

Recent Trends of Emigration from China: 1982-2000¹

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ABSTRACT

Using data from several Chinese censuses and surveys, we provide a new perspective for the study of international migration. Focusing on the trends of international migration from China and Fujian province between 1982 and 2000, several findings emerge. First, Fujian and Yunnan provinces became the leading immigrant-sending provinces in China by 2000. Second, changes in socio-economic selectivity among emigrants from Fujian province from 1990 to 1995 are also clearly revealed in our analysis. The shift from urbanites to rural peasants among the emigrant population is particularly noteworthy. Third, in the context of Fujian province, factors such as age, education, rural/urban status, and occupation (especially the service sector) are the most important predictors of emigration. The paper ends with a discussion of the prospects of assimilation of Fujianese immigrants in destination societies.

INTRODUCTION

On a hot summer day in mid-June of 2000, British customs officers found 58 bodies inside a Dutch tomato truck in Dover, all of whom had suffocated (Hoge, 2000). As a result of this tragic event, the world turned its attention to China's Fujian province because all 58 of the deceased were migrants from Fujian (Onstad, 2000; Rothenthal, 2000). By far one of the most tragic events in the history of international migration, it portrays the story of the contemporary magnitude of global immigration from China's Fujian province to Europe, Japan, and most notably the United States (Gall, 2000; Rothenthal, 2000). Fortunately, not all news about emigration from Fujian is sad in nature. In New York City, the most favourable destination for Fujianese immigrants, one of the first babies of

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2002 was born to Fujianese immigrants, adding good tidings to that city's New Year's Eve celebration. In the spirit of the occasion, New York City's Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg promised to write a letter of recommendation for this newborn baby girl when she applies for college (Hartocollis, 2002; Huang, 2002).

Despite the mass media attention to Fujianese immigration, scholarly efforts to study this new trend of Chinese emigration are sorely lacking, although there are very recent exceptions (Chin, 1999; Kwong, 1997; Pieke, 2002). This is due in large part to the paucity of systematic data available on Fujianese immigrants. Unlike other Chinese immigrants, many in this recent wave from Fujian are undocumented, which raises particular challenges for students of international migration. From the perspective of destination countries, data on undocumented migrants are often difficult, if not impossible, to obtain. For example, in the United States, unless they become permanent residents (e.g. green card holders), Fujianese immigrants are not included in the data collected by the Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services (formerly the Immigration and Naturalization Services), as the US Government only keeps information about legal immigrants. It is also impossible to identify Fujianese in the US decennial censuses because all Chinese are lumped together regardless of their province of origin.

Using data from population censuses and the 1995 1 Per cent Population Sample Survey conducted in China, this paper provides a new perspective and methodology for studying Fujianese emigration. Since these data sources provide information on household registration status at the time of data collection as well as information on emigration, it takes advantage of documentation of the province of origin for migrants. A successful application of this approach can also potentially open up new avenues to study international migration from other provinces in China as well as in other countries where similar data are available. We begin with a brief discussion of background information on Fujian province focusing on emigration history and socio-economic development in recent years. Next we review patterns of emigration from China from 1982 to 2000, highlighting Fujian's increasing importance in sending emigrants. We then examine the implications of socio-economic selectivity of Fujianese emigrants as a function of time. We finish with some discussion and final conclusions.

THE CASE OF FUJIAN PROVINCE, CHINA

Located in the south-east coast region of China, Fujian province had a population of 35 million in the year 2000. Emigration is not new to the Fujianese. In fact, historically Fujian was one of the major migrant-sending provinces in China,

with thousands emigrating to South-East Asian countries. Indeed, this massive Chinese emigration has significantly changed the demography of many South-East Asian countries (Poston et al., 1994). For example, a full 80 per cent of all Chinese in the Philippines and 55 per cent of the Chinese in Indonesia are of Fujian origin (Zhu, 1990).

