LABOUR MARKET OUTCOMES, MIGRATION INTENTIONS OF RURAL-URBAN MIGRANTS AND RETURN MIGRATION IN CHINA

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Author's Declaration

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

Abstract

It has been widely documented that migrant labourers have made great contributions to the urban economy of China; as well, the explosive growth of rural-urban migrants has generated several "migration problems," such as growing social inequality in urban China. It is widely reported that a large number of migrants have returned to their places of origin, after several years of "urban life," and this trend has been accelerated after the global economic crisis after 2008. Consequently, the large number of return migrants have created many problems in the cities, such as labour shortage in the manufacturing industry, and also posed a huge challenge to the rural areas in the resettlement of these returnees. In sum, to understand both the migrants in destination cities and return migrants in their places of origin is of great importance for both urban and rural development in China.

The research so far, on the understanding of migrants' behaviour and labour market outcomes in a multi-phased migration process, seems highly controversial and therefore, insufficient. This study, based on migrant survey data collected in Fujian Province, and return migrant interview data collected in Sichuan and Jiangxi Provinces, explores migrant labour market outcomes in the cities, as well as their geographical differentiation; migrant return intentions, and their gender differentiations; return behaviour and the resettlement situations of actual returnees. The results show that the multi-phased migration process of rural migrants in China is synthetically shaped by macro, meso, and micro factors, and by the interactions between these factors. To be more specific, findings of this study indicate that migrant labour markets in urban China are largely geographically differentiated according to several regional characteristics. The study also finds that a large proportion of rural-urban migrants intends to return to their places of origin. As well, their return intentions are significantly gender-differentiated. Finally, the resettlement situations of return migrants are closely connected to their migration experience.

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CHAPTER ONE

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Research background

Over the last three decades, the incremental but persistent economic reforms and economic opening-up have fundamentally transformed China from a planned economy to a market-oriented socialist economy. During the course of these reforms, Chinese labour markets have been dramatically altered by changing social and economic conditions (Xie and Hannum 1996). Since the beginning of the 1990s, rapid economic growth in coastal China has generated significant expansion in employment opportunities, attracting millions of rural workers to coastal cities like Shanghai (Du, Park, and Wang 2005). According to the migrant monitoring report by China's National Bureau of Statistics, the total number of rural-urban migrants[1] in China reached 252.8 million in 2011 (National Bureau of Statistics of China 2011). These rural migrant workers moving into the urban areas have largely affected the urban economy and social structure in contemporary China (Bao et al. 2002). While the contribution of migrant workers to urban economic growth is widely acknowledged as one of the origins of competitive advantage of China, migrants are often considered as a disadvantaged social group markedly separated from local urban residents，and clustered at the lower end of urban labour market (Fan 2001; Liang 2001; Zhao 2005). The poor economic and welfare conditions of migrants have become one of the major

[1] According to the index interpretation in the original report, "rural-urban migrants" referred in the report includes both "out migrants" and "local rural workers." "Out migrants" refers to rural labourers who worked outside of their original villages and towns' boundaries for more than 6 months in the survey year. "Local rural workers" refers to rural labourers who engaged in the non-agricultural activities within their original villages and towns' boundaries for more than 6 months in the survey year.

causes of increasing social inequality, and may contribute to polarization and social instability in urban China (Fan 2002; Wang and Wu 2010). Research into the differentiation within migrant groups and the factors affecting labour market performance of rural migrants would enhance understanding of social and economic characteristics and structure of migrant labour markets in China.

Monetary income is the most important and basic indicator of labour market performance of rural-urban migrants in China. Many studies have been conducted to understand income determinants of migrant workers in urban China. For example, neoclassical economists have focused on the return to the investment in human capital and its difference between migrant workers and other social groups (Lu and Song 2006b; Fu and Ren 2010). Structuralists have highlighted the importance of wider institutional processes and emphasized the demand side of labour market (Knight and Yueh 2009). Behaviourists and new migration economists have attempted to investigate the effects of factors beyond the conventional earning determinants by including cognitive, social capital, and family factors (Du, Park, and Wang 2005; Yueh 2008). While the existing literature on the income determinants of migrant labourers has generated some understanding of how various factors are related to the performance of migrant workers, there is still a large variation in migrant earnings that cannot be properly explained (Zhao 2005). The geographical differentiation of migrant labour markets has long been under-rated. More importantly, migrant workers are often treated as a homogenous group in coastal cities, and labour migration is viewed simplistically as a one-way process between places of origin and destinations (Borjas and Stephen 1992; Chiquiar and Hanson 2005)

However, recently, beginning with the global financial crisis in 2008, return migration by millions of China's rural-urban migrants has provided clear evidence

that the process is neither simple nor is it one-way. A large proportion of these migrants have returned to their hometowns after spending many years in host cities. In fact, there have been three significant upsurges of return migration in China since the 1980s. The first and second upsurges were from 1989 to 1991 and from 1998 to 1999, while, the third started in 2008 and is still ongoing (Zhang 2009). The data from the National Population and Family Planning Commission shows that, as of 2008, the total number of return migrants, in the last half of 2008, reached over 13 million nationwide (National Population and Family Planning Services Division of Floating Population 2009).

Current research on return migration often focuses on the return or settlement intentions of migrants in host cities. The factors that influence return intentions such as personal traits (Luo and Li 2008), family status (Liu and Shu 2005), housing issues in the cities (Zhang 2006), and remittance payments (Min and Zhang 2011) have been examined in the literature. The differentiation of return and settlement intentions among migrants has also drawn attention. Case studies have indicated that there are gender and generational differences in return and settlement intentions (Chen and Zhu 2008; Zhu et al. 2012). To explain return and settlement intention, empirical studies have focused on demographic variables and urban economic factors such as the cost of living, wage levels and housing issues. Urban social participation and integration and their impacts have often been neglected in the studies of migrants' settlement intentions. In addition, the role of rural connections in shaping return migration is often measured by remittance alone. There has been only limited discussion on the effects of rural property assets, emotional connections, and the elders and children left behind (Luo and Li 2008; Min and Zhang 2011).

Return migrants pose several problems and policy implications. First, the host cities might lose a large number of skilled and unskilled labourers required for the manufacturing and service sectors. The labour shortage, first felt in the Pearl River Delta in the early 1990s is now widespread, and is exacerbated by an increasing level of return migration. Second, the continuing loss of these workers also negatively affects other aspects in the host cities, including housing markets, commercial business opportunities, and social services. Third, returnees who have been away from their places of origin for many years may find it difficult and challenging to be reemployed and to fit in again socially in rural communities. Thus, investigating the issue of return migration can provide a better understanding of these issues and help to formulate relevant policies to address these challenges.

The differentiation in economic development across regions provides a theoretical starting point from which return migration can be explained. Ravenstein's 19th century laws on migration, and Lee's (1966) revised version, may apply in general to return migration research. In the context of China, internal return migration has gradually become a noticeable social phenomenon which has been well documented since the late 1990s (Cui 1999; Zhu 2000; Zhou 2001a; Zhao 2002). The recent large scale return migration, triggered by the global financial crisis in 2008 and subsequent economic slowdown, is now a critical and widespread political and social concern in China. Many studies have been done to understand the dynamic processes and impacts of recent return migration in China (Sheng and Hou 2009; Sheng and Shun 2009; Wang and Li 2009; Xiao and Yao 2009; Yue et al. 2009; Zhang and Wang 2009). However, many of the related discussions are very broad, general and city-based. As a result, the place of origin, often in a rural area, is often ignored or given little attention. There is, however, a need to investigate return migration and the

linkage between destinations and origins to understand their effects on both ends of the migration process.

1.2. Research problem and objectives

As discussed above, the migration process of rural-urban migrants in China is complex, dynamic and multi-directional. The research problem for this study is, thus, to understand the characteristics, behaviour, and labour market outcomes[2] of rural-urban migrants in such a multi-phased process. The first phase of the process is that migrants migrated out of their places of origin to work and live in destination cities. The second phase is migrants in transition: some of them continue to stay in cities as migrant workers or choose to settle down as urban residents; others may intend to return to their places of origin. Thus, the massive migrant population starts to differentiate. As a result, a large number of return migrants have emerged. Returning to and resettling in the place of origin is phase three of their migration process. Throughout the migration process, rural migrants have greatly affected and shaped the places of origin and destination both economically and socially. However, the variations of migrants' intentions, behaviour, and performance in such a complex process are still not well understood. Therefore, unlike many of the related studies which focused on one particular segment of the migration process of rural-urban migrants, this work investigates migrants in all three phases of their migration process.

To answer the research problem, this thesis has three detailed research objectives according to the three phases of the migration process identified above:

[2] Two interchangeable terms: labour market outcome and labour market performance are used in this thesis to generally describe the combination of labourers' earnings, social insurance status and housing status. More details of these two terms are discussed in chapter 4, page 66.

1. For migrants in cities: to examine the roles of the factors that determine individual earnings and to identify the geographical differences in the migrant labour market using a migrant survey in Fujian province.

2. For migrants in transition: to investigate the return intention of rural-urban migrants in their host cities and to identify gender differences in return migration intention based on a migrant survey in Fujian.

3. For return migrants in their places of origin: to describe the characteristics of actual returnees, to explain their return behaviour, and resettlement situations based on in-depth interviews conducted in Sichuan and Jiangxi provinces.

1.3. Thesis outline

After this introductory chapter, Chapter Two will provide a detailed literature review of related theories and empirical studies. It will be divided into three sections according to the research objectives listed above. The gaps in the related studies and the theoretical frameworks will be identified. Chapter Three describes the research methodology. The study area, the data collection methods, and analytical methods adopted in the research will be fully described and discussed.

Chapters Four to Six constitute the main findings and the discussions of the thesis. Chapters Four begins with the discussion of the migrant labour market outcomes in the cities. A detailed descriptive analysis of the migrant labour market followed by a comparative analysis and discussion of migrant earning regression models in four case cities will be presented to achieve the first research objective. Next, Chapter Five will focus on migrant return intentions as identified in the second research objective. It first presents the descriptive analysis of intended returnees in the cities, and then the discussions of the results of the regression models. Chapter Six characterizes and explains the behaviour and resettlement status of actual returnees to fulfill the third

research objective. The final part of the paper is the conclusions and discussions which will be summarized and discussed in relation to the literature. The policy implications of the findings will then be identified and discussed.

CHAPTER TWO

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter reviews the literature on migration and migrant labour markets with three sections. First, the theories and studies about migration behaviour and decisions will be reviewed according to three research paradigms: the neo-classical economic perspective, the individualistic behavioural approach, and the social structural perspective. The second section focuses on theories and studies of migrant labour markets. It will start with a brief review of the general status of migrant labour markets in China, followed by a discussion of migrant earning determinants in urban labour markets. The third part of this chapter will focus on return migration studies in China. The findings of the major characteristics of China's return migrants and the determinants of return migration will be highlighted and discussed. The fourth part will identify the general theoretical framework used in further analyses.

2.1. Theoretical perspectives on migration behaviour and decisions

2.1.1. Neo-classical migration theories and new migration economics

Explaining people's migration behaviour can be traced back over a century. There are some patterns and regularities which are often associated with the waves of labour and population migrations, and many scholars believe there are natural laws behind migration processes (Eshers and Nishira 1961; Greenwood 1988). It is widely believed that Ravenstein's "laws of migration" is the first systematic theory attempting to explain migration processes. Ravenstein (1885, 1889) viewed migration as a part of development, and argued that migration is mostly due to economic causes as people normally migrate to improve their economic status. Ravenstein's work was inferential, and has stimulated an enormous volume of academic works on the reasons

for migration. In the mid-1960s, largely based on Ravenstein's theory, a new analytical framework of the "push and pull" theory was proposed to explain migration behaviour. Lee (1966) argued that labour migration is stimulated and determined by the factors associated with places of origin and destination (such as economic opportunities), intervening obstacles (such as distance and policies) and individual-related factors (such as education attainments). Although Lee did not invent the term "push-pull," his theoretical framework is normally regarded as the first systematic description of push-pull theory (Passaris 1989). Since then, many subsequent studies have been done to improve this theory (Bagne 1969; Trewartha 1969; Jenkins 1977).

In the early studies of migration, economic notions dominated academic thinking (Haas 2010). Neo-classical economists introduced the supply-demand relationship into migration studies. At the macro-level, neo-classical theory explains migration as a result of the adjustment of spatial differences in supply and demand for labourers. For example, according to the Heckscher–Ohlin model, the primary cause of migration is geographical wage differences (Ohlin 1933; Samuelson 1948). This theory has been widely used to explain international migration (Robertson 2004; Brambilla et al. 2012). Neo-classical migration theory is also deeply rooted in the field of development economics. Development economist Lewis (1954) argued that, in the process of industrialization, surplus labourers in the rural sector will continually move to the urban industrial sector due to the differences of marginal labour returns in two sectors. However, Lewis's theory is based on the "sufficient urban employment" assumption which contradicts the actual observations in many developing countries since the 1960s. Harris and Todaro (1970) enhanced Lewis's two-sector model by replacing the original notion of "prevailing income differentials between sectors" to

the "expected rural-urban income differentials." The Todaro-Harris model successfully explains the growing rural-to-urban migration in developing countries where large unemployment in cities is also widely observed. Thus, the Todaro-Harris model has become one of the basic neo-classical models to explain the rural-urban migration in developing countries. Many Chinese researchers have applied this model in studying migration issues in China, and argued that urban industrial expansion and increasing the influx of rural migrants will not solve the problem of rural surplus labour, and may exacerbate unemployment and social inequality in urban China; on the contrary, vigorously developing the rural economy may be a promising solution to narrow the rural urban gaps (Guo 1999; Zhou 2001b; Cai 2007b).

At the micro level, neo-classical theory regards migrants as rational individuals with perfect information acquisition to make their migration decisions based on cost-benefit considerations (Massey et al. 1993). Migrants are expected to move to where they can achieve the highest wage level. In other words, they can achieve the highest return on their "human capital." The human capital theory proposed by Schultz (1960) and Becker (1964) assumes that labourers acquire education, skills and experience as fundamental sources of capital which can enhance their economic production. This theory states that migration is also an investment in human capital and will eventually improve their economic conditions. Given the fact that migrants are different in educational attainments, skills, experience and other human capital features, they are expected to have different returns on their migration investment. On the demand side, depending on different industrial and employment structures in destination cities, migrant labourers will also be selected according to their education, skills and other individual characteristics. In sum, human capital theory explains the

different migration behaviour and differentiation of migrants in destination cities at the micro level.

Neo-classical migration theory, however, has received many criticisms. In particular, one of the major assumptions of neo-classical migration theory, that, an individual is the minimum unit of migration, has been challenged by the recent studies in developing countries, which found that migration is largely influenced by family considerations. Stark and Bloom (1985) and other researchers, therefore, have revised neo-classical migration theory and propose the "new migration economics." This theory indicates that the migration decision of an individual is normally jointly made by his or her family members; migration is not an individual behaviour but rather a family strategy, which is aimed at maximizing family benefits and minimizing family risks. Migration behaviour in developing countries is not only affected by the expected rural-urban income differences and other perceived benefits and costs but is also largely affected by family-related factors (such as children's education) (Stark and Bloom 1985; Taylor 1999). Compared to the traditional neo-classical theories, the "new migration economics" is superior in explaining migration in Southeast Asia and China where family migration has been reported as a popular trend (Yang 2000; Guan, Peng, and Tian 2008; Guo, Guo, and Tang 2010). As an analytical framework, the new migration economics has been widely used in explaining the emerging and rising circular migration and return migration in these areas (Yang 2000; Wang and Fan 2006; Fan 2008; Guan, Peng, and Tian 2008).

2.1.2. Individualistic behavioural approaches

Some critics indicate that individualistic behavioural factors and individual differences have been largely ignored in the neo-classical theories (Gong et al. 2011). Analysts argue that the essential reason that the neo-classical models fail to explain the

diversity and rising complexity of migration is their basic "economic person assumption," which views migrants as a homogenous and undifferentiated group (Stark and Bloom 1985). Individualistic behavioural approaches to migration studies thus focus on individual capabilities and experience in shaping migration behaviour (Skeldon 1997). For example, self-evaluation (Wolpert 1965), selections of residential places (Brown and Moore 1970), and mental stressors (Cadwallader 1979) are all identified as important determinants of migration behaviour.

Previous studies have emphasized the effects of migration motivation and personal character on migration behaviour (Clark 1981; Watts 1983). For example, Clark (1981) pointed out that migration motivation largely affects the direction and persistence of migration flow. He argued that the gender differentiation of migration intentions might be largely explained by the differences in migration motivations between genders. Piotrowski and Yuying (2010) interviewed 43 young people who were left behind in the villages in Thailand, and argued that education, information acquisition, and migration opportunities for these young villagers were generally equivalent to those who have migrated out, while, the primary reason for their staying is that, they were complacent and not motivated to change their current situations.

The effects of past experience of migrants have also been widely discussed by behavioural analysts. It is believed that people's current behaviour is the fruit of their stock of capital, norms and their past experience (Figueroa-Hernandez and Perez-Soto 2011). For example, (Moon 1995) claimed that the impacts from their past experience are essential to explain return migration properly. (Yang and Yang 2006) studied return migrants in China and argued that return behaviour might not be directly triggered by isolation and discrimination which rural-urban migrants have normally experienced in cities, but that the cumulative impact of these experiences might affect

their long-term plans, leaving migrants with little choice except returning to their home communities.

2.1.3. Social structural perspectives

More recently, a new research paradigm in migration study has emerged to highlight the importance of the social process of migration. Researchers believe that migration is largely influenced by social norms and cultural mores which will largely shape individual migration behaviour and even directly motivate one's desire to move. These factors should be clearly distinguished from institutional factors or structural factors in traditional neoclassical models.

Habitus and social norms are two sociological concepts that have been frequently employed in understanding the social process of migration. The notion of habitus was developed by Bourdieu (1977, 1984) as those factors of shared ideas, social habits, beliefs and values that are embedded in the body or daily practices of individuals. Many researchers have applied this concept in migration studies (Fielding 1992; Fielding 1993; Halfacree and Boyle 1993). Furthermore, the concept of social norms is defined as laws that govern society's behaviour. Such laws can be enforced formally or informally (Marshall and Scott 2009). Altogether, the combination of habitus and social norms provides a perspective and conceptual framework to understand the social process of migration, that is, the interaction between the individual and societal structure.

In the context of China, "affection for the native land" has been frequently mentioned in research on return migration (Huang 1999). It is argued that the behaviour in return migration may not be rational. Social norms such as home affection and geographic attachment are deeply rooted in the values and cognitive mechanisms of many rural urban migrants in China, and may also be intensified

during the migration process. Eventually, they may determine their return decision and eliminate the possibility of urban settlement (Huang 1999; Zhang 2002).

The importance and effects of social networks on migration behaviour have been well documented in the literature (Bongaarts and Watkins 1996; Faist 2000; Palloni et al. 2001). In Chinese migration studies, researchers found some evidence showing that having family members in the destination city is very important for their initial migration to the cities (Zhu and Wang 2001; Liu, Li, and Breitung 2012). Some case studies also revealed significant gender and generational differences in the use of social networks. First generation[3] migrants, especially females, tend to rely more on kinship network in the cities, whereas new generation[4] migrants rely more on their advanced social networks such as classmates and friends in the cities (Liu et al. 2012).

2.1.4. Summary

Many studies have examined the causes and determinants of labour migration. Neo-classical economics explains migration as a result of regional economic differences. Behavioural analysts highlight the effects of individual motivation and capability. New migration economics regards migration as part of the family strategy of migrants. Each approach has its own merits and limitations, but does not fully explain return migration.

In this study, one of the research objectives is to understand the causes and determinants of return migration. In achieving this objective, a theoretical framework based on the above discussions is proposed (Figure 2.1). Return migration will be examined according to three major groups of factors: first, the push-and-pull factors between places of origin and destinations; second, the social norms and networks;

[3] The term "first generation migrants" refers to the migrants who were born before 1980.
[4] The term "new generation migrants" refers to the migrants who were born after 1980.

third, the individual and behavioural factors including abilities, motivations, and past experience.

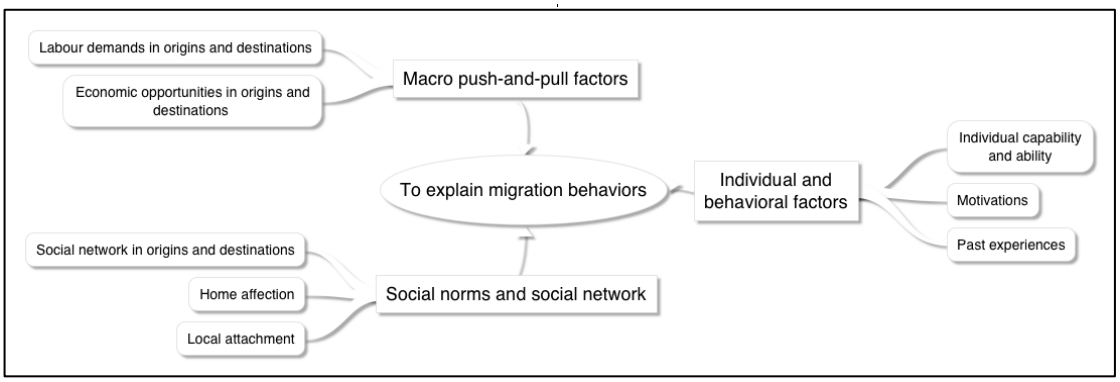

Figure 2.1. Theoretical framework for explaining return migration behaviour

2.2. Perspectives on the Chinese migrant labour market

After their initial migration, migrants will then enter urban labour markets, get paid and support themselves and their families. Correspondingly, the next major concern of migration research is to understand the migrant labour market in the migrant-receiving cities of coastal China. The related theories and studies will be fully reviewed in this section.

