Demographic, Political and Economic Influences on Taiwanese Emigration Intentions: A Comprehensive Analysis

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Introduction

- Hong Kong experienced multiple emigration waves, including a recent one since 2019.
- The global number of migrants has been increasing steadily over the years.
- The percentage of migrants in the world's population has more than tripled since 1970.

Economic Migration Motives
Neoclassical economics:
- Business cycle fluctuations
- ⇧Migration during periods of growth and prosperity
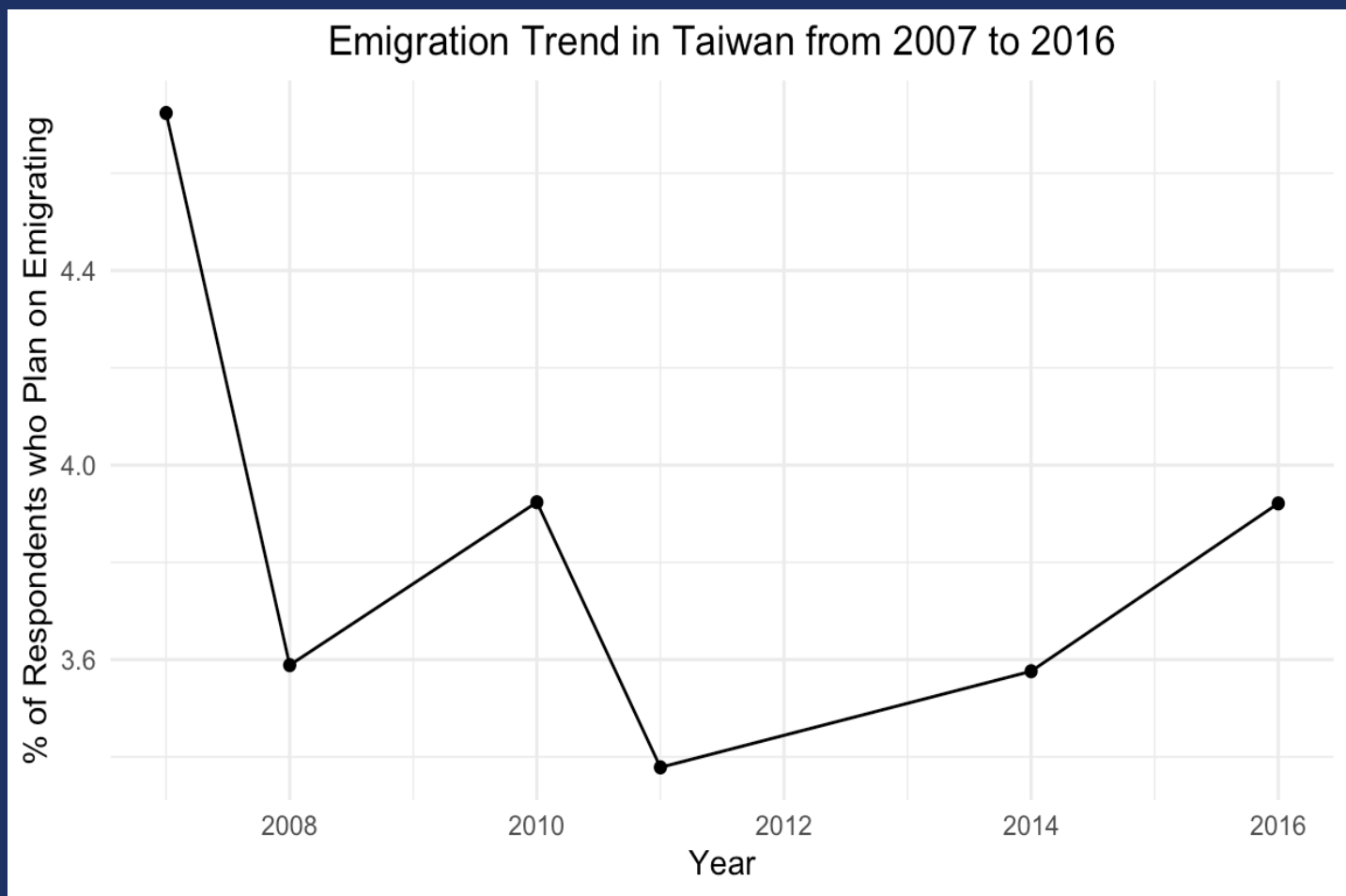- ⇩Migration during economic downturns

Political Migration Motives
Unstable political environment:
- Differences in political ideologies
- Conflicts with ruling authorities
- Unjust social system
→Heightened resolve against political oppression.

