

THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

Statistical Profile

Compiled by Qingwen Xu and Farooq Pasha

INTRODUCTION TO THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA



About this Statistical Profile -

Organizations striving to be employers-of-choice in different countries around the world need access to current information about the economic, social, political, and demographic characteristics of the countries where their employees live and work.

The Country Profile Series focuses on statistics that can guide decision-making at the workplace: workforce highlights, economic highlights, and population highlights. This Country Profile is part of a set of resources about China available on the website of the Global Perspectives Institute: www.bc.edu/agingandwork.

The founding of the People's Republic of China on October 1, 1949 symbolizes the establishment of a socialist system in this most populous country of the world. Stretching 5,000 km across the East Asian landmass, the nation borders with Mongolia and Russia in the north, Vietnam, Laos and Myanmar to the south, and India and Central Asia in the west. China's eastern coastline is bounded by the South China Sea on the southeast and by the East China Sea to the east, beyond which lie Korea and Japan. Among its nearly 1.3 billion people are 56 ethnicities, with Han Chinese constituting 92% of the total population.¹

From its founding in 1949 to late 1978, the economy of the People's Republic of China was centrally planned. In 1978, Deng Xiaoping, the leader of the Communist Party of China, initiated China's market-oriented reforms. Today China is the fastest growing major economy in the world with GDP growth averaging 9.6% for each of the past 30 years.² It is the world's fourth largest (behind the US, Japan, and Germany) with nominal GDP at US\$3.25 trillion, corresponding to US\$2,650 per capita.³

Now thirty million private businesses account for approximately 70% of China's national output, compared to 1% in 1978. But the state still dominates in certain industries such as energy.⁴ China's success has been primarily due to low costs in manufacturing. This is attributed to a combination of cheap labor, solid infrastructure, medium level of technology and skill, relatively high productivity, favorable government policy, and, some claim, and undervalued currency exchange rate.

China has continually emphasized research and development in order to make the transition from a manufacturing-based economy to an innovation-based one. China now has the world's second largest R&D budget, and an estimated 926,000 researchers. This is second only to the United States, which has 1.3 million researchers.⁵

Hundreds of millions of China's people have been pulled out of poverty due to its rapid economic growth. However, the growth has been uneven in different geographic regions and in different rural and urban areas.⁶

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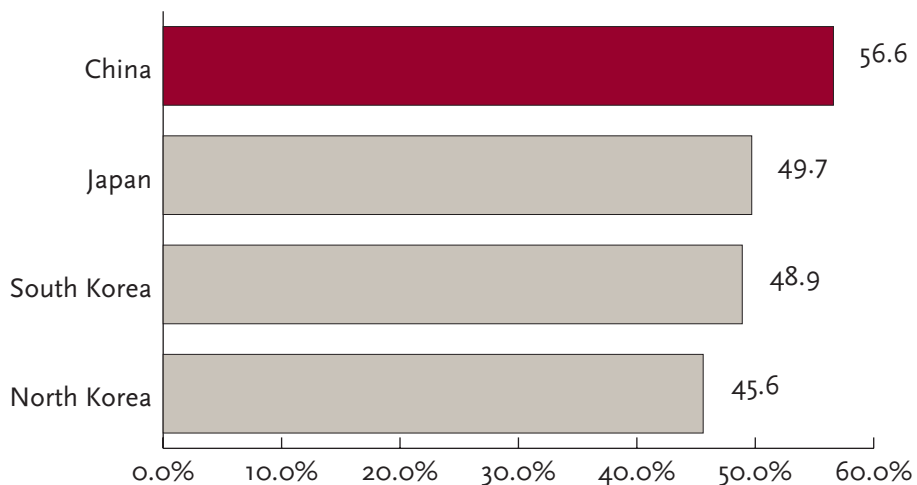