2.2.1. Rural urban migration and the migrant labour market in China

Population migration in China was strictly limited under a socialist planned economy prior to the economic reforms initiated in 1978. A *hukou* household registration system effectively bound people to their places of origin. The relocation of one's *hukou* was impossible without an official approval process. The reforms and subsequent economic success in the 1980s changed the socialist course of population migration in which the strict labour mobility control in China started to be relaxed (Ma 2002). While the *hukou* system that binds people and place together with an official residency registration requirement still exists, the mobility constraining effects of the *hukou* system have been gradually eroded (Bosker et al. 2012). A growing

number of rural migrants have moved to nearby or remote cities seeking economic opportunities, especially after the beginning of the 1990s (Zhao 2005). According to the migrant monitoring report by China's National Bureau of Statistics, as of 2011 the total number of rural-urban migrants[5] in China reached 252.8 million; 53 percent of whom were intra-provincial migrants; 47 percent were inter-provincial migrants (National Bureau of Statistics of China 2011). Geographically, the major inter-provincial migration direction has been from the middle and western provinces to the southern and eastern coastal regions. Almost half of the migrants have moved to the Pearl River Delta and the Yangtze River Delta regions.

Nationwide, about 65 percent of migrant workers are male. In addition, the majority of rural migrants are young adults, although the percentage of older migrants is on the rise. In 2011, the number of rural migrants aged 40 years or older accounted for 38 percent of the rural migrant population. Furthermore, the level of education and training is relatively low. Only 60 percent of rural migrant workers completed their middle school education and close to 70 percent have no skill training (National Bureau of Statistics of China 2011).

It is widely recognized that rural migrant workers facilitated the rapid industrialization and urbanization processes in China over the last three decades. Specifically, low-waged rural migrant workers largely met the labour demand in the manufacturing sectors. As a result, manufacturing sectors provide the most prominent channel by which 36 percent of migrant workers find their employment. Nationwide, only 5 percent of rural migrants are self-employed in various cities, even though self-employment is identified as a significant means of attaining upward social mobility through which rural migrants can be effectively assimilated into urban

[5] Migrants are defined as rural labourers who migrated out of their original town or village and worked outside for more than 6 months in the year of 2011.

development. Furthermore, rural migrant workers earned 2,049 yuan (equivalent to US$328) per month on average in 2011. There is a noticeable geographical variation in the earnings of migrant workers, across the city-size hierarchy of destination cities (Figure 2.2).

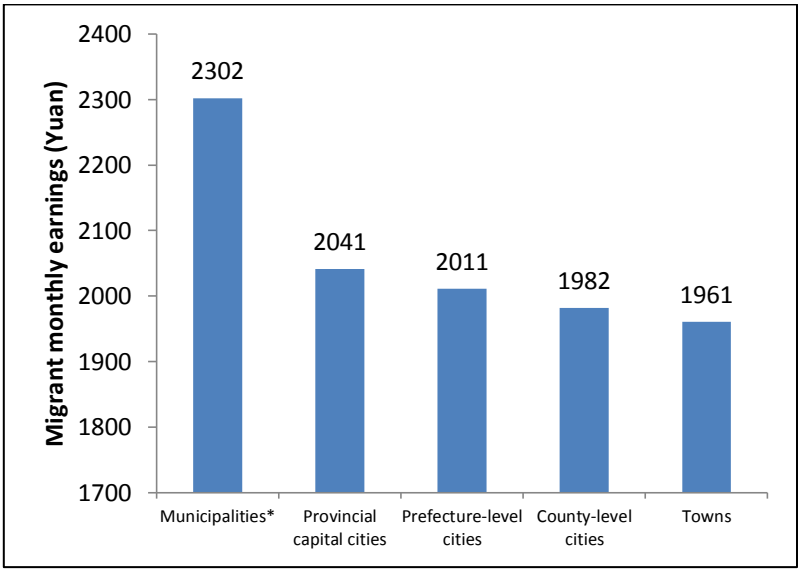

Figure 2.2. Migrants' monthly earnings by a hierarchy of destination cities, 2011
*Four municipalities (*shi*) are under direct central government control: Beijing, Shanghai, Tianjin and Chongqing
Source: National Bureau of Statistics of China (2011)

2.2.2. Migrant Earning determinants in urban labour markets

Many factors determine the earnings of individual migrant workers in urban labour markets. These factors may be related to individual endowments that characterize the supply-side of labour markets (Kim and Park 2004; Lu and Song 2006b; Gries, Kraft, and Pieck 2011). They may be associated with industrial or corporate characteristics that shape the demand-side of labour markets (Lu and Song 2006b; Li and Huang 2010). Macro scale factors may also play a role in determining labour market performance of individual labourers (Zhao 2005; Zhan 2011). Inter-regional inequality in economic growth and change, structural variation of sectoral development across regions, cultural differences embedded in various local labour

markets, institutional barriers in segmenting labour markets and constraining labour mobility, are some of the macro scale factors that shape the dynamics of migrant labour markets in China (Fan 2002; Xu, Tan, and Wang 2006; Wang and Wu 2010).

2.2.2.1. Micro perspective

Neoclassical microeconomic theories explain labour market outcomes by focusing on the dynamic relation between labour supply and demand. Under the assumption of the rational behaviour of job seekers and employers, wages and other economic compensation of labourers are determined by personal endowments and job characteristics. Many studies are conducted to empirically identify the extent to which individual earnings are determined by workers' personal endowments and constraints. One of the pioneering works in investigating the returns of human capital is Mincer's earnings equation, in which education level and training are considered explicitly as determining one's earnings (Mincer 1958, 1970). Many researchers have followed this line of reasoning and applied his theory in studying earning determinants in various labour markets, including migrant labour market outcomes in China. For example, it is argued that the returns of school education and vocational training vary across different labour markets (Pekkala 2003; Guo and Zhang 2011). Some researchers claim that the reward of having a school education for rural-urban migrants is not substantial, especially compared to non-migrant workers (Han and Yuan 2009; Fu and Ren 2010). In comparison, some findings indicate that occupational training has a significant impact on migrant earnings (Huang 2000; Cai 2007a). In addition to education and training, experience or seniority is often viewed as a significant determinant of individual earnings. Age is a common measure of seniority in the classic earnings equation where the effect of experience is normally detected in a parabolic pathway, using two variables of "age," and "age squared" with an inverted

U-shaped relationship included in the related model.[6] In many case studies of migrant labour markets in China, age is identified as a significant positive determinant of migrant earnings (Wang and Wu 2010). However, in a study of the "new generation migrants" in China, Yang and Jiang (2008) compared new generation migrants and the first generation migrants with similar migration duration, and found that the income of the younger group is actually higher. This implies a generational difference in earnings that may complicate the age effects on the earnings in migrant labour markets. Furthermore, language skill is often considered as a significant constraint in migrant labour markets. Better linguistic competence is very important for immigrants to achieve higher occupational prestige and higher income in destination cities (Kossoudji 1988; Akresh and Frank 2011). In the context of China, some case studies also show that proficiency in Mandarin is a very important determinant for migrant labour market performance (Gao and Smyth 2011).

Studies outside of the neoclassic economic perspectives also provide an important understanding of earning determinants of individuals. For example, gender perspectives help to uncover the role of gender in determining male and female earnings differentials. For example, in terms of Chinese migrant labour market studies, it is widely believed that male migrants perform better than female migrants in urban China (Zhao 1999; Han and Yuan 2009; Wang and Wu 2010). Moreover, the effects of institutional barriers on migration have long been understood to disadvantage migrants. In the case of China, *hukou* status (agricultural or non-agricultural residence) has long been regarded as a fundamental factor in determining the earnings of rural migrants and their success in destination cities

[6] Variable "age" describes the positive return of a workers' age, whereas variable "age squared" describes the negative return of workers' age.

(Chan and Zhang 1999; Fu and Ren 2010). However, more recent evidence shows that the impact of *hukou* on migrant earnings has declined substantially (Zhan 2011).

Demographic studies shed some light on the migration process and experience that affected the opportunities of migrants in urban labour market. In a Korean study, Kim and Park (2004) compared female migrants born in different cities and claimed that place of birth will significantly affect rural women's social attachment, and thereby further affect their behaviour and performance in destination cities. Some researchers focus on the difference in geographical mobility between male and female labourers, and attribute such difference as an important determinant of their earnings. Assaad and Arntz (2005) analyzed the data of two household surveys conducted in 1988 and 1998 in Egypt and claimed that gender gaps in labour earnings widened during 1988 and 1998, and they further attributed this phenomenon to women's more limited geographical mobility.

2.2.2.2. Meso perspective

Recent studies on social capital and its relation to labour market outcomes contribute greatly to understanding the dynamics of migrant labour markets. According to *The Dictionary of Human Geography 5th edition*, social capital is a term that has been widely used in sociology and economics since the late 1980s, and was first systematically defined by Bourdieu (1985: 248) as "the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance or recognition" (quoted in Gregory, Johnston, and Pratt 2009: 689). In the subsequent studies, many researchers also gave their own definitions of "social capital" in different contexts (Coleman 1988; Belliveau, Iii, and Wade 1996; Nahapiet and Ghoshal 1998). Although, these definitions may vary literally, they all share a core idea that like other forms of capital,

social relationships and interactions have value, and such value is derived from, embedded in, and available through the social networks possessed by an individual. Moreover, in the empirical studies of social capital, three major approaches have been applied. The first approach examined social capital in the form of trust that minimizes the risks and costs, and thus improves their labour market performance. The second approach discussed the formations of strong and weak social ties and their different impacts on individual economic abilities. The third approach focused on the investments in the social networks and interactions that can yield economic returns to individuals (Gregory, Johnston, and Pratt 2009). Based on the above discussions, the social capital of migrants in this study, will be specifically measured by three groups of factors: first, the job-seeking channel, which is, in fact, a direct and essential measure of how migrants apply their social networks in labour markets, in other words, how social networks of labourers are transformed into social capital; second, other social networks-related factors such as residential neighborhood and urban friend networks in destination cities; third, social integration-related factors such as the participation in the local community.

Job-seeking behaviour is one of the major topics in studying the role of social networks in migrant labour markets. It is recognized that many people find jobs not only through formal channels such as employment agencies or direct applications, but rather depend on their social networks (Granovetter 1973; Granovetter 1974; Marsden and Campbell 1990; Yang and Che 2003). In studying Chinese labour markets, researchers argue that the social networks in migrant destination cities is not only a job-seeking channel but rather a fundamental prerequisite that opens the gate for rural-urban migrants to access urban labour markets (Li 2001; Chen 2004). Furthermore, it is also argued that jobs found through social networks may be better

paid compared to jobs found through other channels (like an agent). While, weak social ties may have greater positive impacts than strong ties[7] on improving job compensation (Granovetter 1973; Granovetter 1974). Many case studies have provided evidence on the effect of social networks on income differentiation in migrant labour markets (Borghans, Weel, and Weinberg 2006; Franzen and Hangartner 2006). Others indicate that there is hardly any evidence showing the existence of significant wage differences between jobs found through social networks and through formal channels (Lin 1999; Mouw 2003).

In addition to job-seeking channels, many studies have been conducted to understand the migrant income effects of other social networks-related factors, including, social participation (Palmer, Perkins, and Xu 2011), friends and acquaintances networks in the cities (Boyd 1989; Ryan et al. 2008), residential neighborhoods (Aguilera and Massey 2003), and social trust (Cox 2000). Although the specific findings may vary, researchers generally believe that social capital and networks significantly affect migrant labour market performance. Compared to the linear effects of human capital, social networks effects are much more complicated. In terms of Chinese migrant labour markets, some studies indicate that kinship and migrant social networks are of great importance to rural migrants. Comparatively, the effects of urban social networks and social participation are relatively limited (Zhuang 2009; Liu, Li, and Breitung 2012). It is often argued that the effects of social capital are largely related to migration duration (Chou and Chow 2009) and to the economic development of destination cities (Wang and Wu 2010). In sum, the role of social capital and networks as an important determinant of rural-urban migrant labour market performance in China is still widely debated in the literature. Specifically,

[7] Weak ties and strong ties are normally distinguished by age of the relationship, frequency of contact, emotional attachment, reciprocity and kinship. The strong ties normally refer to close friends, families and relatives, whereas weak ties normally refer to the minor acquaintances, online connections, and friends of friends.

little attention has been paid to explain geographical differentiation of the effects on migrant labour markets in China.

2.2.2.3. Macro perspective

The above discussion highlights the role of supply-side factors in shaping individual income in labour markets. The demand-side factors such as hiring practices, job requirements, workplace policies of employers, and corporate characteristics are also important determinants of individual earnings. In the context of China, some studies have identified the significant effects of regional employment regulation, firm size, and occupation structure on the migrant labour market performance (Li 2004; Liu and Zhang 2007; Chen and You 2009). The effects of firm ownership type are debated in the previous studies. Lu and Song (2006b) analyzed the migrant survey data collected in Tianjin and claimed that migrant earnings are significantly related to firm ownership types. However, several case studies in other regions indicated that types of firm ownership have no significant impact on migrant earnings (Gao 2006; Liu and Zhang 2008; Guo, Guo, and Tang 2010).

Regional industrial composition may also shape the structural characteristics of labour markets. In a study of migrant earnings based on migrant survey data collected in 2000 and 2008 in two cities in Shandong, China, Li and Huang (2010) claimed that the transformation from manufacturing to a service dominated employment structure is one of the major reasons for the improvement of migrant labour market performance and for the change of migrant earning determinants. However, some researchers also claim that they cannot find any evidence showing the significant effect of industry type on migrant earnings (Gao 2006; Liu and Zhang 2008). In addition, the effect of self-employment on migrant labour market performance is

positively related, and the proportion of self-employed migrants has increased rapidly in the last decade (Giulietti, Ning, and Zimmermann 2012).

The structuralist approach highlights the importance of wider institutional processes, and focuses on the structure of the demand side of the labour market and its impact on the labourers' earning performance. The segmented labour market theory is the most commonly cited theory in this regard. In China, labour market segmentation in the coastal regions is widely reported as a social phenomenon that is closely related to rural-urban migration, and migrant labour markets in coastal cities in China are regarded as highly segmented. Migrant workers are often trapped in the lower end of the labour market with high turn-over rate, low-level labour compensation and social security coverage, and relatively low return on human capital (Zhao 1999; Meng and Zhang 2001; Guo 2004; Howell 2011).

2.2.3. Summary

The above review on the migrant labour market literature demonstrates that rural-urban migrants are still largely clustered in the low-end labour market in urban China. The income gap between migrant labourers and general labourers in urban China is significant. In addition, there is a noticeable geographical variation in the earnings of migrant workers, especially across different types of migration destination cities.

In terms of the determining mechanism of migrant labour market outcomes, many factors have been identified and examined in the literature. A theoretical framework to understand migrant labour market outcomes is then proposed to guide the empirical investigation of the first research objective (Figure 2.3).

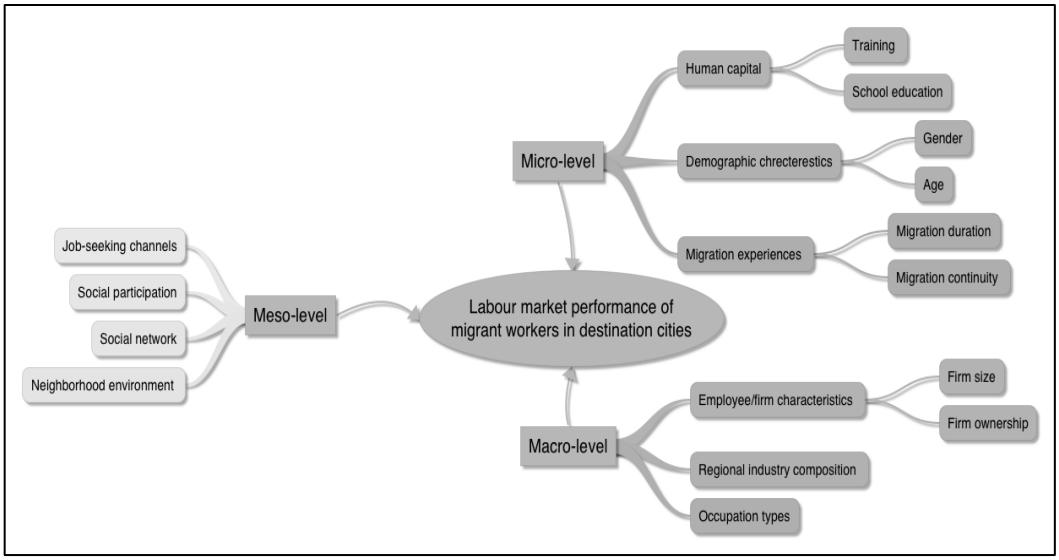

Figure 2.3. Theoretical framework for understanding migrant labour market outcomes

As shown in Figure 2.3, and based on the above literature review, three groups of factors are assumed to affect labour market outcomes of migrant workers in cities: micro-level factors, which include human capital-related factors, demographic characteristics, and migration experience; meso-level factors, such as job-seeking channels, social networks, and social participation; macro-level factors, which include regional industry structure, corporate characteristics, and types of occupation. This theoretical framework will be used to explain the migrant earnings in this study.

Although the spatial variation in the earnings of migrant workers in China has been reported at different geographical scales (Gao 2006; Liu et al. 2007; Xie 2007), the related research, which is dedicated to understanding the geographical differentiations of migrant labour, is still insufficient in the literature.

2.3. Return migration: reasons and consequences

Return migration is a concept capturing a widely witnessed phenomenon of migrant flows from intended destinations back to places of origin; return migrants are broadly referred to as those who suspend their migration by returning to their places of origin

(Vanderkamp 1971; Lee 1974). The return flow of people has been associated with both international return migration and domestic return migration (Cerase 1974; Lindstrom 1996; Zhao 2002). The returnees can go home both voluntarily and compulsively. Both skilled and unskilled labourers are involved in return migration. Some return migrations are short-term, such as seasonal migration (Dustmann 1997), or circular migration (Ortiz 1996; Duany 2002); others may be long-term migrations such as permanent return migration (Vanderkamp 1971; Ley and Kobayashi 2005), or repatriation (Ripmeester 2005).

2.3.1. Characterizing international and domestic return migration

The research on return migration is diverse. In particular, international return migration has been well documented in the English literature. The migration flows between North and South America, between America and Europe, and within the European continent have been profound for many years (Cerase 1974; Lindstrom 1996; Durand, Massey, and Zenteno 2001). Recently, the increasing number of international immigrants returning to Asia from the developed countries in North America and Europe has gradually attracted more scholarly attention (Zweig 1997; Ley and Kobayashi 2005).

While considerable research focus has been placed on international return migration, only a few studies have investigated domestic return migration in western countries. One possible reason for this neglect is that return migrants comprise a relatively small number of people in the total domestic migration in those areas (Lee 1974; Haas 2010). The situation is different in the context of Chinese migration research. Because of relatively lower wage levels and strict immigration regulations, the scale of international return migrants is quite limited in China. Consequently, studies on international return migration are scant in the Chinese literature. In

contrast, due to its sheer number, internal return migration has gradually become a noticeable social phenomenon and has been well documented since the late 1990s (Cui 1999; Zhu 2000; Zhou 2001a; Zhao 2002). The recent large scale return migration, triggered by the global financial crisis in 2008 and subsequent economic slowdown, is now a critical and widespread political and social concern in China. While major cities in the Pearl River Delta and the Yangtze River Delta[8] experience continued labour-shortage, many migrant-sending regions are forced to cope with a large volume of return migrants who want to resettle in the home place that they have left years before. Many studies, especially in the Chinese literature, attempt to document and explain the dynamic processes of the recent return migration in China (Sheng and Hou 2009; Sheng and Shun 2009; Wang and Li 2009; Xiao and Yao 2009; Yue et al. 2009; Zhang and Wang 2009; Yue et al. 2010b).

The literature on return migration has traditionally focused on the demographic characteristics of return migrants (Zhou 2001a), personal and psychological mechanisms behind return migration behaviour (Qiu 2001; Wang and Yuan 2003), and on the social and economic impacts of return migration in the host cities (Huang 1999; Zhang 2002). The discussions and debates on these issues are largely based on data from secondary sources, like the state population censuses. Most of the published studies in Chinese journals are descriptive in nature, and detailed case studies attempting to explain return migration processes are rare due to a lack of available quality data. However, more recently, studies on return migration have benefited from available systematic survey data of return migrant and begin to provide more detailed insights into return migration processes (Zhao 2002; Zhu 2007; Yue et al. 2009; Yue

[8] Pearl River Delta and the Yangtze River Delta refer to two large urban agglomerations in costal China, and are widely regarded as two major economic centers in contemporary China. In particular, Pearl (also known as Zhujiang) River Delta is located at the entrance of the South China Sea. It covers 40,000 km^2 and contains 20 million people. Pearl River Delta generally refers to the triangular-shaped territory of Shanghai, southern Jiangsu province, and northern Zhejiang province of China. It is with an area of 99,600 km^2, and is with a total population over 105 million as of 2010 (CSC IEAS 2012).

et al. 2010b), and the analytical focus has now shifted to the connections between returnees and origin communities (Huang 2005; Liu 2006), the effect of remittances (Chen 2009), the impact on family organization (Chen, Liu, and Xie 2010), and gender and generational differentiation (Fan 2003; Yue et al. 2010b).

Compared to rural-urban migration, return migration is a new phenomenon in China. One obvious reason for this is that the number of return migrants has expanded tremendously in recent years, creating enormous impacts in both rural and urban areas. Scholars from different disciplines argue that return migrants may bring several positive effects (Li 2003; Huang 2005; Xu 2005; Liu 2006; Ma and Jin 2009). First, it is argued that return migrants can speed up social and economic restructuring processes in the rural area. For instance, the migration experience of returned migrants contributes to elevating the skill levels and adaptabilities of rural labourers. They also help the diffusion of modern technology and urban culture through their adopted life styles and ideology (Li 2003; Huang 2005). Second, many scholars claim that return migrants help to promote rural economic development, whereby, both non-agricultural and agricultural sectors can benefit from return migration (Xu 2005; Liu 2006; Ma and Jin 2009). Third, some scholars argue that return migration can help to prompt economic growth and development in the area surrounding traditional migrant-sending regions, and may help to ease the continuing pressure of the urbanization process in China (Huang 2009).

However, it is also argued that return migration is associated with some undesirable effects in migrant-sending regions (Huang 2005; Ma and Jin 2009). For example, a large number of return migrants would exacerbate the existing contradictions and conflicts between “too many people” and “limited arable land” in rural areas where resources are already scarce (Huang 2005; Liu 2006; Ma and Jin

2009). Others have argued that return migration will aggravate the existing dual social structure in urban and rural areas (Xu 2005).