Life-course Transitions
Migration Motives
- education
- marriage
- retirement'
→shaping individuals' decisions to relocate

Emigration Trend in Taiwan from 2007 to 2016

The Push-Pull Theory of Migration:

- Push factors include population growth, density, lack of economic opportunities, and political oppression, while pull factors involve demand for labor, available land, economic opportunities, and political freedom.
- Migration is influenced by obstacles (distance, immigration laws) and personal factors (individual abilities, life cycle, environmental awareness, information availability).

Reasons for Focusing on Taiwan:
Talent Drain
- Taiwan faces a significant talent drain, the fastest in the past decade.
- DGBAS estimates a 1.4% annual growth in Taiwanese leaving Taiwan
- Cross-Strait relations drive Taiwanese emigration due to regularized Chinese military exercises for capital flight.
- Policy: Understanding emigration motives is crucial to address Taiwan's talent drain effectively.

Research Question:
What are the primary factors affecting Taiwanese willingness to emigrate in the past two decades?

H_1:
There is a significant relationship between political factors, economic factors, and Taiwanese willingness to emigrate in the past two decades.

H_2:
There is a significant relationship between geographic factors (such as age, gender, years of education, and family status) and Taiwanese willingness to in the past two decades.

Methodology

Analyze PSFD data to understand changing immigration intentions and influencing factors among Taiwanese participants.

Data Collection

"**Panel Study of Family Dynamics**" (PSFD), by the Research Center for Humanities and Social Science at the Center for Survey Research, Academia Sinica.
- The longest and largest longitudinal survey database in Taiwan
- Main sample: born between 1935 and 1991 in Taiwan
- Child sample: children of the main sample, 16-ear-old or above
- Longitudinal tracking of 18 main samples over 20 years, analyzing survey responses related to participants' emigration intentions and reasons for wanting to emigrate.

Do you have plans to emigrate to another country in the future?
What is the main reason for your plan to emigrate?

- Answer: (1) changing jobs or job location for oneself; (2) spouse changing jobs or job location; (3) for children's education; (4) dissatisfaction with the domestic living environment; (5) hoping to move to a place with lower living costs; and (6) concerns about Taiwan's political instability
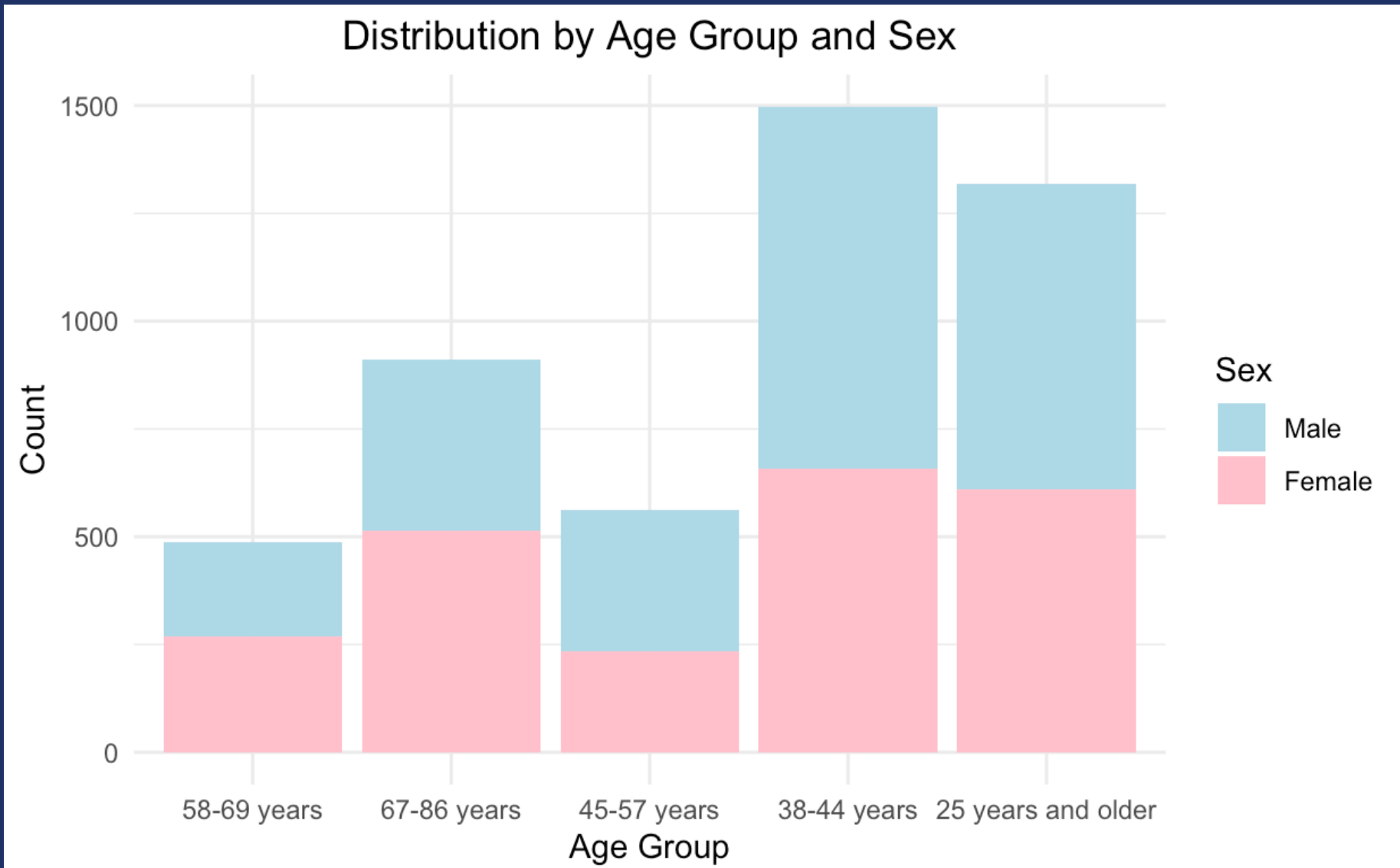
Methods