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LABOR FORCE HIGHLIGHTS

- 911.29 million people in China (69.0% of the total population) age from 15 to 59 in 2007.⁷
- Persons age from 15 to 64 in China is projected to decrease from 936.4 million in 2005 to 841.38 million in 2050.⁸
- Economically active population was 782.44 million in 2006, among them, 764 million people were employed.⁹
- At the end of 2006, the urban registered un-employment rate was 4.1%,⁷ the rate of the urban unemployed persons who voluntarily registered at the employment service organizations verse the total of the urban employed and unemployed.
- In November 2006, average hours worked by urban Chinese employees was 47.26 per week, a 1.1% decrease from the previous year. While people age from 16 to 19 on average worked 49.94 hours, older employees (age 65 and above) worked 36.82 hours per week.⁹
- Data on percent part-time work in China (as percentage of total Chinese population) currently unavailable.
- 68.6% of the total labor force reported being self-employed in 2006.⁹
- As noted in Figure 1a, China is compared to other selected East Asian countries. China has the highest rate of employment as a percent of total population in 2006.¹¹

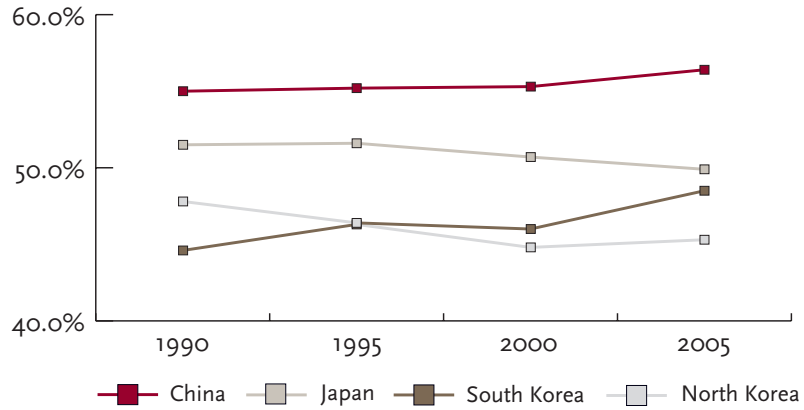
figure 1a. Employed as a percent of Total Population, selected East Asian Countries, 2006



Source: United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

Figure 1b compares China's historical trend of the rate of employment as a percent of total population with other East Asian countries.

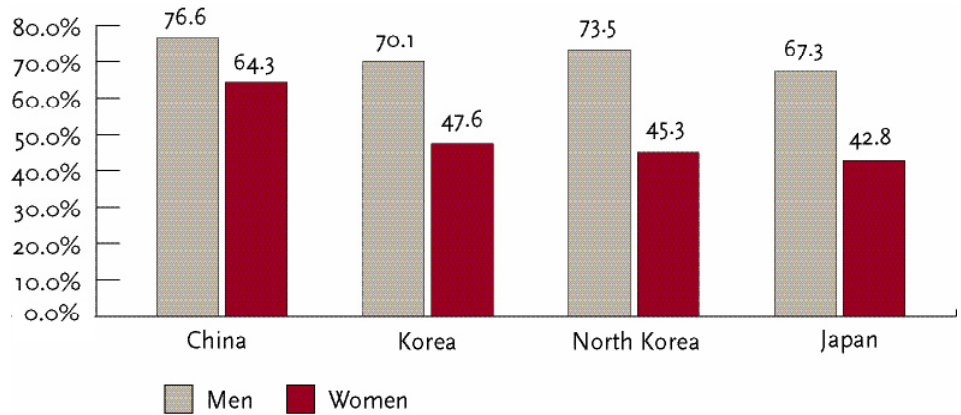
figure 1b. Employed as a percent of Total Population, selected East Asian Countries, 1990-2005



Source: United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

As shown in Figure 2a, China has the highest rates of employment for both men and women in this age group compared to other East Asian Countries¹¹.