The policy responses to different opinions on the effects of return migration are diverse, contingent upon geographic, social, and economic contexts. Some argue that it is a good alternative to the one-way rural migration process, and returning to the places of origin is the normal response to social and economic situations in the host cities (Zhu 2000; Zhou 2001a; Zhou and Liang 2006). During an economic downturn, instead of hovering among the cities, return migrants create a buffering labour pool that can ease unemployment problems in the host cities (Shi and Yang 2009; Zhang and Wang 2009). On the other hand, others argue that returning is not a voluntary move. In the context of interregional migration in China, return migration is not for the betterment of migrants, but rather it worsens the living conditions of those involved. Therefore, many are concerned about the process of return migration, and are calling for policies constraining the scale of return migration (Bai and He 2002; Wang and Yuan 2003; Ding 2005).

2.3.2. Explaining return migration

Why do some migrants return to their places of origin while others do not? There are quite a few theoretical perspectives which attempt to explain the causes of voluntary return migration. These perspectives can be divided into two groups: one focusing on the macro structural causes of returning, and the other taking an individualistic approach. From a macro structural perspective, neoclassical economists believe that the changes in economic conditions between rural and urban areas are the fundamental causes of return migration (Qiu 2001; Wang and Yuan 2003; Ding 2005; Huang 2009; Sheng and Hou 2009; Xiao and Yao 2009; Zhang 2009). Often, return migration is attributed to changes in wage differentials (Dustmann 2003), employment

opportunities (DaVanzo 1976; Lindstrom 1996), and cost of living differentials between rural and urban areas (Durand, Massey, and Zenteno 2001). On the other hand, institutionalists argue for the importance of political factors and institutional barriers as shaping the process of return migration. For instance, many studies have demonstrated how the changes of immigration regulations and regional policies may make a significant impact on return migration (Conway and Cohen 1988; Olesen 2002). In the context of China, many scholars have revealed the effects of the *hukou* system and its derivations on migration decisions of returned migrants (Wang and Yuan 2003; Zhang and Xiao 2006; Wang and Deng 2009).

The individualistic approach focuses on how personal level factors affect the process of return migration. It is argued that macro structural theories have a very limited explanation in dealing with return migration. Such an approach fails to explain why some migrants eventually return to their places of origin when they have other options, while others do not (Durand, Massey, and Zenteno 2001). Macro structural theories often treat return migrants as a homogenous group (Ding 2005; Hu and Hu 2009). Therefore, individualistic approaches advocate adopting micro to meso perspectives in return migration studies. Some scholars regard return migration as the result of a failure to integrate into urban communities (Bernard 1936; Gordon 1964; Borjas 1987, 1990; Yang and Yang 2006; Cheng 2007; Huang 2009; Wang and Deng 2009). As Yang and Yang (2006: 42) put it, "returning is the helpless but rational choice of return migrants in the current system." In addition, some scholars claim that not only the social and community influences of the host cities, but also the ties to the places of origin play an important role in their decision to return (Zhao 2002; Ley and Kobayashi 2005). Furthermore, the new family economics view migration as a household decision taken to minimize risks to family income, or to overcome capital

constraints on family production activities (Stark and Bloom 1985; Taylor 1986). In this view, some researchers claim that returning is a natural reaction or forced choice for most returnees when their family strategies are threatened in the host cities or places of origin (Zhao 2002; Xu and Xing 2009). Therefore, the problems such as split households (Zhou 2001a; Fan 2008), child education, labour-shortage at home, and elder care (Zhao 2002) are the indispensable factors shaping the decision making processes of return migrants. Given the fact that women normally take more responsibilities in the traditional Chinese family structure, this theory also explains the existence of gender-differentiation in return migrants (Chen, Liu, and Xie 2010).

Some individualist analysis takes a social psychological perspective in analyzing return migration decisions. It is argued that the behaviour and behavioural intentions in return migration may not be rational. For example, some advocates of humanistic and behavioural approaches point out that the influences of cognitive and psychological factors tend to be underestimated in studying settlement intentions (Ding 2005; Hu and Hu 2009). In the context of China, it is claimed that home affection and geographic attachment are part of the values and traditions among many rural urban migrants. The migration behaviour and intentions, therefore, may hardly be anticipated by some theoretical principles based on economic factors like utility maximization (Huang 1999; Zhang 2002).

2.3.4. Summary

The above review of the literature on return migration indicates that there exist both theoretical and empirical developments in characterizing and explaining return migration processes. To achieve one of the research objectives of this study which is to investigate the return intention of rural-urban migrants in host cities, a corresponding theoretical framework is proposed (Figure 2.4).

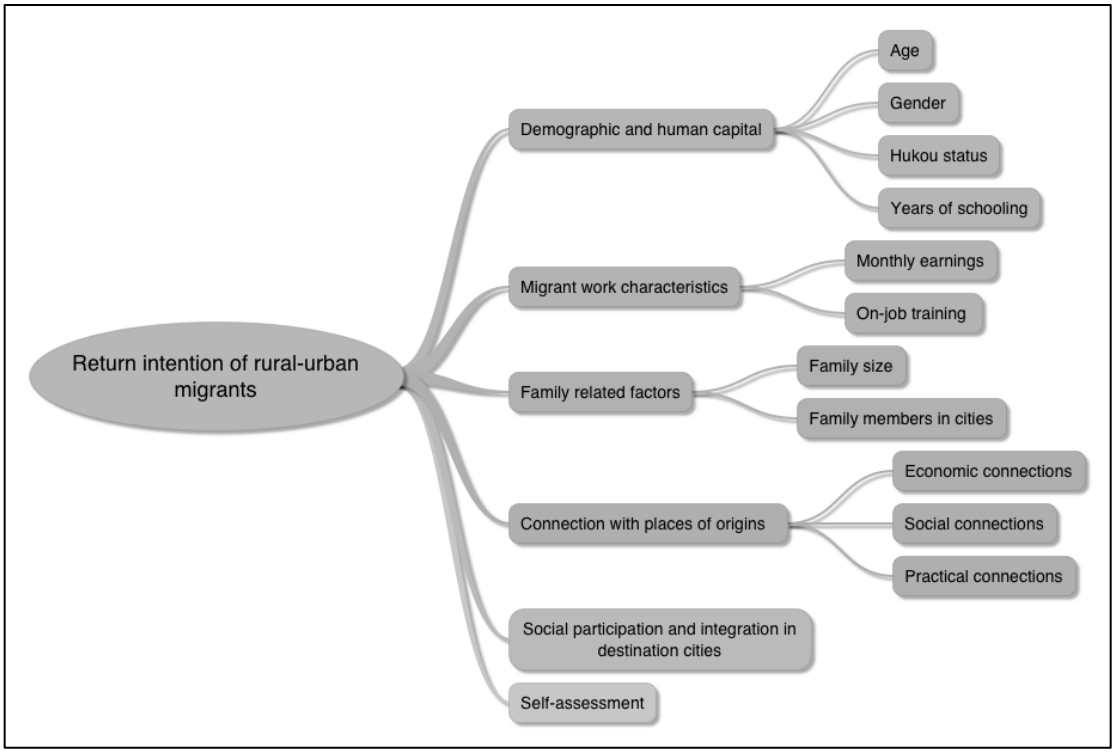

Figure 2.4. Theoretical framework for explaining return intentions of rural-urban migrants

As shown in Figure 2.4, six groups of factors are assumed to affect the return intentions of rural-urban migrants: demographic and human capital-related factors; migrant work characteristics; family-related factors; connection with places of origin; social integration status and self-assessment. The impact of these factors on return intentions will be further examined in the empirical part of this study.

Furthermore, there remain some challenges in studying China's return migration. First, although some researchers have already begun to collect primary data through surveys of migrants and return migrants (Zhao 2002; Zhu 2007; Yue et al. 2009; Yue et al. 2010b), most of the studies in China are still based on the published secondary data, such as the national population census at an aggregated level (Zhu 2000; Zhou 2001a; Bai and He 2002; Zhou and Liang 2006), or on the thematic survey data with relatively small regional coverage (Cui 1999; Zhang 2002; Chen and Wang 2009; Chen 2009; Liu and Liu 2009; Wang and Bai 2009). The lack of high-quality regional

survey data make many studies very broad and general, and the reliability, representation, and consistency of research results become critical problems in the published Chinese literature. Second, the economic and institutional factors that shape return migration in the context of transitional China have been well documented, especially the influence of the *hukou* system on migration decisions (Cheng and Selden 1994; Chan and Zhang 1999; Fan 2002; Wang and Fan 2006). In contrast, other factors such as the effects of social networks, rural linkage, and family factors are discussed inadequately in the literature (Zhao 2002; Zhu 2007). Last of all, numerous studies on population migration in China are city-based. As a result, the place of origin is often ignored or paid scant description, but the social and spatial linkages between the places of origin and destinations are well documented in the scholarly discourse on international return migration (Vanderkamp 1971; Lee 1974; Lindstrom 1996; Durand, Massey, and Zenteno 2001). There is, however, a need to investigate return migration and the linkage between destinations and origins in order to understand its process and effect on both ends of migration.

2.4. Theoretical framework

This review demonstrates the theoretical and empirical progress in understanding migration processes and labour market dynamics in China and beyond. These scholarly perspectives, as portrayed in Table 2.1, provide a conceptual and theoretical framework upon which the empirical part of this thesis is developed.

Table 2.1. Theoretical framework of the thesis

	Migrants in cities: labour market outcomes	Migrants' return intentions	Migrants in origins: return behaviour and resettlement
Macro-level: structural factors	Regional economic structure [55] [105]*	Changes in economic conditions between rural and urban areas [37] [78] [135] [142]	Economic depression in cities [56] [111] [142] [158]
	Corporate characteristics [93] [105] [26]	Political factors and institutional barriers [32] [128] [154] [25]	Rising economic opportunities at home [78] [169]
Meso-level: social and family-related factors	Social networks [62] [63]	Family factors [48] [165] [180] [182]	Social norm [70] [71]
	Social participation [130]	Connections with places of origin [76]	Social networks [72] [73]
Micro-level: individual and behavioural factors	Education and training [118] [119] [51] [72]	Education level [174] [78]	Motivation and capability [121] [27] [131] [103]
	Demographic characteristics [115] [179] [44] [72]	Psychological factors [37] [76]	Past experiences [72] [125]

* Numbers behind each factor indicate the corresponding literature in the reference list.

As shown in Table 2.1, the empirical part of this thesis explains migrants' intentions, behaviour, and performance in a multi-phased migration process. Phase one of this process is migrants in cities; the discussion will focus on their labour market outcomes in cities. Phase two of this process is migrants in transition; the discussion will focus on migrants' return/settlement intentions. Phase three is the returning of rural-urban migrants to their places of origin; the return behaviour and resettlement situations will be examined in this part. On the other hand, migrant labour market outcomes, return intentions, return behaviour and resettlement situations will be analyzed according to three levels of factors: macro, meso, and micro. The changing impacts of these factors by time and space will be fully discussed.

The above review also identifies debates and gaps in the literature that require further study. In the context of Chinese migrant labour markets, the effects of different types of human and social capital on migrant labour market outcomes are still very much uncertain, and how the regional economic and employment structure affects migrant labour markets remains contentious. In particular, there is a lack of knowledge on the spatial differentiation and geographical structure of migrant labour markets in China. Also, systematic studies are needed to understand the determinants of return intentions of rural-urban migrants in China. Such detailed explorative studies may help to reveal the roles of the meso and micro-scale factors that shape the return behaviour and resettlement situation of return migrants in China. The empirical part of this study is thus set up to address some of these issues and gaps using a migrant survey in Fujian and some in-depth interviews conducted in Sichuan and Jiangxi.

CHAPTER THREE

3. METHODOLOGY

This study has three research objectives.[9] This chapter details how these objectives are approached, and will first describe the study area, followed by a brief introduction of the general analytical framework for empirical study. The rest of the chapter will present the data and analytical methods used to achieve three objectives.

3.1. Study area

Three provinces in China--Fujian, Sichuan and Jiangxi--were chosen as the study area for this research. As shown in Figure 3.1, Fujian is a coastal province located in southeastern China, Jiangxi is an interior province adjacent to Fujian, and Sichuan is an interior province located in the west.

[9] Please refer to page 6 for more details of the three empirical research objectives of this study.

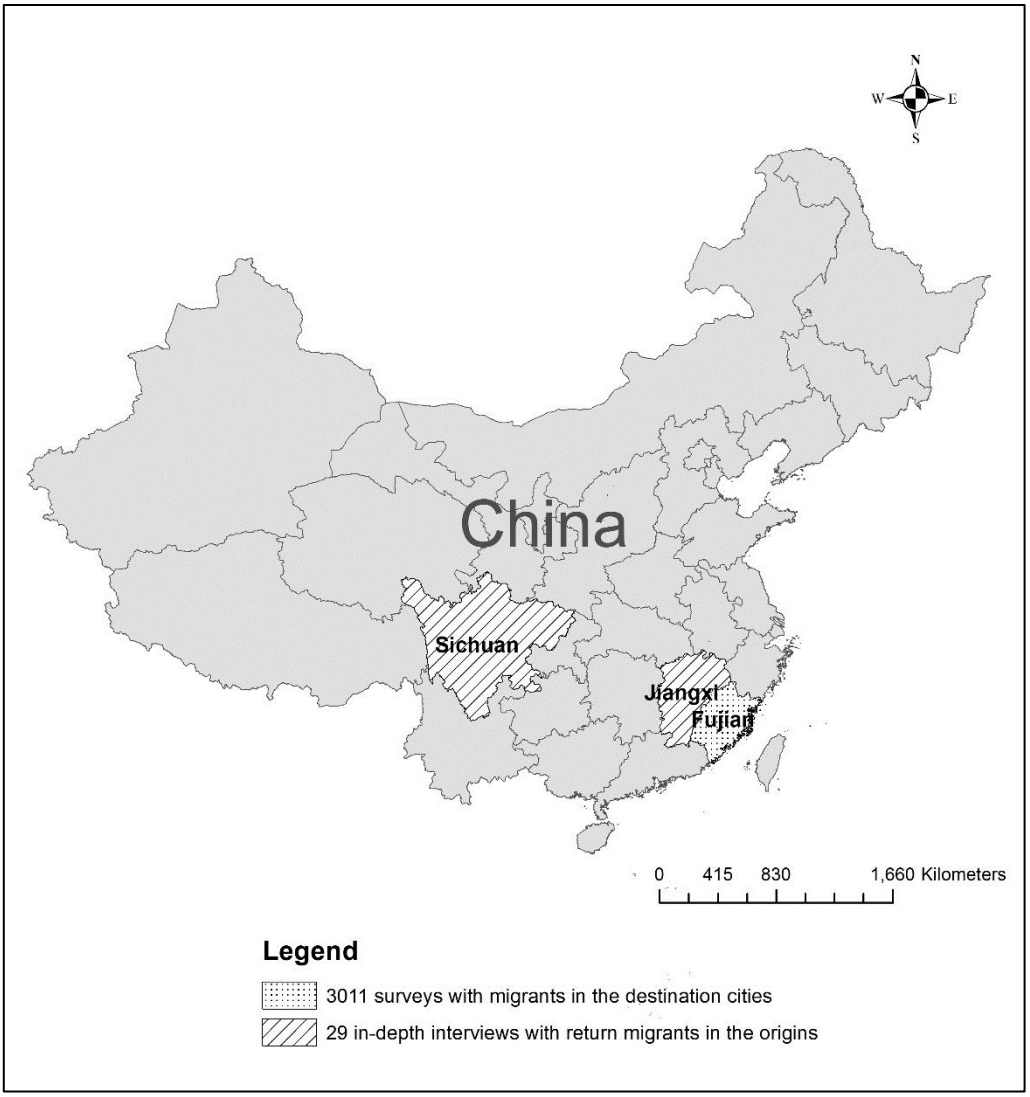

Figure 3.1. Map of the study area: Fujian, Sichuan and Jiangxi

3.1.1. Fujian province

Since 1978, coastal cities in China have been the major destinations of intra- and inter-provincial labour migrants. To investigate the migrant labour market and the return intentions of rural migrants, this study selects Fujian province and its four city-regions as the study area (Figure 3.2). Historically, Fujian Province is well-known as a settlement frontier, receiving waves of migrants from northern China. Today, urban Fujian remains a major destination of rural migrants. According to the 2000 census, there were about 4.7 million migrants, about 2.2 million of whom came from outside the province, making Fujian the sixth most important destination

for inter-provincial migration in China (National Bureau of Statistics of China 2001). Another reason for selecting Fujian as the study area is its representativeness in migrant labour market studies. As a coastal province, Fujian has been at the forefront of adopting economic reform and open door policies. As part of the eastern China economic belt, Fujian connects the two most important economic centers: the Pearl River Delta to the south and the Yangtze River Delta to the north. Its economy is also heavily influenced by overseas investment, especially by Taiwan. Moreover, the impressive pace of economic growth over the last three decades has created substantial employment opportunities in urban Fujian that cannot be filled by local labourers. Numerous rural migrants have moved to various cities in Fujian and are employed in the manufacturing and service sectors, from its urban centers to its urbanizing countryside.

Table 3.1 provides information about the demographic characteristics of labour employment in Fujian. Out of a total of 21.7 million labourers in 2009, males slightly exceeded females. The overall level of educational attainment of the entire labour force was relatively low, with almost 78 percent of labourers receiving middle school or lower education. The average monthly employment income in urban enterprises was 2,400 yuan in 2009. Furthermore, almost half of employment was in the manufacturing industry, 22.8 percent in the service industry, and about 10 percent in the construction sector. In contrast, less than 20 percent of employment was provided by the state or by collectively-owned firms or institutions. Privately-owned firms and self-employment accounted for more than 40 percent of the total employment, and foreign owned firms provided almost 23 percent of employment in urban Fujian (Fujian Provincial Bureau of Statistics 2010).

Figure 3.2. Map of the study area: Fujian province and four case cities

Table 3.1. General labour employment characteristics in Fujian, 2009

Demographic characteristics	Index
Total employment (millions)	21.7
Male and female employment ratio	1.02
Illiterate or semi-illiterate labourers (%)	7.7
Labourers with primary school education (%)	31.5
Labourers with middle school education (%)	31.5
Labourers with high school or vocational school education (%)	13.1
Labourers with junior college or above education (%)	9.1

Source: Fujian Statistical Yearbook 2010

The four selected city-regions represent different types of economic development patterns in Fujian. While Xiamen, Quanzhou, and Ningde are all located in the coastal area (Figure 3.2), their economic characteristics vary substantially.

Xiamen is a state council designated Special Economic Zone, enjoying preferential economic policies that have attracted investments since 1980. As shown in Table 3.2, with 2.5 million people, Xiamen is the city with the smallest population but with the highest proportion of urban population among the four city-regions., GDP per capita in Xiamen is significantly higher than the other three city-regions. In terms of industrial composition, the primary industry in Xiamen is negligible and its economy is essentially supported by the secondary and tertiary sectors (Fujian Provincial Bureau of Statistics 2010).

Quanzhou is famous as a hometown of a large number of overseas Chinese. It is also a national level manufacturing center, and the output of the secondary sector accounts for 58 percent of its GDP. There are over seven million people in Quanzhou, and its GDP is almost twice as large as it is in Xiamen. Altogether, Xiamen and Quanzhou represent relatively better-off regions in the province.

Ningde is located in the mountainous and hilly coastal area. It represents a less developed region in coastal Fujian. Both its GDP and GDP per capita ranked last among four city-regions.

Nanping is an interior city-region with a mountainous landscape. It has been traditionally the poorest region in the province. Primary production still accounts for 22 percent of its GDP while the secondary sector accounts for 40 percent of GDP (Fujian Provincial Bureau of Statistics 2010).

Table 3.2. Regional economic disparities of four case cities, 2009

Regions	Xiamen	Quanzhou	Ningde	Nanping
Total population (millions)	2.52	7.86	3.04	2.90
Urban population (million)	2.06	4.11	1.23	1.40
GDP (100 million Yuan)	1737.23	3069.5	612.28	621.65
Primary industry (%)	1	4	19	22
Secondary industry (%)	47	58	40	40
Tertiary industry (%)	52	38	41	38
GDP per capita (yuan)	68,938	39,227	20,174	21,473

Source: Fujian Statistical Yearbook 2010

3.1.2. Sichuan and Jiangxi provinces

Sichuan and Jiangxi provinces are two major migrant-sending regions of labour migrants in China, and were chosen as the study area to understand return migrants' behaviour and their current resettlement status.

Sichuan province has been historically known as the "land of plenty," and remains one of the major agricultural production bases in China. With the steady progression of economic reforms in the 1980s and 1990s, a tremendous number of agricultural surplus labourers in Sichuan province have gradually migrated to the coastal area for better economic opportunities. This "tidal wave" of migrant labourers has made Sichuan one of the most important "exporters" of migrant workers in China over the last two decades.

Field research and interviews were conducted in Chengdu City and Lezhi County in Sichuan Province (Figure 3.3). Chengdu is the capital city of Sichuan. It is the leading industrial city in western China, and has developed rapidly since the Western Development Program.[10] It is also known for its attractive living conditions, and was recently ranked as the fourth most livable city by *China Daily* (Fu 2006). It can be argued, then, that Chengdu is the ideal destination of return migrants in Sichuan.

[10] The project was proposed in 1999, and begun in 2000. The major goal of this project is to take advantage of the highly developed costal economy to boost the less developed western regions in China. Six provinces (Gansu, Guizhou, Qinghai, Shaanxi, Sichuan, and Yunnan), five autonomous regions (Guangxi, Inner Mongolia, Ningxia, Tibet, and Xinjiang), and one municipality (Chongqing) are mainly involved in this program.

Lezhi is another selected study area, and is located in the administrative district of Zhiyang city. Due mainly to its bad transportation conditions, Lezhi was traditionally an under-developed region in Sichuan. There was, therefore, barely any export industry in the county for a long time. However, in the recent decades, the local government has made a great effort to improve transportation and its regional accessibility. Also, Lezhi County has gradually been included in the extended Major Chengdu Economic Zone. Therefore, Lezhi County has developed rapidly in the last five years. For instance, two large electronic factories have been established in the Industrial Zone of the county as of 2008. In conclusion, the rapid economic development in Lezhi has generated many non-agricultural job opportunities, which could potentially attract return migrants to be reemployed locally (Lezhi County Government 2012).