Regression
1. Logistic regression model
- the probability of individuals having the intention to emigrate, with demographic variables
- Use the same set of explanatory variables to analyze how personal characteristics, work and living conditions, and macroeconomic and political environments influence the reasons for wanting to emigrate.

Results

For our analysis, we found that our hypothesis H1 and H2 were statistically significant, with H1 playing a bigger role in emigration than H2.
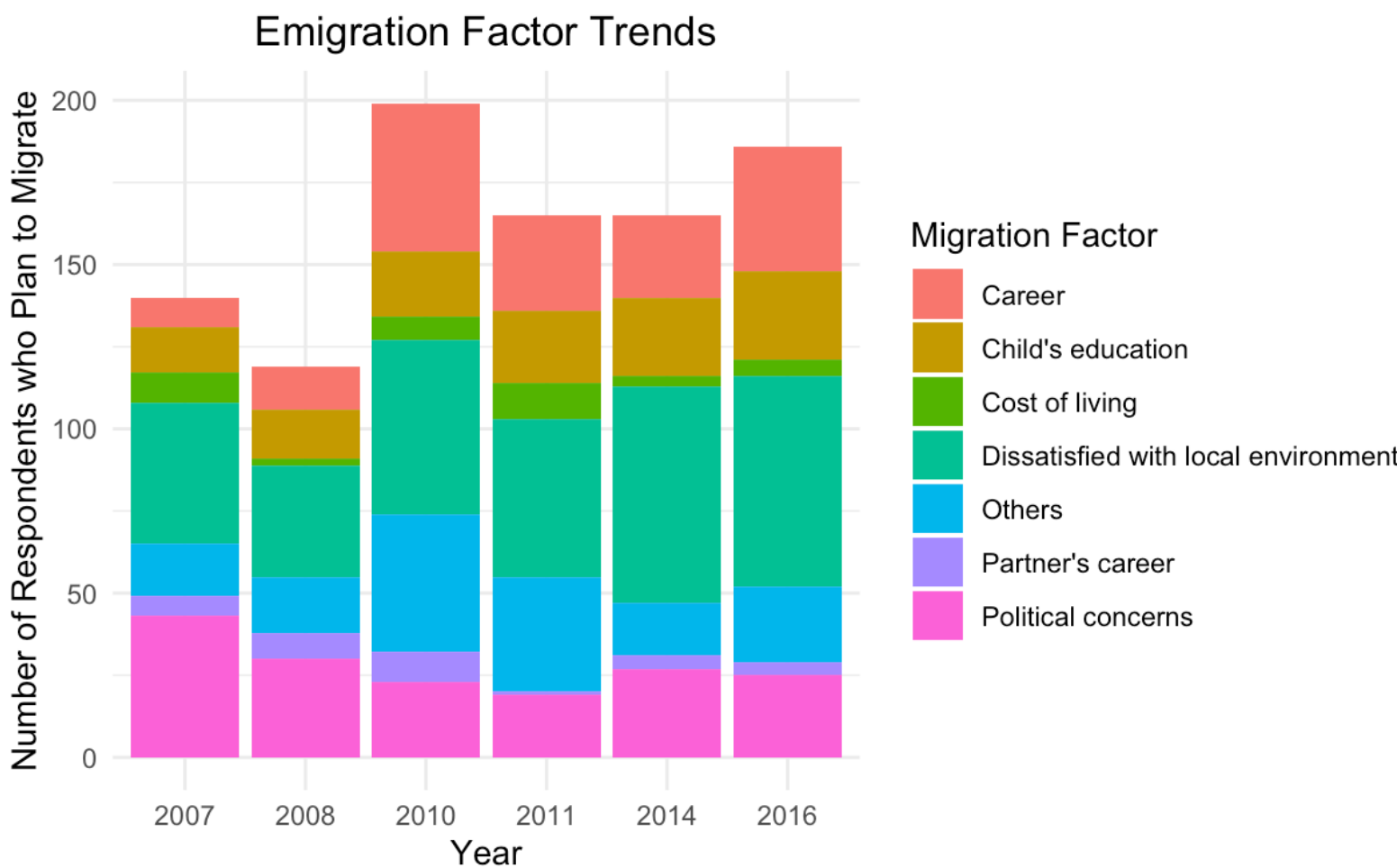
The results are divided into three parts:
1. Trend of factors
2. Regression analysis of political and socio-economic factors
3. Regression analysis of geographical factors