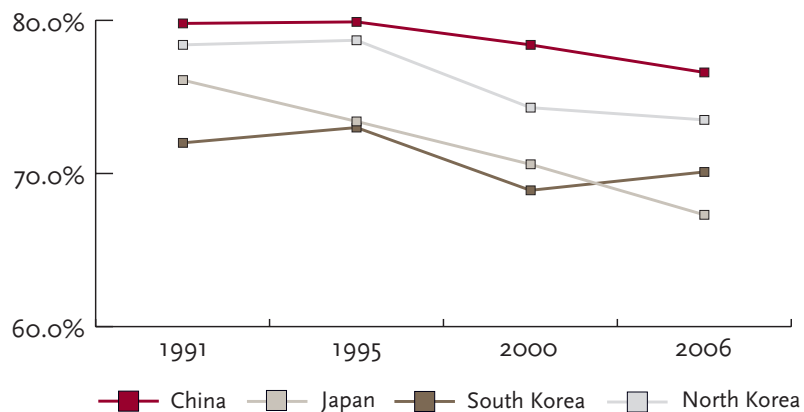
figure 2a. Employment Rates, Age 15-64 by Gender: China and comparable East Asian Countries, 2006



Source: United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

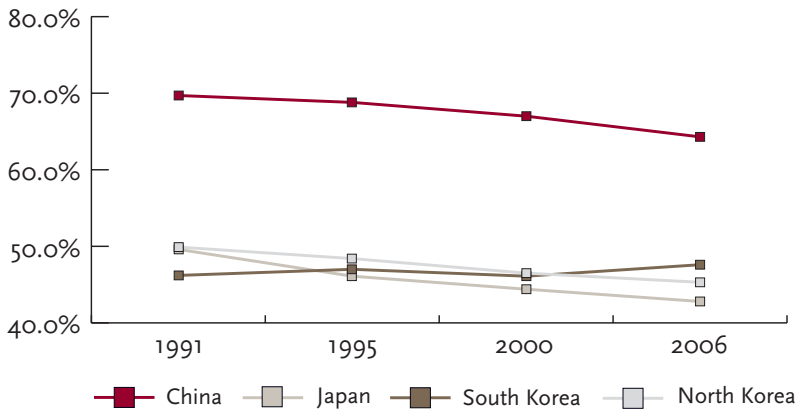
Figures 2b and 2c, show the historical trend of employment rates for age group 15-64 in China and selected East Asian Countries for men and women respectively¹¹.

figure 2b. Employment Rates, Age 15-64 for Men in China and comparable East Asian Countries, 1991 - 2006



Source: United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

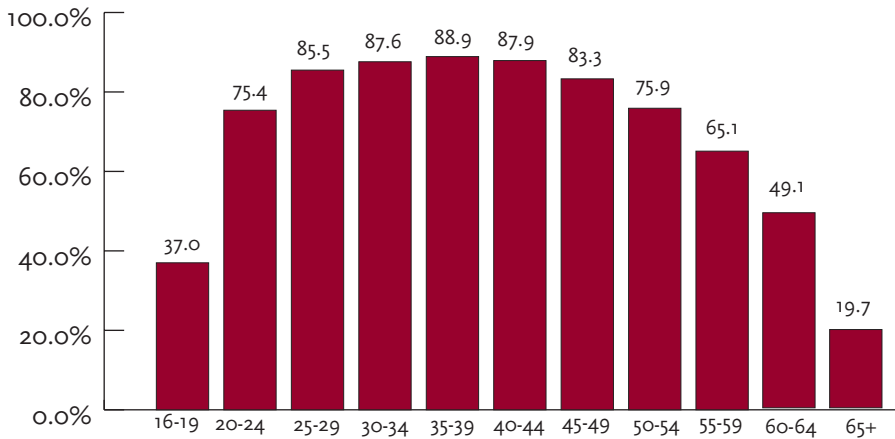
figure 2c. Employment Rates, Age 15-64 for Women in China and comparable East Asian Countries, 1991 - 2006



Source: United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

Figures 1b, 2b and 2c indicate that China is the only country with a historical increasing employment rate as a percent of total population, meanwhile decreasing employment rates for both men and women in the age group 15-64. This is primarily due to China's population policies; the One Child Policy was initiated in the early 1980s