Jiangxi is a southern province in China. From the banks of the Yangtze River in the north to the uplands in the south, it is adjacent to Anhui, Zhejiang, Fujian, Guangdong, Hunan, and Hubei provinces. Jiangxi is a typical interior province surrounded by developed coastal provinces. Its three neighbors, Zhejiang, Fujian, and Guangdong, are regarded as the most highly-developed provinces in China. Therefore, many people in Jiangxi, especially in the rural area, have migrated out to those areas to find jobs. As a result, Jiangxi has become one of the major migrant-sending areas in China.

The data was specifically collected in the Xixi village of Jixangxi province (Figure 3.4). This village was chosen to represent the under-developed rural regions in this study, and is located in the northeast of Fuliang County, adjacent to Anhui Province. Furthermore, the area of the village is 15 km^2, in which the area of uplands is 430 ha, and the area of paddy field is 43 ha. There are 670 people in 150 families in the

village. These people are distributed among five smaller settlements known as "natural villages." Subsistence agriculture is the major industry, with scarcely any local manufacturing employment. Mushrooms and tea leaves are the two main cash crops. Moreover, about 10 percent of the total population in the village has so far migrated out to find employment (Village Committee of Xixi Village 2012).

Figure 3.3. Map of the study area: Sichuan province and two case unites

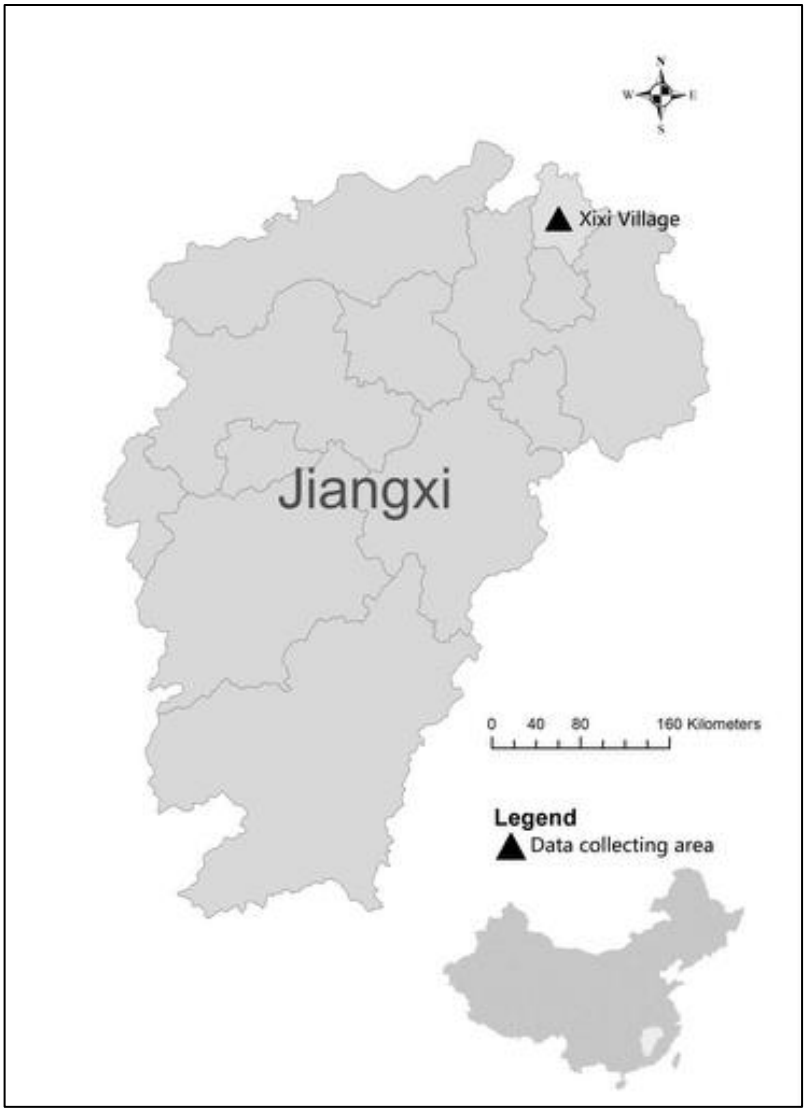

Figure 3.4. Map of the study area: Jiangxi Province and data collecting area

3.2. Analytical framework for empirical study

Analytically, the empirical part of this research is divided into three parts, each tackling a different objective, and all three parts are closely interrelated and sequenced. As shown in Figure 3.5, the major thread of this study is labour market performance associated with the migration process.

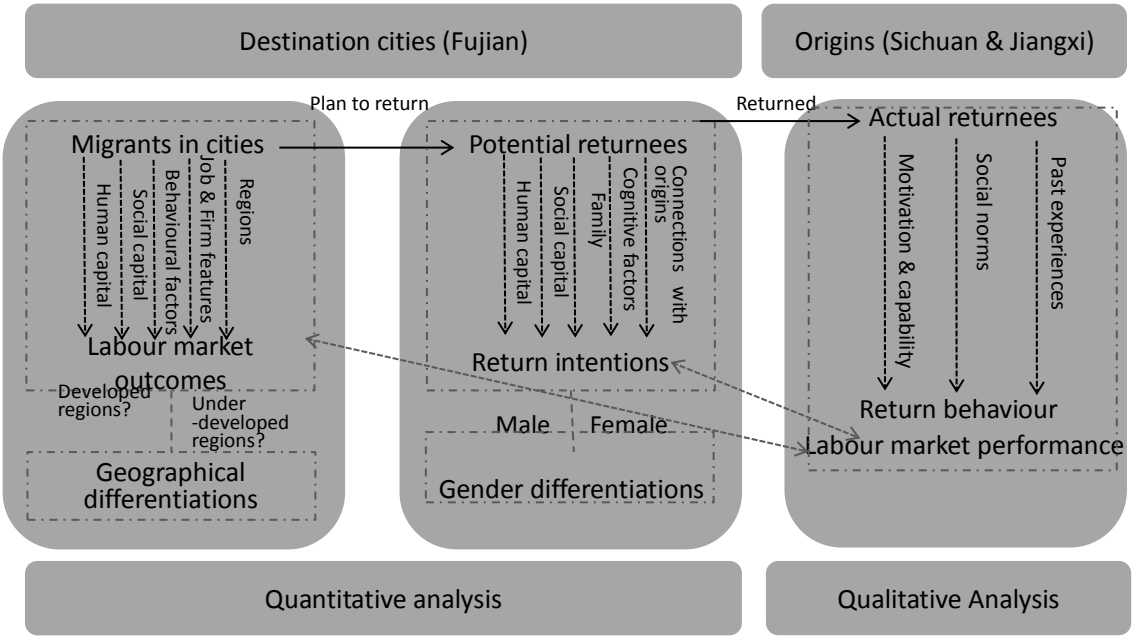

Figure 3.5. Conceptual and analytical framework of the study

The first part of the empirical study aims to reveal the underlying mechanism of individuals' earnings and to understand the geographical differentiation of migrant labour markets. After that, the original migration intention may start to change while their migration process is extended in the cities. Some of them may choose to keep migrating across different cities, whereas others may decide to return home. Therefore, the second part of the empirical study focuses on the long-term migration intentions of rural migrants in the cities. Specifically, it attempts to answer the following two questions. What are the social and demographic characteristics of migrants who choose to return home? What are the influential factors and mechanisms behind their decision process? In other words, this part focuses on the turning point of their migration process: whether to stay or to return. The target groups of the first and second parts are both rural-urban migrants in the cities. Finally, the third part of the empirical research focuses on the actual returnees and attempts to

answer the following question: what factors have shaped their return behaviour and resettlement situations?

3.3. Migrant survey in Fujian

The data for the first two parts of the empirical study were collected through a questionnaire survey jointly conducted by the Center for Population and Development Research at Fujian Normal University and Fujian Provincial Population and Family Planning Commission, in December 2009. The author is a member of the Center for Population and Development Research at Fujian Normal University, and participated in the entire process of data collection. He has access to this data, and is authorized to analyze and present the results as a part of this study.

The provincial migrant population database based on the fifth national census, and established by Fujian Provincial Population and Family Planning Commission, was used as the sampling frame. The potential respondents were those migrants in the database who were 15 to 64 years old, employed as labourers or doing business, had migrated out of the boundaries of their original county-level administrative units, and had lived in the current places of destination for more than one month. The survey was based on a four-step proportional probability sampling procedure in which the county-level, township-level, and community (village) level administrative units were first randomly selected, and then, ten female migrants and five male migrants in each of the selected sample units were randomly selected. As a result of this procedure, 17 county-level administrative units, 59 sub-district (township)-level administrative units, and 185 community (village)-level administrative units were covered in the survey, and a total of 3,011 respondents were interviewed, including 1,994 female migrants and 1,017 male migrants. As the proportion of female and male migrants in the total migrant population was close to 50 per cent in the sample frame, half of the

responses (1,016) from female respondents were then selected and combined with those of male respondents to form a new data set for the analysis. Twenty-two invalid responses were identified and deleted in the process of data entry, so that the data set used here had 2,011 valid responses, including 997 responses from female migrants and 1,014 responses from male migrants.

The questionnaire used to survey migrants was designed at the Center for Population and Development Research at Fujian Normal University and the University of Lethbridge.[11] The original questionnaire was adjusted and modified after a pre-survey with 100 migrants in Fuzhou City. The final questionnaire contains questions organized into six sections: basic personal information; migration process and experience; current employment status; current living conditions; social security status; and social participation and integration. Each part includes 15-25 questions, the majority of which are multiple choice, with a few sorting and fill-in-the-blank questions.[12] A survey with one migrant normally lasted 40 to 120 minutes, depending on the ability of respondents to understand the questions.[13] A total of 370 interviewers, all experienced social workers, two for each village-level unit, were fully trained by the questionnaire designers. After the survey, all of the 3,011 questionnaires were carefully examined one-by-one, using individual telephone confirmation to ensure the accuracy and completeness of each result, by the members of the Center for Population and Development Research at Fujian Normal University.

3.4. Analytical method for assessing migrant labour outcomes

To accomplish the first research objective of examining the factors that determine individual earnings of migrants and identifying the geographical differentiation of

[11] The design of the questionnaire was led by two professors: Dr. Yu Zhu and Dr. Xu Wei. Dr. Yu Zhu is the Head of the Center for Population and Development Research at Fujian Normal University and Dr. Wei Xu is a Professor in the Department of Geography at University of Lethbridge.

[12] The author is not authorized to publish the whole survey questionnaire in this thesis.

[13] The difference in the survey time is caused mainly by the different levels of education attainment and personal understanding and communication skills between the respondent and the person administering the survey.

migrant labour markets in the destination cities, the survey data of the four city-regions in Fujian was selected (Table 3.2). A total of 1,473 migrants from the four city-regions are included in this part of the analysis. Furthermore, the data analysis includes two steps: first, the major characteristics of the migrant labour market in the four city-regions are identified and compared, according to four themes including migrant demographic characteristics, job compensation, residential conditions, and industrial and occupational characteristics. The comparative description of the migrant labour market provides a basis to contextualize the findings of quantitative modeling of migrant earnings conducted in this study. Second, four ordinary-least-squares regression models are developed for each of the four city-regions based on the survey data in order to identify significant earnings determinants in each city-region and how they may vary. The dependent variable in the regression models is the natural logarithmic form of monthly migrant earnings, which is a common choice in related studies, because the monthly earning of migrants is the most direct and clear indicator of their current labour market performance. With natural logarithmic transformation, the dependent variables become normally distributed (see Figure 3.6), and the model results of each explanatory variable can be interpreted as the percentage contribution of these factors on migrant earnings. However, monthly earnings can only partially reflect migrant labour market outcomes. Several important indicators of their performance, such as housing status and insurance coverage, are not measured by the model. Given the fact that the housing and insurance expenses are possibly covered (or partly covered) by employers, and are counted as an important part of migrants' overall welfare in the cities, earnings only represent a major part of the job compensation for migrant workers. Also, the values of their monthly earning in the survey are based on migrants' subjective

responses. It is possible that some over or under-reporting may exist. These limitations should be considered when assessing the model discussions.

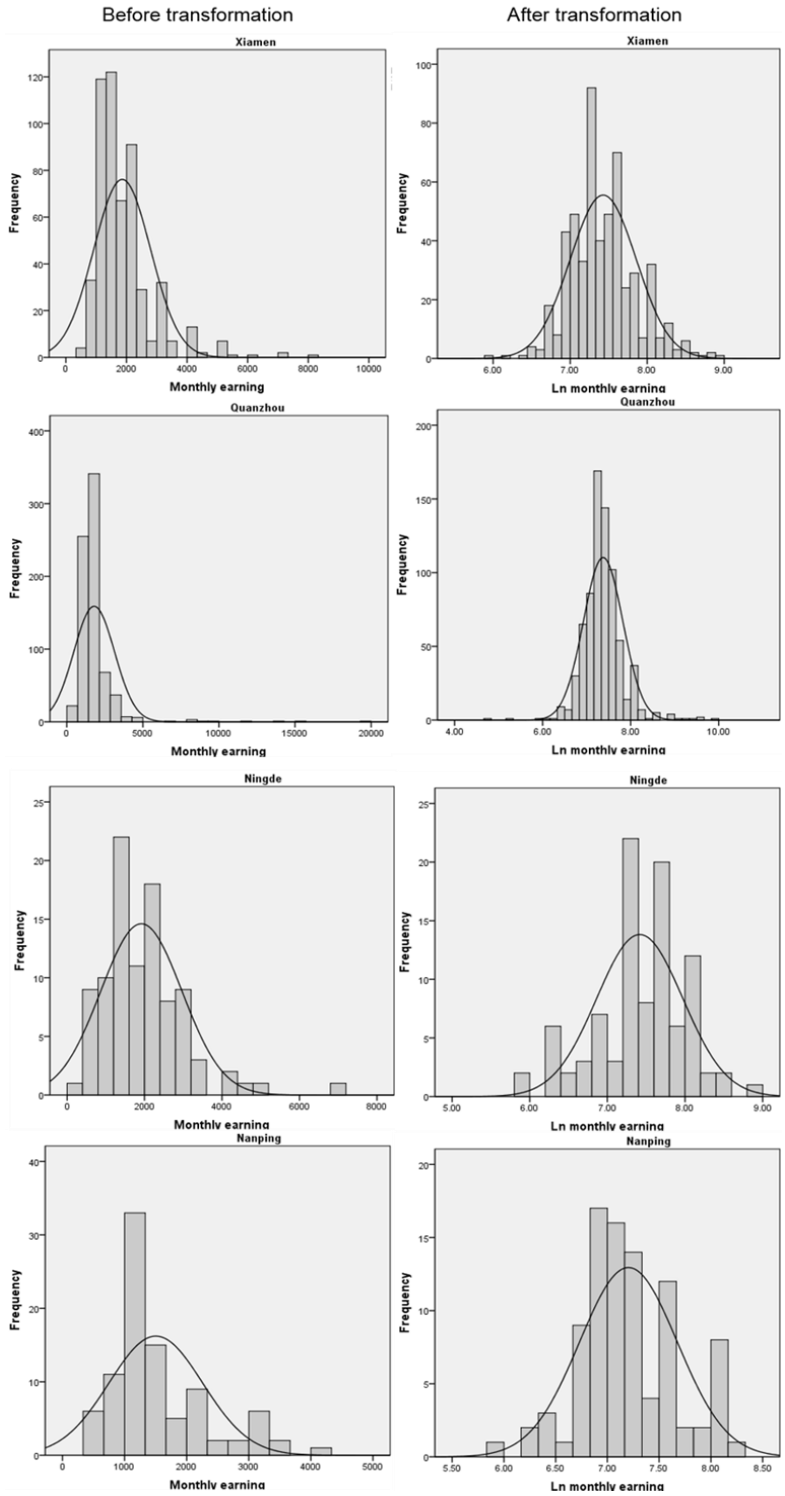

Figure 3.6. Distributions of monthly earnings before and after the natural logarithmic transformation in the four city-regions

The explanatory variables are selected based on the literature review. They are included in order to comprehensively understand the determining mechanism of migrant labour market outcomes. It is worth noting that including too many independent variables in the model would affect the goodness-of-fit for models especially with small sample size, whereas, including insufficient independent variables would harm the completeness of the theoretical framework and the fulfillment of the research objectives. To achieve a balance of these two points, a total of 30 independent variables were eventually included in the model, and categorized into five groups: demographic and human capital; migration experience; behavioural and cognitive factors; social capital; and job and corporate characteristics (Table 3.3).

Table 3.3. List of variables showing average values for model assessment of migrant labour market outcomes

		Xiamen	Quanzhou	Ningde	Nanping
Total sample		538.00	746.00	96.00	93.00
Dependent variable	Logarithmic form of monthly migrant earnings	7.43	7.37	7.42	7.20
Independent variables	**Demographic and human capital**				
	Male (percent male)	52	49	45	48
	Marital status (percent married)	65	66	88	82
	Non-agricultural *hukou*	0.13	0.53	0.05	0.05
	Age	31	30	37	33
	Age-squared	961	900	1369	1089
	Years of schooling	8.78	7.44	6.09	7.31
	Received training during migration	0.35	0.34	0.22	0.34
	Holds occupational certifications	0.24	0.14	0.27	0.14
	Migration experience				
	Migration duration (Years)	8.01	7.79	8.69	9.13
	Never have been unemployed	0.84	0.89	0.78	0.84
	Behavioural and cognitive factors				
	Regards self as an urban resident (reference: others)	0.08	0.03	0.04	0.11
	Migration decision taken independently (reference: others)	0.72	0.70	0.50	0.64
	Social capital and network				
	Residential neighborhoods (reference: others)				
	Local resident	0.14	0.14	0.30	0.64
	Migrants from same origins	0.07	0.17	0.08	0.31
	Accustomed to communicating in Mandarin	0.87	0.79	0.77	0.79
	Accustomed to seeking help from local residents	0.13	0.14	0.25	0.29
	Accustomed to urban lifestyle and habits	0.90	0.80	0.81	0.86
	Job-seeking channels (reference: others)				
	Through Kinship networks	0.20	0.28	0.42	0.20
	Through social networks	0.26	0.36	0.21	0.23
	Through agents and ads.	0.22	0.05	0.05	0.05
	Job & corporate characteristics				
	Job types (reference: other labours)				
	Managers or professionals	0.18	0.11	0.07	0.06
	Vendors or Part-time workers	0.06	0.02	0.09	0.15
	Self-employed	0.15	0.09	0.30	0.22
	Firm size	3.95	4.39	2.31	2.39
	Firm ownership (reference: collective or other ownership)				
	State-owned firms & Institutions	0.06	0.01	0.02	0.02
	Foreign owned firms	0.35	0.10	0.02	0.01
	Privately-owned firms	0.32	0.72	0.42	0.42
	Industry type (reference: other industries)				
	Manufacturing	0.49	0.81	0.43	0.30
	Construction	0.05	0.02	0.10	0.20
	Services sector	0.21	0.11	0.25	0.29

3.5. Analytical method for assessing migrant return intentions

The second empirical objective of the study is to examine why rural-urban migrants plan to return after several years of urban life, and the survey data in Fujian is used to accomplish this objective. The total dataset with 2033 respondents representing Fujian province as a whole has been selected for this part. Tables 3.4 and 3.5 show several basic characteristics of the dataset used in this part of the analysis.

Table 3.4. Demographic characteristics of Fujian survey respondents

Demographic characteristics		Percentage (%)
Sex	Male	50.4
	Female	49.6
Marital status	Not married	30.3
	Married	69.7
Age	15－19	7.5
	20－24	19.5
	25－29	19.3
	30－34	17.0
	35－39	17.4
	40－44	11.9
	⩾45	7.4

Table 3.5. Human and political capital characteristics of Fujian survey respondents

Human and political capital		Percentage (%)
Educational attainment (highest graduation)	No education	11.7
	Primary school	22.6
	Junior secondary school	44.9
	Senior secondary school	8.2
	Vocational school	7.1
	Junior college	3.8
	College and above	1.8
Political status	Member of Communist Party of China	2.4
	Member of Communist Youth League	10.1
	The public	87.5
Hukou	Agriculture	90.9
	Non-agriculture	9.1

To explore migrant return intentions, a term, “intended returnees”, is employed in this thesis to capture return migration intentions. Specifically, migrants who are planning to move back home in the future, but are still living and working in cities, are referred to as intended returnees.

The data analysis is divided into two parts. First, a descriptive analysis is presented to understand the major characteristics of intended returnees and of gender differentiation. Their demographic, economic, and social characteristics, and the details of their return intentions, are discussed in this part of the analysis. A gender comparison has also been conducted. The in-depth and comparative description of intended returnees provides a basis to contextualize the findings of quantitative modeling of migrant return intentions.

Second, binary logistic regression models are then developed for all surveyed migrants, both male and female. The research objective is to understand the demographic and social determinants of migrant return intentions. Thus, the binary dependent variable in the model is their long term return/settle intentions: with a value of 1 for return and 0 for all others. This variable is directly derived from a multiple choice question in the survey: if you could choose freely, what would be your long-term plan? Five mutually exclusive responses are available for respondents: 1) settle in the current city; 2) settle in another city; 3) return to origins; 4) keep migrating between different cities; 5) hard to decide. To determine the dependent variable for the model, choice 3 is assigned a value of 1 and all other choices are assigned a value of 0. It is quite clear that this variable directly represents migrant return intentions, and is the ideal dependent variable for this study. In terms of the independent variables, as shown in Table 3.6, 29 explanatory variables are included and categorized into 6 groups based on the theoretical and analytical framework

derived from the respective literature review. The analysis and discussions of the return intentions of general migrants is followed by an in-depth comparison between male and female models. The comparative study is intended to understand the gender differences in the determinants of migrant return intentions.

