The selectivity of internal migration in China

Xiaxia Yang

PhD Candidate

Geography, University of Washington

Selectivity, an inherent feature of migration

• Self-selection statement: neoclassical migration theory &

new economics of labor migration theory

• China: strong state interference

Theoretical framework - A selective migration model

Age selectivity

Health selectivity

A selective migration model

- Urban-rural dual system in China
  - Hukou institution

- Centre-local relationships in post-reform China
  - Power decentralization
  - Tax sharing reform
  - Cadre evaluation system

- Social reproduction of migrant labor power
  - Maintenance and renewal of the labor force

A selective migration model

- The three components of the selective migration model contribute to the fact that local governments in migration destinations are not interested in offering social service to migrants; only their labor is welcome

- As a result, the young and healthy are singled out to the migration destinations, and the old and frail are filtered out at the migration origins

A selective migration model

- Although selection is ubiquitous in all migration processes, we argue the extent of migration selectivity in China is extraordinarily intensive.

Age selectivity
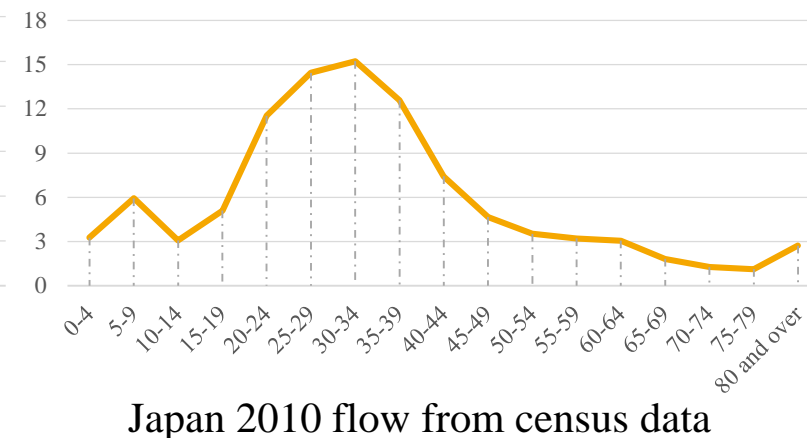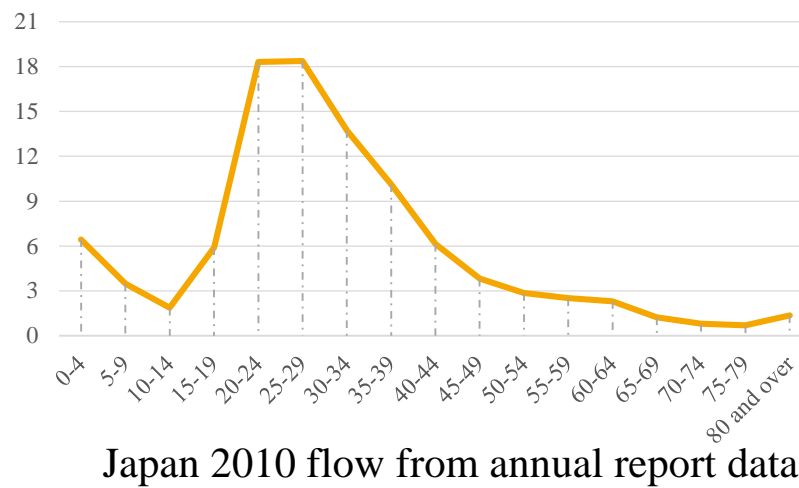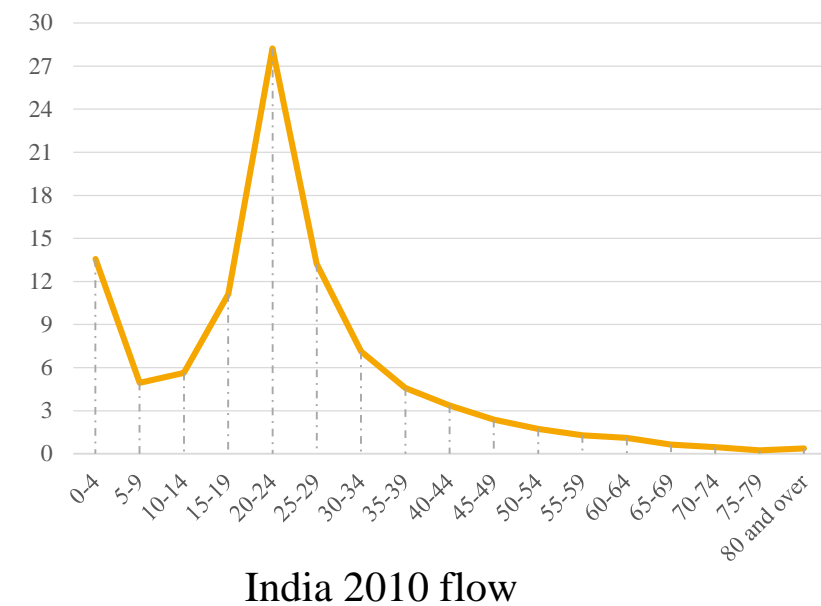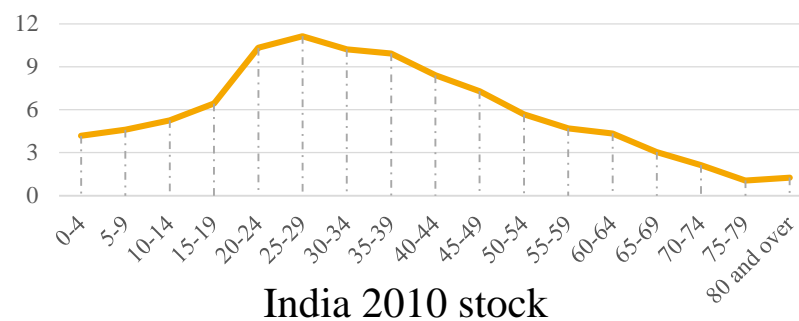– comparing age structure of migrants in China with that in India and Japan