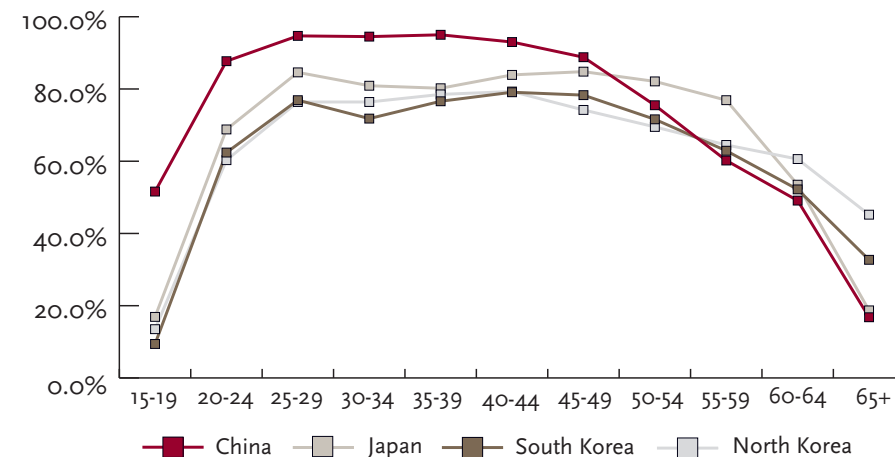
figure 3. Employment Rates in China, within age group, 2005



Source: National Bureau of Statistics of China

Figure 3 shows the employment rates for each age group in China in 2005.¹⁵

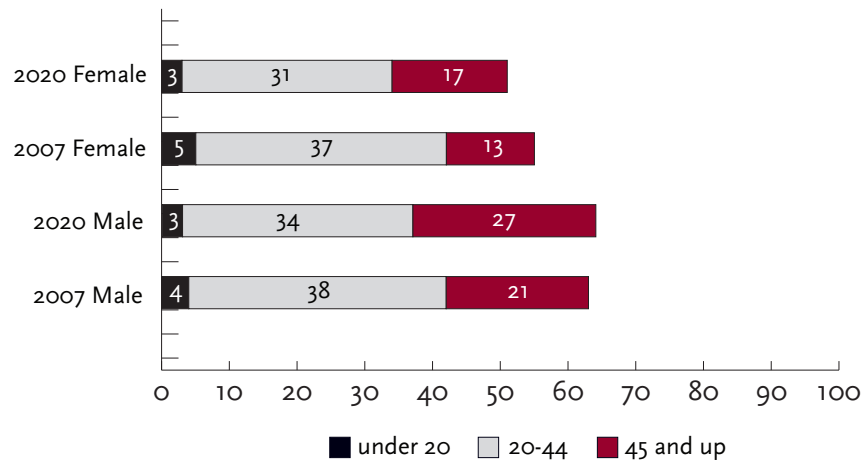
figure 4. Employment Rates in China compared to selected countries within age group, 2007



Source: International Labor Organization

Figure 4 compares the employment rates for each age group in China with South Korea, North Korea and Japan. In 2007, the employment rate for people age 65+ was lowest in China (16.8%) and highest in North Korea (45.2%).¹⁰

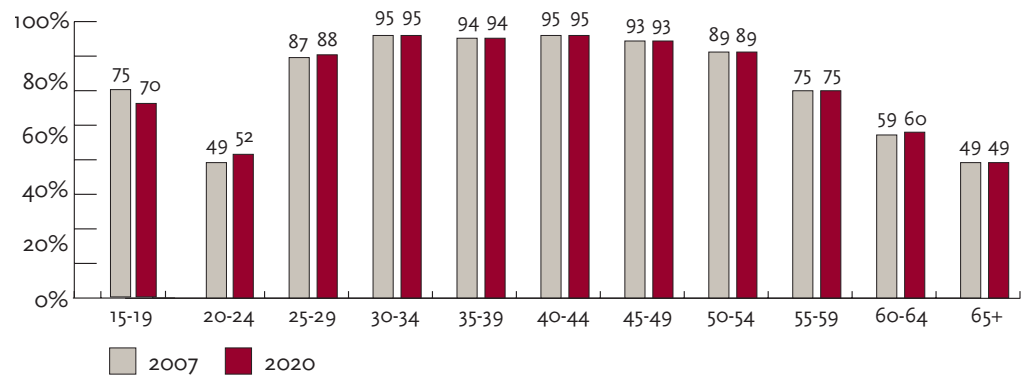
figure 5a. Current and Projected Percentage of Total Population Economically Active in China, 2007 and 2020