Table 3.6. List of variables showing average values for model assessment of migrant return intentions

Variables		Total	Male	Female
Total sampling size		2033	1017	1016
Dependent variable	Would you choose to return in the long run?	0.38	0.39	0.38
Independent variables	**Demographic**			
	Age	31	32	31
	Male (reference: female)	0.53		
	Years of schooling	7.99	8.56	7.41
	Married (reference: not married)	0.69	0.66	0.73
	Agricultural *hukou* (reference: non-agricultural)	0.91	0.9	0.92
	Migration duration (year)	7.99	8.92	7.05
	Migrant Work			
	Monthly income (Yuan)	1794	2012	1527
	Ratio of expenditure to income	51	48	53
	Received training in host cities (reference: no training)	0.33	0.36	0.31
	Family			
	Family size	5	5	5
	Family members in the same city	2	1	2
	Numbers of children in the same city (reference: others)	0.22	0.2	0.25
	Connections with origins			
	Distance between place of origin and destination city (km)	542	536	548
	Have families in origins (reference: others)	0.77	0.78	0.76
	Month at home after initial migration	5.65	5.32	5.98
	Have land in origins (reference: others)	0.79	0.8	0.77
	Have houses in origins (reference: others)	0.14	0.2	0.07
	2008 remittance (yuan)	4276	4660	3892
	Social networks			
	Accustomed to communicating in Mandarin (reference: others)	0.82	0.83	0.8
	Frequent local community participation (reference: others)	0.07	0.08	0.07
	Residential neighbor network (reference: others)			
	Local resident	0.2	0.2	0.2
	Migrants from same origins	0.13	0.12	0.14
	Colleagues	0.13	0.14	0.12
	Friend with local residents (reference: others)	0.46	0.49	0.43
	Need help from local residents (reference: others)	0.17	0.16	0.17
	Accustomed to urban lifestyle and habits (reference: others)	0.84	0.84	0.84
	Self-assessment (reference: others)			
	Regards self as an urban resident	0.05	0.06	0.05
	Regards self as a migrant	0.58	0.56	0.61
	Regards self as both	0.16	0.18	0.14

3.6. Data and analytical method for assessing return migrants' behaviour and resettlement situations

As indicated in Chapter Two, there is a lack of systematic studies on return migrants in China. While, this part of the empirical study adopts a qualitative approach to explore why rural migrants have moved back to their places of origin, and how they have coped with local conditions after their return from the cities. The data is collected from in-depth interviews with return migrants and analyzed according to the grounded theory methodology.

As stated earlier, Chengdu City and Lezhi County in Sichuan and Xixi Village in Jiangxi have been chosen as the study area for this part. These three regions represent a major city in the interior of China, a rapidly-developing urban fringe area, and an under-developed remote area, respectively. Thus, the data represent three different types of geographic regions where rural migrants have originated.

An in-depth interview method was adopted to collect qualitative data, and the potential interviewees were actual return migrants. The actual returnees are defined as those who have migrated out from their domiciles to other regions to work for at least three months, and then returned home and stayed or were planning to stay for more than six months. The original interview selection criteria were based on inter-provincial migration. However, in the process of the field study, it was found that many return migrants had migrated out to a major city within the province and returned to their home county or village. Their experience appeared to represent a typical group of return migration, unexpected in the initial research design. As a result, intra-provincial returnees were also included in the final interviews.

In order to collect representative and reliable data, interviewees were selected following a rigorous procedure. First, resettlement status was used as the major

control variable to select potential interviewees in the three case regions, so that return migrants with different reemployment status were comprehensively covered. Five types of resettlement status were identified: farm workers, family-care givers, manufacturing industry employees, service industry employees, or self-employed. Second, a local government cooperation approach combined with snowball sampling was adopted to generate potential interviewees in three regions (Table 3.7). The corresponding local officials in three regions with a good local knowledge and especially familiar with migration information, were contacted and interviewed first to gain some general understanding of the local return migration situation. The criteria for potential interviewees and the interview plan were also given to the local officials, and with their help, the list of potential interviewees was then generated.

In the process of the field study, two major problems with this approach were found. On the one hand, the data and knowledge of the local officials may not be up-to-date or accurate. It is therefore possible that some of the potential interviewees on the list may not exactly match the interviewee criteria, or information about the potential interviewees is not correct. On the other hand, the personal biases of local officials could affect the objectivity of the selection of potential interviewees. For example, local officials may prefer to choose those relatively affluent interviewees to provide a more positive image of their jurisdictions. Two measures were taken to mitigate the effects of these problems. The first was simply to generate a larger list of potential interviewees with help from local officials. Specifically, in this study, the common rate of elimination is around three to one. Second, after the interviews, the interviewees from the original list were asked to identify some of their acquaintances who might match with the respondent criteria. Interviewers then managed to interview

these people. These two additional measures significantly improved the efficiency and randomness of the data collection for this study.

After the interviewees were selected, face-to-face interviews were conducted in local dialects or in Mandarin after obtaining the consent from the interviewees, in December 2011 and January 2012. The interviews were all recorded as audio files, and each lasted between 40 and 90 minutes. Interview guidelines with open-ended questions were prepared in-house before reaching the field. The major contents of the interviews were structured around respondents' migration experience, including the facts of their migration process, the reasons for their migration behaviour, and, more importantly, the reasons for their return behaviour and resettlement status.

As a result, 29 qualified return migrants were eventually interviewed. Tables 3.7-3.10 show several selected characteristics of the interviewees in this study. Considering the total sample size, the coverage of the data is reasonably satisfactory, and covers those who returned to villages, counties, and cities of their origin. In terms of resettlement status, the data includes the migrants who returned to work in local factories, in service industries, on farms, in caring for families or in self-employment. Furthermore, the distribution of the respondents in different demographic groups and with different migration experiences is also properly represented. Overall, the data reasonably reflects the situation of return migrants in China. However, it is important to note that the data is collected for an exploratory qualitative research project, thus it is not necessary to match the population structure of general return migration in China. In other words, the characteristics showed in Tables 3.7-3.10 only represent the return migrants interviewed in this study.

Table 3.7. Interview characteristics of interviewed returnees

Interview characteristics		Index
Number of interviewees (#)		29
Regional breakdown (#)	Chengdu City (Sichuan)	2
	Lezhi County (Sichuan)	10
	Xixi Village (Jiangxi)	17
Method of interviewee selection (#)	Local government cooperation approach	20
	Respondent participation approach	9

Table 3.8. Demographic characteristics of interviewed returnees

Demographic characteristics		Index
Average age (Years)		36
Gender (#)	Male	18
	Female	11
Hukou status (#)	Agricultural	24
	Non-agricultural	5
Educational attainment (#)	Primary school and below	10
	Junior high school	12
	High school (secondary school)	5
	University	1
	Had dropped out of school	9

Table 3.9. Migration characteristics of interviewed returnees

Migration experience		Index
Years of migration	Average (years)	7
	Three years and less (#)	10
	Four to ten years (#)	12
	Ten years and above (#)	7
Migration distance(#)	Intra-province	5
	Inter-province	24

Table 3.10. Return behavior and resettlement status of interviewed returnees

Return behaviour and resettlement status		Index
Type of return destination (#)	Village-level	16
	County/Township-level	11
	Municipal-level	2
Duration of returning	Average year (years)	5
	One year and less (#)	5
	Two to five years (#)	13
	Five years and above (#)	11
Current employment status (#)	Manufacturing	6
	Transportation and warehousing industry	1
	Services sector	6
	Wholesale and retail trade	2
	Taking care of family	5
	Farming	5
	Special cultivation	1
	Starting their own businesses	7

The data analysis in this part is based on grounded theory (Table 3.11), which is a systematic approach that aims to discover and explore theoretical ideas from qualitative data, and has been widely used in qualitative research (Martin and Turner 1986). The complete grounded theory methodology starts from the research design and data collection and analysis process. In this part, the data analysis process of the grounded theory will be focused and discussed.

As shown in Table 3.11, the first and essential step of data analysis in the grounded theory technique is the coding of the data. The three essential elements of grounded theory--concepts, categories and propositions--are expected to be generated in this step (Glaser 1992). The whole coding process of this study was conducted using Nvivo qualitative analysis software. For the first step, the interview audio materials were fully transcribed in Chinese text, and then imported into Nvivo. Then the line-by-line coding was completed to generate fragmented nodes[14] of the interview contents. The transcription and line-by-line coding are normally referred to as open

[14] "Node" is a term used in Nvivo. It could also be termed as the codes or concepts, in related research.

coding in the grounded theory, which aims at generating concepts as much as possible regardless of research objectives (Charmaz 2006). A total of 661 fragmented nodes were generated in this process. Next, the fragmented nodes and corresponding contents were cautiously analyzed and reorganized into 124 categories.[15] The fourth step brings the research objectives into the data analysis. The major goal of this step is to eliminate the irrelevant nodes, and to discover the core variables that could explain the respondents' behaviour and resettlement conditions based on the research objective (Charmaz 2006). As a result, 44 categories related to research objectives were selected and adjusted; several core variables of their return behaviour and resettlement status were identified. The fifth step is to carefully analyze selective categories, core nodes, and corresponding contents, and to generate several themes that could systematically and directly respond to the research questions, and as a result, a total of 29 themes were generated after step five.

The sixth step is a significant part of the whole data analysis. It integrates the qualitative contents with a theoretical model by weaving the concepts and themes achieved above into a theory explaining the main concern of the study (Charmaz 2006). Jointly considering the research objectives, findings from the above analysis and literature study, the return behaviour and resettlement situations of return migrants are explained by three major groups of factors: individual behavioural factors including motivations, capabilities and past experiences; social related factors including social norms and social networks; and macro push-and-pull factors. Under such a theoretical framework, the categories and themes generated during the data analysis processes were reconstructed and reorganized respectively. Thus, a total of 21 new themes were generated and categorized into nine propositions: motivations of

[15] Referred as "tree nodes" in Nvivo

out-migration and return behaviour; capability of individuals and return behaviour; capability of individuals and current resettlement situations; social norms and return behaviour; family status and current resettlement situations; social networks and return behaviour; social networks and current resettlement situations; bad experience in the destination cities and return behaviour; and migration processes and current resettlement situations. With the achievement of several theoretical propositions that directly connect to the research objectives, the coding process of the data is completed.

Memoing is the essential component through the whole process of the grounded theory (Glaser 1998). Glaser (1998: 69) defined memos as "the theorizing write-up of ideas about substantive codes and their theoretically coded relationships as they emerge during coding, collecting and analyzing data, and during memoing." In terms of this study, the core nodes and corresponding contents were cautiously analyzed under the theoretical framework generated in step seven. The causes of respondents' returning, the effects of their current resettlement situations, and other core ideas of the study were fully discovered and analyzed according to the nine propositions. The related findings and discussions were recorded in Nvivo as memos, which were further reorganized into logical order. The final step was to add all the components together and attempt to answer the research questions based on the data analysis, and also to translate the cited Chinese interview texts into English. Eventually, the finding and discussion part of this study was generated. According to the theoretical framework and propositions achieved earlier, the finding and discussion part is organized into three major sections in Chapter Six: motivations and capabilities of individuals, social-related factors, and past experience.

Table 3.11. Data analysis process of the qualitative study

Grounded theory method		Data analysis of the study
Coding	Open coding	1. Transcribe all the interview audio into Chinese textual material and import into Nvivo
		2. Code every meaningful sentence or sentence pattern in the interview text into fragmented nodes (concepts generated).
	Axial and selective coding	3. Compare, link, combine, and clean fragmented nodes into several tree nodes (new concepts will also be emerged in the process）
		4. Reorganize and select nodes according to the core idea of the study: return behaviour and resettlement status (categories generated)
	Theoretical coding	5. Generate the initial themes that could systematically explain the core idea of the study by carefully discovering the core nodes, categories, and corresponding contents
		6. Generate the final theoretical framework (propositions generated)
		7. Adjust the original nodes and themes according to the final theoretical framework
Memoing		8. Compare, combine, and analyze the related nodes and corresponding contents according to the theoretical framework; generate the theoretical thinking; write down the related findings and discussions (referred as "memos" in GT)
Sorting		9. Sort and organize the memos and theoretical themes into proper order according to the research objectives
Writing up		10. Based on steps eight and nine, attempt to answer the research questions, and translate related Chinese interview texts into English.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. MIGRANT LABOUR MARKET OUTCOMES IN CITIES

Labour market outcome is a term which has been frequently used in labour economics, and normally refers to two things: first, the quantity of the labour force, which is normally measured by employment/unemployment rates (Borjas, Freeman, and Katz 1997; Bertola, Blau, and Kahn 2001); second, the quality of the labour force, which is normally measured by wage rates and other job compensations (Montgomery 1991; Drinkwater, Eade, and Garapich 2009; Neumann 2013). The latter usage of this term is in line with the idea that will be discussed in chapters four and six. Therefore, the term "labour market outcome" has been used in this thesis to describe the combination of individual earnings and other job compensation and benefits (like social insurance and housing conditions). In addition, another term "labour market performance," which is also widely-applied in related studies (Blos, Fischer, and Straubhaar 1997; Dustmann and Fabbri 2003), has been used interchangeably with "labour market outcome" in this thesis.

The empirical research objective of this chapter is to examine the roles of various factors in determining individual earnings in migrant labour markets, and to identify the geographical differentiation by using a migrant survey in Fujian, China. The findings are first reported by a descriptive analysis of the labour market performance of migrant workers in the four city-regions. Specifically, the income distributions, housing status, insurance coverage, and employment structures of migrants will be discussed in this chapter, after that, a comparative analysis and discussion of migrant earning regression models in the four case cities is then presented. This section

concludes by relating the findings to the debates in the literature on migrant labour markets in China.

4.1. Characteristics of migrant labour markets in the case city-regions

In this section, the major characteristics of migrant labour markets in the four regions will be discussed comparatively. It starts with the discussion of demographic characteristics, including age and educational attainment of labour migrants in the four regions in order to portray a general picture of the target population in this study. The subsequent discussions thus directly aim at the migrant labour market. Labour market compensation for migrants, including income distribution and social insurance coverage, is presented first, followed by a discussion of migrant housing conditions. Finally, the industrial and occupational characteristics of migrant workers in the four regions is analysed to further explore the structural characteristics of migrant labour markets. The comparative description of migrant labour markets provides a basis to contextualize the findings of quantitative modeling of migrant earnings presented in the following section.

4.1.1. Demographic characteristics of rural migrant workers

Figure 4.1 shows the average age and age distribution of the surveyed migrants in the case regions. The average age of the respondents ranges from 30 years old in Quanzhou to 37 years old in Ningde. In general, rural migrant workers tend to be younger in more economically developed areas than in less developed areas. The age structure of migrant workers in Xiamen and Quanzhou is similar, where the majority of migrants are between 20 and 29 years old. In contrast, migrant workers in Nanping and Ningde mostly fall within 30-39 years old. Noticeably, 36.5 percent of the respondents in Ningde are even older than 40. Such a percentage is significantly higher than that in other three city-regions.

Educational attainment is argued in the literature to be one of the most fundamental earning determinants. According to the survey, there is little difference in average schooling years for surveyed migrants among four city-regions. The average years of schooling ranges from six years in Ningde to nine years in Xiamen (Figure 4.2). Therefore, given the fact that nine years of formal education is the national standard of compulsory education, the educational attainment of migrant workers is relatively low in all case city-regions. About 40 percent of the respondents in the four case regions graduated from middle school, whereas, the share of migrant workers who received university education is less than 5 percent. Notably, the proportion of rural migrants in Ningde with no education is as high as 30.2 percent, while in other three cities, it is about 10 percent.

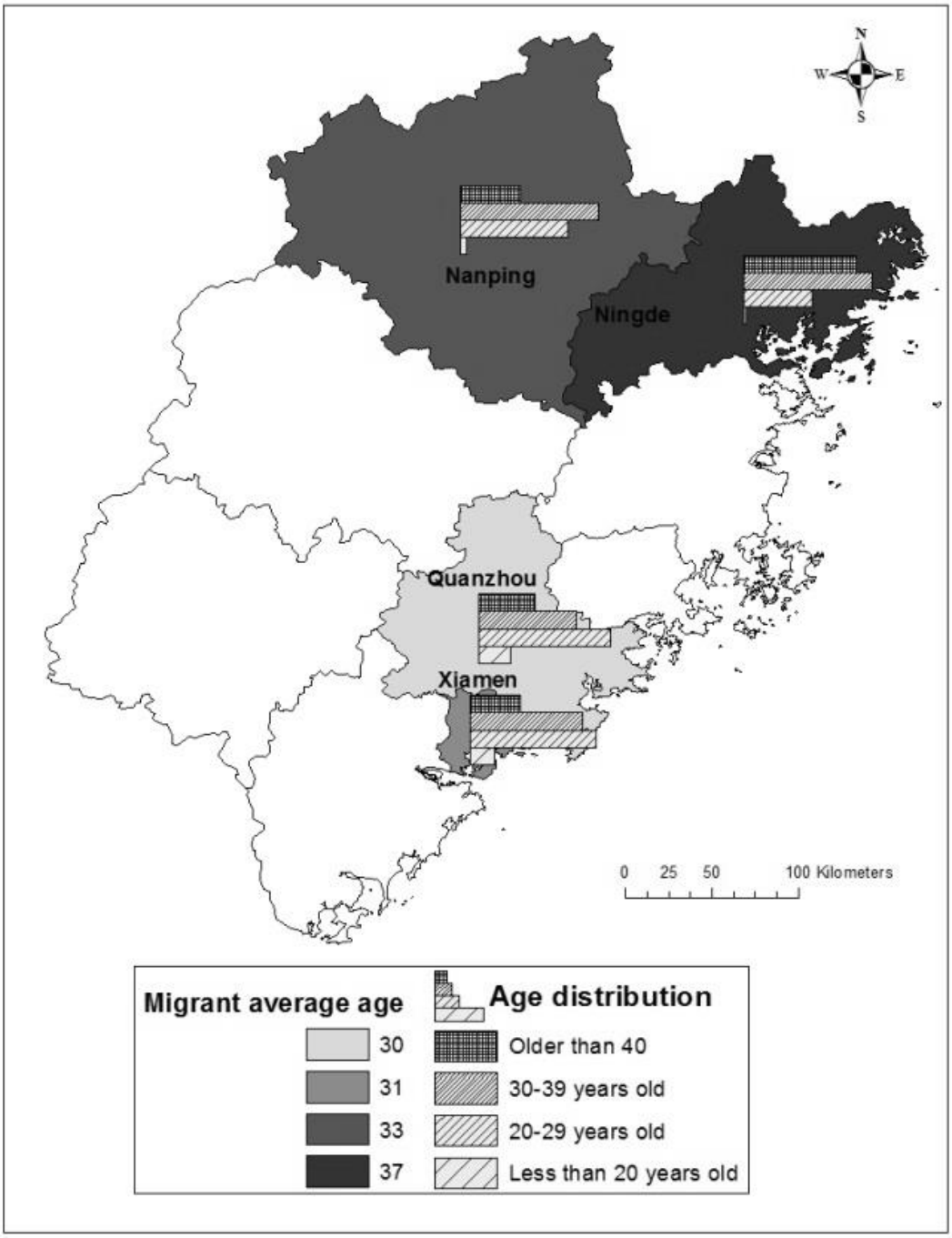

Figure 4.1. Average age and age distribution of surveyed migrants in four case cities, 2009

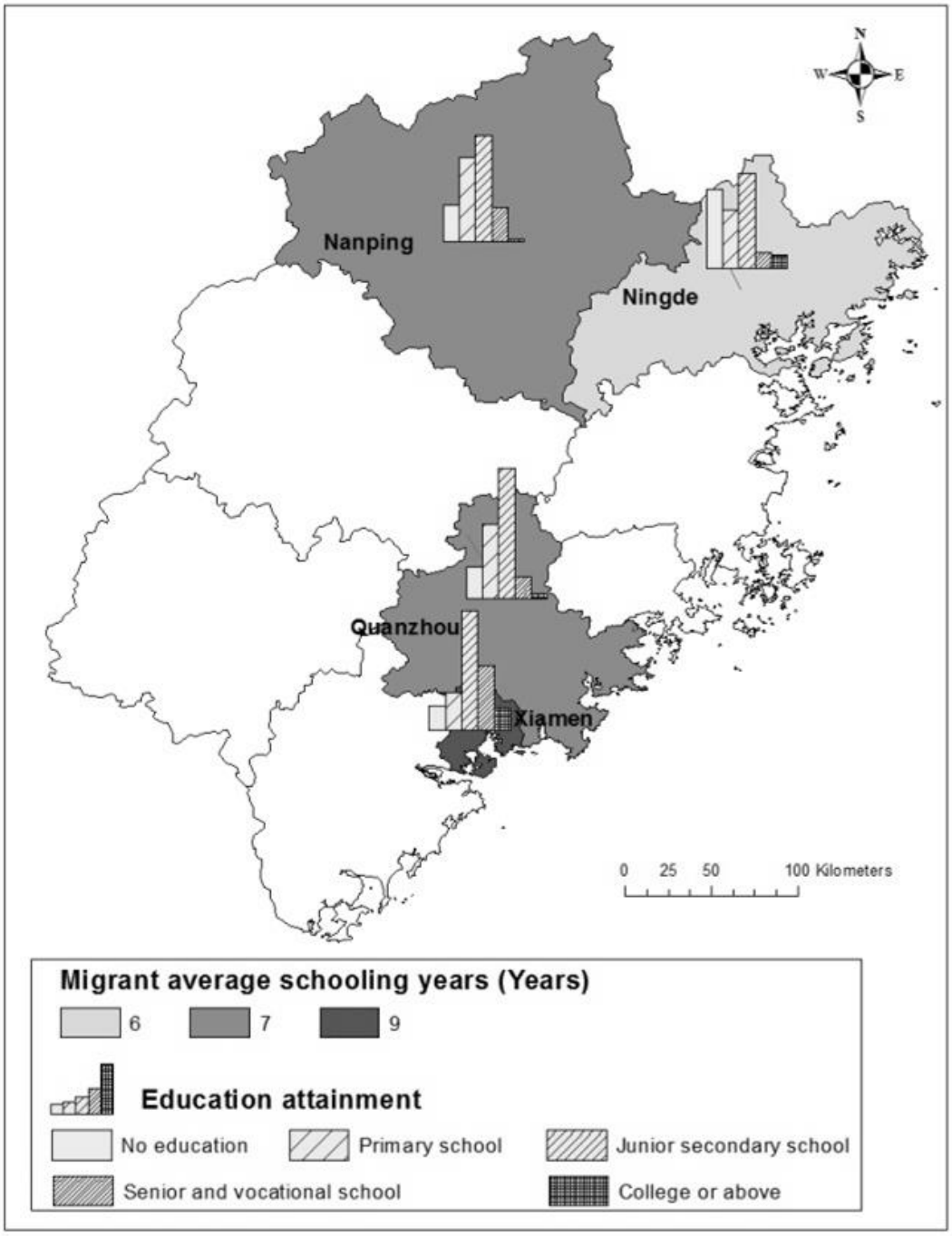

Figure 4.2. Migrant educational attainments in four case cities, 2009

4.1.2. Labour market compensation for migrants

Figure 4.3 presents the income distribution of migrants in the case city-regions. The average monthly income of migrant ranges from 1,503 yuan in Nanping to 1,918 yuan in Ningde, and most migrants earn 1,000-2,000 yuan a month.

