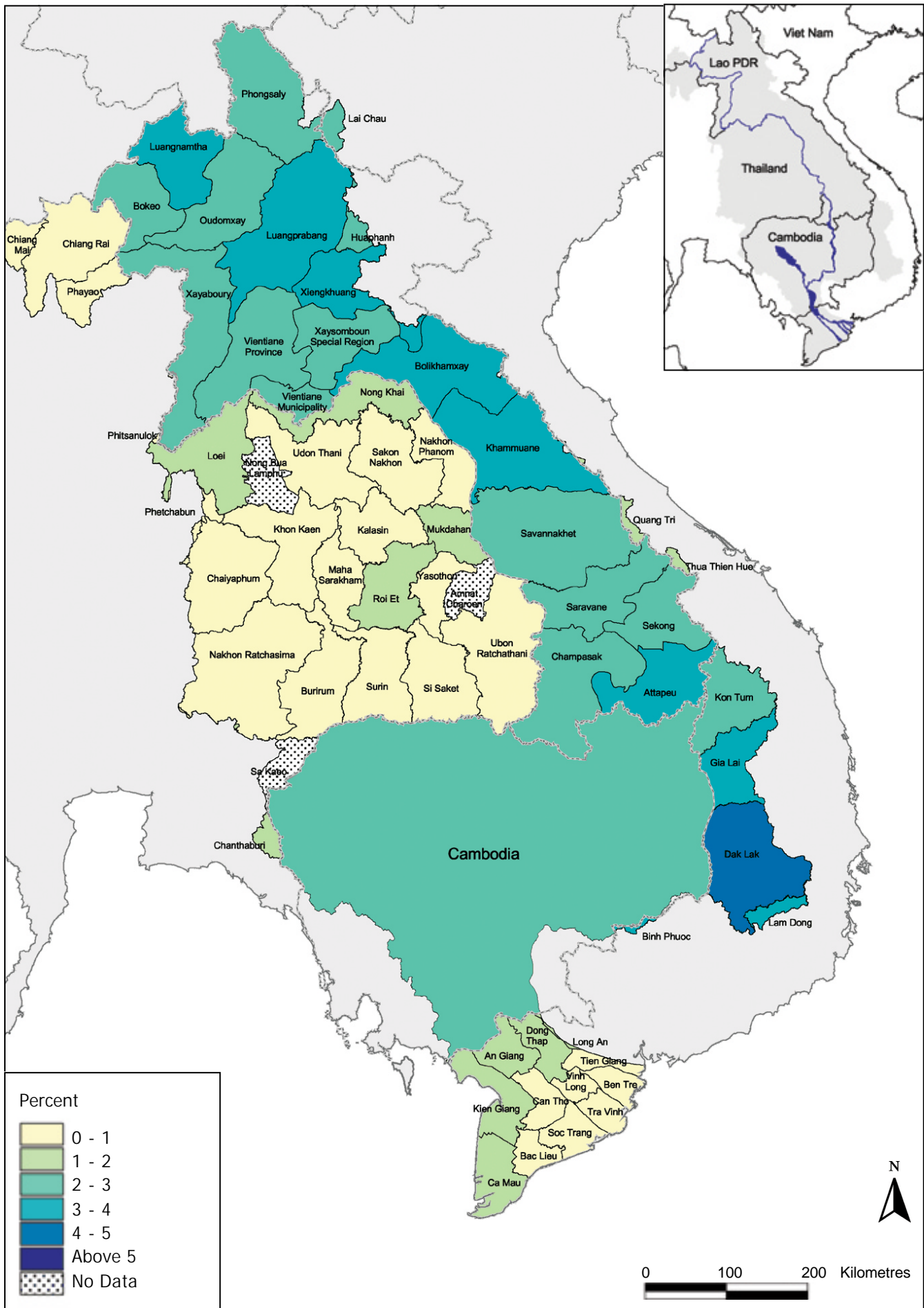
On the Korat Plateau of Thailand, flat terrain served by an extensive transport infrastructure has led to moderately high population densities (75-175 persons/km²). Densities are similar in the southern plains around the Mekong and Bassac rivers in Cambodia.

The northern and central provinces of the Mekong Delta in Viet Nam are the most densely settled (350-650 persons/km²), due in part to good accessibility by road and inland waterways, and proximity to Ho Chi Minh City. Here the distributaries of the Mekong also run through fertile soils, making for attractive agricultural conditions that support large numbers of people.

Country	Indicator Definition	Source	Table
Cambodia	Number of persons per square kilometre (1998)	Population Census 1998	PopMap
Lao PDR	Number of persons per square kilometre (1995)	Population Census 1995	Table 1B
Thailand	Number of persons per square kilometre (2000)	Population Census 2000	Key Ind.
Viet Nam	Number of persons per square kilometre (1999)	Population Census 1999	Table 1.5

Map 3: Population Growth

Annual population increase



Note: Province names and boundaries are not shown where national or regional data are used

Map 3: Population Growth

Annual population increase

Population growth rates in most of Thailand and parts of the Mekong Delta are very low because of declining fertility rates (see Map 36). These regions of the LMB are growing at less than two percent per year, with growth rates of less than one percent in many provinces.

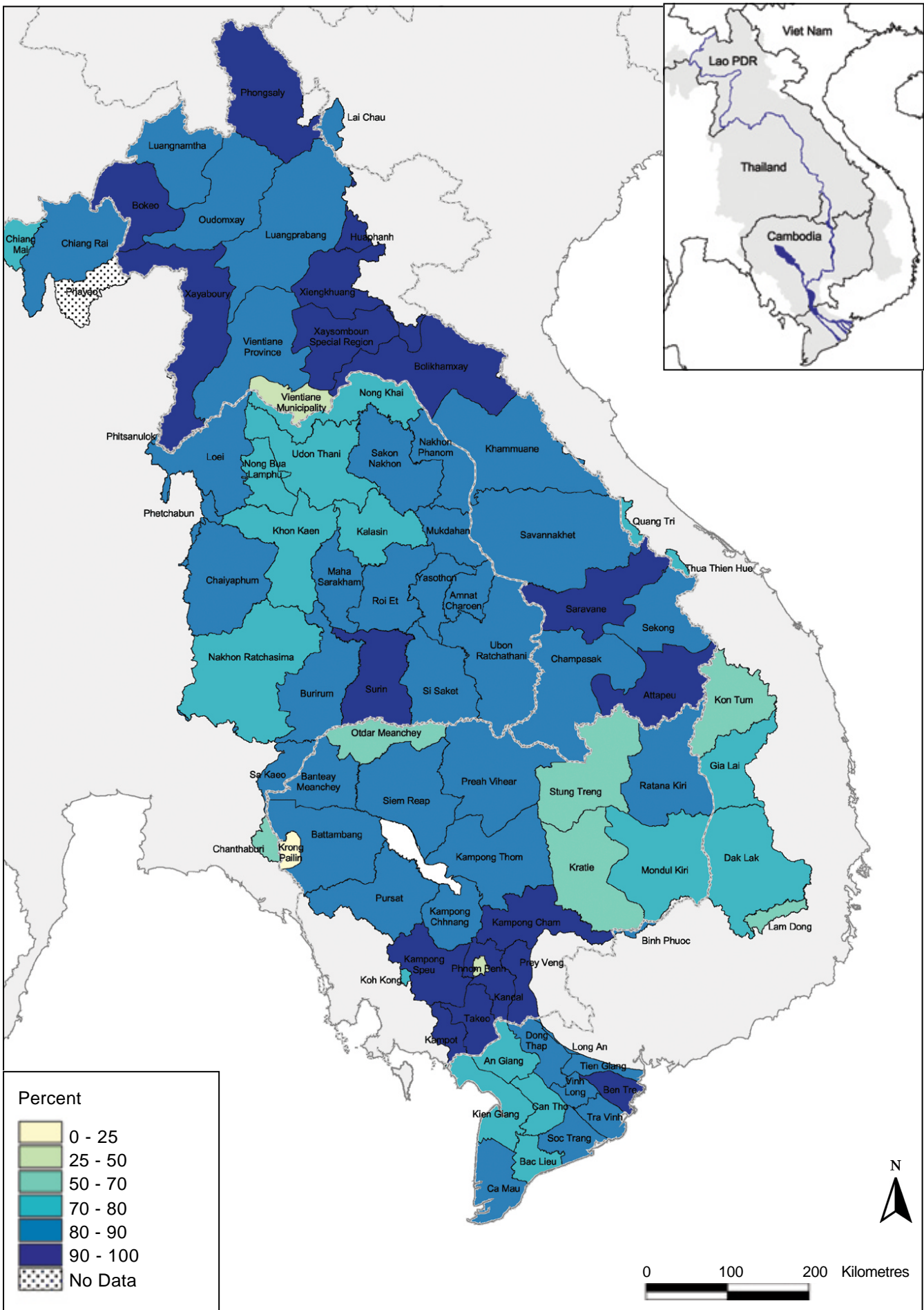
The provinces of the Central Highlands exhibit very high population growth rates, with the population of Dak Lak increasing at five percent per annum. These rates are explained partly by comparatively high fertility rates and partly by large-scale in-migration (Map 19).

If current population growth trends continue, Cambodia and Lao PDR will nearly double their present populations within 20 years. Over the same period, the national populations of Thailand and Viet Nam are expected to increase by 20-30 percent.

Country	Indicator Definition	Source	Table
Cambodia	National population growth rate (1998)	Population Census 1998	
Lao PDR	Increase in average mid-year provincial population (2000-2001)	Statistical Yearbook 2001	Table 25
Thailand	Average annual population growth rate (1990-2000)	Population Census 2000	Table 2
Viet Nam	Annualized population growth (1989-1999)	Viet Nam Human Development Report 2001	Table 5

Map 4: Rural Population

Proportion of population living in rural areas



Map 4: Rural Population

Proportion of population living in rural areas

The LMB is a predominantly rural region. Approximately 80 percent of the population live in rural areas and rely on natural resources for their livelihoods. They are subsistence farmers who supplement what they grow with the fish they catch and the food and other materials they gather from forests and wetlands. Because of remoteness and lower incomes, people living in rural areas tend to fare more poorly than those in urban areas in many of the indicators of social development.

People generally live in small, dispersed villages, and district and provincial towns. Throughout the LMB, variations in the proportions of rural population result from a number of factors. Towns attract people because they offer better access to services, markets and transportation. Also, as in Lao PDR, government programs have relocated people from remote highland areas to towns in an effort to stop shifting cultivation.

In the central provinces of Northeast Thailand, a highway between Bangkok and Vientiane (in Lao PDR) has led to a greater concentration of population in towns and small cities. A similar settlement pattern may occur as a result of future major transportation infrastructure developments such as the ADB sponsored East-West Corridor.