The figure above shows a snapshot of the demographic of respondents in 2016.

Results

Emigration Factor Trends

Political & Economic Factors

	Dependent variable:		
	dependent_variable	Min	Max	Mean
happiness	0.035*** (0.013)	1.000	7.000	4.843
qol	-0.174*** (0.033)	1.000	7.000	4.864
health	-0.198*** (0.047)	1.000	7.000	2.592
s_home	0.035 (0.065)	1.000	7.000	1.834
s_job	0.228*** (0.032)	1.000	7.000	1.46
Constant	-2.502*** (0.264)			
Observations	21,082			
Log Likelihood	-3,345.927			
Akaike Inf. Crit.	6,703.854			

Geographic Factors

	Dependent variable:		
	dependent_variable	Min	Max	Mean
sex	-0.386*** (0.071)	1.000	2.000	3.107
age	0.173*** (0.027)	1.000	5.000	1.479
p_child	0.187 (0.121)	0.000	1.000	0.1209
income	0.00001*** (0.00000)	0.000	289K	28.0K
married	-0.323*** (0.112)	0.000	1.000	0.1209
Constant	-3.526*** (0.154)			
Observations	24,099			
Log Likelihood	-3,797.283			
Akaike Inf. Crit.	7,604.565			

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

The stacked bat chart on the left shows the trend of factors which influence Taiwanese citizens' plans to migrate. Overall, career plans, political concerns, and dissatisfaction with the local environment play the biggest factors.

For political concerns, there is a decreasing trend over time; whereas economic factors see an increasing trend over time. At the same time, social factors show a consistent trend across the decade.

Political & Economic Factors
The logistic regression analysis revealed statistically significant associations between several variables and the outcome variable. The variables happiness, quality of life, quality of health, and job satisfaction showed significant relationships with the outcome variable.

The regression indicated that poor happiness, quality of life, health, and poor job satisfaction were associated with increased likelihood of migration.

The overall constant also shows a significant relationship that poor socio economic and political factors increase desire to emigrate. This supports H1.

Geographic Factors

Regression analysis was also conducted for demographic factors such as age, sex, marriage status, and income. The results show that compared to other factors, sex and marriage have the biggest impact, with men and single people being more likely to emigrate.

The overall constant also shows a significant relationship that the aforementioned geographical factors increase desire to emigrate. This supports H1.

Discussion & Conclusion

Conclusion:
- Political motivations for emigration in Taiwan are decreasing, giving way to economic factors.
- Individual characteristics and job types significantly impact emigration intentions.
- Young, unmarried individuals, higher-income earners, and entrepreneurs are more willing to emigrate.
- Public sector workers show lower emigration intentions due to stable employment.
- Economic indicators, like high unemployment and housing price-to-income ratio, increase willingness to emigrate.
- Factors such as age, marital status, education level, and job type influence political and economic for emigration.

Discussion:
- Low emigration willingness, strong candidates already acted, absent from sample.
- Emigration shifts from political fears to economic.

Limitations:
- Lack of comparative research with Hong Kong due to restricted access to relevant databases.
- Study limitations include reliance on emigration intentions, not actual decisions, and unavailability of destination preferences.

Recommendations:
- Taiwan grapples with declining birth rates, urging policies to promote fertility and curb emigration.
- Emigration intentions focus on improving living conditions, emphasizing education, housing, and overall well-being enhancements.

Reference

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Incomplete version:
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Division of Labour

Distribution by Age Group and Sex (figure)