One of the classic questions in the migration literature is whether migrants move in order to escape poverty. This is clearly not the case in Fujian province as it is not the poorest province in China. Quite the contrary, it is one of the coastal provinces that experienced the most rapid growth during the recent decades since the late 1970s. For example, in 1978 during China's initial transition to a market-oriented economy, Fujian's rural household per capita income was ranked twelfth (out of all 30 provinces); by 1992, the per capital rural income rose to eighth place in China (Liang and Wenzhen, 2001). These data indicate that in contrast to other provinces in China, Fujian has enjoyed a particular advantage in the process of transition to a market-oriented economy. In the next few sections, we examine changing patterns of province of origin among emigrants, socio-demographic profiles of emigrants from China and Fujian province, and changes in the selectivity of emigrants from Fujian between 1990 and 1995.

CHANGING PATTERNS OF EMIGRANTS FROM CHINA

Historically, emigrants from China were mainly from Guangdong province (see Figure 1 for the location of each province). This can be testified by the fact that most Chinatown "old-timers" in North America came from Guangdong province and as a result speak either a *Taishan* dialect or Cantonese. This has clearly changed in recent decades. In New York City, for example, there are 43 Fujianese immigrant associations representing immigrants from different parts of Fujian province.² Similarly, there are increasing numbers of immigrant associations for people from Zhejiang province. The changing pattern of province of origin is also reflected in recent immigrants to European countries (Laczko, 2003; Li et al., 2003; Pieke, 2002; Skeldon, 2000).

To examine changes in emigration patterns over time, we analyse data from the censuses of 1982, 1990, and the most recent 2000 (NBS, 1983, 1991, 2002). We also supplement the analysis with individual level data from the 1995 China 1 Per cent Population Sample Survey (China Population Sample Survey Office, 1997). All four data sources share the same characteristics – they all have information on the respondent's household registration status; they include socio-demographic information, e.g. sex, age, educational level, for individuals who emigrated from China but previously lived in the community.

FIGURE 1
LOCATIONS OF MAJOR IMMIGRANT-SENDING PROVINCES IN CHINA,
1982-2000



Table 1 shows how the distribution of emigrants from China changed between 1982 and 2000. The second column in Table 1 indicates the number of emigrants from each province in 1982. The total number of emigrants ($N=56,930$) was very small in 1982. The “fever of going abroad” had just begun. The emigrant population consisted primarily of students and a small number of people who were joining family members abroad. Since Beijing has many universities, it is not surprising that Beijing accounted for more than 22 per cent of China’s emigrant population in 1982; it was followed by Shanghai, another major city in China, accounting for approximately 10 per cent of China’s emigrants in 1982.

The emigrants from Guangdong province were primarily those who were reuniting with relatives abroad, i.e. the so-called “family reunification immigrants”. In 1982, Fujian represented less than 2 per cent of China’s emigrant population, suggesting that the illegal emigration from Fujian probably did not start in significant numbers until the mid-1980s.

By 1990, emigration patterns had begun to change such that in a matter of eight years, from 1982 to 1990, the magnitude of the emigrant population quadrupled to more than 234,000. Although Beijing and Shanghai still accounted for the largest proportion of China’s emigrant population, Fujian quickly began to catch up. Surpassing Guangdong in 1990, Fujian accounted for more than 13 per cent of China’s emigrant population; by 1995, Fujian topped the list with 28 per cent

of China's emigrant population, dominating all other provinces by the mid-1990s. This fact is consistent with the observation that Fujianese abound in New York City, other cities in the United States, and some European countries.

Although most emigrants from Fujian identified in the census or national survey data are more likely to be long-term emigrants because their household registration status is suspended or cancelled, it is possible that some organized contract labourers are included as well. As China integrates in the world economy, some Chinese companies regularly send large number of labourers to other countries to work on contracted projects. In 1995, for example, there were 30,000 contract labourers from Fujian who went to work abroad (NBS, 1999). If the contract is short term and contract labourers' household registration are not suspended, they will not be counted as emigrants. However, how this is implemented in practice is not entirely clear. In addition, we are unable to distinguish between long-term emigrants and short-term contract labourers who went to work abroad (to the extent that they are included in the data).

