



The Biased Good Will – A Quantitative Analysis on the China’s Online Philanthropy Crowdsourcing Platform

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Introduction: Online Crowdsourcing Platform

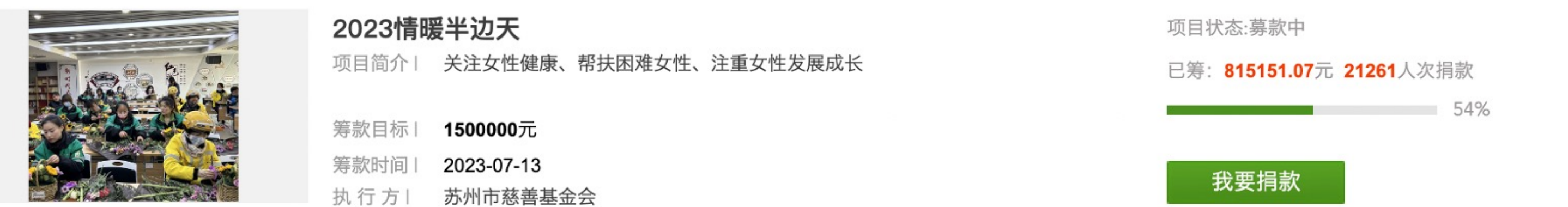
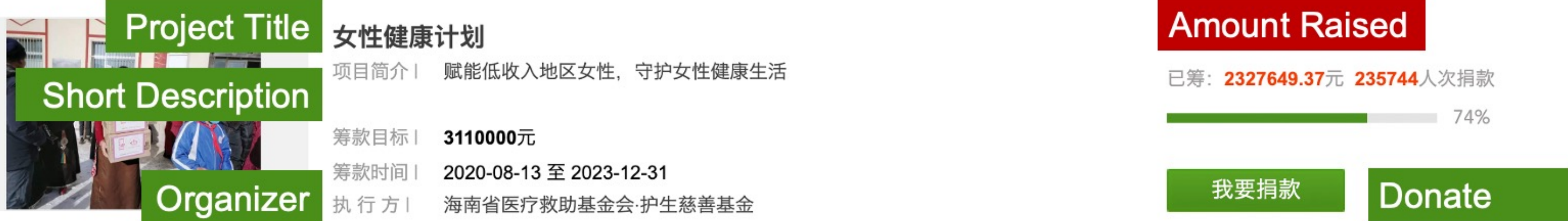


Figure 1

- Online platforms and social media are becoming a major form of social connection and organization, driven by Internet technology and tech giants like Tencent, Alibaba, and ByteDance. The introduction of platforms and social media has changed the philanthropic sector.
- As summarized by Han et al. , (2023), digital philanthropy is a relatively recent phenomenon. It originated when tech giants like Tencent and Alibaba set up corporate foundations and utilized their technologies to create crowdsourcing platforms for NGOs to mobilize public resources for their projects. This new form of charity fundraising was recognized and regulated by the Chinese government as well. Following the promulgation of the New Charity Law in 2016, the Ministry of Civil Affairs began to allow philanthropic foundations to fundraise on online public charitable platforms and announced a list of approved platforms. Before that, only a limited number of registered NGOs that gained approval from the Ministry of Civil Affairs were allowed to start public fundraising campaigns, which was part of the state regulation to control potential movements and civil activities. According to data from Han et al. (2023), projects seeking online financial support have surged since 2013 to include more than 5,000 projects in one year.

Methodology

Data Collection & Data Cleaning: Web Scrapping

- I used a chrome add-in, named Web Scraper to scrape the data from Tencent online philanthropy crowdsourcing platform. <https://gongyi.qq.com>. The website has in-build search engine, reflected in the URLs, which allows me to scrape project based on keywords. I used “妇女” (women) and “女性” (female) as the keywords and pull out 4646 projects initially.
- For each project posted on the platform (Figure 1) available for public donation, I collected their project names, short introductions, target amounts, NGO organizers, start times and end times of the campaigns, the detailed project descriptions with promotion texts, and most importantly the total amounts raised for each project.
- Yet the rough search engine could result in pulling projects not targeted specifically at women. To address this problem, I used a dictionary to filter out irrelevant projects. The final database consist of 2121 projects in total. The sample size is believed to be large enough to reveal the biased patterns.