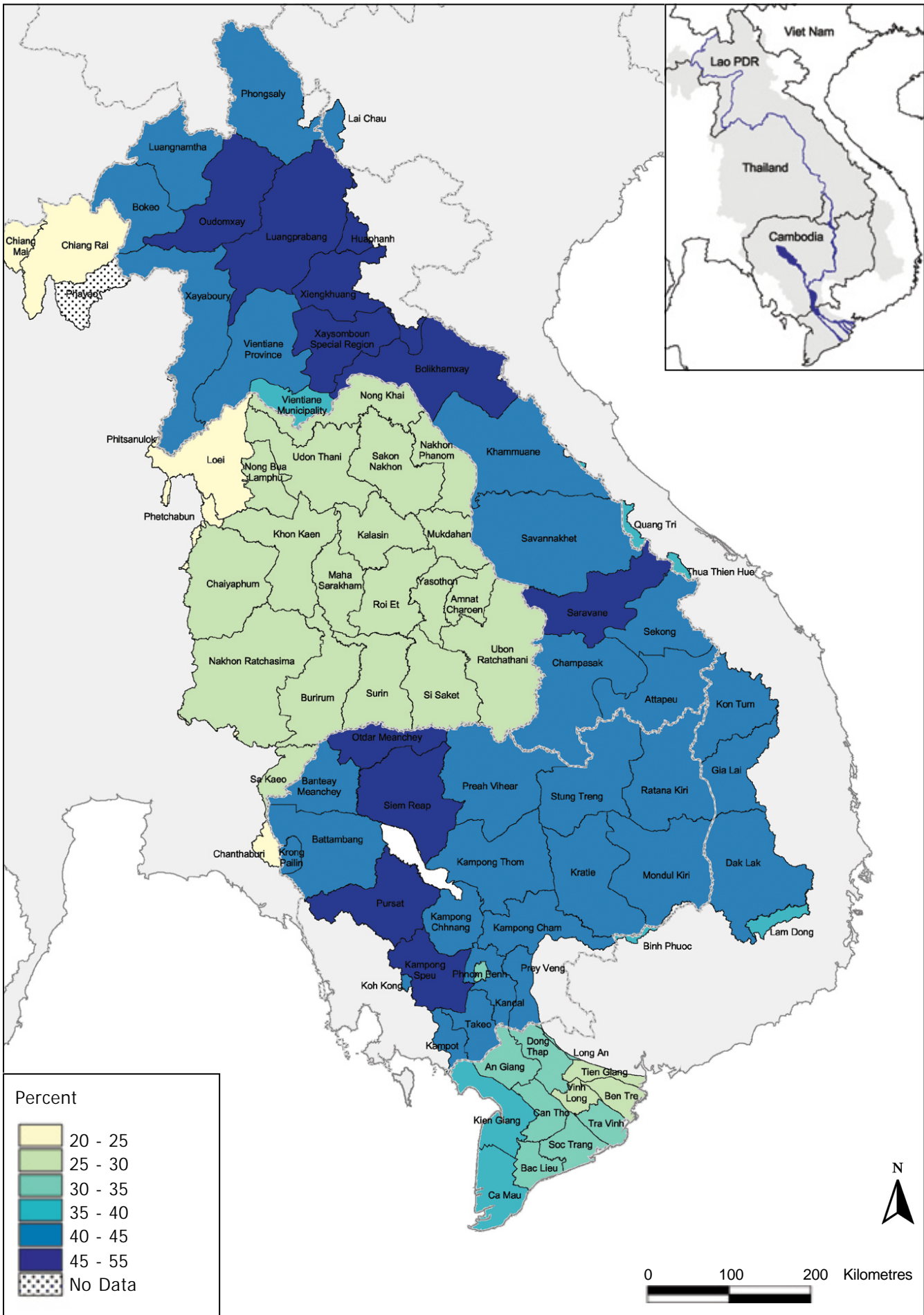
In some provinces in northern and eastern Cambodia, very small overall populations are concentrated in district and provincial towns. As a result, these provinces have substantially lower proportions of rural population than other parts of the country, even though their urban centres are comparatively small.

In the cases of Phnom Penh, Pailin and Vientiane Municipality, the administrative units correspond largely to the territory of the urban centres (see Map 46 for further information about urban and peri-urban development in the LMB).

Country	Indicator Definition	Source	Table
Cambodia	Percentage of population living outside of urban areas (1998). Districts containing cities and provincial headquarter towns are treated as urban areas.	Population Census 1998	PopMap
Lao PDR	Percentage of population living in rural areas (1995)	Population Census 1995	Table 2.2
Thailand	Percentage of population living outside of municipal areas (2000)	Population Census 2000	Key Ind.
Viet Nam	Rural population as a percentage of total population (1999). Urban areas include urban districts of cities, urban quarters, and towns.	Population Census 1999	Table 1.1

Map 5: Age Structure - Child Population

Proportion of population aged 0-14



Map 5: Age Structure - Child Population

Proportion of population aged 0-14

Children under the age of 14 make up high proportions of the populations of Cambodia and Lao PDR. The differences between these countries and Thailand and Viet Nam reflect very different fertility rates over the last 15 years.

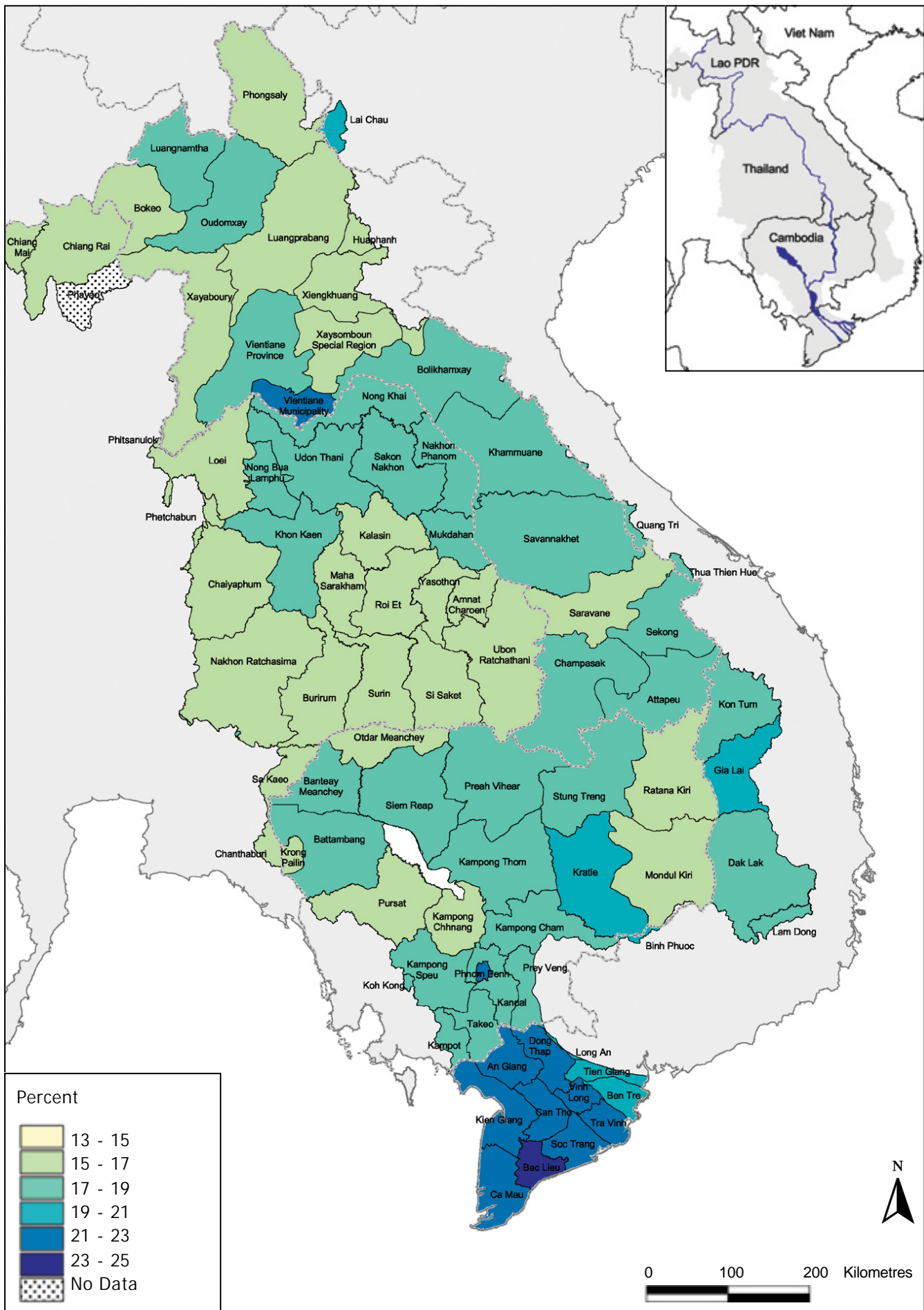
Cambodia and Lao PDR experienced post-war baby booms in the 1980s. As hostilities ceased and family life returned to normal, there was a surge in births. High birth rates continued in the 1990s, and children today constitute more than 40 percent of the population. This situation results in high dependency ratios (see Maps 9-10). It also has important implications for current demands for primary education and childhood health services (see Health Maps and Education Maps).

The lower proportions of children in the populations of the Mekong Delta and the Korat Plateau reflect fertility rates that have dropped to near or below replacement levels (2.1 children/family). Contributing factors include higher education levels among women, greater opportunities for non-farm employment and higher incomes, and government programs promoting birth spacing and smaller families.

Country	Indicator Definition	Source	Table
Cambodia	Proportion of population aged 0-14 (1998)	Population Census 1998	Table A1
Lao PDR	Proportion of population aged 0-14 (1995)	Population Census 1995	Table 1C
Thailand	Proportion of population aged 0-14 (2000)	Population Census 2000	Table 2
Viet Nam	Proportion of population aged 0-14 (1999)	Population Census 1999	Table 1.5

Map 6: Age Structure - Youth Population

Proportion of population aged 15-24



Map 6: Age Structure - Youth Population

Proportion of population aged 15-24

The proportions of the population aged 15-24 are similar across most provinces in Cambodia, Lao PDR and Thailand. Many Cambodians and Lao in this age group were born during the 1970s, when their countries were embroiled in civil strife and war. Despite generally higher fertility rates than in Thailand, Cambodian and Lao women had fewer children during this difficult period. Also, many children died from the effects of war, further reducing the number of youth today.

The Mekong Delta has a higher proportion of youth than the rest of the basin. This is the result of the post-war baby boom in Viet Nam that started in the mid-1970s, that is, 5-10 years earlier than in Cambodia and Lao PDR.