TABLE 1
DISTRIBUTION OF EMIGRANTS FROM CHINA BY PROVINCE

Province	1982 (%)	1990 (%)	1995 (%)	2000 (%)
North				
Beijing	22.07	28.85	9.19	5.22
Tianjin	2.38	3.40	1.82	0.65
Hebei	4.49	0.33	0.38	0.54
Shanxi	1.45	0.33	0.13	0.22
Inner Mongolia	0.48	1.31	0.68	0.36
North-East				
Liaoning	3.69	3.86	2.42	5.14
Jilin	0.97	1.56	5.30	7.59
Heilongjiang	1.59	0.70	6.53	4.42
East				
Shanghai	9.59	22.51	15.25	5.66
Jiangsu	4.83	3.21	6.36	4.40
Zhejiang	1.44	0.86	4.24	7.24
Anhui	2.53	1.39	0.76	0.51
Fujian	1.75	13.33	28.05	17.63
Jiangxi	2.75	0.62	0.38	0.46
Shandong	2.23	4.10	6.06	1.73

TABLE 1 (continued)

Province	1982 (%)	1990 (%)	1995 (%)	2000 (%)
Central and South				
Henan	2.82	0.25	2.42	1.12
Hubei	4.65	0.66	0.89	0.89
Hunan	4.16	1.11	0.72	0.66
Guangdong	5.18	6.73	3.05	3.37
Guangxi	1.01	0.37	0.64	0.47
Hainan			0.25	0.10
South-West				
Sichuan	8.04	1.44	2.46	1.50
Guizhou	2.76	0.21	0.13	0.09
Yunnan	1.39	0.78	0.25	29.07
Tibet		0.04	0.13	0.02
North-West				
Shaanxi	5.18	1.27	0.81	0.45
Gansu	1.22	0.20	0.21	0.13
Qinghai	0.04	0.12	0.04	0.05
Ningxia	1.01	0.08	0.04	0.03
Xinjiang	0.29	0.29	0.42	0.28
China (total number)	56,930	234,800	236,800	756,626

Source: 1982 China Population Census; 1990 China Population Census; 1995 China 1 Per cent Population Sample Survey; 2000 China Population Census.

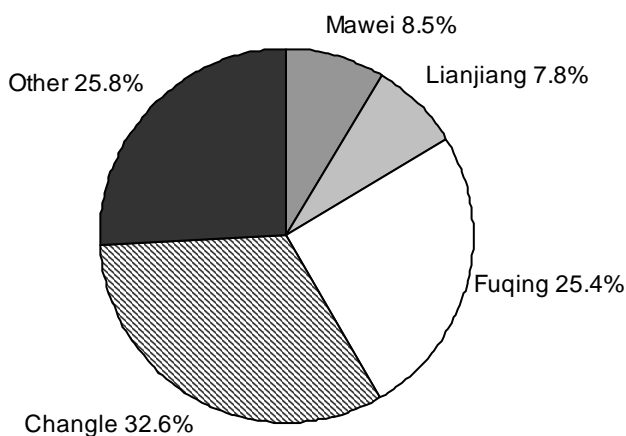
Turning to the most recent results from the 2000 Chinese Population Census shown in the last column, we see that new patterns emerge. Compared to 1995, the overall number of international migrants from China has more than tripled to 756,626. It is also important to note that the distribution of major immigrant-sending provinces has changed as well. Although Fujian continues to be an important migrant-sending province, accounting for nearly 18 per cent of China's emigrant population, its ranking has moved down to second place. There seem to be more people moving from Zhejiang to other countries, a finding that is consistent with research conducted in migrant destination countries such as the United States and European nations (Chin, 1999; Lin, 2002; Pieke, 2002; *World Journal*, 2002).