Data Wrangling & Tags Identification

- Topic:** Based on the grounded theory approach (Corbin & Strauss, 1990), I first reviewed a sample of the whole dataset to extract seven topics that these projects may cover, namely health, mental health, career, disability, women’s rights, education, and reproductive & maternity. These are based on both project descriptions and extracted after reviewing dozens of NGO annual reports. For each topic area, I developed a lexicon of keywords to allocate projects into topics for further analysis .
- NGO Type:** Through analyzing the organization name, I applied automated allocation to identify GONGOs and civil NGOs. This method is plausible as only organizations registered and recognized by the Ministry of Civil Affairs are allowed to use China in their name. Similar rules apply to the All-Women China Federation, where only those affiliated with it are allowed to use certain text in their names.

Government-Organized NGO (GONGO) in China

Early scholars see potential in philanthropic to leverage civil participation and even democratization in China (Chamberlain, 1993; Jie, 2006; Moore, 2001; Tang & Zhan, 2008). Yet the third sector in China demonstrates completely different characteristics, featuring a more collaborative instead of conflictual relationship with the state (Chamberlain, 1998; Muthiah Alagappa, 2004). The most prominent case would be Government-Organized Organizations, or GONGO (Saich, 2000). These organizations are not part of the government structure and operate in an independent system, yet they could be directly founded by the state and in close relationship with the government (Lai et al., 2015).

- Administration Level & Geography Information:** In our dataset, almost all NGOs are affiliated with a place. We observe that NGOs are in four different administration levels, namely national, provincial, city-level, and county-level. Based on the organization name and matching it to the map of China, we extract the location and administration level of each project, the data projected to link geographical information available from R packages.

Data Analysis & Main Objectives

- This project utilized R Studio and a set of packages, mainly ggplot, to visualize the following three dimension:
- To what extent are donations skewed among different projects?
- What are the topic areas NGOs in China focus on while donating to women-related projects? How is resources distributed across topics?
- Where do donations concentrate geographically, and do donations flow to the most needy places?

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Finding 1: Strong Skewness of Donation

0%		10%		20%		30%		40%		50%		60%	
CNY	-	CNY	284.10	CNY	1,509.47	CNY	4,170.10	CNY	9,200.86	CNY	22,558.45	CNY	45,853.69
70%		80%		90%		100%		Figure 2 Quantile of Distribution					
CNY	93,466.65	CNY	205,447.64	CNY	542,644.11	CNY	79,765,754.18	GONGO					
								NGO					

By printing the quantile of the donation amount (Figure 2), we found that the distribution of donations raised through online platforms is quite skewed.

The box plot in Figure 3 further visualized the skewed distribution of log donation by NGO types. Figure 4 further facet by topic areas. Note that the plot is based on log amount of donation, the skewness is quite strong.