China 2010 stock

India 2010 stock

India 2010 flow

Japan 2010 flow from annual report data
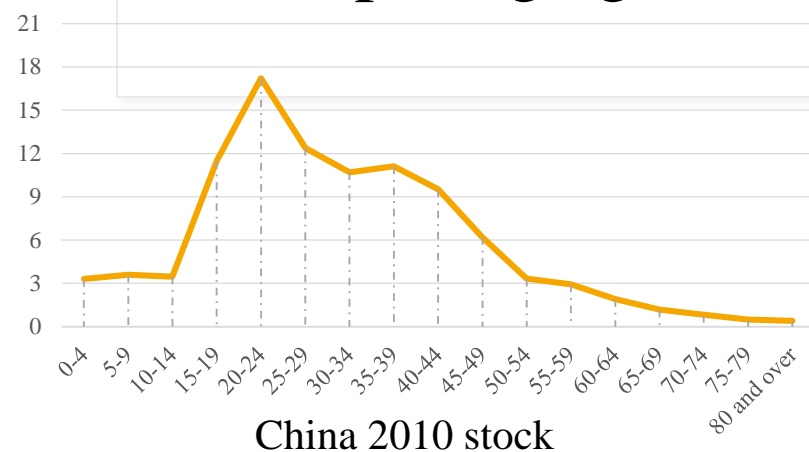
Japan 2010 flow from census data

Table. Dependency ratios of domestic migrants in China, India and Japan

	China 2010 census	India 2011 census (all duration)	India 2011 census (duration between 1 to 4 years)	Japan 2010 annual report	Japan 2010 census
Child dependency ratio	12.0	17.9	32.6	14.0	15.2
Elderly dependency ratio	3.3	9.6	2.3	4.9	8.6
Total dependency ratio	15.3	27.5	34.9	18.9	23.8

Age selectivity

– finding out the most selective provinces in China

- "How far" a province's migrant age structure stays away from the national average :

$$d_{ij} = \frac{m_{ij}}{l_i} - 1$$

- Add up d_{ij} to get an accumulated "distance" value for pre-labor-age migrants:

$$MC_j = \sum_{i=0}^{14} d_{ij}$$

Labor-age migrants:

$$MA_j = \sum_{i=15}^{64} d_{ij}$$

Post-labor-age migrants:
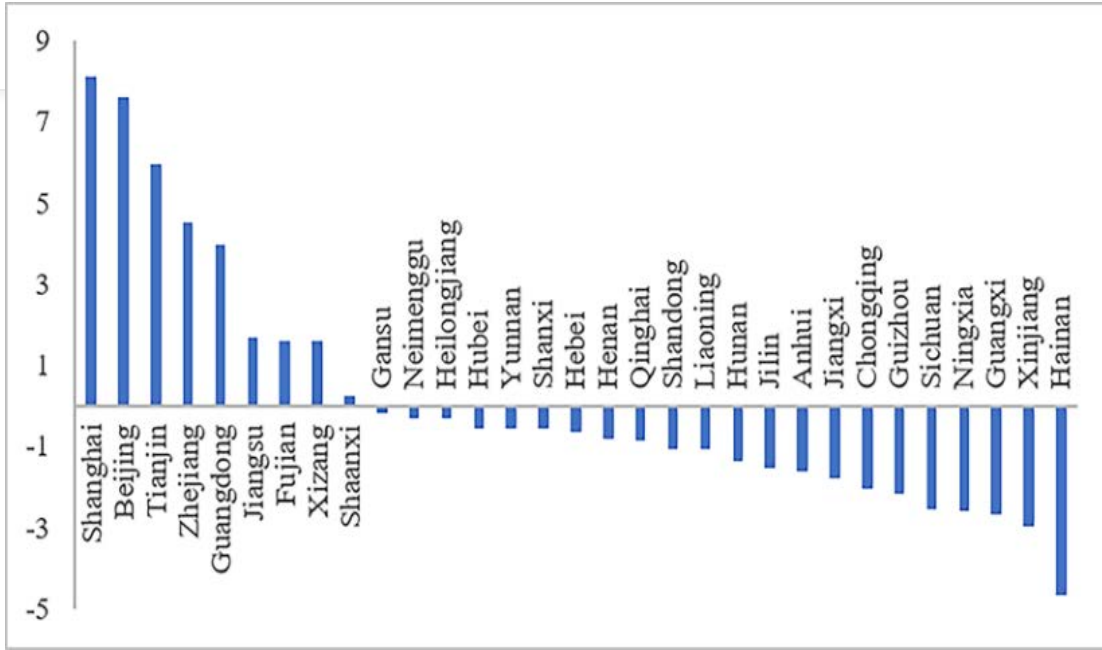
$$MO_j = \sum_{i=65} d_{ij}$$