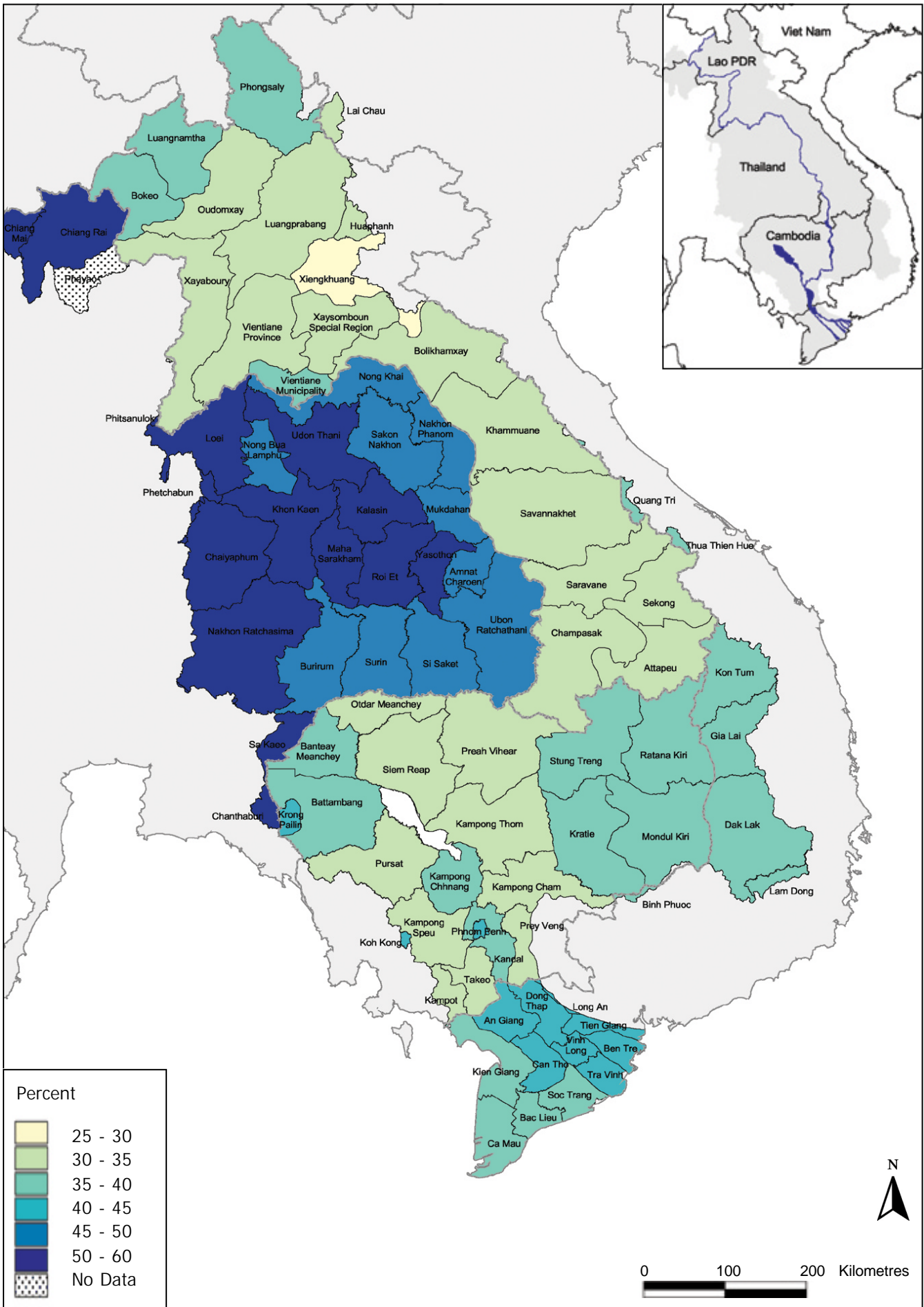
Phnom Penh in Cambodia and Vientiane Municipality in Lao PDR have comparatively high proportions of youth in their populations. These urban centres attract large numbers of young migrants from the provinces in search of employment and education.

The proportion of youth in the LMB population will grow dramatically in coming years as children reach this age group. This has important implications for the demand for educational and other services to meet their needs. It will also put great strains on the labour market to provide sufficient jobs for this age group.

Country	Indicator Definition	Source	Table
Cambodia	Proportion of population aged 15-24 (1998)	Population Census 1998	Table A1
Lao PDR	Proportion of population aged 15-24 (1995)	Population Census 1995	Table 1C
Thailand	Proportion of population aged 15-24 (2000)	Population Census 2000	Table 2
Viet Nam	Proportion of population aged 15-24 (1999)	Population Census 1999	Table 1.5

Map 7: Age Structure - Adult Population

Proportion of population aged 25-64



Map 7: Age Structure - Adult Population

Proportion of population aged 25-64

The low proportions of adults (25 to 64 years) in much of the LMB are a legacy of wars and civil strife in Cambodia, Lao PDR and Viet Nam. Millions of people died between the 1960s and the 1980s. As a result the number of adults, particularly adults over 40, is very low when compared with other countries in the region.

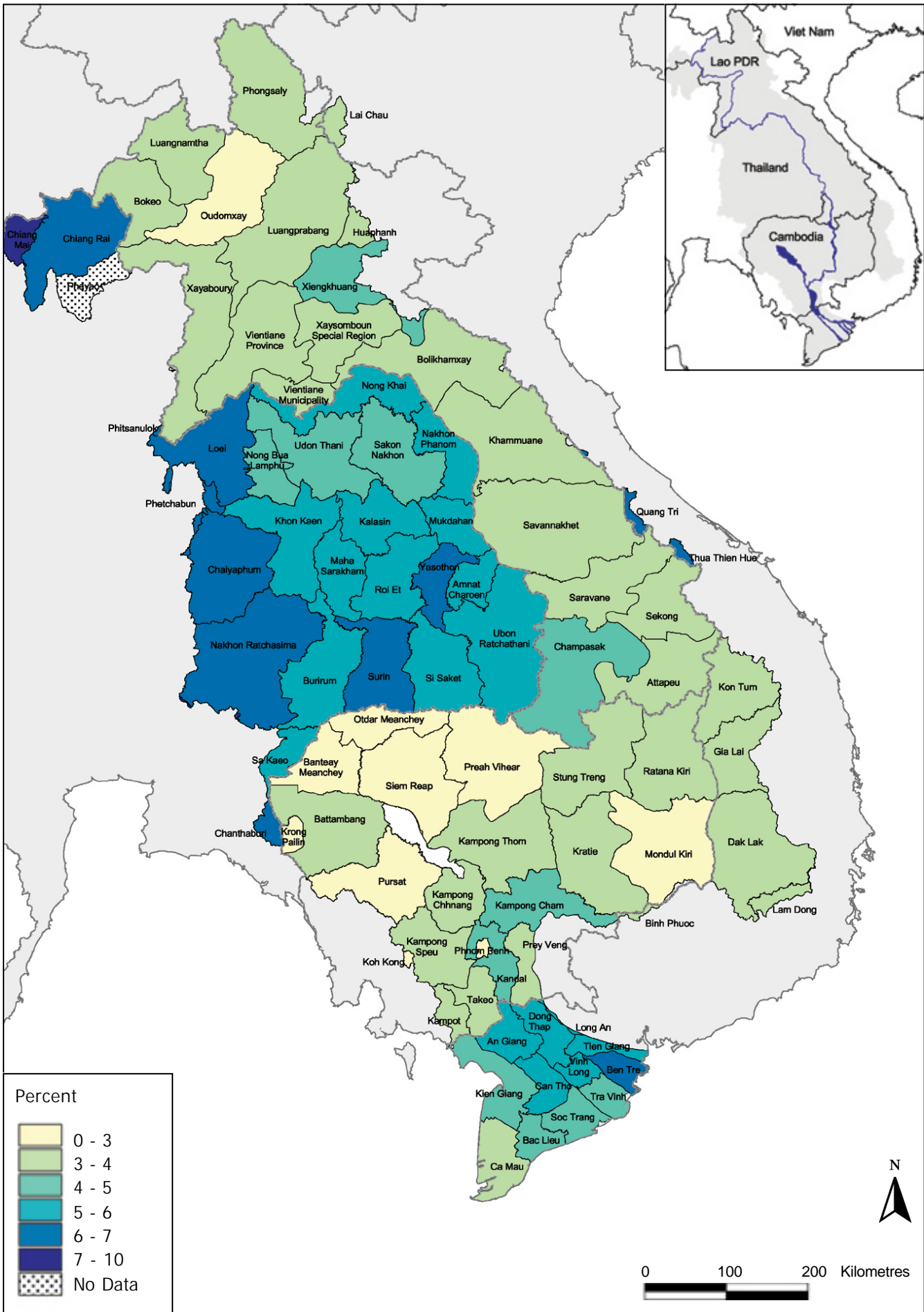
In Northeast Thailand, adults comprise about half the population, with slightly lower proportions in the eastern provinces of the Korat Plateau. Many adults migrate from this region to seek work in Bangkok and the regional urban centres.

As the youth population matures, the adult populations of LMB countries will also expand rapidly in coming years. With lower birth rates, the proportions of adults will become larger. A significant benefit of this demographic transition will be greater numbers of adults to support dependent children and elderly (see also Maps 9 to 10).

Country	Indicator Definition	Source	Table
Cambodia	Proportion of population aged 25-64 (1998)	Population Census 1998	Table A1
Lao PDR	Proportion of population aged 25-64 (1995)	Population Census 1995	Table 1C
Thailand	Proportion of population aged 25-64 (2000)	Population Census 2000	Table 2
Viet Nam	Proportion of population aged 25-64 (1999)	Population Census 1999	Table 1.5

Map 8: Age Structure - Elderly Population

Proportion of population aged 65 and over



Map 8: Age Structure - Elderly Population

Proportion of population aged 65 and over

The low proportion of elderly (65 years and older) and the variations across the LMB can be explained in terms of life expectancy.

Low life expectancy in Cambodia and Lao PDR (see Maps 34 to 35) means that, on average, few people live beyond their mid-fifties. Poor health conditions and the lingering effects of war and civil strife account for the short life spans.

People in Thailand and Viet Nam tend to live up to 15 years longer and make up greater proportions of the populations of the Korat Plateau and the Mekong Delta.

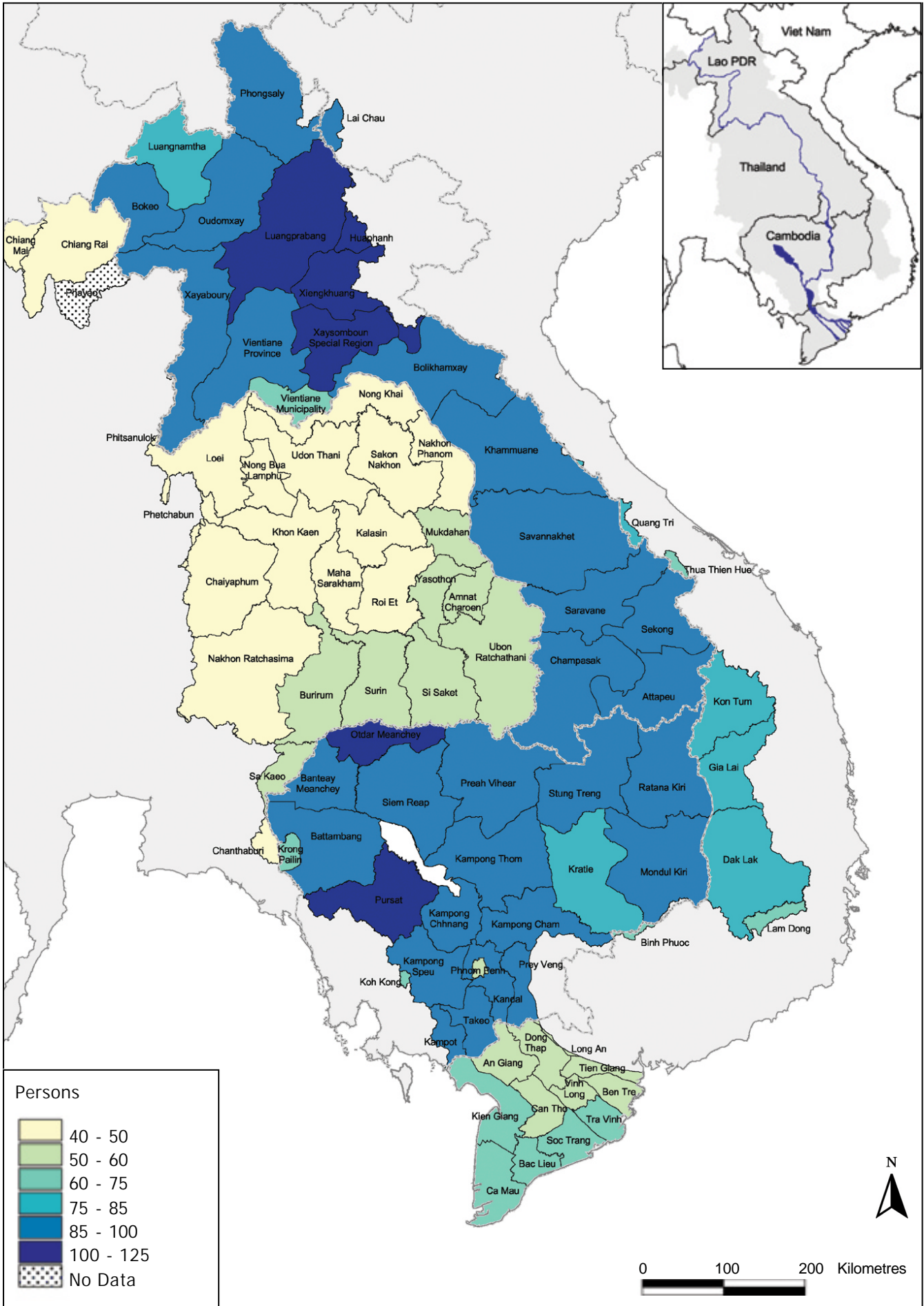
In the Central Highlands of Viet Nam, however, the proportion of elderly is similar to Cambodia and Lao PDR. There are many ethnic minority groups living in this region who tend to have lower life expectancies than people living elsewhere in the country. There has also been substantial in-migration of younger people to the Central Highlands.