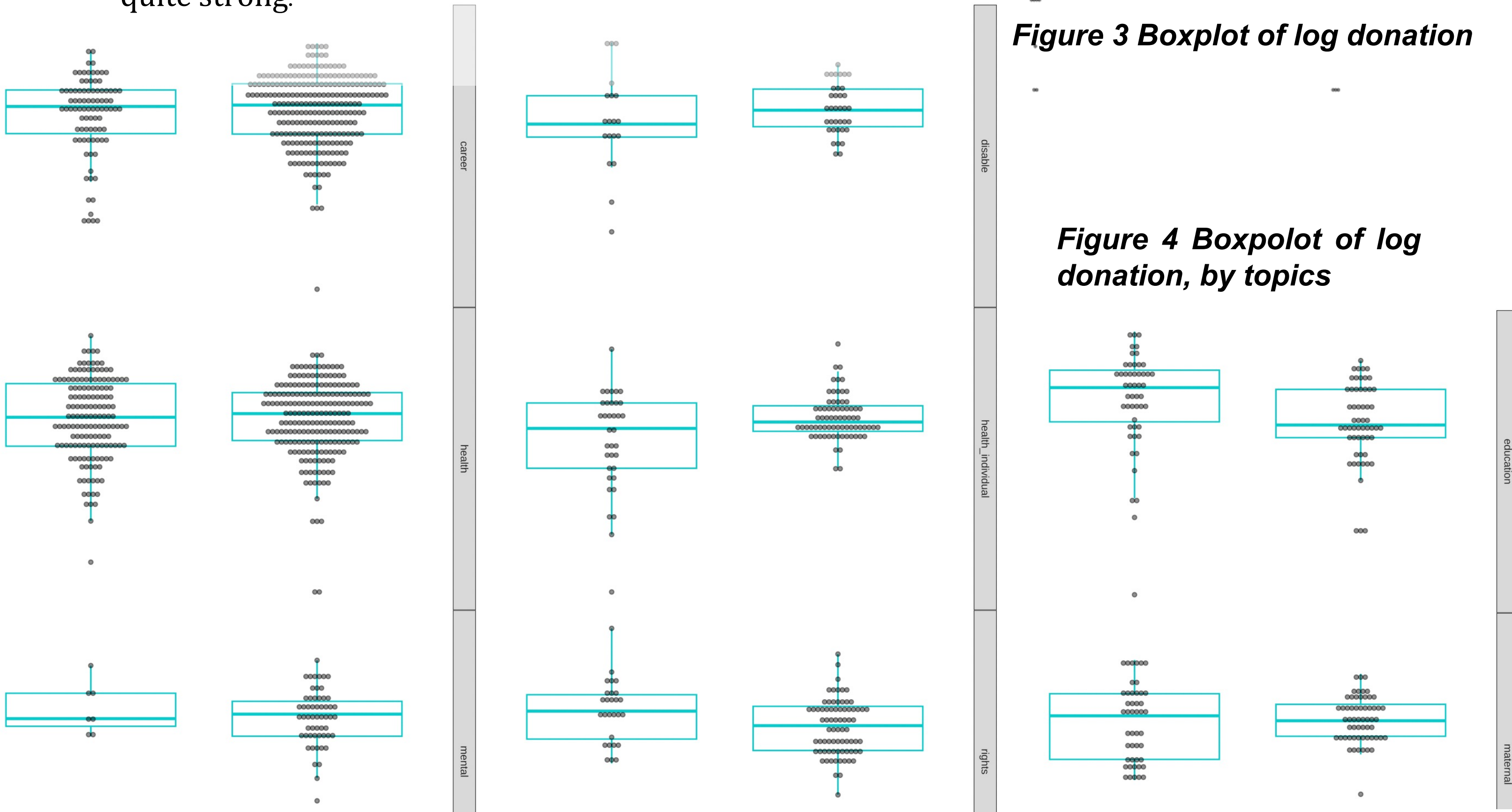


Figure 3 Boxplot of log donation

Figure 4 Boxpolot of log donation, by topics