Even within Fujian province, there is also a change in counties of origin for emigrants. Traditionally, Min-Nan region (in southern Fujian) was a major migrant-sending region to South-East Asia (Zhuang, 2000). However, now the

pattern of emigration from Fujian is clearly dominated by the Fuzhou area. For example, in 1995, the Fuzhou area accounted for 65 per cent of emigrants from Fujian province. In contrast, the Quanzhou area (in Min-Nan region) accounted for only 6.9 per cent of emigrants from Fujian. This discrepancy became even more pronounced by 2000 (i.e. 75% of emigrants were from Fuzhou area and 5.3% were from Quanzhou area). Figure 2 details the distribution of Fujian emigration by county and county-level city in the 2000 Chinese Census.

Changle and Fuqing were two major county-level cities that sent 33 per cent and 25 per cent of the total Fujian emigrants respectively. Mawei (located in the outskirts of Fuzhou city) and Lianjiang are in distant third and fourth places. There is no doubt that Fuzhou area dominates today's Fujian emigration patterns and the role played by the traditional Min-Nan region has significantly diminished.

FIGURE 2
DISTRIBUTION OF EMIGRANTS BY COUNTY, FUJIAN, 2000



Source: Chinese Population Census, 2000.

The 2000 Chinese Population Census also reveals a sharp increase in emigrants from some border regions including the provinces of Yunnan and Jilin. The most surprising result is that in 2000 Yunnan became the number one migrant-sending province in China, accounting for nearly one-third of China's emigrant population. This is even more striking, considering that in 1995 emigrants from Yunnan accounted for less than 1 per cent of China's overall emigrant popula-

tion. Yunnan is a border province adjacent to Myanmar (formerly Burma). Perhaps a complete understanding of the sudden increase in emigration from Yunnan warrants another paper in itself; we suggest that it has something to do with the location of Yunnan province. In both Yunnan and Jilin, border trade probably explains a larger degree of the rise of emigration. The most important legal trade between Yunnan and Myanmar is jade, which has a very big market in China. Indeed, data from Myanmar suggest that there has been a major increase in the Chinese population in Myanmar.³ The case with Jilin province in north-east China is also worth noting. Bordering with North Korea and Russia, the trade between Jilin and Russia has been particularly active with myriad business people actually emigrating to Russia for business.

WHO EMIGRATES? SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF EMIGRANTS FROM CHINA AND FUJIAN

In this section, we provide an overall description of emigration from China. First, we compare the basic characteristics of emigrants and non-emigrants for China as a whole. Second, we compare basic characteristics of emigrants from Fujian, Beijing, and China. Finally, focusing on Fujian province and taking various individual level characteristics into account, we estimate a set of statistical models to predict emigration from Fujian province.

Even though Chinese citizens officially are guaranteed the freedom to emigrate, the reality is that emigration is highly selective. Using data from the 1995 China 1 Per cent Population Sample Survey, we compare emigrants and non-emigrants by several major individual characteristics. The results are summarized in Table 2.

In general, the proportion of males in the emigrant population (62%) is higher than in the non-emigrant population (51%). The most striking difference is that emigrants are much younger than non-emigrants: the percentage of emigrants between the age of 18 and 39 is nearly 72 per cent as compared to 38 per cent among non-emigrants. Emigrants also have higher levels of educational achievement than non-emigrants; fully 37 per cent of emigrants are college-educated, the percentage of those without any education is negligible. In contrast, 41 per cent of non-emigrants have only an elementary school education, while a significant proportion has no formal education at all. Finally, there is an urban bias as emigrants tend to come from cities. One factor for this urban bias is that many students who went abroad were college graduates and all universities in China are located in urban areas.

TABLE 2
SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS
OF EMIGRANTS AND NON-EMIGRANTS, CHINA, 1995

Variables	Emigrant (%)	Non-emigrant (%)
Sex		
Male	62.03	51.03
Female	37.97	48.97
Age		
0-17	4.60	30.91
18-39	71.47	37.82
40 and older	23.93	31.27
Married		
Yes	37.87	42.81
No	62.13	57.19
Education		
No formal education	1.15	16.50
Elementary school	11.97	40.96
Junior high school	27.75	29.85
Senior high school	22.09	9.97
Some college+	37.05	2.71
Place of origin		
City	64.04	23.33
Town	7.37	8.19
Rural	28.59	68.17

Source: China 1 Per cent Population Sample Survey, 1995.

