

Independent child migrants: Some basic information and how to find out more

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Aims of talk

- Present some basic information about independent child migrants
- Make suggestions for finding out more

Sources of information on migrants in developing countries

	Internal migrants	International migrants
Macro Censuses, national surveys, administrative data	Available and coverage acceptable (for some groups)?	Available, but coverage often unacceptable
Micro Small surveys, qualitative data, case studies	Children starting to receive attention. Lots of advocacy.	(As for internal migrants)

Internal migration:
Illustrative results from
national censuses

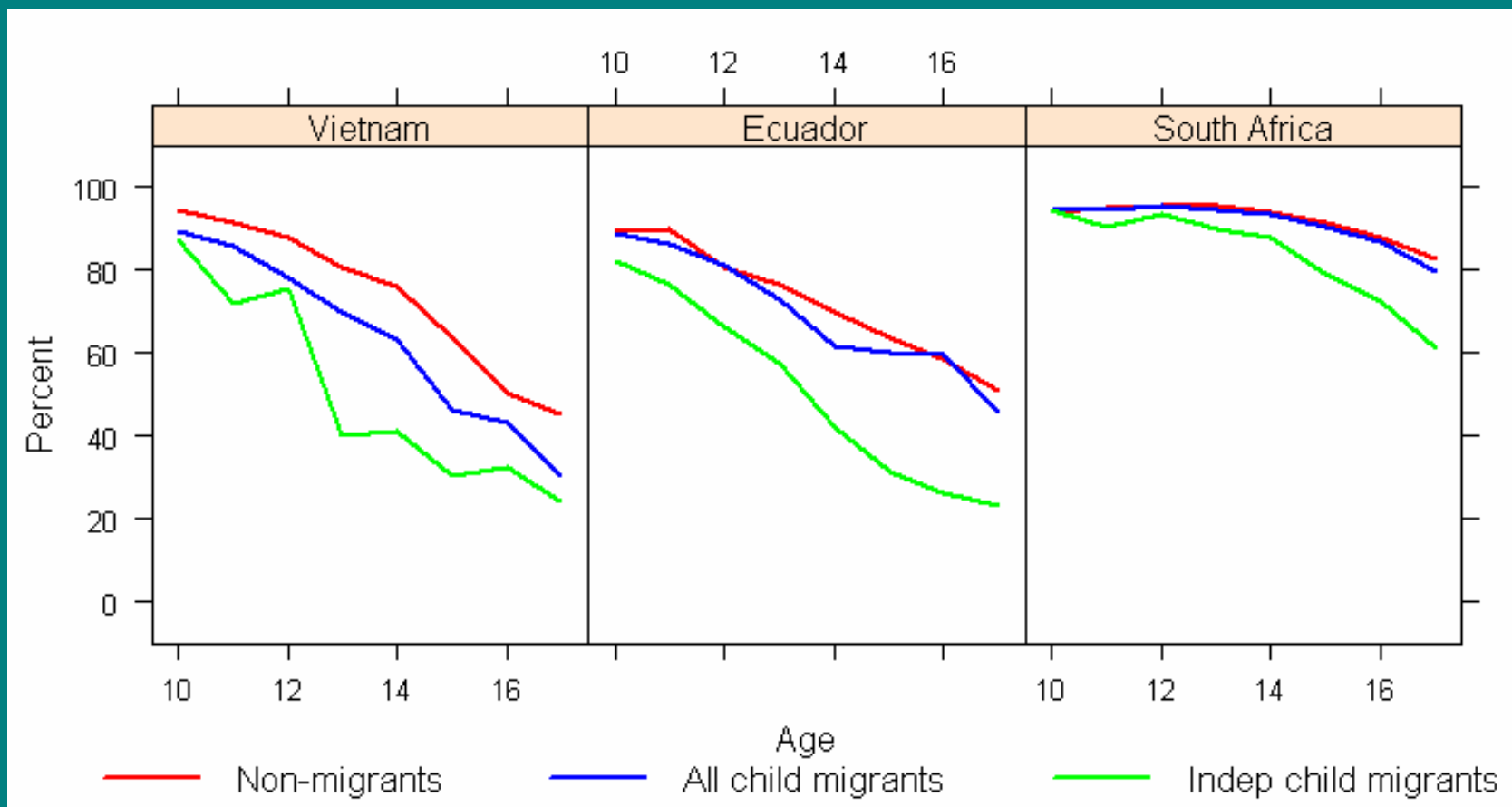
Data from censuses

- Source: IPUMS International (www.ipums.org)
- Definitions
 - **Independent** = does not live with mother or father
 - **Child** = aged 10-17
 - **Migrant** = changed province/state within the past 5 years