Finding 2: Topic Distribution

Figure 5 · Donation Amount by Topic / CNY

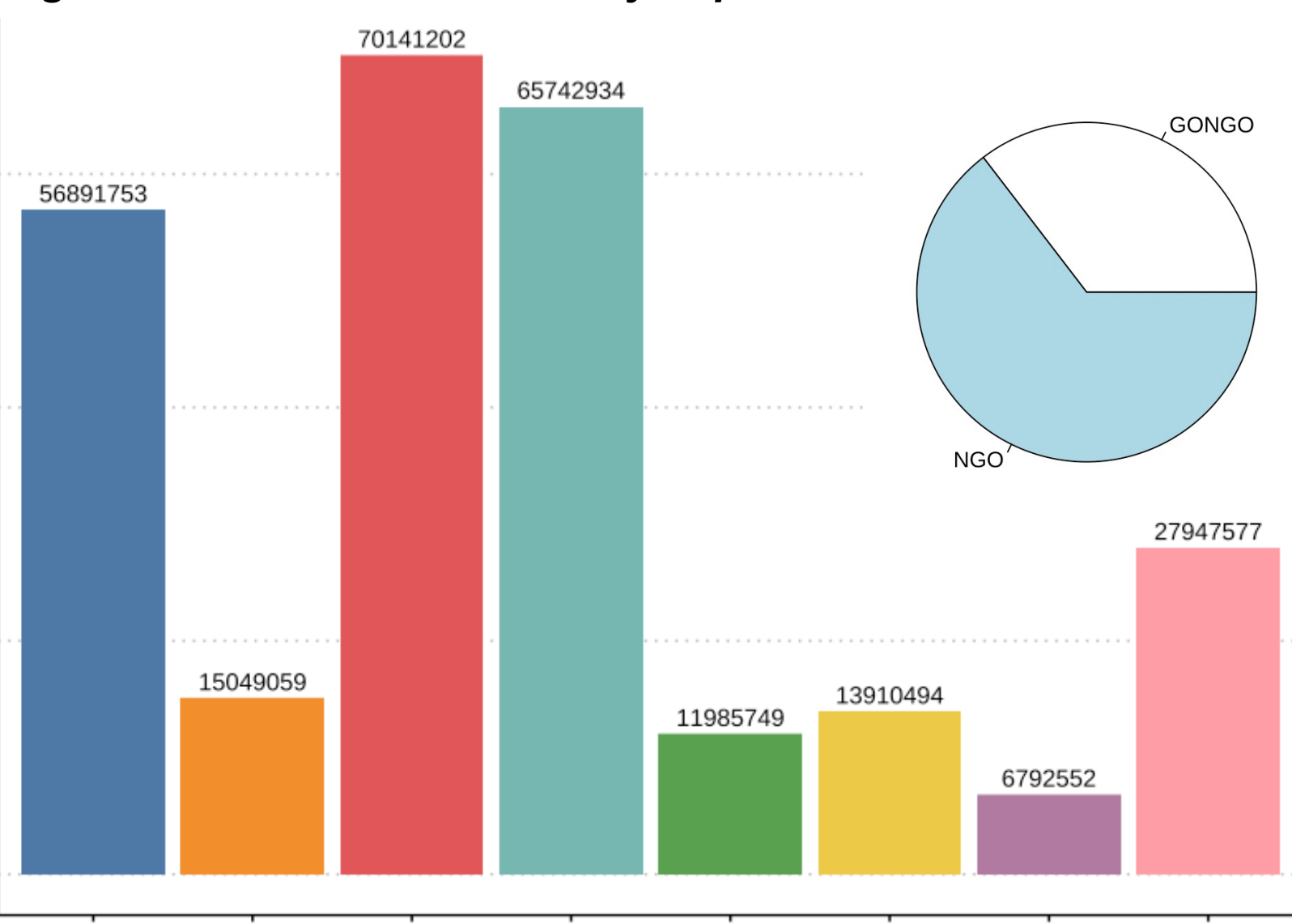


