

Influence factor analysis of migrants' settlement intention: Considering the characteristic of city

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ABSTRACT

The settlement intention of migrants is an important factor for urban development. Through examination of existing research we found that the influencing factors on settlement intention differed by region; however, little attention was paid to the factors affecting settlement intention based on regional differences in China. Using data from the National Health and Family Planning Commission of the People's Republic of China, this study chose 282 cities as study areas. First, this was performed through the statistic and spatial analysis of GIS, which explains the effect of the city level variable on settlement intention; then, it introduced a hierarchical linear regression model, combining macro statistics with micro-survey data to explain the factors influencing settlement intention as well as the relationship between the city-level variable and the individual-level variable. The results showed three things: First, the characteristic of city had an impact on the settlement intention. Second, the regional difference of settlement intention was significant, it was interesting insofar as Eastern China attracted the most migrants but the settlement willingness of migrants in the east was the most insignificant. Thirdly considering the characteristic of city, education, age, income, employment status and occupation type had a significant effect on urban settlement intention.

1. Introduction

The question 'to stay or to return' was important for the receiving region as well as for the sending region, because the intentions of migrants to stay can inspire the receiving region to implement new appropriate integration policies and facilitate the sending region to introduce institutional reforms in order to make return a source of economic growth and social development (Paparusso & Ambrosetti, 2017). Therefore, researchers and policy makers have placed significant emphasis on the migration settlement intention and in turn have achieved substantial gains (Belgiojoso, 2016; Carling & Pettersen, 2014; Dustmann, 2003). From an international perspective, because the main type migration was trans-migration, mainly from developing countries to developed countries, such as African migrants in Spain and Italy, Estonian migrants in Finland, Morocco migrants in German and so on. As a result most studies paid attention to settlement intention between countries. These studies took into account both the micro and macro levels (Olesen, 2010). At the macro level, scholars highlight that economic, institutional and cultural factors of both origin and destination countries were the key factors. Boccagni suggest that the social and

economic conditions of the homeland may hinder such migration return (Boccagni, 2011). Ette pointed out that social-cultural and institutional factors were the decisive determinants, this was different from the neo-classic expectation which emphasize the economic factors (Ette, Heß, & Sauer, 2015). At the micro level, the individual characteristics of immigrants and human capital, integration, and also links with the country of origin were considered. Paparusso et al. examined the effect of micro level determinants on the return migration intentions of Moroccans (Paparusso & Ambrosetti, 2017).

Divergent from the international perspective, researchers in China pay more attention to the settlement intention of migrants from the micro level perspective (Fan, 2002; Tan, 2003; Thissen, Fortuijn, Strijker, & Haartsen, 2010; Zhao, 2002). Hou Hongya reported that age and education had a significant influence on settlement intentions of migrants (Hou, Yang, & Li, 2004). The results of Ren Yuan showed that migrants with a stable job, working for a longer time, and who migrated with their family were more likely to settle down (Ren, 2006). Zhu Yu showed that a stable income and good security were the important factors affecting permanent migration (Zhu, 2007). Cai He said that subjective social and psychological factors in migrants, such as urban

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adaptability and a sense of discrimination, can influence the decision to stay in the city (Cai & Wang, 2007). Generally speaking, in addition to considering gender, age, ethnicity, health and other demographic variables, scholars have put other variable into the analysis model, such as income, marital status, and employability. For example Cao Guangzhong pointed self-employed migrants tend to have stronger intention for permanent urban settlement (Cao, Li, Ma, & Tao, 2015).

Summarizing the existing research of China, we found two differences from the international study. Firstly, we found the research perspective in China was dominated by the micro perspective. Secondly we found the researches paid less attention to regional differences in settlement intentions. Actually speaking settlement intentions were not only correlated with the individual and familiar characteristic, but also with the environmental opportunities and constraints of different region (Paparusso & Ambrosetti, 2017). Furthermore through the exploration of existing research, we found that the influencing factors on settlement intentions differed in different regions. For example, one empirical analysis of the settlement intention of migrants in Beijing in 2006 showed education had no significant effect on the settlement intention of migrants, while another empirical study that focused on the settlement intention of migrants in Suzhou and Shanghai in 2007 indicated education was positively correlated with an intention of settlement (Wei, 2013). Another study also found significant regional differences in the factors influencing settlement intention. Sheng Yinan paid attention to differences in settlement intentions between cities of different sizes and household registration systems, finding that there were significant differences in the factors influencing settlement intention (Sheng, 2016).

Considering the information outlined above, our study attempted to fill the gap between China and studies conducted based on the international context. We need to answer three questions. Firstly, were there regional differences in the willingness towards settlement in different cities of China? Secondly, if there were regional difference, was there a Matthew effect (i.e., the higher the “urbanization”, the higher the willingness to become residents)? Thirdly, how did the influence of individual characteristics on settlement intention changed with different characteristic of cities?