Average monthly earning of migrants in Xiamen is 1,858 yuan, which is the second highest among the case city-regions. It is noteworthy that the percentage of the lowest income group (less than 1,000 yuan) in Xiamen is only 12.5 percent, which is the lowest among the four case cities. Compared to the other three cities, the relatively low standard deviation of income indicates that the wage level of migrant workers in Xiamen is not as polarized. Furthermore, the average monthly income in Quanzhou is 1,796 yuan, ranking third among the case regions. Similar to Xiamen, the percentage of the extreme low income group (less than 1,000 yuan) in Quanzhou is relatively low, where seven out of ten migrants earn 1,000-2,000 yuan a month.

Ningde is often viewed as one of the less developed cities in coastal Fujian. However, the results of this survey have shown a different picture, that is, the average monthly income of the respondents in Ningde is 1,918 yuan which is the highest among all the case regions. Nevertheless, it is important to point out that 75 percent of migrant workers earn less than 1,500 yuan a month in Ningde. While, the standard deviation of their income is relatively high. Therefore, although the average monthly income of migrants is relatively high, the income of rural migrants is more polarized in Ningde than in the other three city-regions. In addition, Nanping is an interior city in this study, where the average monthly income of migrants is the lowest among the four case regions. The major characteristic of income distribution in Nanping is that about 35 percent of rural migrants earn less than 1,000 yuan, and such a proportion is significantly higher than other three city-regions.

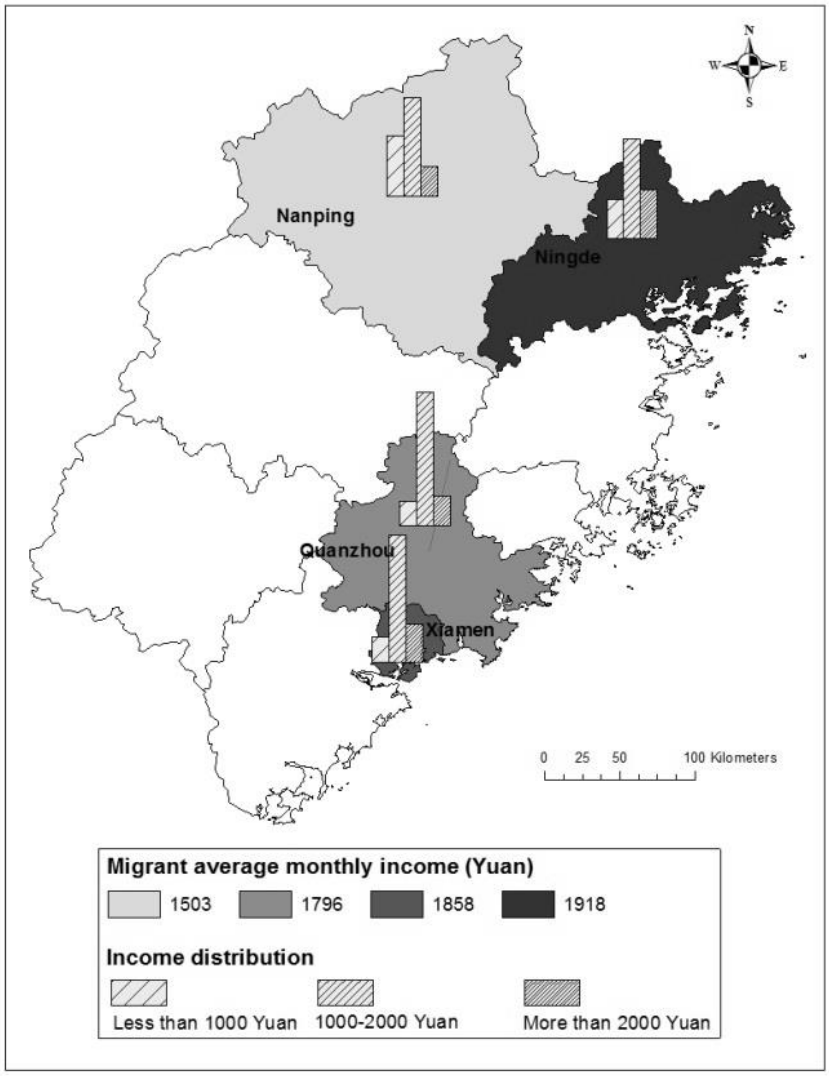

Figure 4.3. Average monthly income and income distributions of migrants in four case cities, 2009

The coverage of social insurance represents another indicator of employment compensation in labour markets. Some studies indicate that the income gap between migrant workers and local labourers may be largely attributed to the difference in social welfare (Xie 2007). As shown in Table 4.1, the coverage rates are extremely low in Quanzhou, Ningde and Nanping. The coverage rates of all four available types of insurance are lower than 15 percent, and most rates are less than 5 percent. The results indicate that a majority of rural migrant workers in these three city-regions did not receive any social security benefits as their working compensation, even though

such coverage is mandatory according to Chinese labour regulations. Comparatively, social insurance coverage is higher in Xiamen than in the other three city-regions. Specifically, the coverage rates of all four types of social insurance in Xiamen are between 30 and 50 percent. This finding indicates a higher degree of industrial compliance with labour regulations and policies in Xiamen.

Table 4.1. Social insurance coverage of migrant workers in four case cities (%)

Type of insurance[16]	Xiamen	Quanzhou	Ningde	Nanping
Pension insurance	34.6	3.2	3.1	7.5
Medical Insurance	46.5	5.5	2.1	3.2
Unemployment insurance	29.7	1.6	1	4.3
Injury insurance	39.4	14.9	9.4	4.3

4.1.3. Residential conditions of migrants

The housing conditions of rural migrants in the four case regions can be categorized into three types. Housing type I is observed in Quanzhou (Figure 4.4), where the average housing area for migrants is the lowest among four cities. This low rate of living space is because 74 percent of migrant workers in Quanzhou live in dormitories with shared rooms provided by employers. Such a percentage is much higher than the other three city-regions, and can be attributed to the fact that Quanzhou is a strong manufacturing center, and compared to other industries, manufacturing companies normally provide dormitory housing. As a result, the dormitory-based housing status in Quanzhou, will largely constrain social circles of migrants, and completely separate migrants' living neighbourhoods from local residents. Housing type II is observed in Xiamen and Nanping, where the average housing areas of migrant workers are about 10 m^2 per person, and about 75 percent of migrants live in rented rooms in apartment buildings or houses. Notably, the proportions of migrant workers who have bought

[16] According to the Law of Social Insurance of the People's Republic of China, established in 2010, there are currently five types of social insurance in China: pension insurance, medical insurance, unemployment insurance, injury insurance, and maternity insurance. However, the emphasis of this part of the thesis is on the general migrants, therefore, the strongly gender-related maternity insurance is not included in the discussion.

their own apartments in Quanzhou, Xiamen, and Nanping are lower than two percent.

Ningde belongs to housing type III in the survey. With 31 m^2 per person as an average housing area, migrants in Ningde live in a much bigger space compared to the other three cities. This result is not unexpected because 40 percent of the rural migrants in this city-region have bought their own residences. Furthermore, the unique housing conditions in Ningde might be closely related to a higher income level, an older population structure and a greater proportion of self-employed migrants in this region.

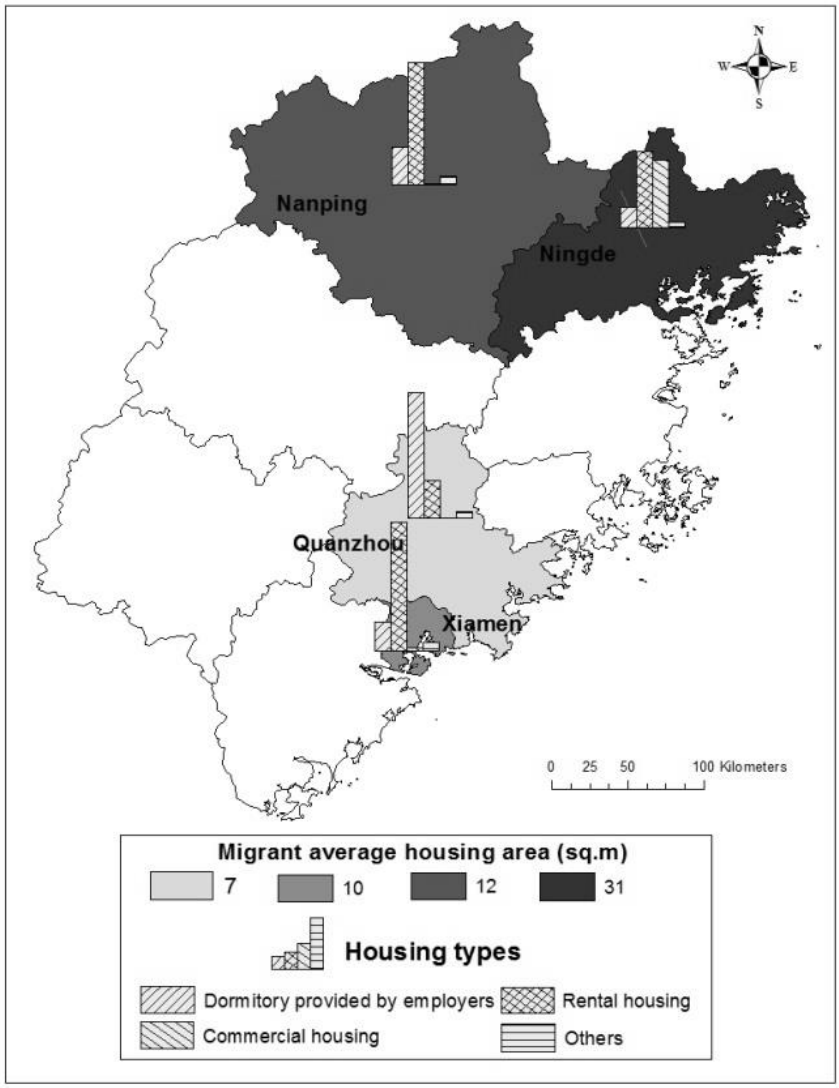

Figure 4.4. Housing status of migrants in four case cities, 2009

4.1.4. Industrial and occupational characteristics of migrant workers

The share of migrant employment by industry is generally similar among Xiamen, Ningde, and Nanping, where migrant workers are mostly employed in manufacturing and service industries. The proportion of migrants employed in these industries is between 30 and 40 percent. Comparatively, the industrial structure in Quanzhou is much more concentrated in manufacturing activities, which employ 80 percent of migrant workers.

The private economy is well developed in Fujian, and has become an important provider of employment in the province. The proportion of migrant workers employed by privately-owned firms in all case city-regions is relatively high, whereas the proportion of migrants employed by state-owned firms is extremely low. However, there are regional differences in employment by firm types. About 72 percent of the respondents in Quanzhou are employed by privately-owned firms. In Nanping and Ningde, the proportion of migrant workers employed by privately-owned firms is about 40 percent. In Xiamen, the employment share by privately-owned firms is even lower. However, 35 percent of migrant workers are employed by foreign-owned firms in Xiamen; in contrast, the role of foreign owned firms is not significant in providing employment opportunities for migrant workers, in the other three case regions. It is well recognized that foreign-owned firms tend to comply more with employment policies and labour regulations compared to privately-owned firms in China (Liu, Jing, and Long 2008). The above result may explain why migrant workers have high social insurance coverage in Xiamen.

In terms of the occupational structure, not surprisingly, most migrant workers are unskilled general labourers. Specifically, about 78 percent of migrant workers in Quanzhou are in this category. This is expected given the concentration of migrants in

the labour intensive manufacturing activities in Quanzhou. While, in the other three city-regions, unskilled general labourers accounted for about 50 percent of the total migrant workers. With regard to other occupation types, close to 20 percent of the respondents in Xiamen work as managers or professionals with high compensation levels. The proportion is, however, much lower in the other three city-regions. Comparatively, for jobs with extremely low occupational compensation, such as vendors or part-time workers, the highest proportion (14 percent) is found in Nanping. Furthermore, the proportion of self-employed migrants (21 percent) is also relatively high in Ningde where 30 percent of the respondents claimed that they owned a business at the time of the survey. Such a proportion is the highest among the case cities. Consequently, due to the fact that the economic return of self-employment is significantly higher than other occupations, the high proportion of self-employed migrants in Ningde partly explains why migrant income level and residential condition of migrants are better in this city than in other case regions, especially considering the relatively poor regional economic development.

4.2. Determinants of labour market outcomes

Four regression equations were established using SPSS software to identify the earning determinants in migrant labour markets in four selected case regions. The regression analyses are reasonably successful. All models are statistically significant (Table 4.2). The adjusted R^2 value of the four models ranges from 0.17 to 0.36. Table 4.2 presents how each independent variable behaves in the regression models and how the earning coefficients differ across different case regions.

For demographic characteristics, three variables are included: gender, marriage, and *hukou* status. First, gender segmentation of the migrant labour market in urban China has been reported (Fan 2003). This study also finds some evidence to show the

gender segmentation of the migrant labour market. For instance, gender as a variable is highly significant in all four models. In addition, the contribution rates for being male vary among four models. In Xiamen and Quanzhou, male migrants earned around 11 to 14 percent more than females, but it is about 34 percent more in Ningde and Nanping. This result indicates that the gender segmentation of migrant labour markets could be more prominent in a region with poorer economic development and less regulated labour markets. Second, as expected, marriage is insignificant in all four regression models. Third, *hukou* status categorizes migrant workers into rural or urban migrants in cities and has long been reported as an essential determinant of migrant earnings and urban development. However, this sample reveals that the effect of the *hukou* system on migrant earnings is diminished. Although, it still has a great impact in less developed interior city like Nanping, *hukou* status as a variable is insignificant in the other three models.

Five variables are included in the models in order to measure human capital, including age, age-squared, years of schooling, training experience, and possession of occupational certificates. In general, migrant labour markets in the developed regions like Xiamen and Quanzhou seem to be much more sensitive to human capital, especially in Quanzhou. In contrast, these variables are mostly insignificant in Ningde and Nanping.

Table 4.2. Regression results of models assessing migrant monthly earnings in four case city-regions

	Xiamen	Quanzhou	Ningde	Nanping
Constant	6.62***	6.24***	6.31***	6.99***
Demographic and human capital				
Male (reference: female)	0.14***	0.11***	0.33***	0.33***
Married	0.063	0.015	0.32	0.079
Non-agricultural *hukou* (reference: others)	0.01	0.064	0.146	0.614**
Age	0.002	0.03***	0.0366	-0.011
Age-squared	-2.3E-05	-0.0005***	-0.0005	5.8E-05
Years of schooling	0.022***	0.01***	-0.16*	-0.013
Received training during migration (reference: others)	0.036**	0.106***	-0.077**	0.212
Holds occupational certifications (reference: others)	0.15***	0.118***	0.132	-0.022
Migration experience				
Migration duration (Year)	0.01***	0.008**	0.016*	0.022**
Never have been unemployed (reference: others)	0.063**	0.003	0.222*	0.166
Behavioural and cognitive factors				
Regards self as an urban resident (reference: others)	-0.011	-0.0112	0.272*	0.134
Migration decision taken independently (reference: others)	0.038	0.055*	0.29***	0.143
Social capital and network				
Residential neighborhoods (reference: others)				
Local resident	0.058	0.044	0.247**	0.02***
Migrants from same origins	-0.053	-0.001	0.028	0.182
Accustomed to communicating in Mandarin (reference: others)	-0.024	0.018	0.142	-0.1**
Accustomed to seeking help from local residents (reference: others)	-0.077*	-0.018	0.016*	-0.22**
Accustomed to urban lifestyle and habits (reference: others)	0.087*	0.043	-0.027	-0.025
Job-seeking channels (reference: By themselves and others)				
Through Kinship networks	-0.059	-0.076*	-0.064	-0.246**
Through social networks	-0.073*	-0.041	-0.125	-0.003
Through agents and ads.	-0.052	-0.072	-0.488*	0.22*
Job & corporate characteristics				
Job types (reference: other labourers)				
Managers or professionals	0.26***	0.19***	0.376	-0.056
Vendors or Part-time workers	-0.095	0.038	-0.2	-0.23**
Self-employed	0.34***	0.34***	0.36***	0.188
Firm size	0.02***	0.013*	0.003	0.007
Firm ownership (reference: other ownerships)				
State-owned firms & Institutions	-0.037	0.04	-0.243	0.729
Foreign-owned firms	0.0316	-0.017	-0.238	0.362
Privately-owned firms	0.085	0.023	0.087	-0.008
Industry type (reference: other industries)				
Manufacturing	-0.008***	0.141***	0.029	0.0457
Construction	0.075	0.103	0.273	0.075
Services sector	-0.005*	-0.051	0.169	-0.07
F-value	9.96***	5.92***	2.76***	1.6***
Adjusted R2	0.341	0.17	0.365	0.187

Significance level: ***0.01, **0.05, *0.10

It is clear that, within the developed regions, the effects of specific variables also vary across space. First, in Xiamen, both formal education and skills training have a significant impact on migrant earnings, but the seniority measured by age and age-squared is not statistically significant in the model. The contribution rate[17] of each schooling year is 2.2 percent. The variable "received training during migration processes" is associated with a rise in migrant earnings of 3.6 percent. Furthermore, when other variables are controlled, the dummy variable "had an occupational certificate" adds 15.1 percent more earnings for migrants. Such a percentage is well above other cities. This result indicates that to earn an occupational certificate in Xiamen is a very efficient way to elevate one's earnings in the labour market.

Second, in Quanzhou, all of the human capital-related variables are significant. As expected, the effect of the variable "age" is significantly positive, and the variable "age-squared" which measures the negative return of one's age is, negative. This finding indicates that the work experience is important determinant in Quanzhou, and the migrant labour market in Quanzhou is largely a youth-dominated market. Furthermore, the return to education is 1.9 percent each additional year, and to hold an occupational certificate creates over 10 percent difference in earnings. In conclusion, these results indicate that the investments in human capital are significant in differentiating Quanzhou's migrant earnings.

In underdeveloped regions like Ningde and Nanping, the role of human capital in shaping migrant earnings is rather insignificant. Specifically, in Ningde, neither of the two age variables is significant, and it is evident that seniority is not valued in Ningde's migrant labour markets. With regard to education and training status, the effects of the formal education and the possession of occupational certifications,

[17] Since the dependent variable is the natural log of monthly earnings, the parameter of each independent variable could be explained as the percentage contribution rate on migrant monthly earning.

which normally are assumed as positive drivers for job compensation, are all significantly negative in the model of Ningde. The result reveals that formal education and occupational training are not associated with positive economic return for migrants in Ningde. Moreover, none of the human capital variables is significant in the model of Nanping.

Migration experience represents another way of accumulating human capital in migrant labour markets, which has been argued to play an important role in determining migrant earnings (Lu and Song 2006a). It is firstly measured by a variable "migration duration" in the models. Han and Yuan (2009) analyzed migrant data collected in seven cities between 2006 and 2007， and claimed that migration duration has no significant effect on migrant earnings. The findings of this study, however, do not support such an argument. Compared to age variables, which are only significant in Quanzhou, migration duration is significant in all four cities. The compensation for each additional year of migration is a 1.5 percent increase in earnings. These results indicate that, compared to the general seniority measured by age, migration experience may have a greater impact on migrant earnings. Furthermore, previous research indicates that to maintain the continuity of migration is of great importance for migrants in order to improve their earnings in urban China (Xie 2007). This study partly supports such an argument. The continuity of migration is measured in the model by unemployment experience. The variable "never have been unemployed" is significant in Xiamen and Ningde, and the contribution rates are relatively high, especially in Ningde.

Behavioural and cognitive factors have always been ignored in neoclassical migration theory. However, it is argued by some scholars that these factors have a great impact on one's labour market performance (Bowles, Gintis, and Osborne 2001;

Heckman, Stixrud, and Urzua 2006). In the model of this study, two behavioural and cognitive-related variables are included. The cognitive effect is measured by self-assessment as an urban resident or a migrant, and the behavioural effect is measured by an individual's decision making power. The former variable is only significant in Ningde, while, the latter variable is significant in Quanzhou and Ningde. Noticeably, the compensation for stronger decision making power is outstanding in Ningde. If a migrant takes a migration decision independently, one earns 30 percent more than who does not.

To measure the influences of the social capital and networks, three major factors are included in the model: residential neighborhood, social integration status, and job-seeking channels. Compared to Xiamen and Quanzhou, migrant labour markets in the less developed regions like Ningde and Nanping are more sensitive to social capital and networks. First, the residential neighborhood category includes two dummy variables: "lived with local residents" and "lived with migrant workers." It is found that in Ningde and Nanping, living with local residents will bring a significant advantage for migrants, but not in Xiamen and Quanzhou. Next, for measuring social integration status, three variables are included. First, the variable "accustomed to communicating in Mandarin" is only significant in Nanping. However, it is noteworthy that the variable is unexpectedly negative, that is, those who made such claims in Nanping earn 10 percent less than others. One possible reason for this abnormal phenomenon is that migrants who selected this answer in the survey may lack knowledge of the local dialect. This could be a disadvantage for migrants in the labour market with low openness where the local dialect dominates. "Accustomed to seeking help from local residents" is another noticeable variable in this category and is significant in three cities. More interestingly, the variable is, again, unexpectedly

negative in Xiamen and Nanping. The possible reason for this result is that migrant workers have no families or acquaintances in the city, and have to seek help from local residents when needed.

The job-seeking channel is argued to be the most direct and explicit earning determinant in the category of social capital (Han and Yuan 2009). But the findings of this study provide little support for such an argument. Specifically, to measure the effects of job-seeking channels, three dummy variables are included in the model: found current job through kinship networks, through social networks, and through agents and advertisements. As a result, it is found that the effects of the job-seeking channel are negative, with an exception in Nanping where finding a current job through agents and advertisements has an advantage.