Source: International Labor Organization

Figures 5a and 5b, compare the 2007 employment rates for the different age groups in China with the projected rates for 2020.⁴

figure 5b. Current and Projected Economically Active Population Estimated and Projections in China, within age group, 2007 and 2020

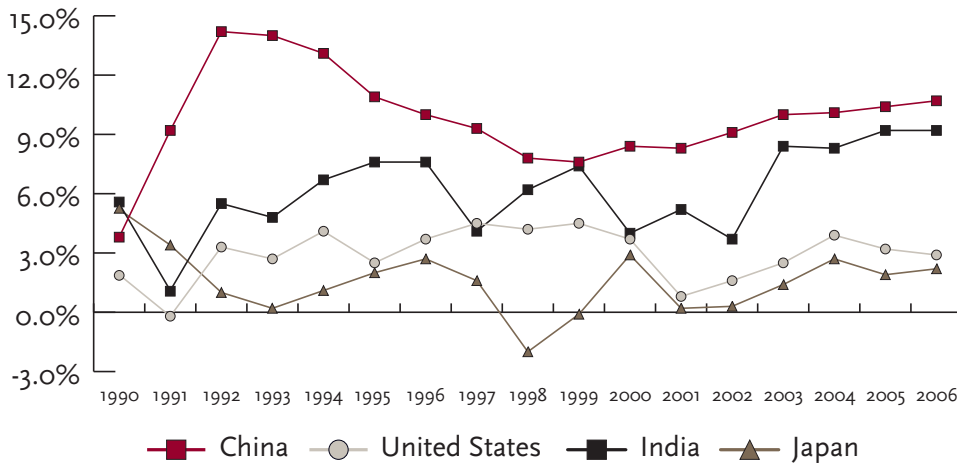


Source: International Labor Organization

ECONOMIC HIGHLIGHTS

- Gross Domestic Product per capita in China in 2006 was \$1,441, while it was \$12,969 in South Korea, \$527 in North Korea and \$29,418 in Japan.¹⁰
- Gross Domestic Product of China grew at an average of 9.8% during the period 1990-2006. Growth rate peaked in 1992 at 14.2%, and was 10.7% in 2006.⁶ Figure 6 compares the trend of China's GDP growth with the GDP trend in India, Japan, and the United States.