In order to answer these questions, this study used the investigation of the National Health and Family Planning Commission of the People's Republic of China, choosing 282 cities as study areas. First, this was performed through the statistic and spatial analysis of GIS, which explains the effect of the city level variable on settlement intention; then, it introduced a hierarchical linear regression model, combining macro statistics with micro-survey data to explain the factors influencing stay intention as well as the relationship between the city-level variable and the individual-level variable. This paper is divided as follows: data source of the research as well as the study methodology is presented in section 2; section 3 addresses the main research findings; and finally, section 4 highlights the main conclusions drawn from this study.

2. Data source and methodology

2.1. Data source

Statistics used in this study originated from the survey data of the National Health and Family Planning Commission of the People's Republic of China in 2015. The Probability Proportionate to Size Sampling method was used when conducting the investigations. This survey covered 31 provinces and 347 cities of China. The original number of samples in this survey was 206,000. In this survey there are 9 answers for the question, i.e. the reason for migration. The answers included working and business, accompanying transferring of family members, marriage, relocation, study and training, joining the army, joining relatives and friends, born and others. After fully considering the study's purpose, we deleted the samples which the answer was not working and business, as well as deleting some of the cities due to

missing data. The final data set covered 282 cities and the number of samples was 148,000. The data on cities came from China's city statistical yearbook and the statistical yearbooks of 31 provinces.

2.2. Methodology

2.2.1. Modeling method

A hierarchical linear model of individual and city variables was constructed. Hierarchical linear modeling (HLM) is a complex form of ordinary least squares (OLS) regression that is used to analyze variance in the outcome variables when the predictor variables are at varying hierarchical levels. In this study migrants in a city share variance according to the same development of the city (Cao, Xu, Xie, Liu, & Liu, 2015; Osborne, 2000; Woltman, Feldstain, Mackay, & Rocchi, 2012). The structure of the data is hierarchical. The model estimates individual level and their implementation in estimating the cities-level outcomes.

The procedure is described as follows:

Utilizing HLM 7 software, a basic model was established (Model 0). Model 0 conducted a regression on the first and second layer with no variables in these two layers. It was designed to identify whether the variances came from the difference between cities. The basic form of Model 0 is as follows:

$$\text{Level-1 Model: } Y_{ij} = \beta_{0j} + r_{ij}$$

$$\text{Level-2 Model: } \beta_{0j} = \gamma_{00} + \mu_{0j}$$

If the p-value was significant, through the final estimation of variance components, it was necessary to establish a variable model at the first level (model 1). Model 1 conducts a regression on first layer variables with no variables in the second layer. In order to exam whether the variances of the intercept and slope ratios of the first level were significant in the second layers. The basic form of Model 1 is as follows:

$$\text{Level-1 Model: } Y_{ij} = \beta_{0j} + \sum \beta_{nj} X_{nij} + r_{ij}$$

$$\text{Level-2 Model: } \beta_{0j} = \gamma_{00} + \mu_{0j}$$

$$\beta_{nj} = \gamma_{n0} + \mu_{nj}$$

If the T-test of variance components was significant, then model 2, with variables in both the first level and second level, was established. On level 2, the slope(s) and intercept of level 1 become dependent variables being predicted from level 2 variables. The basic form of

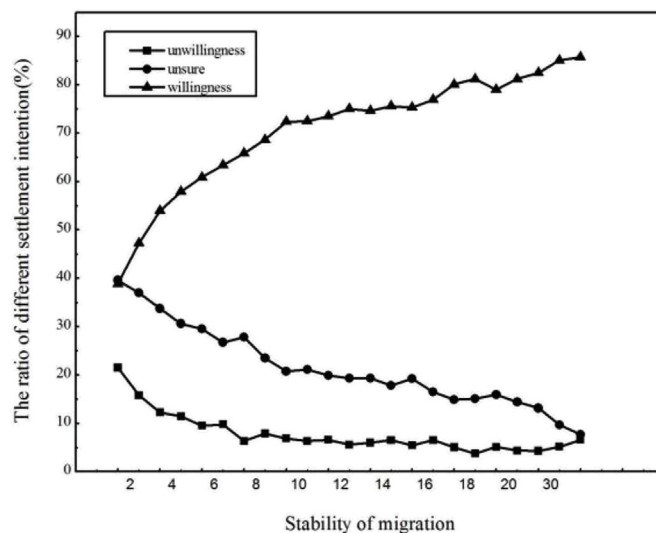


Fig. 1. The relationship between the stability of migration and the ratio of different settlement intentions.

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