The elderly population of the LMB will increase in coming years, as the general population ages and health conditions improve. Although the relative proportion of elderly will remain small, there will be a growing need for the provision of social services to meet the needs of older people.

Country	Indicator Definition	Source	Table
Cambodia	Proportion of population aged 65 and over (1998)	Population Census 1998	Table A1
Lao PDR	Proportion of population aged 65 and over (1995)	Population Census 1995	Table 1C
Thailand	Proportion of population aged 65 and over (2000)	Population Census 2000	Table 2
Viet Nam	Proportion of population aged 65 and over (1999)	Population Census 1999	Table 1.5

Map 9: Dependency Ratio

Persons aged 0 to 14 and 65 and older, per 100 persons aged 15 to 64



Map 9: Dependency Ratio

Persons aged 0 to 14 and 65 and older, per 100 persons aged 15 to 64

The dependency ratio measures the number of dependents who must be supported by working-age adults. Dependents include children under 15 years and the elderly (65 years and older). A dependency ratio of 100, for example, means that each working adult must, on average, provide for the needs of one other, non-working household member.

Cambodia and Lao PDR have dependency ratios that exceed 80, with rates above 100 in several provinces in central Lao PDR. The loss of many adults in these countries, combined with large populations of young children, account for the high rates.

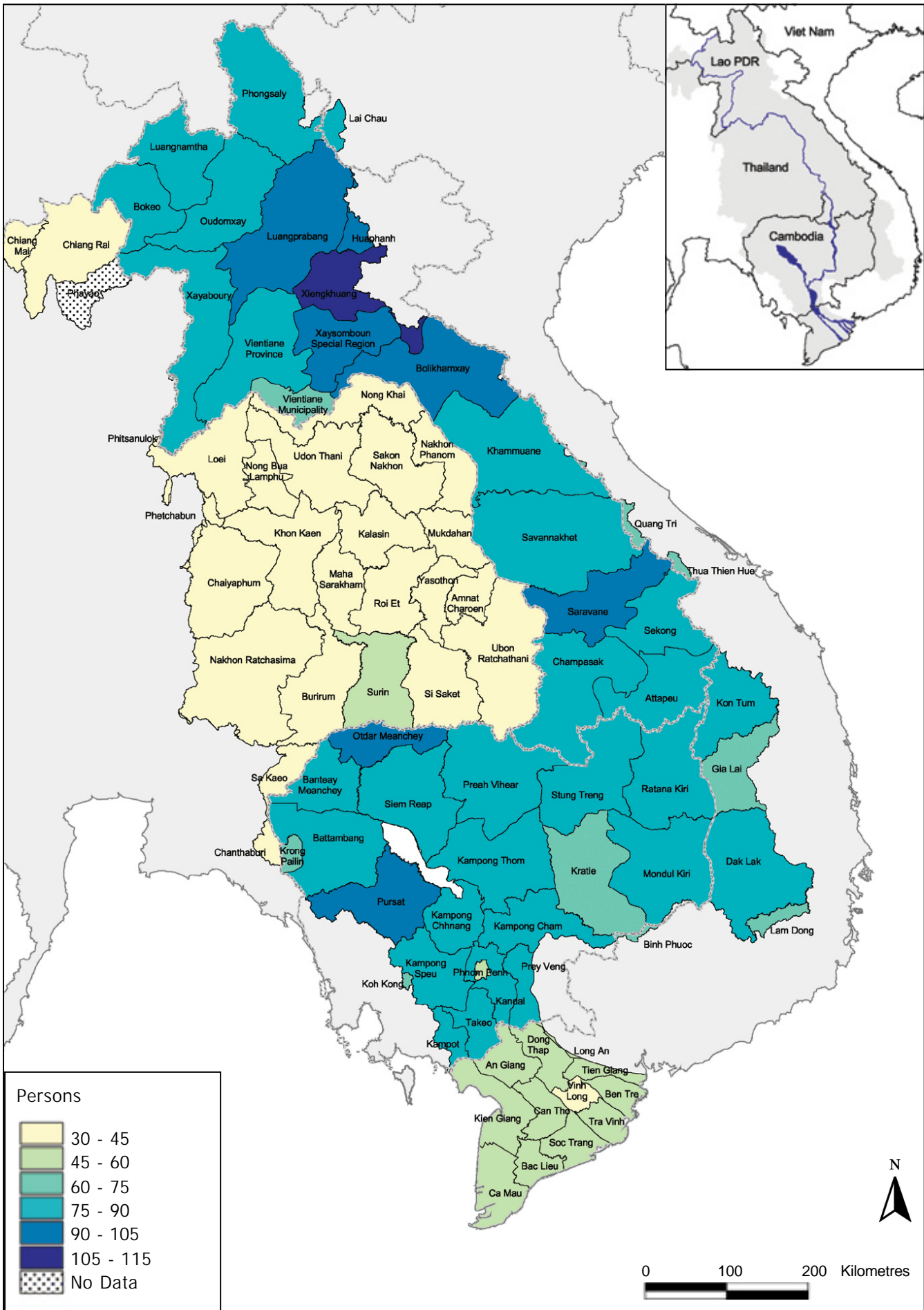
Lower dependency ratios in the Mekong Delta and in Thailand reflect the larger number of working adults, as well as the smaller number of children.

With the exception of Thailand, dependency ratios in the LMB are currently well above the 1999 average of 60 for the East Asia and Pacific region (World Bank 2002). There are strong links between high dependency ratios and levels of poverty in the LMB (see Map 27).

Country	Indicator Definition	Source	Table
Cambodia	Ratio of the population aged 0 to 14 years and 65 years and older, to the population aged 15 to 64 years (1998)	Population Census 1998	PopMap
Lao PDR	Ratio of the population aged 0 to 14 years and 65 years and older, to the population aged 15 to 64 years (1995)	Population Census 1995	Table 1C
Thailand	Ratio of the population aged 0 to 14 years and 65 years and older, to the population aged 15 to 64 years (2000)	Population Census 2000	Table 2
Viet Nam	Ratio of the population aged 0 to 14 years and 65 years and older, to the population aged 15 to 64 years (1999)	Population Census 1999	Table 1.5

Map 10: Child Dependency Ratio

Persons aged 0 to 14 years, per 100 persons aged 15 to 64 years



Map 10: Child Dependency Ratio

Persons aged 0 to 14 years, per 100 persons aged 15 to 64 years

Child and elderly dependency ratios measure the proportion of each age group separately in relation to the number of working-age adults.

Child dependency ratios range from 75 to 90 for most provinces in Cambodia and Lao PDR. That is, children account for approximately 90 percent of the total dependency rate in these countries. The same is true in the Central Highlands of Viet Nam.

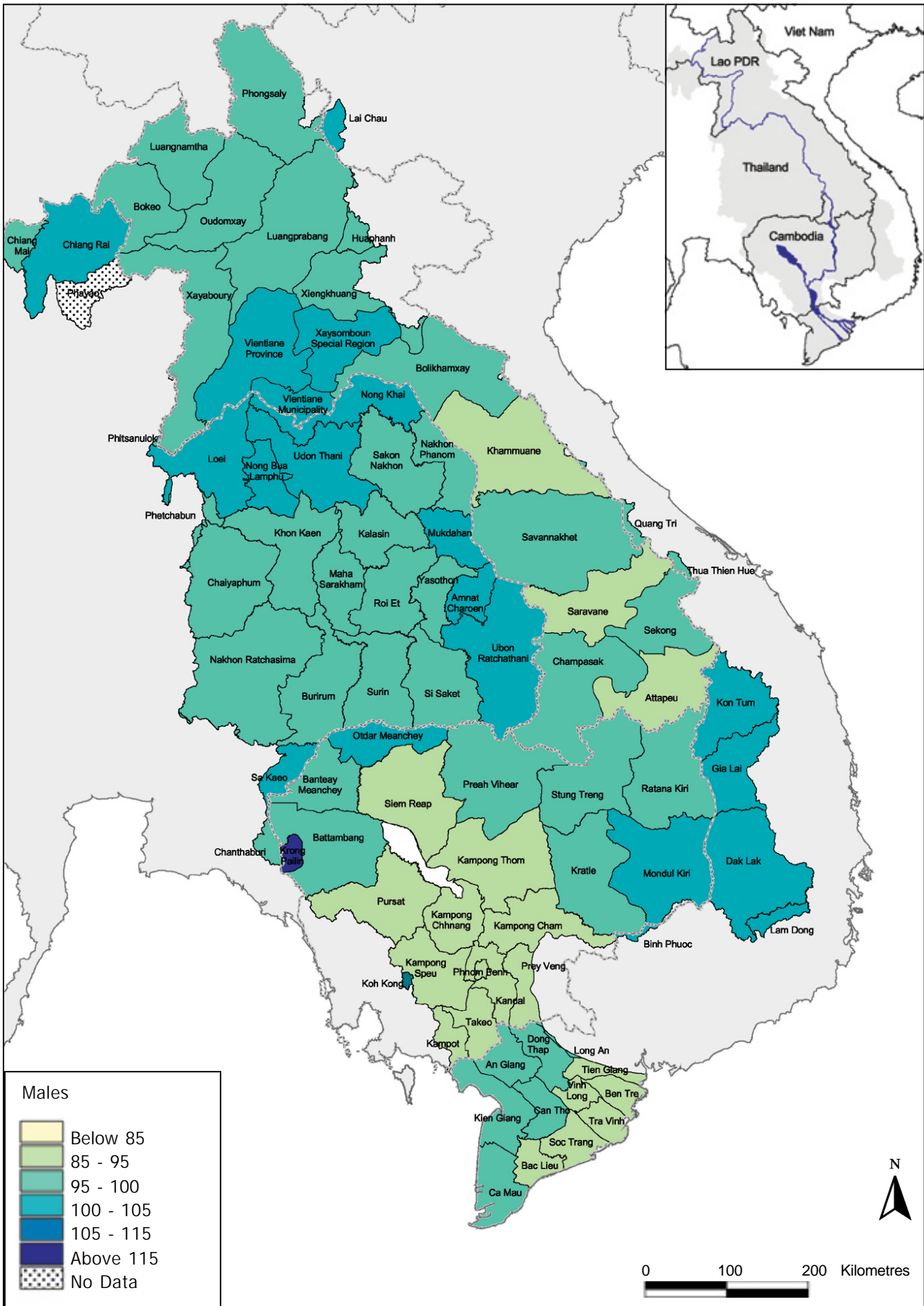
Child dependency ratios are lower in the Mekong Delta and Northeast Thailand, accounting for 70 to 75 percent of total dependency. In both of these countries fertility rates have been decreasing over the last 10 years, which explains the lower numbers of children as a percentage of the entire population.