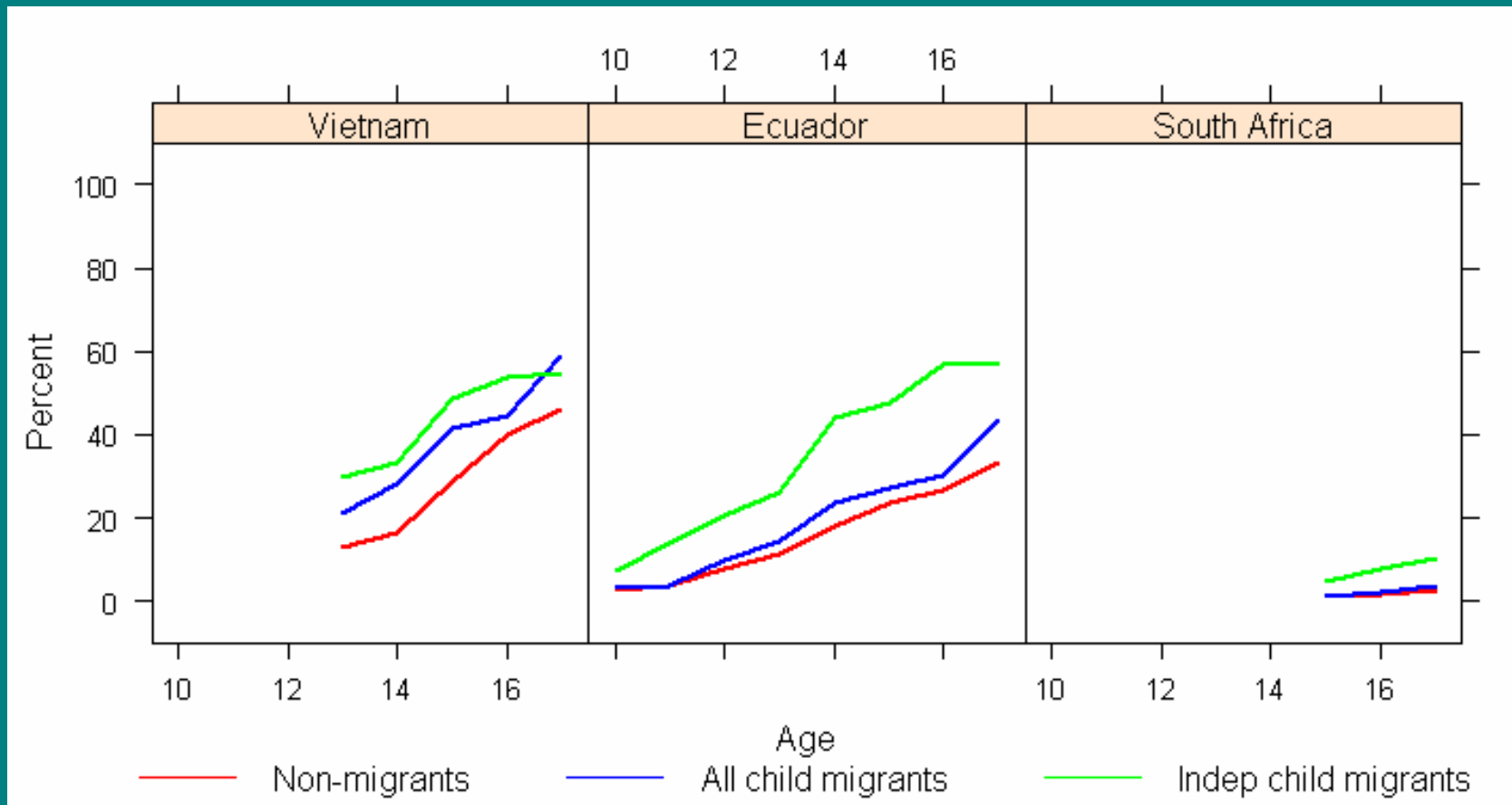
Some basic numbers

Country	Independent child migrants (000)	Independent child migrants as percent all children	Girls as % independent child migrants
Vietnam	70	0.5	60.6