From Table 2, the general impression is that a “typical” Chinese emigrant in the 1990s is a young male from the city with a high level of education. This image is clearly different if we focus on emigrants from Fujian. Table 3 compares emigrants from Fujian and Beijing on several important socio-demographic characteristics. Seventy-four per cent of emigrants from Fujian are male. In contrast, the gender ratio is much more balanced among emigrants from Beijing. Emigrants from Fujian are 20 per cent more likely to be between the ages of 18 and 39 when compared to emigrants from Beijing. As far as education is concerned, the contrast is even more striking. Among emigrants from Fujian, almost 80 per cent have an education level of junior high school and lower. In contrast, 76 per cent of emigrants from Beijing have a college degree. Finally, about two-third of emigrants from Fujian are of rural origin whereas almost all

emigrants from Beijing are former city residents. Clearly, emigrants from Fujian represent a lower level of the socio-economic stratum than emigrants from Beijing. Moreover, it is likely that a significant number of Fujianese emigrants are undocumented.

This comparison between Fujian and Beijing suggests a divergent pattern of Chinese emigration in the 1990s. On the one hand, emigrants from Beijing are more likely to be highly educated and to have a balanced gender ratio, while on the other hand, emigrants from Fujian province are heavily dominated by rural, young men with low levels of education. This polarization in socio-economic origin is reflected in the Chinese immigrant population in the destination countries.

A major question then is do these findings hold true if we compare Fujian with emigrants from China as a whole? Column 3 in Table 3 provides the basic characteristics of emigrants from China (excluding emigrants from Fujian). Again, we see that the gender ratio is much more balanced among emigrants from China than that of Fujian. The comparison between emigrants from Fujian and China is equally striking, with emigrants from Fujian much more likely to come from rural areas with low levels of education. Compared to Beijing as well as to the rest of China, emigrants from Fujian appear to represent a truly distinct population.

To further understand how individual level characteristics affect propensity to emigrate from Fujian province, we estimated a set of logistic regression models of international migration. Again the data come from the 1995 China 1 Per cent Population Sample Survey. Migration theory typically predicts that international migrants are more likely to be male, single, and young (Massey et al., 1987). Aside from gender, age, and marital status, we also include education, rural/urban origin, and occupation. Most census-based studies of international migration only have occupation of immigrants in the host society. In our case, we have information on the individual's occupation before emigration from the province of origin. The results are summarized in Table 4. We focus our discussion on Model 2 that contains all variables of interest.

Consistent with other studies of international migration, emigrants from China are more likely to be male and unmarried. Individuals who are between the ages of 20 and 29 are most likely to emigrate. As for occupation before emigration, we use agriculture as a reference category. Individuals who were in sales, the service sector, and manufacturing are most likely to emigrate. The largest

size of the coefficient for occupations is found in service work. Interestingly, service work is also the most common occupation among Fujianese immigrants in New York City (Liang, 2002). As far as rural/urban origin is concerned, individuals residing in rural areas (before emigration) have the highest propensity to emigrate. This again confirms our earlier results that emigration from Fujian is indeed very different from other provinces in China.

TABLE 3
COMPARISON OF EMIGRANTS
FROM FUJIAN, BEIJING, AND CHINA, 1995

Variables	Fujian (%)	Beijing (%)	China* (%)
Sex			
Male	74.10	47.28	41.60
Female	25.90	52.72	58.40
Age			
0-17	1.93	6.69	5.40
18-39	85.40	66.11	67.30
40 and older	12.67	27.20	27.30
Married			
Yes	61.22	64.53	62.40
No	38.78	35.47	37.60
Education			
No formal education	0.28	0.43	1.40
Elementary school	27.42	1.71	7.40
Junior high school	47.92	7.26	21.70
Senior high school	19.39	14.10	22.90
Some college+	4.99	76.50	46.60
Place of origin			
City	17.36	99.58	77.90
Town	17.08	0.00	4.50
Rural	65.56	0.42	17.60

Note: *For purposes of comparison, statistics for China as a whole do not include Fujian Province.