In terms of the effects of occupation characteristics on migrant earnings, the job type shows a strong effect on migrant earnings in all cities. Specifically, three dummy variables are included in this regard: managers or professionals, vendors or part-time workers, and self-employed. First, being a manager or professional can effectively improve one's earnings in Xiamen and Quanzhou, and the contribution rates are 26 percent and 19 percent, respectively. In contrast, the variable is not significant in Ningde and Nanping. One possible reason is that, in the survey, the number of "managers" or "professionals" is extremely small in these two cities. Second, the disadvantage of being a vendor or part-time worker is not as bad as expected; in fact, the variable is only negatively significant in Nanping. The reason for this is partly attributed to the different compensations between the vendor and the part-time worker. Specifically, further analysis indicates that to be a part time worker is certainly at the bottom of the labour market in all cities. But the earnings of vendors in Xiamen, Quanzhou, and Ningde are reasonably high, and close to or even higher than

general labourers. Third, it is argued that to be self-employed is very important for migrants in order to improve their labour market outcomes in cities. In this study, the variable is highly significant in three cities with contribution rates as high as 35 percent, and the highest contribution rate is observed in Ningde.

The effects of corporate and industrial characteristics are measured using firm size, firm ownership types, and industry types. The results show that these factors have some impact in Xiamen and Quanzhou, but are utterly irrelevant in Ningde and Nanping. In general, the effects of corporate and industrial characteristics are weaker than expected. The most unexpected variable is firm ownership, which is assumed to be a significant determinant of migrant earnings. For instance, according to the 2010 Statistics Yearbook of Fujian, there were remarkable income gaps between workers employed by state-owned firms, foreign-owned firms, and private enterprises (Fujian Provincial Bureau of Statistics 2010). However, the variable is insignificant in all four models. One possible reason for this result is that when migrants are employed by state-owned, foreign-owned, or privately-owned firms, they are most likely to work at the lowest status positions in the company, with little chance of promotion, and the wage levels of low-end jobs are similar, irrespective of firm ownership. Furthermore, the effect of industrial structure on the migrant labour market is quite weak, that is, almost all of the included variables are insignificant. One exception is the measure of "to be employed in manufacturing," which shows significant effects in Xiamen and Quanzhou. Specifically, the effect is strong and positive in Quanzhou, but weak and negative in Xiamen.

4.3. Discussion and conclusions

The sheer volume of rural urban population migration in recent decades in China is unprecedented in human history, and so, there is growing concern over the livelihood

and survival of rural migrants in urban labour markets. This chapter focuses on labour market outcomes of migrant workers in urban Fujian. The findings indicate that the earnings of migrant workers are relatively low. Specifically, the average monthly income of the surveyed migrant workers was 1,800 yuan, much lower than the provincial average of 2,400 yuan for all employees in urban enterprises in Fujian, in spite of the fact that migrant workers have educational attainments similar to those in the total labour force (Fujian Provincial Bureau of Statistics 2010). More than half of the surveyed migrant workers actually earned less than 1,500 yuan a month. The coverage of social insurance was also extremely low. Most migrant workers did not receive any social insurance programs as part of their employment benefits. Housing conditions for migrant workers in Fujian were quite poor as well. Most migrant workers lived in crowded factory dormitories or small rented rooms. Furthermore, 55 percent of the surveyed migrant workers were employed in the manufacturing industry, and 51 percent of them were employed in privately-owned firms. In conclusion, the findings confirm that rural migrants are very much confined at the lower end of urban labour markets in Fujian. They work mostly as unskilled general labourers with little possibility for upward social mobility. Dormitory living and networking among themselves made it difficult for rural migrant workers to move out of the entrapment of migrant labour markets.

Chinese migrant studies indicate that inter-provincial migration in China has a strong connection to the spatial disparity in regional economic development between Eastern and Western China (Fan 2005). This chapter aims to understand the geographical differentiation of migrant labour markets across prefectural city-regions in Fujian and indicates that migrant labour markets are geographically structured. Migrant labour market compensation, employment structures and industrial

characteristics are all differentiated across the four case regions, and they are closely related to four types of regional economic characteristics.

First, this study shows that migrant labour markets are largely connected to regional accessibility and market attractiveness to potential migrant workers. With better regional accessibility and higher attractiveness to potential migrant workers, a region would be able to attract migrant labourers from a wider geographical area. Thus, the accessibility and attractiveness to potential migrant workers of regional labour markets could be directly reflected by the proportion of long-distance migrant labourers. In the survey, the highest proportion of out-of-province migrant labourers was observed in Quanzhou, where 80 percent of surveyed migrant workers were from other provinces. On the other hand, 76 percent of migrant workers in Nanping came from within the province. Furthermore, previous research indicates that the difference in distances migrants must travel may have an effect on their behaviour and performance in destination cities (Li and Huang 2010). Specifically, short-distance migrants may show a stronger regional attachment compared to long-distance migrants. For example, migrant workers in Quanzhou were largely disconnected from local communities. The proportions of those, who purchased an apartment, or even just rented one in local communities, were extremely low, and the majority of migrant workers lived in factory dormitories provided by employers. As a result, migrant earnings in Quanzhou are almost totally insensitive to all social capital-related variables in the study. In contrast, migrant workers in Nanping showed a stronger local connection and attachment; the proportion of migrant workers living in local communities was much higher in Nanping than in Quanzhou. As a result, migrant earnings in Nanping were much more sensitive to social capital and networks. Also, due to the extensive use of the local dialect in a labour market with a low level of

regional openness, the proficiency of using Mandarin, which is normally thought to augment the earning power of migrant workers, had a significant negative effect on migrant earnings in Nanping.

Second, the infusion of global capital is argued to be one of the most influential forces on regional economic development, especially in coastal China. Some research from the macro perspective reveals a close connection between economic globalization and flows of rural-urban migration (Liu et al. 2007; Pan 2008). However, little attention has been paid to the linkage between economic globalization and the geographical differentiation of migrant labour markets. Among the four city-regions in this study, Xiamen received the largest amount of direct foreign investment in 2009 (Fujian Yearbook 2010). Correspondingly, in the survey, the proportion of migrant workers employed by foreign-owned firms in Xiamen is the highest. It is argued as well in the literature that foreign-owned firms in China provide better social insurance coverage (Liu, Jing, and Long 2008), while, the findings of this study support such a claim. Specifically, the coverage rates of social insurance in Xiamen are significantly higher than other regions. In conclusion, the high level of participation in globalization partly contributes to the relatively high level of social welfare of migrant workers in Xiamen.

Third, the determinants of migrant labour market outcomes are also largely related to regional economic development. In the survey, Xiamen and Quanzhou are regarded as more developed regions, while Ningde and Nanping are less developed. The regression model results provide some evidence on how regional economic development may be related to migrant labour market outcomes at the local level. For example, measures of human capital, such as formal education, job training, and occupational skills, seem to be weighted more in developed regions. In contrast, social

capital and networks seem to have a greater impact in less developed regions. Given that the average educational attainment for respondents in the four city-regions is similar, the finding indicates that the rate of the return to education and training is much higher in more developed regions than in less developed regions. As a result, migrant workers may effectively elevate their performance by improving their education levels or training status, in the more developed regions. In contrast, such traditional methods are ineffective in the less developed regions, where migrant workers tend to depend more on their social capital and networks. In addition, the gender differentiation of labour market outcomes also appears to vary according to regional economic development. Specifically, the earnings differential for being a male is around 30 percent in less developed regions, and is much higher than in more developed regions (around 10 percent). The result indicates that the widespread gender differentiation in the migrant labour markets is even more serious in less developed area.

Finally, migrant labour markets are closely related to the characteristics of regional industrial and employment structures. In the survey, Xiamen and Quanzhou are both manufacturing oriented city-regions. As a result, the local migrant labour markets in Quanzhou and Xiamen share several similar characteristics related to the manufacturing industry. For example, the effect of on-the-job training in the destination city and skilled trade certificates, which are normally required in the manufacturing industry, is both significantly positive in these two city-regions. However, according to the 2010 Statistics Yearbook of Fujian, the proportion of manufacturing output to the total economy in Quanzhou is 53 percent, whereas the corresponding proportion in Xiamen is 14 percent lower (Fujian Provincial Bureau of Statistics 2010). As a result, the migrant labour market in Quanzhou has shown

stronger characteristics related to its manufacturing-based economies. Specifically, the re-training processes and the certificates obtained during the migration process have a greater impact on migrant earnings in Quanzhou than in Xiamen. Furthermore, the survey revealed that the average monthly earnings of migrant workers in Ningde is remarkably higher than those in the other three city-regions. The reason for this peculiar phenomenon is because the proportion of self-employed migrants is extremely high in this area. Except for the case of Nanping, self-employment is significant in all three models. The results confirm that the regional employment structure has an effect on the migrant labour market. The findings also confirm that self-employment represents an important avenue for upward social mobility among migrant workers.

In sum, it can be argued that migrant labour markets and their earning determinants are geographically differentiated. The microeconomic mechanisms that determine migrant workers' earnings are largely affected by the processes of regional economic change. Transformation to a market oriented economy from a socialist economy, integration into a global capitalist system, the level of economic development, and structural characteristics are all geographically differentiated and constructed. A geographic perspective, thus, provides an important lens through which the dynamics of migrant labour markets in China can be understood.

CHAPTER FIVE

5. RETURN INTENTIONS OF RURAL-URBAN MIGRANTS IN CHINA

This chapter aims to investigate return intentions of rural-urban migrants in China. The surveyed migrants are divided into two groups: those who planned to return in the future (intended return migrants), and others. The criterion is based on one question in the survey: "If you could choose freely, what would be your most likely long-term plan?" Five answers were provided: 1, settle in the current city; 2, settle in another city; 3, return to the place of origin; 4, keep migrating; 5, hard to decide. Those who chose answer three are categorized as the "intended return migrants," and all others are regarded as a reference group. The characteristics and influential factors of intended returnees will be fully discussed in this chapter.

The major characteristics of intended returnees, including social and demographic characteristics, planned return behaviour, and distributions of places of origin and destination, will be first presented. Beyond that, the regression models of the total sample and of the two gender groups will be fully discussed, in order to further explore the determinants of return intentions and their gender differentiation. Finally, the findings of this study will be interpreted in the context of transitional China.

5.1. Characteristics of intended returnees and their behavioural intentions

5.1.1. Social and demographic characteristics of intended returnees

The number of actual return migrants is believed to be less than 10 percent of the total rural-urban migrants in China (National Population and Family Planning Services Division of Floating Population 2009; Sheng and Hou 2009). However, there is no accurate estimate about the number of migrants who intend to return to rural areas

from host cities. For example, Wang and Yuan (2003) conducted a survey in Chengdu in 2001, and concluded that 30.4 percent of migrants wanted to return, while, the report from the National Population and Family Planning Services Division of Floating Population (2009) showed that 8 percent of migrants intended to return in 2006. According to the survey in Fujian, out of 2,033 respondents, 783 intended move back to their rural homes, accounting for 38.5 percent of the total respondents while a total of 738 respondents reported that they intended to stay (respondents who picked options 1 and 2 in the question described at beginning of this chapter), and the remaining 25.5 percent stated their intentions were undetermined (respondents who picked options 4 and 5 in the question described at beginning of this chapter) (Table 5.1).

Figure 5.1 presents the age structure of surveyed migrants in Fujian. The data indicates that in the 20-24 and 25-29 age groups, the proportions of those who intended to stay in the host cities are much higher than those who intended to return. Across the 30-49 age groups, the numbers who intended to return are consistently greater than those planning to stay. In conclusion, intended returnees are older than intended settlers, consistent with other findings (Bai and He 2002; Zhao 2002; Wang and Fan 2006; Zhou and Liang 2006; Zhang and Wang 2009). In terms of the actual age difference between intended returnees and other migrants, Zhou and Liang (2006) concluded that the average age of returned migrants is 10 years older than those who are still working in cities. However, based on this survey, the average age difference among three types of surveyed migrants--intended returnees, intended settlers, and those who were undecided--is modest (Table 5.1). In addition, there is little difference in sex ratio across three types of respondents, and the difference in marital status among three groups is also insignificant (Table 5.2).

Table 5.1. Demographic characteristics of three groups of surveyed migrants, 2009

Migration intention	Number of respondent (#)	Percentage (%)	Average age (yeas)	Sex (%)	
				Male	Female
Intended returnees	783	38.5	32	51	49
Intended settlers	738	36.3	30	51	49
Undecided	512	25.20	30	48	52
Total	2033	100	31	50	50

Table 5.2. Marital status of three groups of surveyed migrants, 2009

Migration intention	Marital status (%)				
	Unmarried	Married	Divorced	Widow	Total
Intended returnees	26.8	72.7	0.1	0.4	100
Intended settlers	31.6	66.7	0.8	0.9	100
Undecided	34	64.8	0.2	1	100

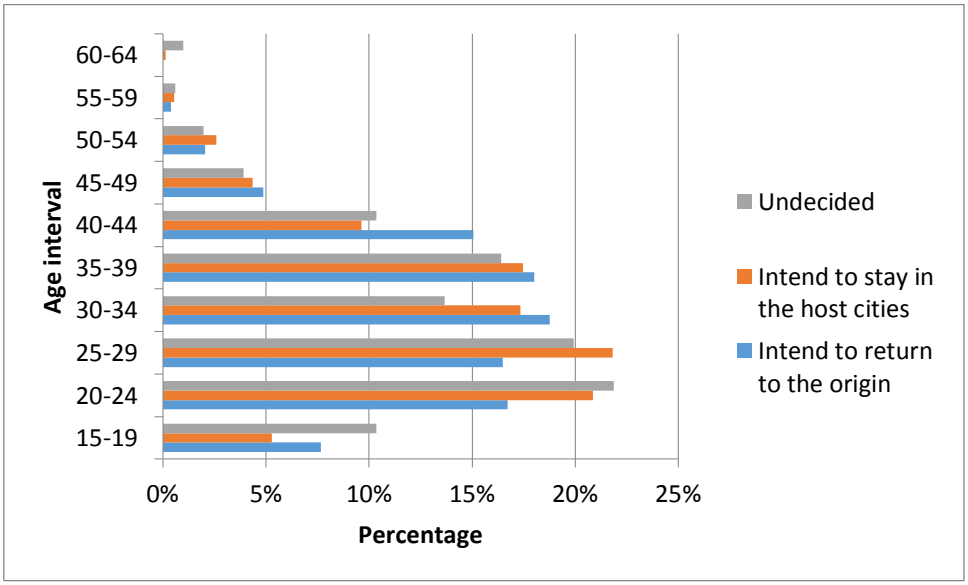

Figure 5.1. Age structure of the three groups of surveyed migrants, 2009

As demonstrated in Chapter Two, inconsistent results about the educational attainments of return migrants were reported in the Chinese literature. For example, based on the 2000 Population Census, Zhou and Liang (2006) found that the educational attainment of returned migrants was not only higher than that of the non-migrant population in rural area, but returnees were also better educated than

general migrants. A more recent study, based on a 2008 survey in five major labour exporting provinces,[18] indicated that the education levels of return migrants were relatively low and most of them did not have junior high school diplomas (National Population and Family Planning Services Division of Floating Population, 2009). However, according to this survey, the average school-years completed for intended returnees is seven years, 1.5 years less than that of intended settlers. To be more specific, the ratio of intended returnees is much higher than intended settlers in the lower education categories (junior school and below), the opposite of the situation in the relatively higher education categories (high school and up).

5.1.2. Planned migration behaviour of intended returnees

Views about planned migration behaviour of intended returnees are diverse in the Chinese literature. Some scholars claim that returnees would go back to agricultural work just like what they did before migrating out (Bai and He 2002), while others argue that a large proportion of returnees will not go back to farming, and this trend will be increasingly evident over time (Han and Cui 2009). In this survey, only 15 percent of intended returnees reported that they will go back to farming (Figure 5.2). Over 55 percent of them planned to self-employed in commercial and business activities after they return. In addition, only 11 percent of intended returnees were considering employment in a factory, and 17 percent of them would return to take care of their families.

[18] Five major labour exporting provinces include Sichuan, Henan, Anhui, Hubei and Hunan.

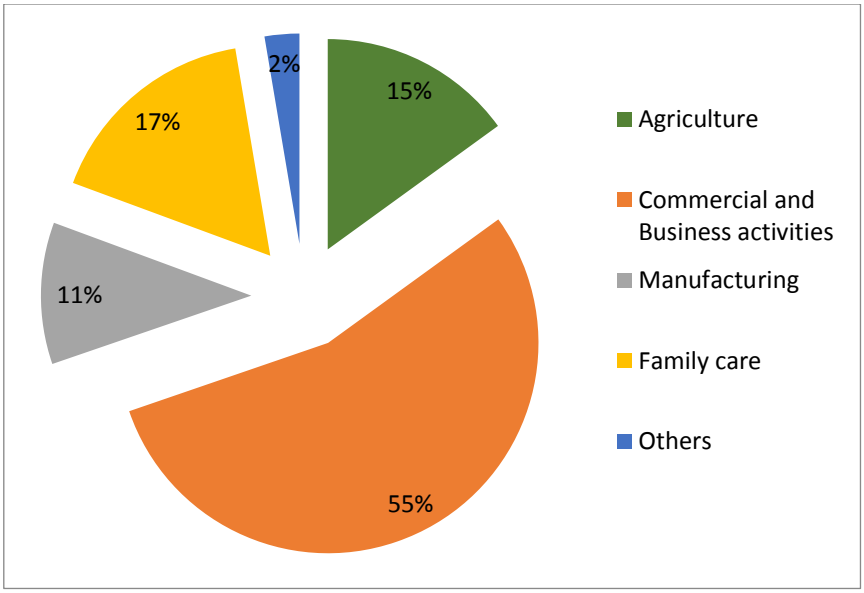

Figure 5.2. Planned migration behaviour of intended returnees in Fujian, 2009

Moreover, there are some significant gender differences in employment intentions of intended returnees. As indicated in Figure 5.3, more male migrants (66 percent) wanted to be engaged in self-employed commercial and business sectors than their female counterparts (44 percent). A quarter of female returnees intended to take care of their families after their return, while, only 8 percent of male migrants planned to do the same. In addition, working in a factory was favored more by female migrants.

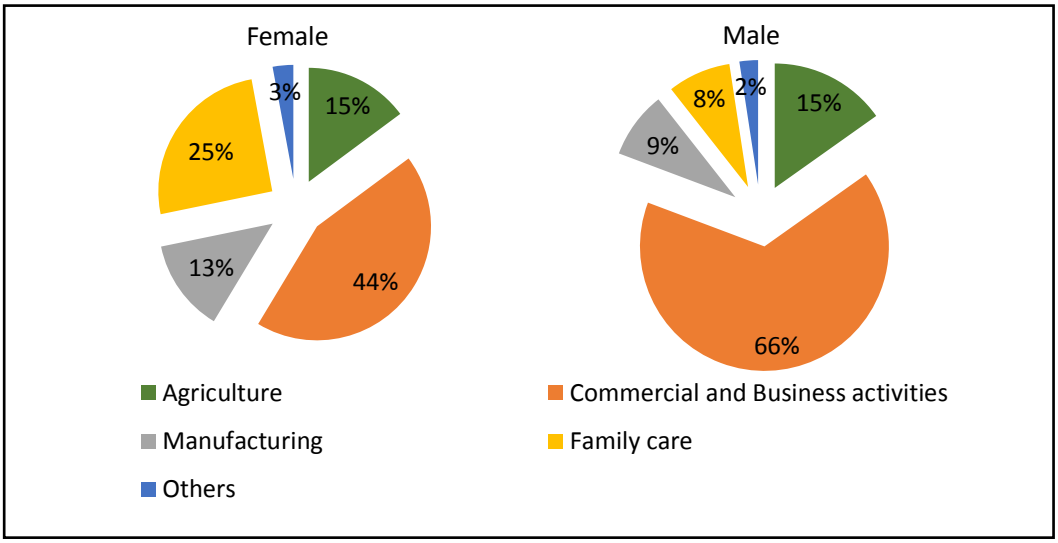

Figure 5.3. Planned migration behaviour of male and female intended returnees in Fujian, 2009

5.1.3. Places of origin and return destinations of intended returnees

Future migration intentions may vary greatly depending on the migrants' places of origin. The results of the survey clearly demonstrate such disparities (Table 5.3). Among those who intended to stay, more than half are from within Fujian province; while for those who intended to leave, about 65 percent are from the central or western provinces. Migrants within Fujian were twice as likely to remain in the host city.

Table 5.3. Types of places of origin of intended returnees in Fujian, 2009

Intended returnees		Intended settlers	
Location of origin	Share (%)	Location of origins Type	Share (%)
Central provinces	36.3	Within Fujian	52.6
Western provinces	28.5	Central provinces	22.9
Within Fujian	23.2	Western provinces	17.6
Eastern provinces	12	Eastern provinces	6.9

Many studies show that migrants would not choose to return to their original villages, but rather to larger towns and cities near their places of origin (Zhou 2005; Ge and Lin 2009). This is explained by the fact that these nearby towns and cities could provide more economic opportunities for returnees to restart their social and economic lives, by contrast, the results from this study suggest that a majority of intended returnees will move back to their home villages (Figure 5.4). Moreover, since more than half of intended returnees will be self-employed, the perceived non-agricultural employment opportunities are expected to increase in recent years, in the migrant-sending countryside. Other than home villages, small towns nearby, are the second most important destinations for intended returnees, while cities are the least desirable places.