Figure 6 Topic Distribution by type

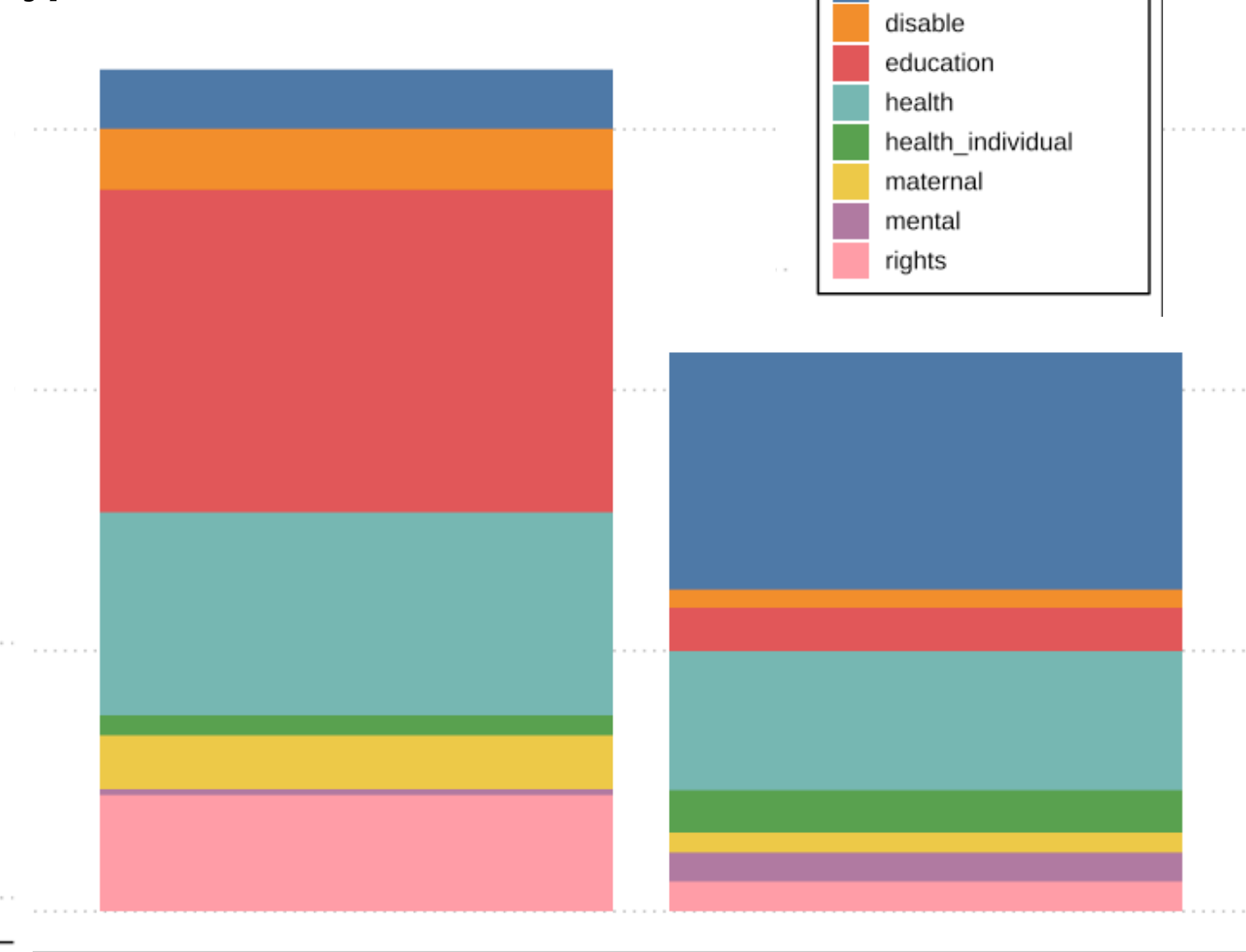
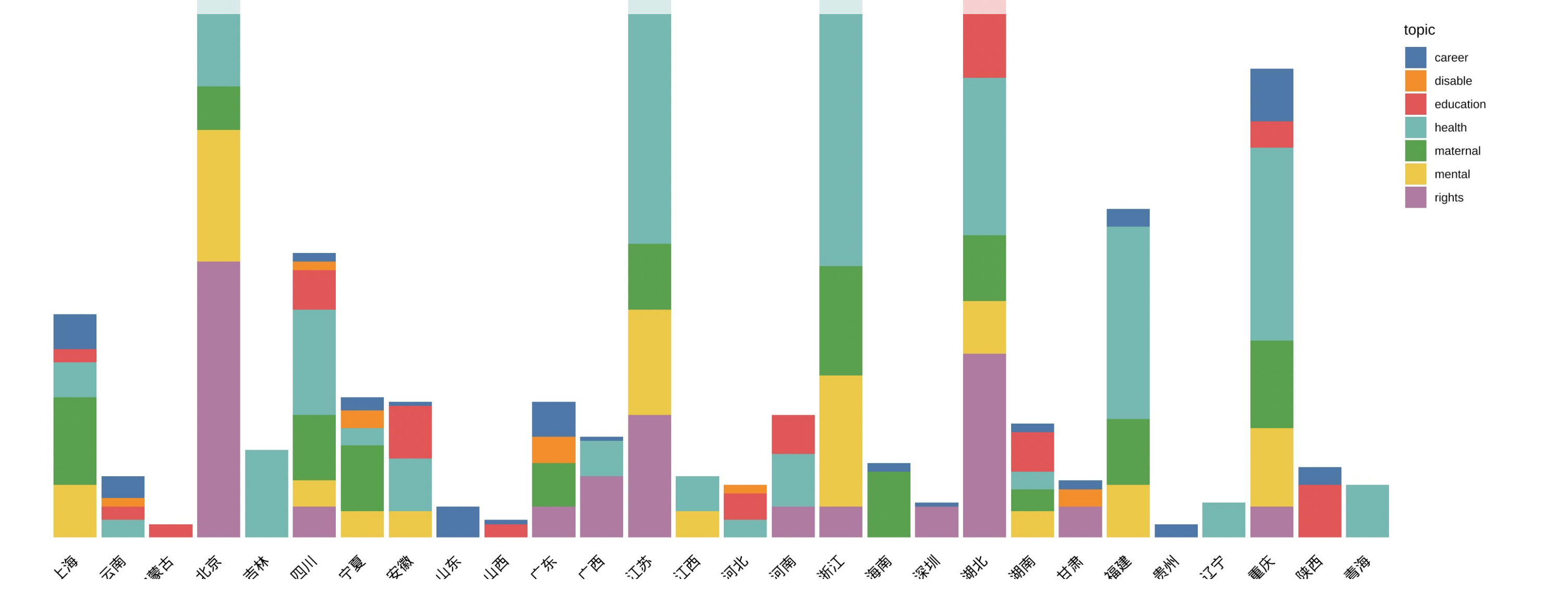