Source: China 1 Per cent Sample Survey, 1995.

TABLE 4
 LOGISTIC REGRESSION OF INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION
 FROM FUJIAN PROVINCE, 1995

Variables	Model 1		Model 2	
	b	SE	b	SE
Sex (1=female)	-0.66***	0.12	-0.60***	0.13
Age ^a				
15-19	-0.51	0.27	-0.30	0.28
20-29	0.86***	0.18	0.70***	0.19
30-39	0.74***	0.18	0.62***	0.18
Marital status (1=married)	-0.44**	0.14	-0.33*	0.14
Education ^b				
Elementary school	3.23**	1.01	2.91**	1.01
Junior high school	4.09***	1.01	3.53***	1.01
High school	4.19***	1.01	3.80***	1.01
Some college+	4.54***	1.04	5.09***	1.05
Place of origin ^c				
City	-0.16	0.16	-0.73***	0.16
Town	0.61***	0.15	-0.02	0.15
Occupation ^d				
Professional			0.37	0.42
Cadre			0.27	0.53
Office worker			-0.54	0.73
Sales			0.95***	0.26
Service worker			3.86***	0.15
Manufacturing worker, etc.			1.60***	0.15
Constant	-9.38***	1.02	-9.87***	1.02
Wald chi-square (N=111,876)	231.59***		929.70***	

Notes: (a) Age 40+ serves as the reference category; (b) No education serves as the reference category; (c) Rural serves as the reference category; (d) Agriculture serves as the reference category; *p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001.

CHANGES IN THE SELECTIVITY OF EMIGRATION FROM FUJIAN BY SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS: 1990-1995

For a long time, migration students have been interested in the socio-economic selectivity of migrants (Massey et al., 1994; Findley, 1987). The general consensus is that, at the initial stage of the migration process, it is usually those in the middle

of the socio-economic hierarchy who are most likely to migrate because individuals on the low end of the socio-economic scales cannot afford the trip and prosperous individuals have no incentive to migrate. Therefore, only those at the middle level of the socio-economic scale have both the incentive and means to migrate. Massey et al. (1994) argue that this socio-economic status (SES) selectivity in the initial stage of migration is dynamic and may change over time. As more and more migrants from the same community travel abroad, information about the destination spreads across the community; the accumulation of social capital that connects the host destination and sending communities increases correspondingly. In the words of Massey et al. (1993: 461), “as the stock of social ties and international migrant experience grows over time, migration should become progressively *less selective* and spread from the middle to the lower segments of the socio-economic hierarchy” (emphasis added). As a result, migration becomes less dependent on SES and increasingly more accessible to all individuals in the community of origin. Using measures of migration prevalence at the community level and life history data from 19 Mexican communities, Massey et al. (1994) showed that the migration process indeed grew less selective as the level of migration prevalence increased.

Following this rationale, we looked for changes in SES selectivity over time for emigrants from Fujian, using data from the 1990 Chinese Census and the 1995 1 Per cent Population Sample Survey (see Table 5). Examining education variables from 1990, emigration was quite selective by educational level; 43 per cent of the emigrants had completed senior high school and above and 11 per cent had some college level education. By 1995, however, a high level of education was less of a factor. Almost half of the emigrants from Fujian had only completed junior high school, and more than one-quarter had just an elementary school education. Likewise, in 1990, about 11 per cent of emigrants from Fujian were professionals; by 1995, that number was only 2 per cent. Most of the emigrants in 1995 were previously in service occupations, doing manual labour, or working in agriculture. Indeed, as emigration became more prevalent over time in Fujian province, emigration became much more accessible to the average Fujianese – so much so that one did not have to possess a prestigious occupation or a high level of education in order to make the trip.