There are contradictory forces acting on age dependency ratios. Child dependency ratios will tend to decline as young people become adults and, in general, have fewer children than their parents. At the same time, elderly dependency ratios will increase as people live longer. This transition has already begun in Thailand and Viet Nam.

Country	Indicator Definition	Source	Table
Cambodia	Ratio of the population aged 0 to 14 years to the population aged 15 to 64 years (1998)	Population Census 1998	Table A1
Lao PDR	Ratio of the population aged 0 to 14 years to the population aged 15 to 64 years (1995)	Population Census 1995	Table 1C
Thailand	Ratio of the population aged 0 to 14 years to the population aged 15 to 64 years (2000)	Population Census 2000	Table 2
Viet Nam	Ratio of the population aged 0 to 14 years to the population aged 15 to 64 years (1999)	Population Census 1999	Table 1.5

Map 11: Gender Ratio

Number of males per 100 females (all ages)



Map 11: Gender Ratio

Number of males per 100 females (all ages)

The gender ratio measures the number of men for every 100 women in the population. Gender ratios in the LMB are generally less than 100, indicating that women outnumber men in most provinces.

Economic forces affect gender ratios in the LMB, with men often migrating out of rural areas to seek employment in urban centres. For example, men migrate from Northeast Thailand to Bangkok or Chiang Mai.

While men have traditionally been more likely to migrate for economic reasons, women are increasingly migrating to urban centres to work in the manufacturing (generally textiles) and service sectors (such as hotels and restaurants).

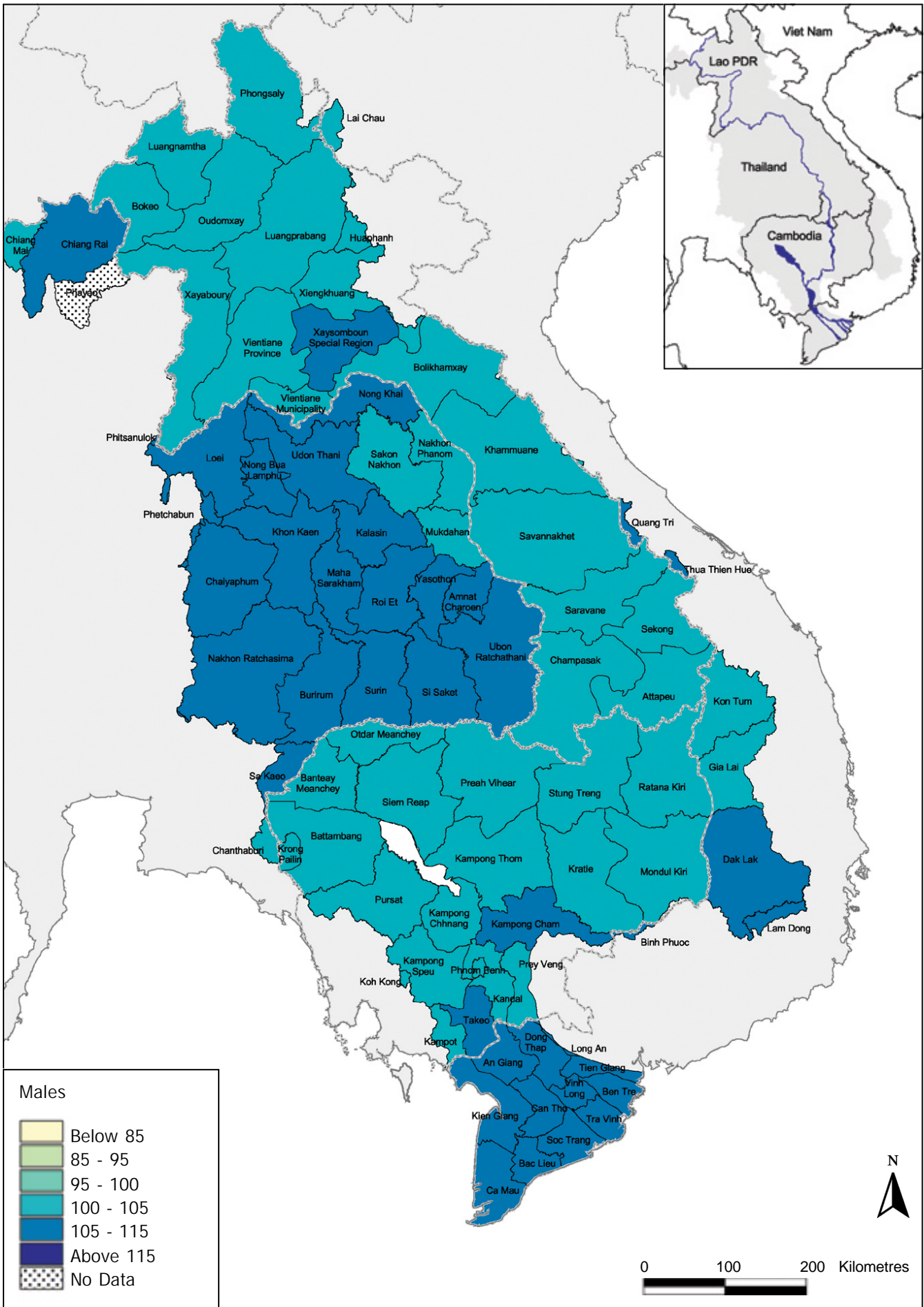
In Cambodia and, to a lesser extent, Lao PDR, war and civil strife have influenced the gender ratio. Many more men than women died in conflicts that occurred from the early 1970s, and in Cambodia, did not finish until the 1990s. This is reflected in lower numbers of men in urban as well as rural areas.

In several provinces, men outnumber women. The province of Krong Pailin is a centre for the logging and mining industries in Cambodia, and has a gender ratio of 117. In the Central Highlands of Viet Nam, government programmes to promote economic development have resulted in the in-migration of labourers who are disproportionately male.

Country	Indicator Definition	Source	Table
Cambodia	Number of males per 100 females, all ages (1998)	Population Census 1998	PopMap
Lao PDR	Number of males per 100 females, all ages (1995)	Population Census 1995	Table 1C
Thailand	Number of males per 100 females, all ages (2000)	Population Census 2000	Key Ind.
Viet Nam	Number of males per 100 females, all ages (1999)	Population Census 1999	Table 1.5

Map 12: Child Gender Ratio

Number of males per 100 females (0-14 years)



Map 12: Child Gender Ratio

Number of males per 100 females (0-14 years)

The child gender ratio measures the number of boys under the age of 15 in relation to the number of girls of the same age.

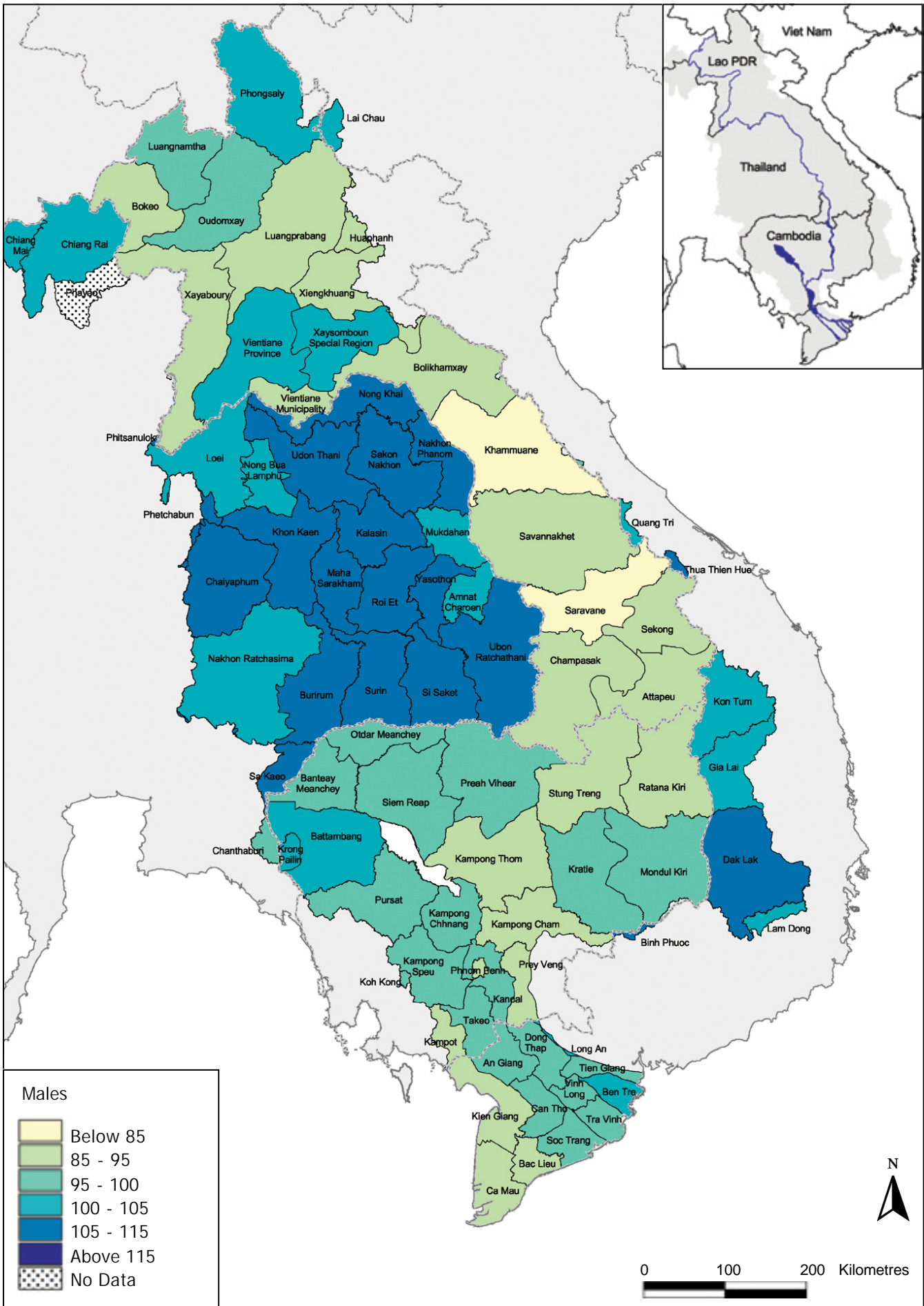
In general, the child gender ratio is over 100, that is, more boys are born than girls. The child gender ratios in the LMB range from 100 to 107, reflecting normal international patterns for gender ratios at birth.