figure 6. GDP Growth, China, US, India and Japan 1990 - 2006



Source: World Bank

figure 7. Total External Debt as percentage of GDP, China 1990-2006

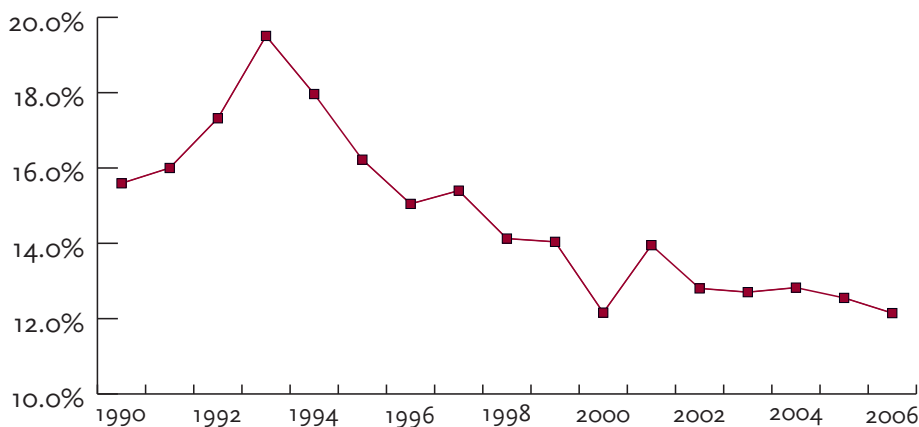


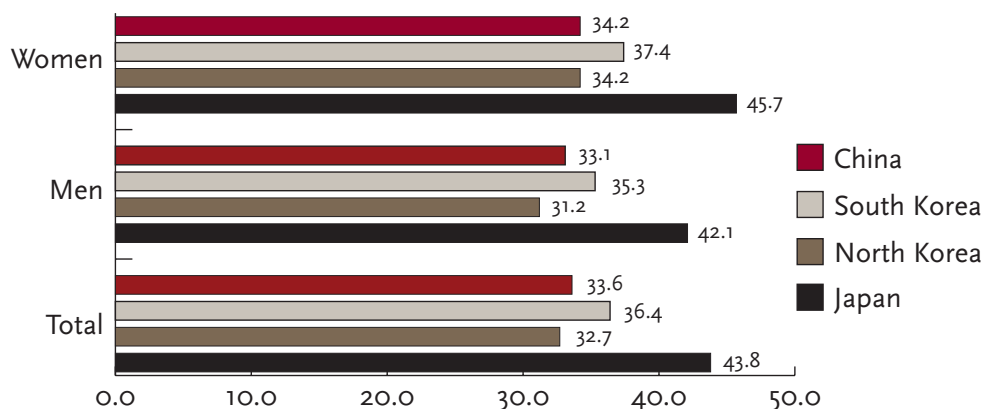
Figure 7 presents the trend of China's total external debt as percentage of GDP from 1990 to 2006.

Source: World Bank

DEMOGRAPHIC HIGHLIGHTS

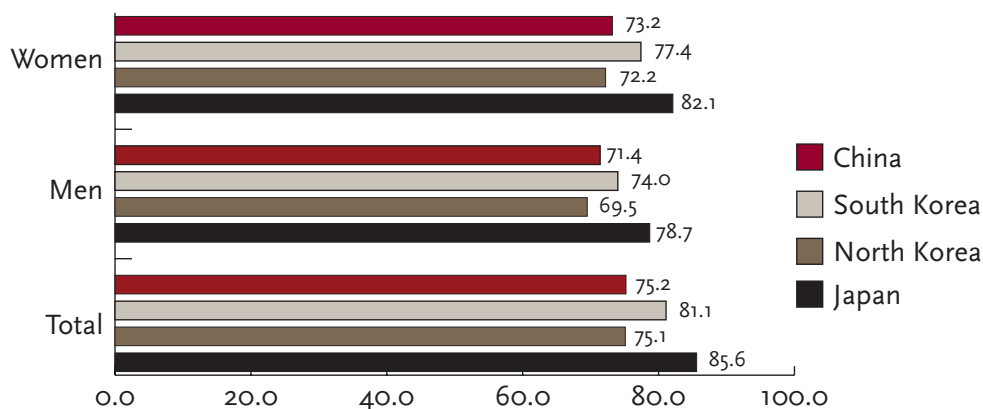
- 🌐 In 2007, the Chinese population was 1,331,256,000, compared to 48,142,000 for South Korea, 22,670,000 for North Korea and 128,325,000 for Japan.¹⁰
- 🌐 Ethnic composition is greater than 91.5% Han Chinese, with Zhuang, Manchu, Hui, Miao, Uyghur, Tujia, Yi, Mongol, Tibetan, Buyi, Dong, Yao, and Korean among the numerous ethnic groups constituting the remaining ~8% of the population.¹³
- 🌐 Total fertility rate for china is 1.77 children born/woman (2008 estimate).¹³
- 🌐 The life expectancy at birth for the Chinese population in 2007 was 73.2 years, 71.4 for men and 75.2 years for women.¹³
- 🌐 The median age of the Chinese population in 2007 was 33.6 years, 33.1 years for men and 34.2 for women (see figure 8).⁷