As emigration became less selective along the socio-economic dimension, there was also a shift in other demographic characteristics. In 1990, 77 per cent of emigrants were males which declined slightly over the course of five years to 74 per cent in 1995. In 1990, young adult children were the most likely to emigrate, while by 1995, emigration included a range of household members including household heads, spouses, children, and others. Finally, in 1990 almost 70 per cent of emigrants were former city residents. Nevertheless, by 1995, emigrants were much more likely to come from rural areas.⁴

TABLE 5
COMPARISON OF EMIGRANTS FROM FUJIAN, 1990 AND 1995

Variables	1990(%)	1995(%)
Sex		
Male	77.00	73.96
Female	23.00	26.04
Age		
15-19	6.30	8.31
20-29	47.80	49.58
30-39	30.80	29.36
40+	15.10	12.75
Mean age	30.00	29.00
Household relationship		
Household head	10.70	28.81
Spouse	23.30	13.57
Children	56.90	46.81
Other	9.10	10.81
Married		
Yes	60.40	61.77
No	39.60	38.23
Education		
No formal education	0.60	0.28
Elementary school	22.30	27.42
Junior high school	33.60	47.92
Senior high school	32.40	19.39
Some college+	11.00	4.99
Occupation		
Professional	11.10	2.13
Cadre	2.20	1.22
Office worker	0.70	0.61
Sales	4.40	5.79
Service worker	22.90	38.11
Agriculture	31.40	14.63
Manufacturing worker, etc.	27.30	37.50
Place of origin		
City	68.60	17.17
Town	5.30	17.17
Rural	26.10	65.65

Source: China Population Census, 1990; China 1 Per cent Population Sample Survey, 1995.

This change from city to rural origin among emigrants perhaps reflects a combination of several factors. For example, by mid-1995 China's urban reform made life for city residents rather comfortable so there was less incentive for them to leave, especially to endure sufferings that usually are associated with the smuggling journey. This is consistent with the statistical evidence that between 1985 and 1995 per capita income among urban households in Fujian increased seven times, while the per capita income for rural households increased by five times (FSB, 1997). At the same time, China stepped up its anti-human smuggling effort, forcing smugglers to turn to the countryside where peasants were still willing to immigrate and it remains more difficult to detect by law enforcement officials.

This change in SES selectivity among emigrants from Fujian has important implications for future emigration trends. In 1995, Fujian's agricultural population was approximately 25 million (FSB, 1997). If we accept the proposition that 25 per cent of China's rural population is surplus (Li, 1996), that is, not needed for agricultural production, and if we apply this percentage to Fujian's agricultural population, this translates into a 6.3 million rural population surplus in Fujian. This figure could represent a very large potential pool of emigrants from Fujian.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Much of China's demographic changes were manifested in fertility and more recently internal migration. Since the late 1980s international migration has increasingly become important as larger number of immigrants from China went to Japan, Europe, and North America (especially the United States). Some of this recent wave of international migration from China, in particular undocumented migration, has attracted global mass media attention as reflected in the cases of ill-fated Golden Venture fiasco in New York City in 1993 and more recently the tragic death of 58 Chinese immigrants in Dover, England in 2000. In both cases, most of the immigrants were from China's Fujian province. However, there has not been sufficient scholarly attention to China's international migration and as a result our knowledge of this social phenomenon is rather limited. This is in part because of the difficulty in obtaining data on Chinese immigrants, particularly undocumented immigrants. In this paper, we have tried to take advantage of some recent data from China to paint a portrait of current China international migration patterns. Our methodology of using data from China to study international migration has borne some fruit thanks to the information on household registration status contained in the Chinese data.

The large number of international migrants contained in the 2000 census suggests that there are still many issues to be explored once individual level data are available.