Higher infant and child mortality rates for boys than girls mean that the gender ratio for a group of children becomes more balanced as they age.

Country	Indicator Definition	Source	Table
Cambodia	Number of males per 100 females, 0-14 years (1998)	Population Census 1998	PopMap
Lao PDR	Number of males per 100 females, 0-14 years (1995)	Population Census 1995	Table 1C
Thailand	Number of males per 100 females, 0-14 years (2000)	Population Census 2000	Key Ind.
Viet Nam	Number of males per 100 females, 0-14 years (1999)	Population Census 1999	Table 1.5

Map 13: Youth Gender Ratio

Number of males per 100 females (15-24 years)



Map 13: Youth Gender Ratio

Number of males per 100 females (15-24 years)

The youth gender ratio measures the number of young men aged 15 to 24 in relation to the number of young women of the same age.

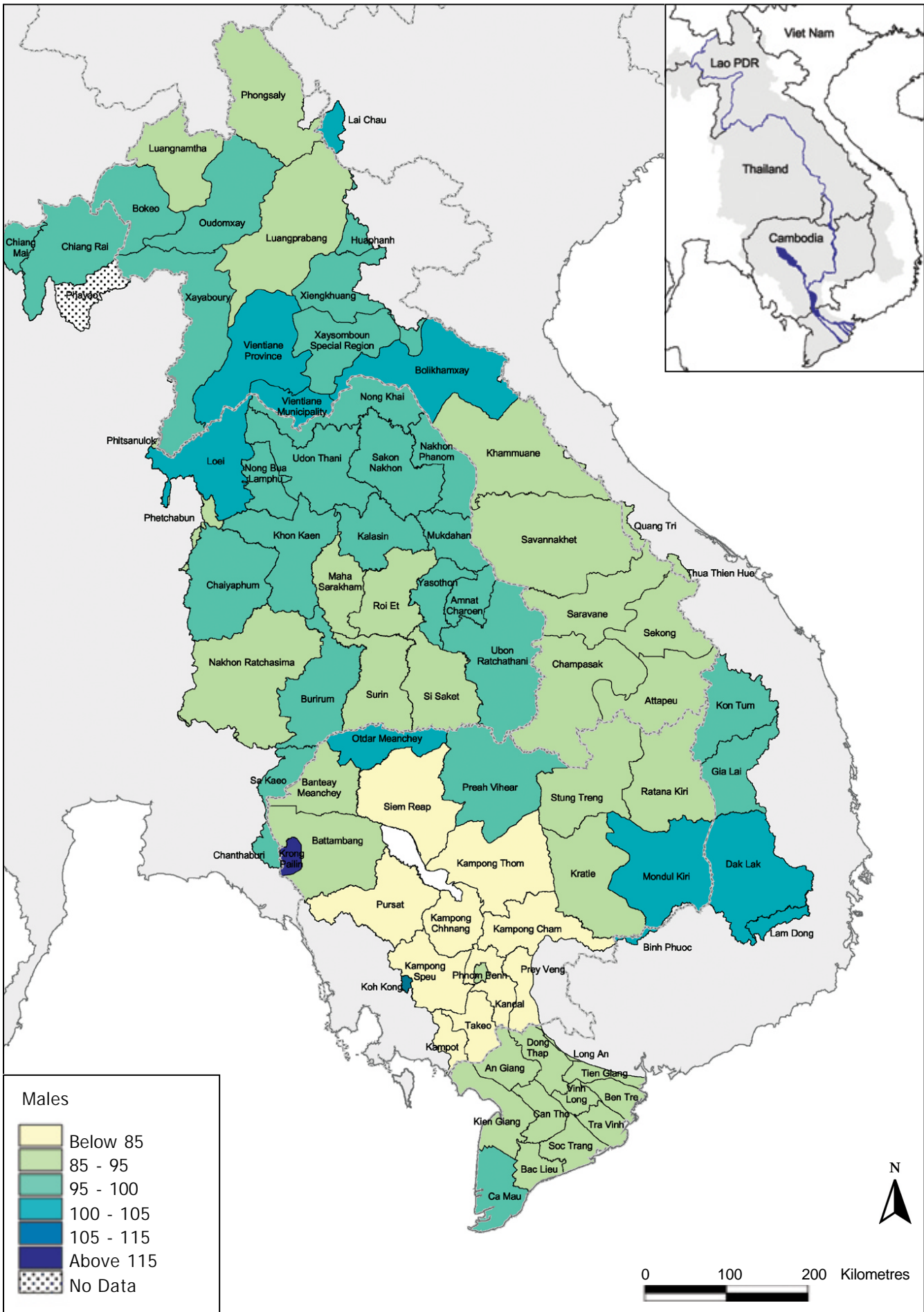
Youth gender ratios above 105 in many provinces in Northeast Thailand may reflect several factors. Infant and child mortality rates are generally very low in Thailand, with most boys and girls surviving to adolescence. It would also appear that young men tend to remain in the region to study or work.

Youth gender ratios below 100 in Cambodia, Lao PDR and the Mekong Delta suggest that by this age young men are leaving their homes to search for work. On the other hand, gender ratios above 100 in the Central Highlands may be the result of the in-migration of young men seeking work.

Country	Indicator Definition	Source	Table
Cambodia	Number of males per 100 females, 15-24 years (1998)	Population Census 1998	PopMap
Lao PDR	Number of males per 100 females, 15-24 years (1995)	Population Census 1995	Table 1C
Thailand	Number of males per 100 females, 15-24 years (2000)	Population Census 2000	Key Ind.
Viet Nam	Number of males per 100 females, 15-24 years (1999)	Population Census 1999	Table 1.5

Map 14: Adult Gender Ratio

Number of males per 100 females (25-64 years)



Map 14: Adult Gender Ratio

Number of males per 100 females (25-64 years)

The adult gender ratio measures the number of men aged 25 to 64 years in relation to the number of women of the same age.

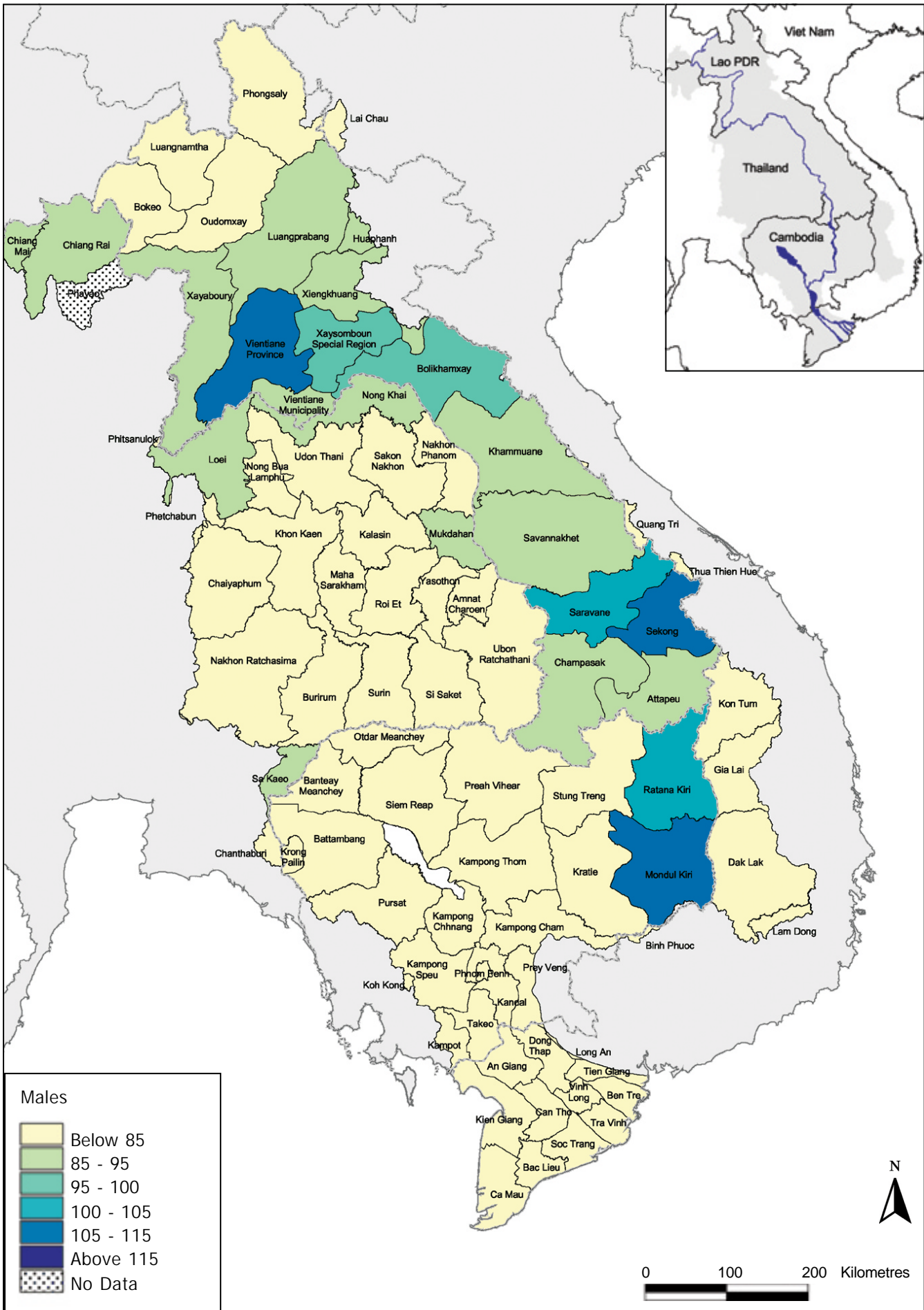
Throughout most of the LMB, adult women outnumber adult men. That is, the gender ratio for the entire population (Map 10) is largely a result of the adult gender ratio. The low number of adult men is due to economic migration to urban centres (outside the basin in the case of Thailand and Viet Nam) and the greater number of men who died during wars and civil strife in Cambodia, Lao PDR and Viet Nam.

The gender imbalance is greatest in the Tonle Sap region and provinces near Phnom Penh, with gender ratios between 70 and 80. The percentage of households headed by women also tends to be greatest in these provinces (Map 17). This suggests that many women were widowed, or have husbands who have migrated to seek work elsewhere.

Country	Indicator Definition	Source	Table
Cambodia	Number of males per 100 females, 25-64 years (1998)	Population Census 1998	PopMap
Lao PDR	Number of males per 100 females, 25-64 years (1995)	Population Census 1995	Table 1C
Thailand	Number of males per 100 females, 25-64 years (2000)	Population Census 2000	Key Ind.
Viet Nam	Number of males per 100 females, 25-64 years (1999)	Population Census 1999	Table 1.5

Map 15: Elderly Gender Ratio

Number of males per 100 females (65 years and over)



Map 15: Elderly Gender Ratio

Number of males per 100 females (65 years and over)

The elderly gender ratio measures the number of men over the age of 65 years in relation to the number of women of the same age.