Philippines	89	0.6	66.7
Ecuador	45	2.1	59.1
Brazil	315	1.1	67.6
South Africa	58	0.7	51.2
Mexico	162	0.9	62.9

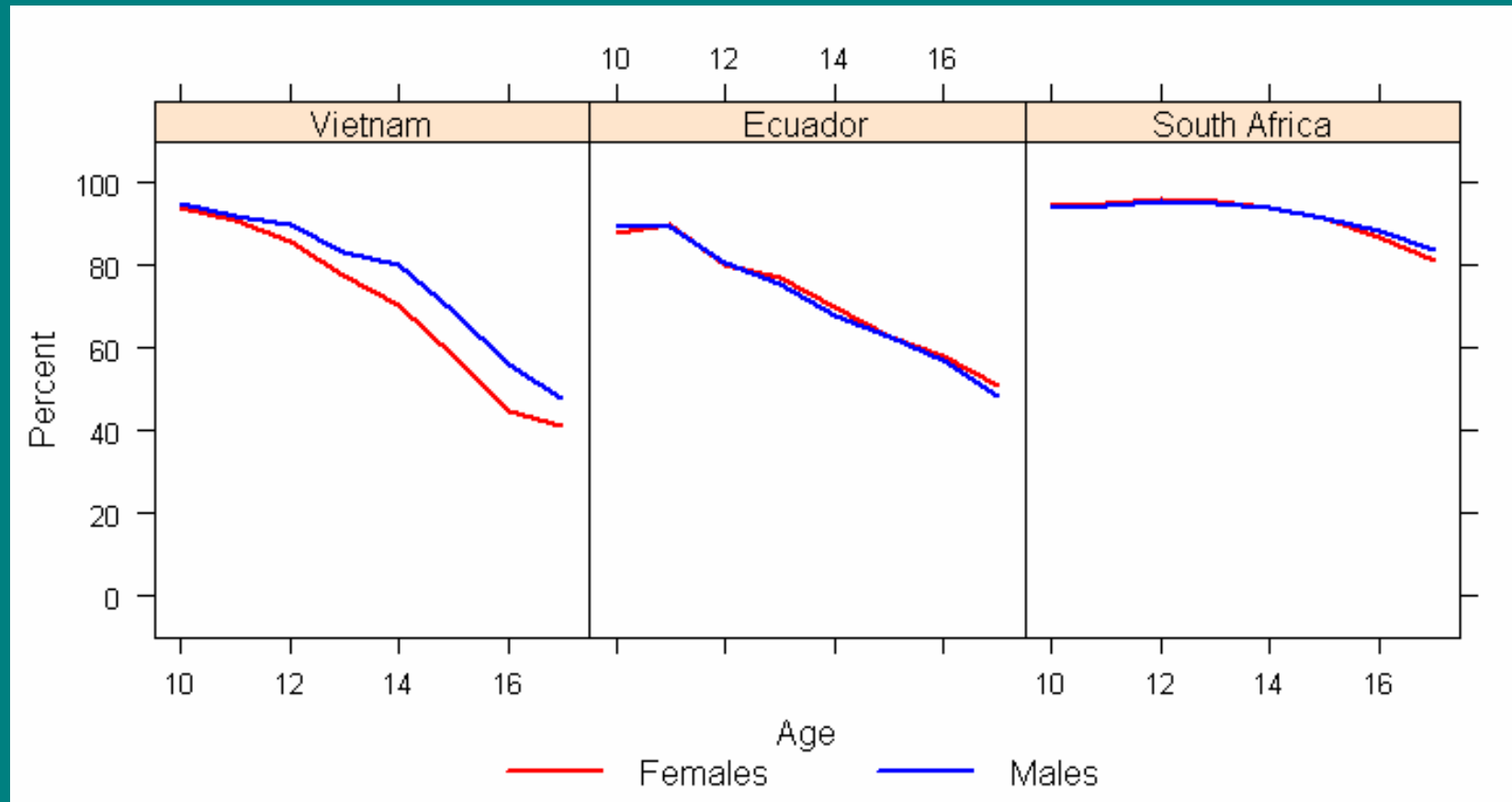
Percent of children attending school, by migration status