figure 8. Median Age, selected East Asian Countries, 2007



Source: The World Factbook 2007

figure 9. Life Expectancy at birth, selected East Asian Countries, 2007

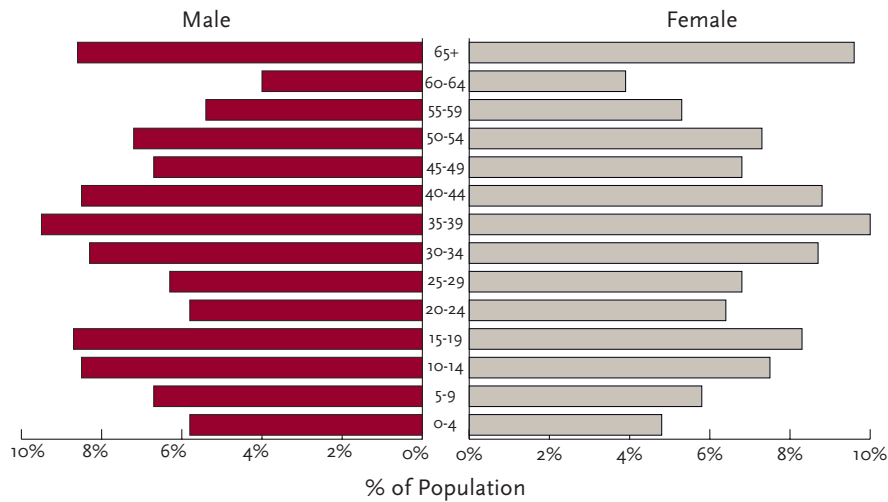


Source: The World Factbook 2007

🌐 In China, 8.6% of the male population and 9.6% of the female population is 65 or older.¹ In comparison:

- 🌐 In South Korea, 8.0% of the male population and 12.3% of the female population is 65 or older.⁸
- 🌐 In North Korea, 6.2% of the male population and 10.6% of the female population is 65 or older.⁸
- 🌐 In Japan, 18.2% of the male population and 23.7% of the female population is 65 or older.⁸

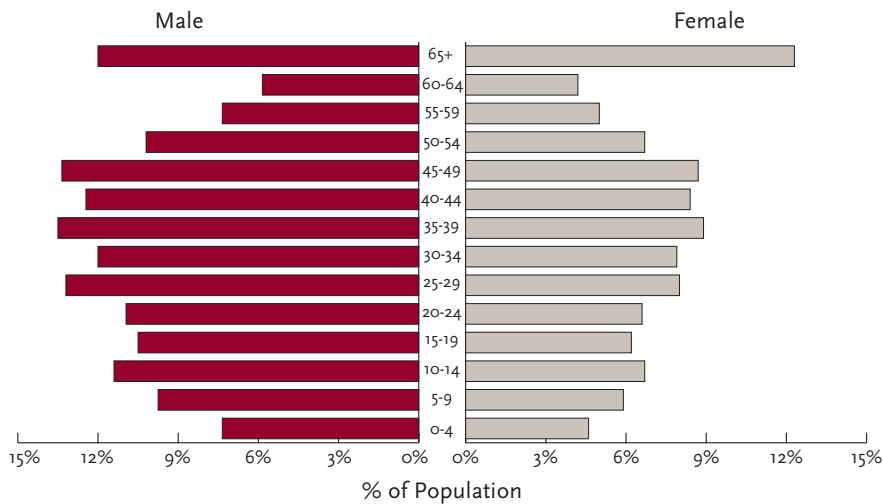
figure 10a. Population Distribution of China, 2005



In China, there is a bulge in the population over 65 years. South Korea, North Korea and Japan show similar dynamics for the older population but Japan has the biggest bulge in the male and female population for the age group of 65+.