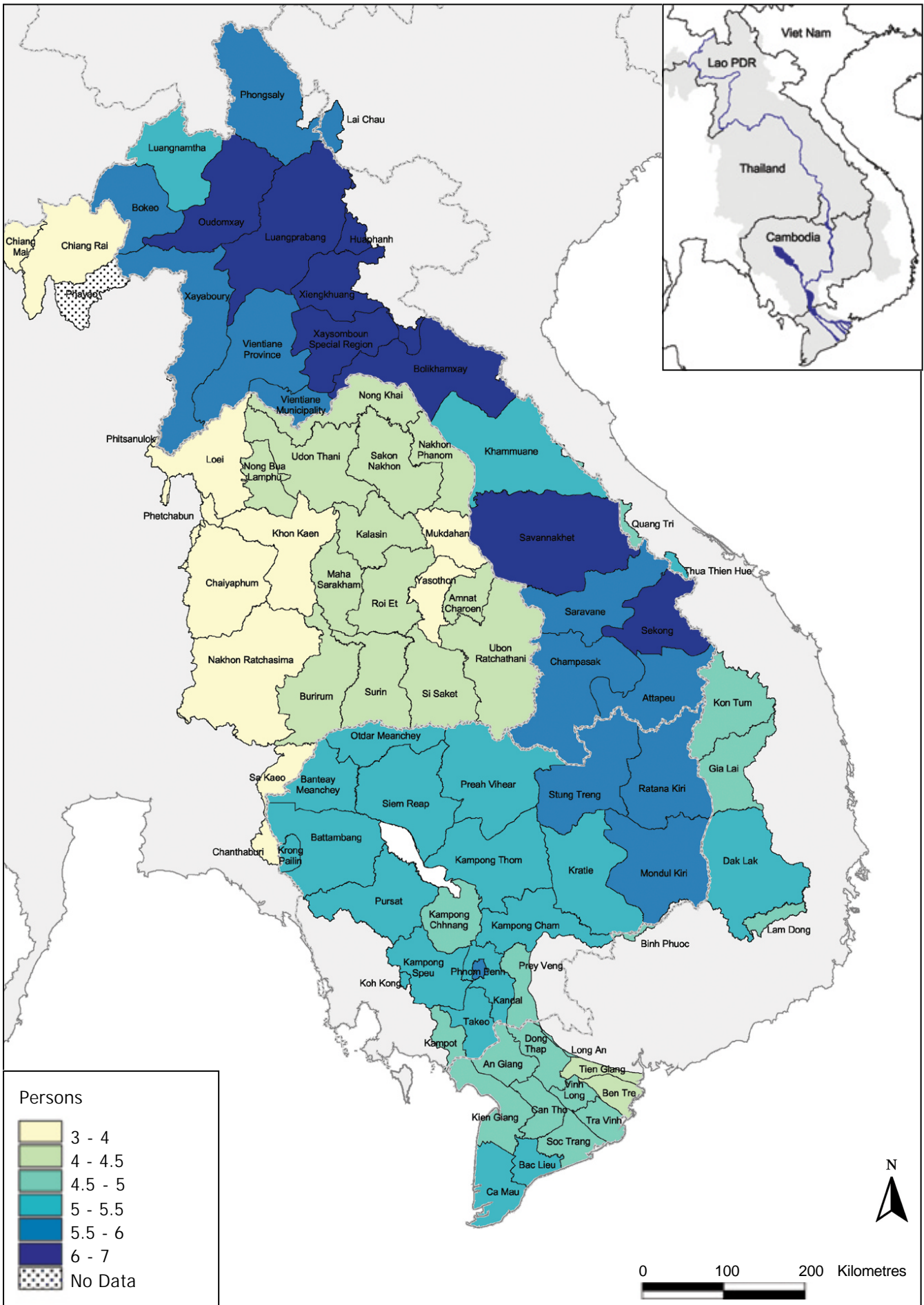
In the LMB, women tend to live 4 to 6 years longer than men. Therefore, the gender ratio tends to be well below 100 among elderly people. Higher gender ratios among the elderly in Lao PDR may be explained by very small differences in life expectancy for men and women (see Maps 34 and 35).

Those provinces where the elderly gender ratio is above 100 (particularly Mondulkiri and Ratanakiri in Cambodia, and Sekong in Lao PDR) tend to have very small elderly populations, meaning that it is more likely that random variations in death rates will have more influence on the sex ratio than the broader trends discussed above.

Country	Indicator Definition	Source	Table
Cambodia	Number of males per 100 females, 65 years and over (1998)	Population Census 1998	Table A1
Lao PDR	Number of males per 100 females, 65 years and over (1995)	Population Census 1995	Table 1C
Thailand	Number of males per 100 females, 65 years and over (2000)	Population Census 2000	Key Ind.
Viet Nam	Number of males per 100 females, 65 years and over (1999)	Population Census 1999	Table 1.5

Map 16: Household Size

Average number of persons per household



Map 16: Household Size

Average number of persons per household

In rural areas of the LMB, households are the basic social and economic unit. The traditional household is large, often including several generations. Many children help the adults to produce food and meet other needs. As adults, children ensure the care of their parents and grandparents when they can no longer work.

The average household size in Cambodia and Lao PDR is 5 to 6 persons, reflecting that many people in these parts of the LMB still pursue traditional, subsistence livelihoods. The more remote areas of Northern and Central Lao PDR have households with, on average, 6 to 7 persons.

The average household size in Thailand has dropped from 6 to 4 persons. A similar transition is occurring in Viet Nam. At the same time, the number of households is increasing.

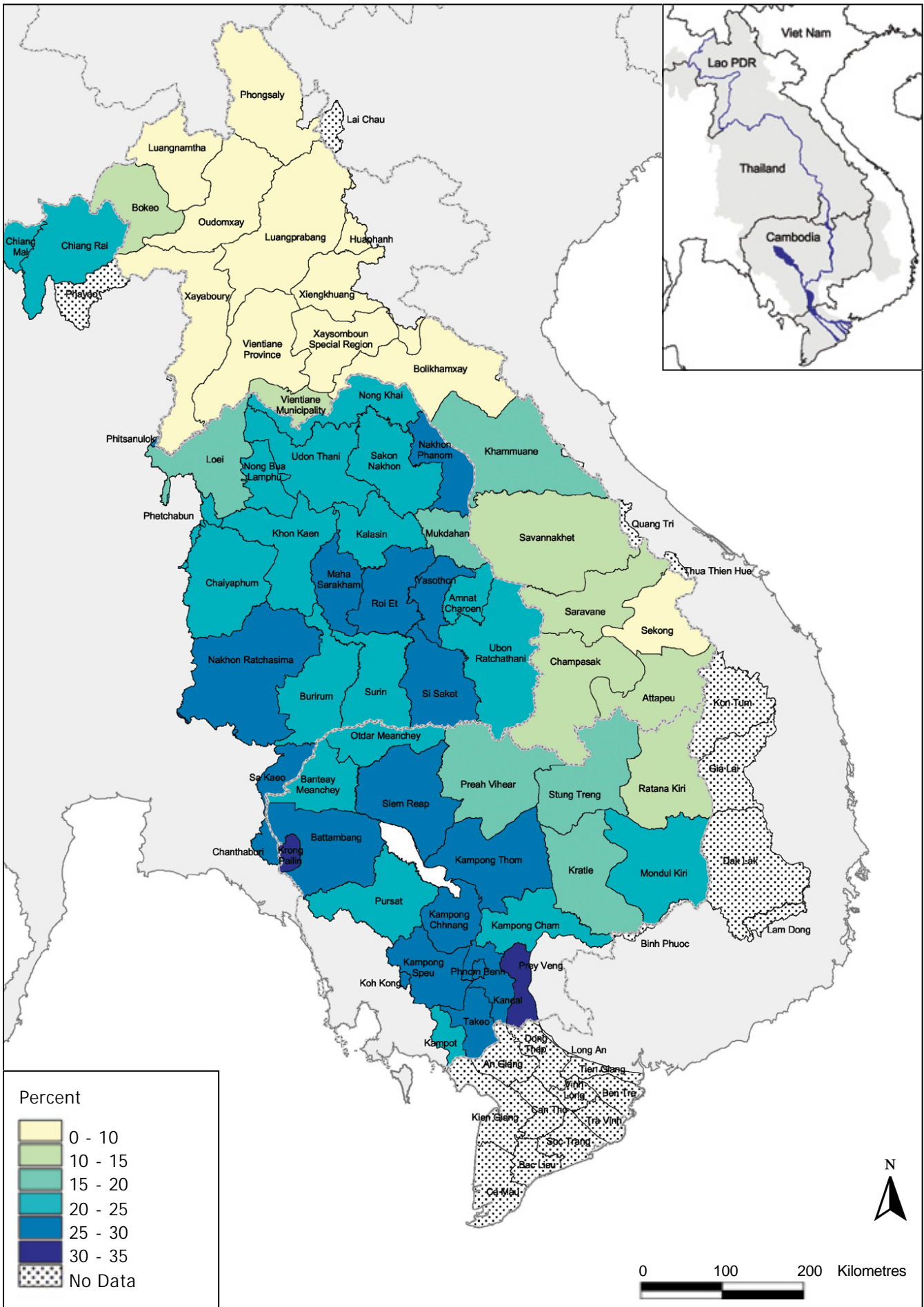
Several factors account for declines in household size. Governments are promoting smaller families, with observable results in Thailand and Viet Nam. As economic opportunities and incomes improve in these countries, families tend to become smaller. In addition to these factors, reductions in infant and child mortality rates in Cambodia and Lao PDR will encourage families to have fewer children.

Interestingly, Phnom Penh has larger household sizes than most rural areas in Cambodia. This may reflect households that include relatives who have migrated from rural home communities to study or work in the city.

Country	Indicator Definition	Source	Table
Cambodia	Average number of persons per household (1998)	Population Census 1998	PopMap
Lao PDR	Average number of persons per household (1995)	Population Census 1995	Table 3.1
Thailand	Average number of persons per household (2000)	Population Census 2000	Key Ind.
Viet Nam	Average number of persons per household (1999)	Population Census 1999	Table 1.3

Map 17: Female Household Headship

Proportion of households headed by females



Map 17: Female Household Headship

Proportion of households headed by females

Men head most households in the LMB. The proportion of households that are headed by women ranges from 5 to 10 percent in Lao PDR to over 30 percent in parts of Cambodia.

Female household heads tend to be women who are widowed or divorced, or married women whose husbands are away working. The proportion of female household heads is higher among older women.