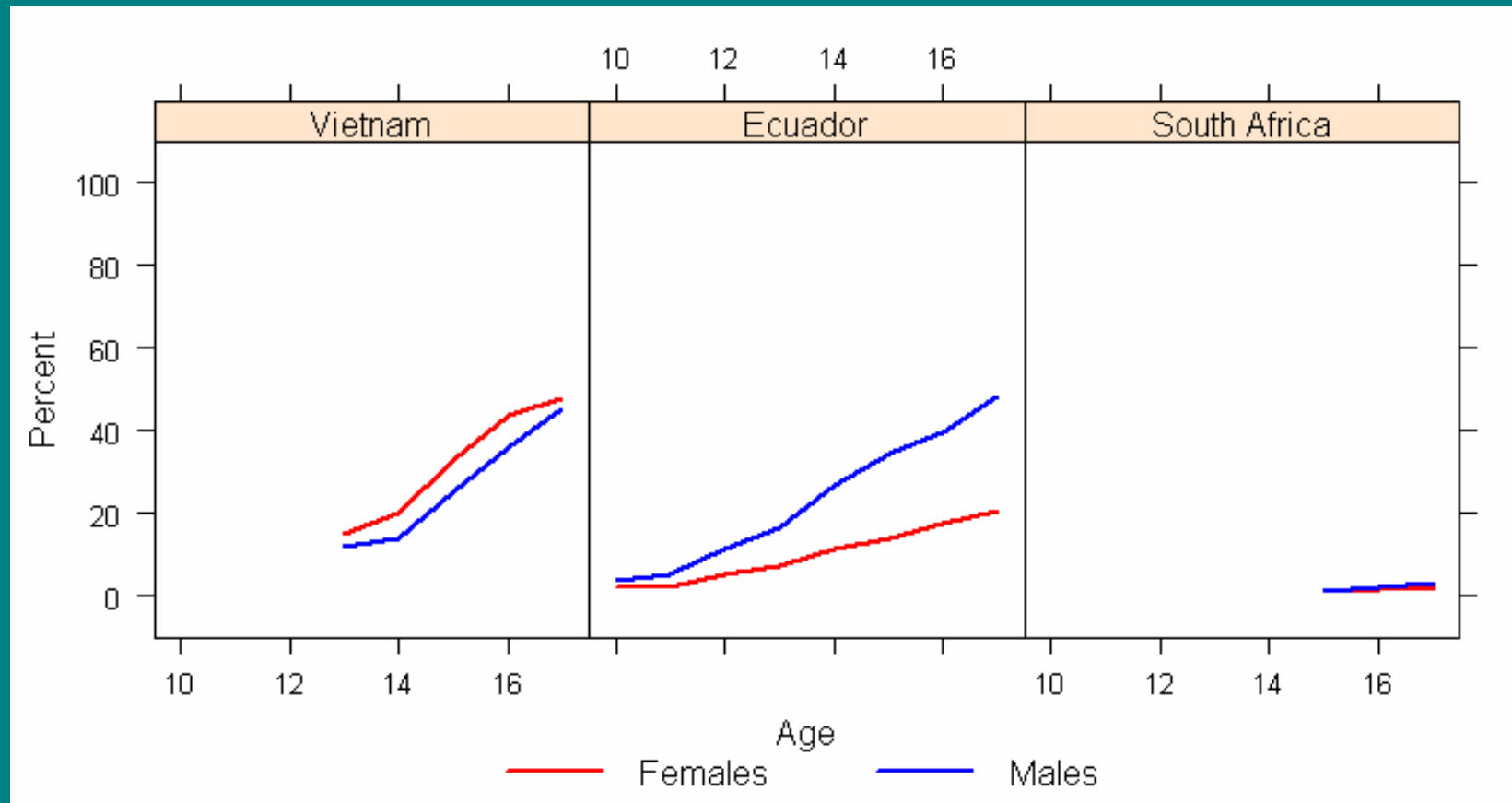
Percent of children employed, by migration status