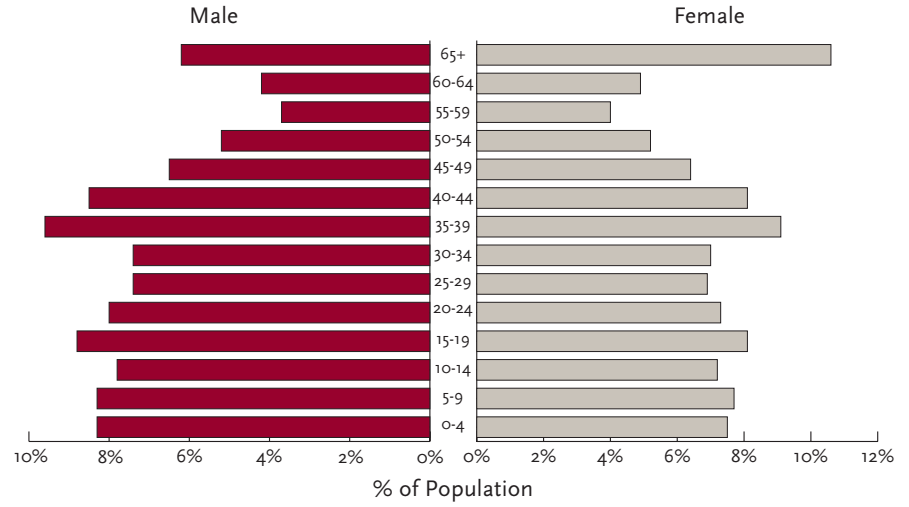
Source: National Bureau Statistics of China

figure 10b. Population Distribution by age in South Korea, 2007



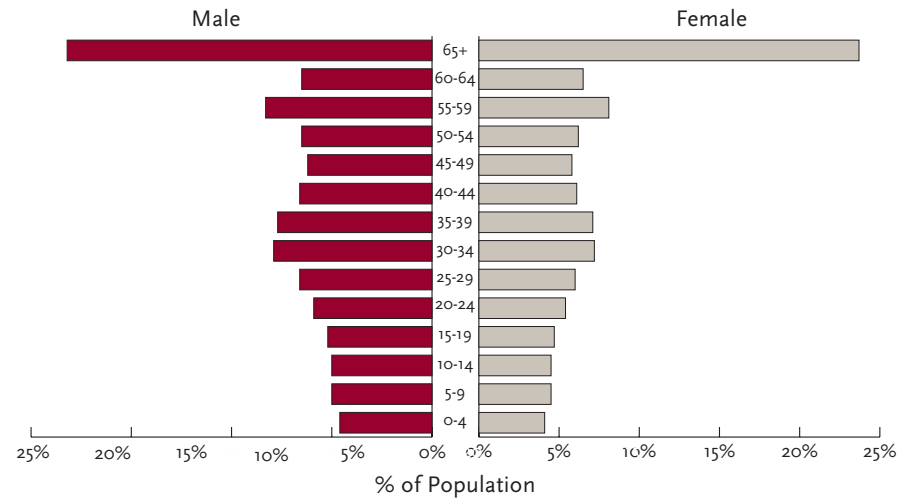
Source: United States Census Bureau

figure 10c. Population Distribution by age in North Korea, 2007



Source: United States Census Bureau

figure 10d. Population Distribution by age of Japan, 2007



Source: United States Census Bureau

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ABOUT THE INSTITUTE

Established in 2007 by the Center on Aging & Work, the Global Perspectives Institute is an international collaboration of scholars and employers committed to the expansion of the quality of employment available to the 21st century multi-generational workforce in countries around the world.

The Global Perspectives Institute focuses on innovative and promising practices that might be adopted by employers and policy-makers.

The Institute's research, publications, and international forums contribute to:

- 🌐 a deeper understanding of the employment experiences and career aspirations of employees of different ages who work in countries around the world;
- 🌐 informed decision making by employers who want to be employers-of-choice in different countries; and
- 🌐 innovative thinking about private-public partnerships that promote sustainable, quality employment.

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The Sloan Center on Aging & Work at Boston College was founded in 2005 with a multi-million dollar grant from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation. The Center partners with workplace decision-makers in evidence-based research on employer and employee responses to the increasingly global multi-generational workforce. These collaborations focus on quality of employment with the aim to inform employers with research data to attract, engage and retain high quality industry talent. As of 2008, the Center has three research streams – the US National Initiatives, the State Initiatives and the Global Initiatives. Their collective mission is to gather information and collaborate with leaders in the public, non-profit and business sectors in an effort to leverage today's multi-generational workforce and globalization as competitive advantages in the 21st century economy.

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