Figure 5 presents an overview on the donation distribution by topic. Projects focused on women education and female health are receiving exceptionally attention, followed by projects help women get employment and start their career. Surprisingly, rights based argument is receiving high donation. A closer look on Figure 6 and Figure 7 would solve the puzzle. Most rights-based projects were held by GONGO, indicating that only those close to the state are allowed in advocacy work. Similar patterns applies to city. Beijing has the largest proportion of rights-based project.

Figure 7, Topic Distribution by Province



Finding 3: Imbalanced Spatial Distribution

Compare Figure 8 and Figure 9, it seems provincial level donation general flows to less privileged places. By contrast, the prefecture-level donation maps are indicating the opposite. a large proportion of donation flows to cities around the Yangtze River Delta and Pearl River Delta, the two regions with almost the highest GDP in China. One possible is the affinity to the birthplace of donors, where financially capable people prefer to donate to their birthplace instead of the place in more urgent need.

Figure 9, Donation by Province

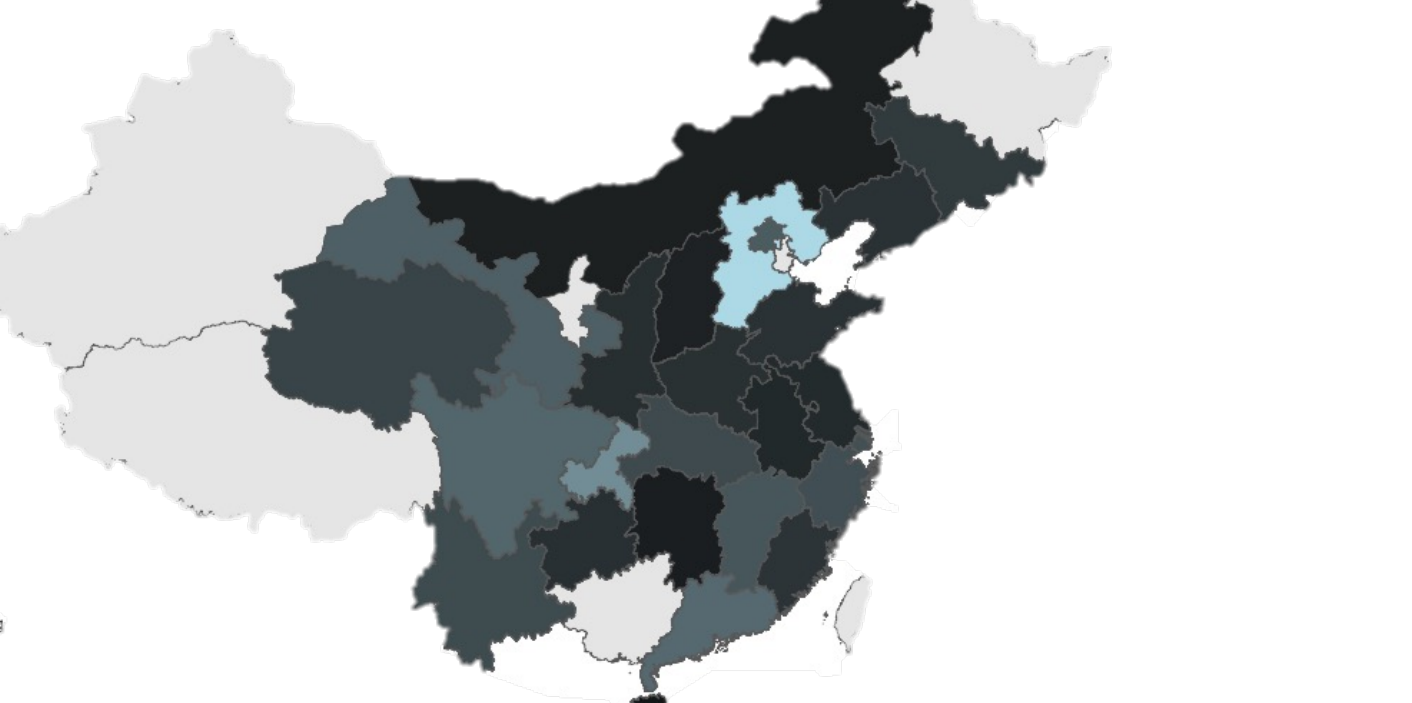


Figure 10, Donation by Perfecture

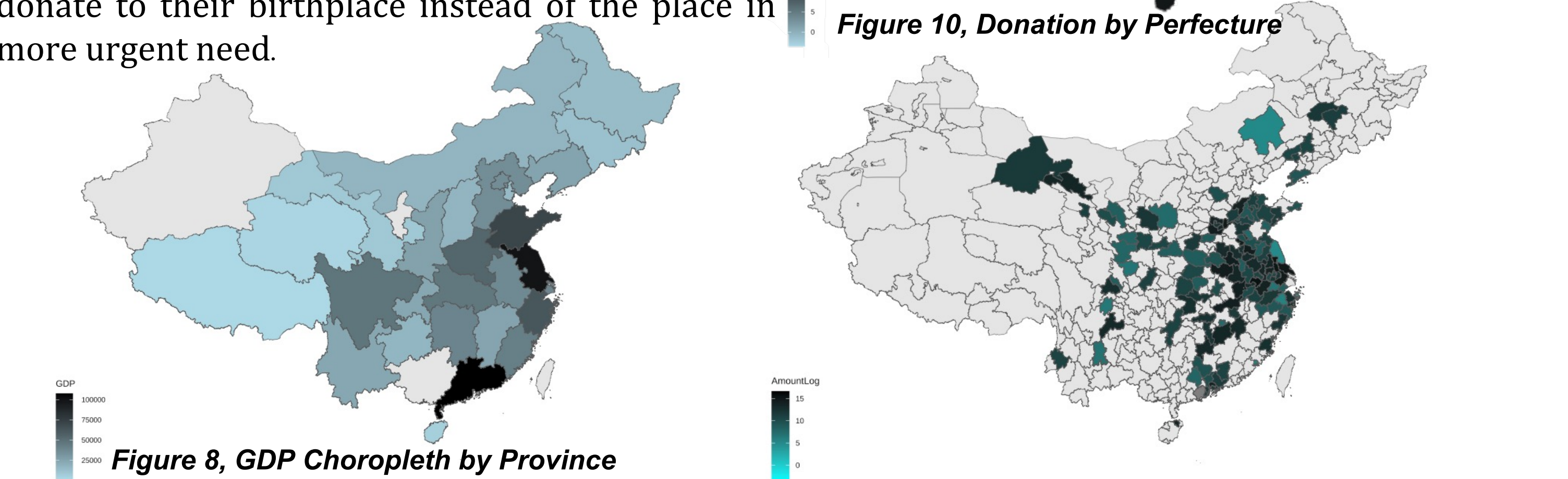


Figure 8, GDP Choropleth by Province