Our study has uncovered several major findings. Perhaps the most important one is that Fujian and Yunnan provinces were the most important Chinese immigrant-sending provinces in the 1990s and 2000. Guangdong province, once a major immigrant-sending province, no longer plays a major role in sending immigrants in the 1990s. Fujian province has already drawn worldwide attention because of the large number of undocumented Fujianese migrants in the United States and Europe. Further studies should explore the patterns of emigrants from Yunnan province including destination countries and characteristics of emigrants from Yunnan.

Another important finding is the change in migrant selectivity for emigrants from Fujian province. Today's emigrants from Fujian are much more likely to come from rural areas and with only a junior high or elementary school education. Their fate in the host society is less clear when compared to other Chinese immigrants with higher levels of education. These individuals often pay large sums of money to be smuggled abroad with snakeheads fees for going to the United States upwards of US\$65,000. Facing huge financial burdens once they arrive in the United States, these Fujianese immigrants very often come with limited English ability, and have to work in the ethnic economy where English is not required. Not having legal status also has consequences for access to health care and other public benefits. For married immigrants, enduring long-term separation from their spouses often results in mental health problems. Added to these uncertainties is the fact that most industrialized countries such as the United States and Europe are experiencing economic downturns as well. Thus, there is a great deal of uncertainty in terms of how well this new group of Chinese immigrants will assimilate in the host societies in the industrialized world.

NOTES

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2. Private communication with Mr. Xiangnong Chen, vice president of Fukien American Association, 22 July 2003.

3. Private communication with Professor Guotu Zhuang of Xiamen University, 26 July 2003.
4. It should be noted that rural/urban distinction is defined by China State Statistical Bureau in an administrative way. Thus people who live in rural areas are not necessarily engaged in full-time agricultural labour. However, the rural/urban distinction is still meaningful and important. Our argument is that emigrants from Fujian in the mid-1990s are no longer those full-time wage-earning city people, but for the most part they are coming from rural areas where individuals are likely to be engaged in a mix of agricultural and sideline economic activities.

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TENDANCES RÉCENTES DE L'ÉMIGRATION EN PROVENANCE DE CHINE: 1982-2000

À l'aide de données provenant de plusieurs enquêtes et recensements chinois, nous offrons une nouvelle perspective pour l'étude de la migration internationale. Les tendances de la migration internationale en provenance de Chine et de la province de Fujian entre 1982 et 2000 donnent lieu à plusieurs constatations. Premièrement, les provinces de Fujian et du Yunnan sont devenues en 2000 les provinces chinoises qui exportaient le plus de migrants. Deuxièmement, notre analyse montre clairement des changements dans la sélectivité socio-économique des émigrants de la province de Fujian de 1990 à 1995. Il faut tout particulièrement noter le passage d'une composante majoritairement urbaine à une composante majoritairement rurale dans la population émigrante. Enfin, dans la province de Fujian, les plus importants facteurs prédictifs d'émigration sont l'âge, l'éducation, le fait d'habiter la ville ou la campagne et la profession (en particulier dans le secteur des services). L'article traite pour finir des perspectives d'assimilation des immigrants de Fujian dans les sociétés de destination.

TENDENCIAS EMIGRATORIAS RECIENTES DESDE CHINA: 1982-2000

Gracias a los datos acopiados en varios censos y encuestas chinas, este artículo ofrece una nueva perspectiva para estudiar la migración internacional. Basándose en las tendencias de migración internacional desde China y la provincia de Fujian entre 1982 y 2000, se obtienen varios resultados. Primero, las provincias de Fujian y Yunnan fueron las principales provincias de envío de inmigrantes de China en 2000. Segundo, los cambios en la selectividad socioeconómica de los migrantes de la provincia de Fujian entre 1990 y 1995 se revelan claramente en nuestro análisis. Cabe mencionar que hoy emigran principalmente las personas de las zonas rurales. Tercero, en el contexto de la provincia de Fujian, los factores como la edad, educación, condición rural o urbana y profesión, especialmente en el sector de servicios, son indicadores importantes que permiten prever la emigración. El artículo concluye exponiendo las perspectivas de asimilación de los inmigrantes de Fujian en las sociedades de destino.