Percent of independent child migrants attending school, by gender



Percent of independent child migrants employed, by gender



International migration:
Findings from small-scale
studies in Thailand

Background information on migration to Thailand

- Approximately 2m irregular, low-skilled migrants from Cambodia, Laos, and Myanmar
- Income differential similar to US/Mexico
- Thai government wants labour migrants, not families - though policies vary

Sources of information on child migrants

- Census and national surveys have very poor coverage of international migrants
- Administrative statistics useful
- Growing number of small-scale studies by NGOs, academics, international agencies
 - Mainly look at special groups
 - Aim often to publicize abuses
 - But do obtain useful information under difficult conditions

How many?

- Approximately 200,000 migrant children in Thailand; proportion who are independent is unknown
- 10 percent of migrant population, versus about 1/3 of population of origin countries
- Approximately half of child migrants are girls

The migration process

- Children often travel long distances
- One study found that 93% of children were accompanied by relatives when traveling to Thailand
 - though most did not live with parents in Thailand
- Quality of networks varies by occupation (and hence gender) and village
- Quality of networks is single most important determinant of safety

Education

- In 2003 only 10% of migrant children enrolled in school
- According to 2005 government policy, all migrant children, including unregistered, can go to school
- Small-scale studies suggest barriers include
 - Cost of uniforms, books etc (like poor Thais)
 - Continued fear of apprehension (justified)
 - Language difficulties
- Special schools for migrants
 - Established by NGOs and migrants
 - Some government opposition

Work

- Children often work alongside adults, though tasks may differ - eg wrapping fruit rather than spraying
- Some children work 18 hour days; others complain of receiving insufficient work
- Stories of exploitation by employers - and of good treatment
- Children earn less than adults, partly reflecting experience
- Remittances, or even just reducing mouths to feed, can be important to children's families

Conclusion

Some key points

- Internal migrants in selected countries
 - Around 1-2% of children aged 10-17 are independent child migrants
 - Lower school attendance, higher employment, than other children
- International migrants in Thailand
 - Networks vital
 - Poor access to education (though Thai govt making efforts)
 - Children's work important to families

Implications

- Where to put research resources
 - Internal migration: Using existing data (with appropriate skepticism!) is cost-effective
 - International migration: new small-scale studies
- Priorities, targeting
 - If child migrants are really 1-2% of child population, what does this mean for priorities, targeting?
- Diversity of independent child migrants
 - In many countries, child migrants includes significant numbers of students *and* workers
 - Need to focus on sub-groups