Age selectivity
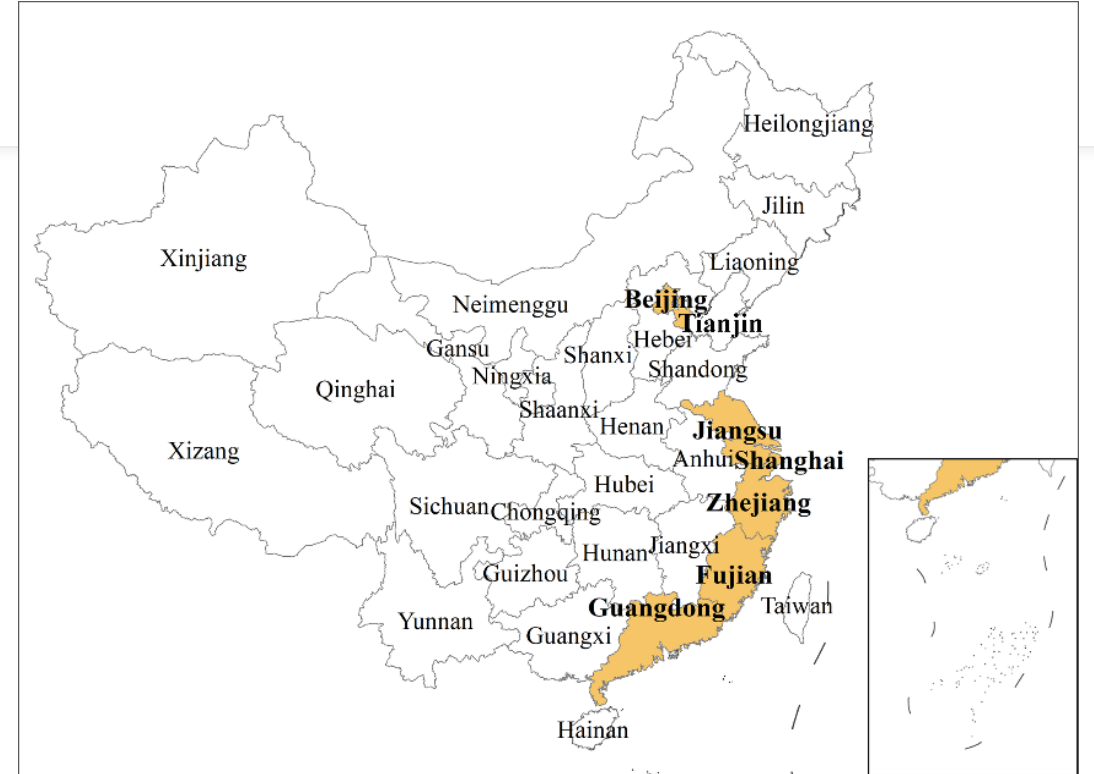### – finding out the most selective provinces in China

- Aggregate to get the "Age selectivity index":

$$ASI_j = (MA_j - MC_j - MO_j) \cdot \frac{n_j}{k_j}$$

with n_j signifying the total number of migrants in province j and k_j indicating the total population in province j.

Rank of Age Selectivity Index

Location of the top seven provinces

Health selectivity

- Lu and Qin (2014): the extent of health selection is greater in China compared to internal migration in other developing countries.

- Tong and Piotrowski (2012): the intensity of health selection in China falls between that in international immigration setting and that in internal migration setting.

Conclusion

- Our empirical and textual evidence conforms to the selective migration model, suggesting that China's internal migration is concentrated in healthy young adults, and that the selectivity level is extraordinarily strong.