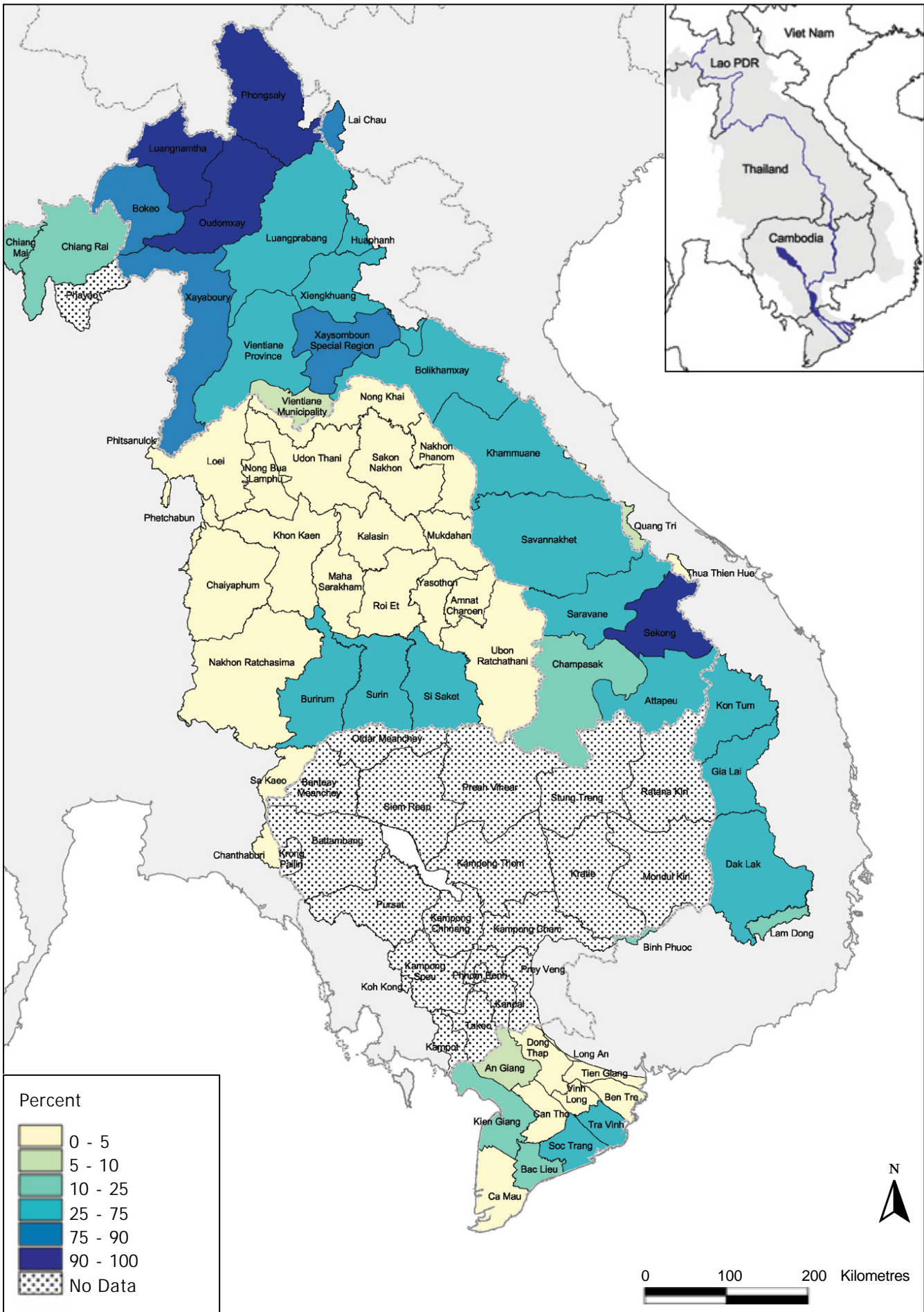
In Cambodia, Lao PDR and Viet Nam, the incidence of female-headed households in urban areas is approximately twice the rate in rural areas (FAO n.d., Huguet et al. 2000, NSC-Lao PDR 1997). In Viet Nam, for example, women head 50 percent of urban households, but only 28 percent of rural households. Poor rural women raising families alone are more likely to lose their land and migrate to urban areas.

The rate of female headship may be underestimated in the LMB. For cultural reasons, many women are reluctant to report themselves as the head of their household. It is also possible that they do not consider themselves the household head even if their husbands have migrated to find work. These reasons may explain the low reported rates in Lao PDR.

Country	Indicator Definition	Source	Table
Cambodia	Percentage of households headed by females (1998)	Population Census 1998	PopMap
Lao PDR	Percentage of households headed by females (1995)	Population Census 1995	Table 3B1
Thailand	Percentage of households headed by females (2000)	Population Census 2000	Key Ind.
Viet Nam	N/A	N/A	N/A

Map 18: Ethnic Minority Population

Ethnic minority groups as a percentage of total population



Map 18: Ethnic Minority Population

Ethnic minority groups as a percentage of total population

This map shows the proportion of people living in each province who do not belong to the dominant ethnic group of their country. The dominant groups are the Khmer in Cambodia, the ethnic Lao in Lao PDR, the Thais in Thailand, and the Kinh in Viet Nam.

There are particularly wide variations in how ethnicity is, or is not, reported. Even if indicator definitions were identical, definitions of ethnicity would still be problematic, being subject to self-image and expedience (where self-reported), and on political considerations (where defined by governments). The map presented here should be seen in this light.

The Mekong region has a rich history of cultural and ethnic diversity. More than 70 ethnic groups make up the population, particularly in upland areas of Lao PDR, Cambodia and Viet Nam. Data for Cambodia were unavailable for the production of this map.

Ethnic minority groups account for almost 50 percent of the population of Lao PDR. The ethnic Lao are located predominantly in the lowlands of the Mekong and its tributaries. As one moves into the upland areas of the country, the diversity and proportion of ethnic minority groups increases.

Elsewhere in the Mekong basin, ethnic minority groups make up smaller proportions of the populations. They also tend to be concentrated in the remoter regions, including the Northern Region of Thailand, Northeast Cambodia and the Viet Nam Central Highlands.

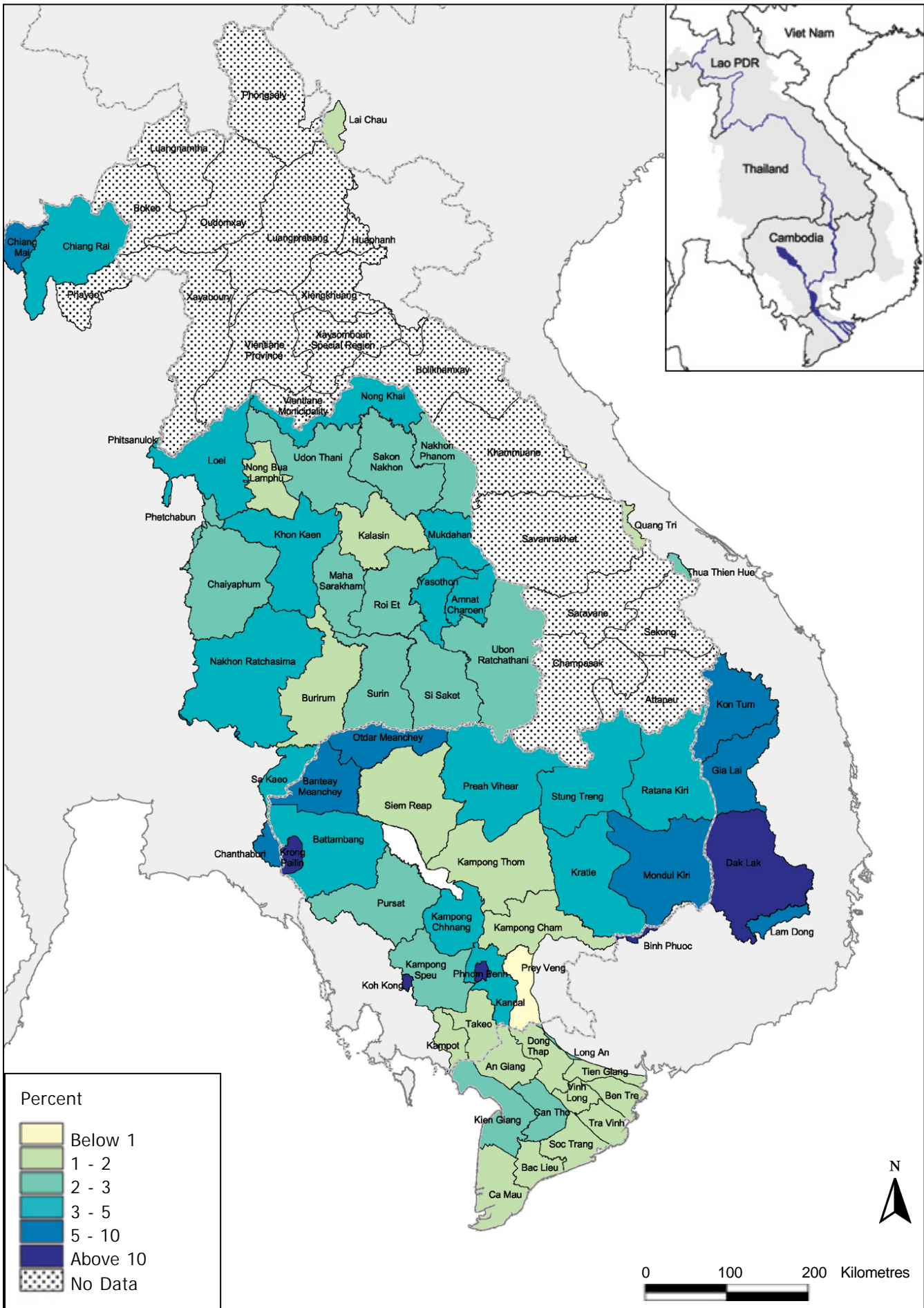
Large populations of the dominant ethnic group from each country live in other countries of the basin. Over one million ethnic Khmer live in remote parts of the Mekong Delta; they also make up 25-50 percent of the population of the Thai provinces of Si Saket, Surin and Burirum along the Cambodian border. Many Kinh from Viet Nam live in Cambodia, and many ethnic Lao have settled in Northeast Thailand.

Ethnic minority groups tend to have lower levels of social and economic well-being. In each country, there is a strong correlation between areas with large minority populations and those with poor socio-economic conditions.

Country	Indicator Definition	Source	Table
Cambodia	N/A	N/A	N/A
Lao PDR	Minority population as a percentage of total population (1999)	Lao Front for National Construction 1999	
Thailand	Minority population as a percentage of total population (2000)	Population Census 2000	Key Ind.
Viet Nam	Minority population as a percentage of total population (1999)	Population Census 1999	Table 1.6

Map 19 : Migration

Proportion of population not living in the same province as five years earlier



Map 19: Migration

Proportion of population not living in the same province as five years earlier

Migration patterns in the LMB are complex, with people moving for many reasons. This map depicts available data on the proportion of the population that had migrated to a province in the five years preceding the most recent census.

The search for employment is a major cause of migration. People migrate on a seasonal and semi-permanent basis to Phnom Penh, Vientiane and secondary urban centres to earn money for their families in rural areas. Economic migrants are often the young and better-educated people (NSO-Thailand 1998). Also, increasing numbers of women are migrating to cities to work in low-skill manufacturing and service sector jobs.

Rural-rural migration frequently involves people moving from more to less densely populated areas (such as northeast Cambodia) to seek new economic opportunities. Migration from urban to rural areas occurs in periods of economic slowdown such as the late 1990s. Due to increased urban unemployment (such as occurred in Thailand), many people returned to their rural home communities.

Government policies also influence people's movements. In Lao PDR, programs to stop shifting cultivation involved relocating people out of highland areas. In Viet Nam, moving lowland people to the Central Highlands formed part of national objectives to increase agricultural production in the region, accounting for five-year migration rates of 7 to 12 percent.

Conflict and instability in the Mekong region over the past 50 years caused many people in Cambodia, Lao PDR and Viet Nam to leave their homes. When they were able, many returned voluntarily or as part of government resettlement programs. These movements accounted for large migrations during the 1980s and early 1990s.

Country	Indicator Definition	Source	Table
Cambodia	Percentage of population who have migrated to province in the previous 5 years (1998)	Population Census 1998	Table C4
Lao PDR	N/A	N/A	N/A
Thailand	Percentage of population who migrated in last 5 years (2000)	Population Census 2000	Key Ind.
Viet Nam	Percentage of population 5 years and over living in a different province from current province of residence 5 years before (1999)	Population Census 1999	Table 2.1