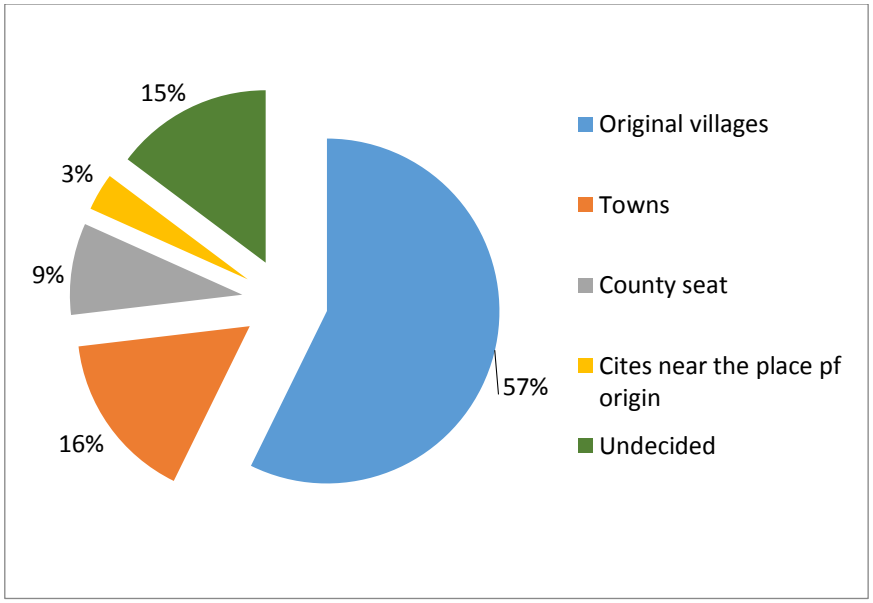

Figure 5.4. Geographic choices of intended returnees in Fujian, 2009

5.1.4. Reported reasons for return migration intention

In the survey, intended returnees were asked why they want to return. Ten reasons were given in the questionnaire (see Table 5.4). The most frequently cited reason is related to family, and about 22 percent of female migrants select family as the most important reason to return. The second major reason is associated with income, indicating the earnings are not sufficient for them to continue to stay in the city. Housing is the third most cited reason to leave, and 16 percent of respondents considered housing as the most significant barrier preventing them from becoming integrated in the cities. Child education represents another influencing factor, driving people out of the city, and female migrants expressed greater concern than male migrants. About 10 percent of migrants claimed that employment problems are the most important reason for them to leave. Surprisingly, only 8 percent of migrants referred to their *hukou* status as the most important factor (see Table 5.4).

Table 5.4. Primary reasons for return reported by intended return migrants in Fujian, 2009

Reasons for returning	Male (%)	Female (%)	Total (%)
Family	19	22	20
Income	18	19	18
Housing	17	14	16
Child education	11	14	13
Employment	10	10	10
Hukou issues	8	8	8
Personal	6	6	6
Social networks	5	3	4
Environmental Quality	4	3	4
Neighborhood	1	1	1

5.2. Determinants of return migration intentions

The analysis of reported reasons for return intention also provides a starting point to further explore the determinants of migration intentions. A binary logistic regression analysis was conducted to model the influences of groups of factors on migration intentions. The dependent variable is migration intention, with a value 1 for leave and 0 for others (stay or undecided). Seven groups of independent variables are included in the model to assess the significance of these variables in determining the return migration intention. The analysis was conducted for all migrants as well as for female and male migrants separately.

5.2.1. Model assessment for all migrants

The results of the binary logistic regression analysis using all migrants' data are presented in Table 5.5. The model is reasonably successful and statistically significant based on the model chi-square value. It has reasonable explanation power as measured by the Cox and Snell R^2, and percentage of cells correctly predicted.

Among social and demographic variables, which include age, gender, education, marital status, *hukou* status, and migration experience, only education is statistically significant. Specifically, a one year increase in schooling decreases the odds of

intending to return by 4 percent. The results indicate, unexpectedly, that older migrants are not more likely, compared to younger migrants, to intend to return, when other variables are controlled. However, in related studies, many researchers argue that return migrants are generally older than other migrants (Bai and He 2002; Zhao 2002; Wang and Fan 2006; Zhou and Liang 2006; Wang and Li 2009). One possible explanation for this is that the future migration intention is different from studying actual return migrants, whose average age tends to be older than general migrants. Also, return intention is not significantly shaped by marriage status. This is to be expected when male and female migrant data are mixed in analysis. Next, the *hukou* issue has been long argued as a critical barrier deterring migrants from settling in the city; however, *hukou* status is insignificant in this model. Whether this indicates a declining trend in the role of the *hukou* system remains to be further verified. Finally, the length of migration experience is argued to be a significant factor differentiating return migrants from others (Bai and He 2002). However, the analysis does not support such a conclusion.

Three variables are included in the category of migrant work: monthly income, ratio of expenditure to income, and training. None of these variables is significant. To wit, there is no significant difference in monthly earnings between return and non-return migrants. The likelihood of returning to the home village is not significantly dependent upon how much one spends of the monthly income either. Given the fact that migrants often only receive trivial training like workplace safety training, it is expected that the intention to return or stay is not significantly shaped by the difference in training among migrants.

The family category has three variables: family size, family members in the same city, and child education. The regression analysis indicates that the size of family does

not make a significant difference in differentiating migration intention. However, the other two family variables do. The variable "family members in the same city" refers to the total number of family members who are living in the same city with respondents. The result shows that a migrant is less likely to leave if more family members are in the same host city with him or her. To be more specific, the odds of intending to return decrease by 10.2 percent, if one more family member lives in the same city. Furthermore, child education is measured by whether there is at least one child going to school in the same city with respondents. "Had at least one child going to school in the same city" decreases the odds of intention to return by 37.8 percent.

The category of connections with places of origin includes five variables: "distance between place of origin and destination city," "have families at home in place of origin (after initial migration)," "months at home after initial migration," "have land in place of origin," and "2008 remittance." First, the distance to destination city measures the geographical separation from the place of origin. This variable is significant. A 1,000 km increase in geographic separation from the origin increases the odds of returning by 3.4 percent. Second, the regression analysis indicates that the presence of family members in the origin is insignificant in shaping peoples' migration intentions. Third, the duration of staying home at the place of origin during the migration process is also insignificant in differentiating return and non-return migrants.

However, when the connection with the place of origin is measured in a more tangible way, the result is different. The analyses show that having land in the migrant's hometown is significant, and it increases the odds of returning by 38.6 percent. The finding is the same when the tie to the place of origin is measured by using the amount of remittance sent back in 2008. For every 1,000 yuan increase in

remittance sent back home in 2008, it increases the odds of returning by 2 percent. It can be argued, therefore, that tangible economic ties to the place of origin can influence significantly the migration intention of rural migrants in the host cities.

Social networks group includes eight variables: "accustomed to communicating in Mandarin," "local community participation," "residential neighbor networks (including three dummy variables)," "made friends with local residents," "accustomed to seeking help from local residents," and "accustomed to urban lifestyles and habits." To start with, a dummy variable, "accustomed to communicating in Mandarin," is employed to measure the language communication skill in the host cities. While the sign of this variable is as expected, it is not statistically significant. Next, it may be expected that migrants, who are actively involved in local communities and participate in local events and activities, may prefer to stay in the host cities, but the results show that local community participation is insignificant. This may be due to the fact that only a few migrants were actually involved in local communities, and nobody is deeply engaged in organizing local community events and activities.

The third factor in the social networks group is "residential neighbor networks," which includes three dummy variables: "lived with local residents," "lived with migrants from same origins," and "lived with colleagues." It is as expected that residing with local residents in the same neighborhood would reduce one's likelihood of leaving; and living in the same neighborhood with other migrants or workplace colleagues would increase one's chance to have return migration intention. Although the signs of these dummy variables are as expected in the results, they are nonetheless insignificant. This means that there is little influence of residential neighborhood on the behavioural intention in future migration, when other variables are controlled. The above findings may be explained by the fact that both employment and residential

mobility of migrants is so high, and residential duration in the same neighborhood is so short, that migrants hardly communicate with their neighbors.

The remaining three dummy variables in the social networks group are: "made friends with local residents," "accustomed to seeking help from local residents," and "accustomed to urban lifestyles and habits." All of them are significant. First, having friends who are local residents measures the social proximity of migrants to local residents. It decreases the odds of returning by 20.6 percent. Second, the dummy variable, "accustomed to seeking help from local residents (when having problems)," is also significant, but with an unexpected positive sign, to wit, if a migrant was accustomed to seeking help from local residents, that increases the odds of returning by 44 percent. This unexpected result could be explained by the fact that migrants, who seek help from local residents when facing challenging problems, are those who have no relatives or migrant friends to rely on in the host city, therefore, they are lonely and helpless in cities, and thus, more likely to return. Third, whether one is accustomed to urban life is also a significant variable, and it increases the odds of not returning by 30.8 percent. In conclusion, the above findings indicate that there is a significant difference in social networks between return and non-return migrants.

In the self-assessment category, three dummy variables are "regards self as an urban resident," "regards of self as a migrant," and "regards self as both." As a result, regarding oneself as a migrant is significant in the model. It, thus, indicates that there is a significant difference between return and non-return migrants in viewing oneself as a migrant or not. Those viewing themselves as migrants are 50.9 percent more likely to return.

The last category of variables is possession of village resources by surveyed migrants. The results show that the size of farmland is insignificant, while possession

of a house is significant in differentiating return and non-return migrants. It indicates again that the materialized connection with the places of origin represents a significant magnet pulling migrants back to the countryside.

Table 5.5. Results of logistic regression model assessment of return intentions for all migrants

	Coefficient	S.E.	Ward	Odds ratio
Demographic				
Age	-0.014	0.01	2.143	0.986
Male	0.021	0.12	0.12	1.021
Education (year of schooling)	-0.04*	0.023	2.975	0.961
Married	0.091	0.189	0.023	1.095
Agricultural *hukou*	-0.339	0.373	0.832	0.712
Migration duration (year)	-0.004	0.012	0.103	0.996
Migrant Work				
Monthly income (yuan)	$-2.43*10^{-6}$	$5.28*10^{-5}$	0.002	0.99997
Ratio of expenditure to income	-0.002	0.002	1.25	0.998
Received training in host cities	-0.151	0.189	0.634	0.86
Family				
Family size	0.009	0.041	0.045	1.009
Family members in the same city	-0.102*	0.061	2.747	0.903
Child education (reference: in village)				
In the same city	-0.378**	0.152	6.236	0.685
Connections with origins				
Distance between place of origin and destination city (km)	$3.43*10^{-4}$***	$1.06*10^{-4}$	10.505	1.00034
Have families in origins (reference: none)	-0.012	0.167	0.005	0.988
Months at home after initial migration	0.002	0.003	0.496	1.002
Have land in origins (reference: none)	0.386***	0.129	8.929	1.471
2008 remittance (yuan)	$2.18*10^{-5}$*	$1.19*10^{-5}$	3.334	1.00002
Social networks				
Accustomed to communicating in Mandarin (reference: none)	-0.142	0.147	0.934	0.868
Local community participation (reference: none)	-0.288	0.233	1.524	0.750
Residential neighbor networks (reference: others)				
Local residents	-0.241	0.159	2.301	0.786
Migrants from same origins	0.096	0.163	0.347	1.101
Colleagues	0.238	0.171	1.931	1.269
Made friend with local residents (reference: none)	-0.206*	0.119	3.022	0.814
Accustomed to seeking help from local residents (reference: none)	0.440***	0.161	7.461	1.553
Accustomed to urban lifestyles and habits (reference: none)	-0.308**	0.159	3.756	0.735
Self-assessment (reference: not sure)				
Regards self as an urban resident	-0.544	0.435	1.563	0.580
Regards self as a migrant	0.509***	0.153	11.019	1.663
Regards self as both	-0.2	0.208	0.926	0.818
Village Resources				
Farmland (mu)	0.004	0.009	0.155	1.004
House	0.468***	0.161	8.426	1.597
-				
Model chi-square	168.556***			
Cox&Snell R^2	0.104			
Percentage correctly classified	63.9%			

Significance level: ***0.01, **0.05, *0.10

5.2.2. Model assessment for female and male migrants

The results of binary logistic regression analyses using female and male data are presented in Tables 5.6 and 5.7. The models are both significant based on the chi-square values. The model based on the data set of female migrants has higher explanation power than using the data set of male migrants according to the model's Cox and Snell R^2 index.

None of the demographic variables is significant in influencing migration behavioural intention of female migrants; in contrast, age, education, and *hukou* status are significant in shaping the return intention of male migrants. Among male migrants, "older," "more educated," and "having an agricultural *hukou"* all make them less likely to return to the places of origin, and the respective odds are 2.9 percent, 7.6 percent and 60.5 percent.

None of the migrant work variables is significant for female migrants. On the contrary, for male migrants, both monthly income and ratio of expenditure to income are significant. Specifically, every 1,000 yuan income increase reduces the odds of returning by 22 percent, and every percentage increase in the expenditure ratio decreases the odds of returning by 0.7 percent, for male migrants. The findings indicate that when male migrants earn more income and consume more in the host cities, the chance for them to stay increases. These results suggest that human capital-related variables and economic opportunities are more important in influencing migration decisions among males than females.

The effects of family-related variables vary among female and male migrants as well. A bigger family may reduce the odds to return for male migrants by 11.6 percent, but it increases the odds to return for female migrants by 11.4 percent. Furthermore, when all other factors are controlled, having a child attending school in

a host city has no significant influence on the migration intention of male migrants. But it will significantly reduce the likelihood of returning to the place of origin, for female migrants, by 40.2 percent. As expected, the results reflect the gender division of labour within a traditional Chinese family in which the wife bears much more responsibility than the husband, in raising children and caring for elderly.

The place of origin is a significant influence in differentiating between return and non-return migrants for both males and females. The effect of distance separation is significant on female return migration intentions, with the odds of returning increasing by 65 percent for every 1,000 km separating the destination and the places of origin. For male migrants, having family members such as brothers and sisters at the places of origin may reduce the odds of returning by 40.6 percent. For male migrants, having agricultural land in the place of origin increases the odds of returning by 73.2. Sending remittances to families at home significantly increases the odds of returning for male migrants, a 4 percent increase for every 1,000 yuan remittance sent. There is little difference in the amount of remittance sent between return and non-return female migrants, when all other variables are controlled.

Social networks variables have no significant effects on male migrants in deciding migration intentions, but for female migrants, their intention to return is significantly affected by one variable in this group, that is, a lack of relatives and migrant friends in the host city increases the odds of returning by 83.7 percent for female migrants.

In the self-assessment category, viewing oneself as a migrant is a significant variable in the models of both genders. This lack of self-confidence in a host city increases the chances of returning to the places of origin by odds of 46.1 and 58.6 percent for male and female migrants, respectively. Furthermore, it seems that the self-assessment has an even greater impact on females. Viewing themselves as urban

residents significantly decreases the odds of returning by 10.3 percent, for female migrants; however, this variable is insignificant in the male model.

The size of contractual agricultural land in the places of origin may not significantly shape return intentions for both male and female migrants. In addition, having contractual rights to cultivate land is significant for male migrants, but not for females, in making future migration decision. It increases the odds for male migrants to return by 54.9 percent.

Table 5.6. Results of logistic regression model assessment of assessing return intentions for males

	Coefficient	S.E.	Ward	Odds ratio
Demographic				
Age	-0.03**	0.014	4.750	0.971
Education (year of schooling)	-0.076**	0.037	4.331	0.927
Married	0.102	0.268	0.146	1.108
Agricultural *hukou*	-0.605*	0.521	3.165	0.395
Migration duration (year)	0.011	0.016	0.476	1.011
Migrant Work				
Monthly income (yuan)	$-2.18*10\text{-}^{4}$**	$9.73*10^{-5}$	5.005	0.99978
Ratio of expenditure to income	-0.007**	0.004	4.067	0.993
Received training in host cities	-0.269	0.23	1.371	0.764
Family				
Family size	-0.116*	0.063	3.394	0.89
Family members in the same city	-0.051	0.088	0.334	0.95
Child education (reference: in village)				
In the same city	-0.292	0.221	1.736	0.747
Connections with origins				
Distance between place of origin and destination (km)	$2.4*10^{-5}$	$1.55*10^{-4}$	0.024	1.000023
Have families in origins (reference: none)	-0.406*	0.238	2.927	0.666
Months at home after initial migration	0.445**	0.197	5.097	1.561
Have land in origins (reference: none)	0.732**	$1.68*10^{-5}$	5.747	1.00004
2008 remittance (yuan)	0.004*	0.004	0.267	1.002
Social networks				
Accustomed to communicating in Mandarin (reference: none)	0.131	0.213	0.382	1.14
Local community participation (reference: none)	-0.219	0.314	0.484	0.804
Residential neighbor networks (reference: others)				
Local residents	-0.032	0.222	0.021	0.968
Migrants from same origins	0.254	0.238	1.135	1.289
Colleagues	0.106	0.237	0.237	1.112
Made friends with local residents (reference: none)	-0.185	0.167	1.224	0.831
Accustomed to seeking help from local residents (reference: none)	0.092	0.229	0.162	1.097
Accustomed to urban lifestyles and habits (reference: none)	-0.257	0.226	1.294	0.774
Self-assessment (reference: not sure)				
Regards self as an urban resident	-0.015	0.517	0.001	0.985
Regards self as a migrant	0.461**	0.217	4.523	1.586
Regards self as both	0.016	0.274	0.003	1.016
Village Resources				
Farmland (mu)	-0.003	0.013	0.051	0.997
House	0.549***	0.207	7.062	1.732
-				
Model chi-square	89.421***			
Cox&Snell R^2	0.109			
Percentage correctly classified	64.3%			

Significance level: ***0.01, **0.05, *0.10

Table 5.7. Results of logistic regression model assessment of return intentions for females

	Coefficient	S.E.	Ward	Odds ratio
Demographic				
Age	$2.2*10^{-4}$	0.015	$2.4*10^{-4}$	1.0003
Education (year of schooling)	$-3.6*10^{-4}$	0.032	$1.2*10^{-4}$	0.99996
Married	0.192	0.29	0.437	1.212
Agricultural *hukou*	0.036	0.592	0.004	1.037
Migration duration (year)	-0.01	0.018	0.281	0.990
Migrant Work				
Monthly income (yuan)	8.54*10-4	$7.95*10^{-5}$	1.154	1.00009
Ratio of expenditure to income	$-3.64*10^{-4}$	0.002	0.023	0.99996
Received training in host cities	0.148	0.362	0.168	1.116
Family	-	-	-	-
Family size	0.114**	0.059	3.715	1.12
Family members in the same city	-0.135	0.092	2.133	0.874
Child education (reference: in village)	-	-	-	-
In the same city	-0.402*	0.219	3.367	0.669
Connections with origins	-	-	-	-
Distance between place of origin and destination (km)	$6.54*10^{-4}$***	$1.56*10^{-4}$	17.659	1.001
Have families in origins (reference: none)	0.325	0.248	1.715	1.384
Months at home after initial migration	0.360**	0.183	3.856	1.433
Have land in origins (reference: none)	$1.12*10^{-5}$	$1.84*10^{-5}$	0.368	1.00001
2008 remittance (yuan)	0.001	0.004	0.025	1.001
Social networks				
Accustomed to communicating in Mandarin (reference: none)	-0.443	0.216	4.195	0.642
Local community participation (reference: none)	-0.518	0.375	1.917	0.595
Residential neighbor networks (reference: others)				
Local residents	-0.385	0.242	2.536	0.680
Migrants from same origins	-0.03	0.234	0.017	0.97
Colleagues	0.379	0.257	2.175	1.460
Made friends with local residents (reference: none)	-0.161	0.177	0.831	0.851
Accustomed to seeking help from local residents (reference: none)	0.837***	0.242	11.947	2.309
Accustomed to urban lifestyles and habits (reference: none)	-0.328	0.236	1.925	0.72
Self-assessment (reference: not sure)				
Regards self as an urban resident	-0.103**	1.096	4.292	0.103
Regards self as a migrant	0.586***	0.228	6.603	1.797
Regards self as both	-0.480	0.348	1.9	0.619
Village Resources				
Farmland (mu)	0.002	0.014	0.014	1.002
House	0.374	0.274	1.862	1.454
-				
Model chi-square	128.331***			
Cox&Snell R^2	0.157			
Percentage correctly classified	67.1%			

Significance level: ***0.01, **0.05, *0.10

5.3. Discussion and conclusions

The findings from this study indicate that a large proportion of current rural urban migrants might return to the rural countryside in China. Given the fact that there were 229 million rural urban migrants in China, in 2009 (National Bureau of Statistics of China 2009), if 38 percent of them eventually return to their home villages, it will create profound social and political effects on both rural and urban communities. This study sheds some light on the complexity and dynamics of continuing migration of massive numbers of rural migrants in China. Permanent migration may be desirable for stabilizing the continued trend towards the acceleration of urbanization and industrialization. But this is, nonetheless, only one of many possibilities for individual rural migrants who may return.

To identify possible return migrants is an important but challenging task for policy makers. This study shows that return migrants may be slightly older or less educated. They are, however, very similar to those who want to settle permanently in the host city. Escaping the city glamour for a presumably boring rural life seems to be the intended choice, because most of those, who intend to return, may eventually go back to their home villages, and city life is the least desirable option among them. This result indicates that the "bright light" of the cities remains to be just a hope. Without sufficient income in the city, far-away neon light looks dim from the perspective of a small tenement flat in a deteriorating inner-city neighborhood. The dismal economic and social realities of migrant life pose a challenge to urban policy makers, if cities wish to retain migrants over the long run. Furthermore, while losing large numbers of rural migrants may impact host cities, it creates much greater uncertainties and challenges to rural areas. Migrant-sending regions are often resource poor and constantly challenged by population pressure and a lack of economic opportunities.

Based on the findings that most returnees hope to be self-employed in business sectors, there is an urgent need to study how migrant returnees are coping with social and economic realities in their places of origin.

The statistical analysis of the survey data reveals that motives for return migration intention are diverse. Overall, the selected groups of variables, based on the existing theoretical perspectives, can explain significantly the difference between return and non-return migration intentions. First, the demographic and work variables seem to be less relevant to the behavioural migration intention, compared to family, connections with village society, and social networks variables. Among the demographic and work groups, only the level of education significantly shapes the migration intention, which is consistent with the findings in the Chinese literature (Zhao 2002; Xu 2005; Li and Gao 2009). Therefore, increasing the level of education through training and adult schooling is one of many policy options that urban policy makers can take, if retaining migrants is deemed to be important to urban social and economic development. Surprisingly, and in contrast to the popular view in the literature, the finding does not indicate that *hukou* status is significant in differentiating return intentions. However, the diminishing role of *hukou* status is consistent with the field observations and in-depth interviews with migrants. The institutionalized civil rights and privileges through the *hukou* system are already de-bundled or disguised in the course of the transition to a quasi-market economy. As one migrant puts it, "*Hukou* does not mean too much to us. I cannot use it to buy an apartment in cities."

Many scholars have highlighted the importance of family ties, home affection and local attachment in migration decisions in China (Huang 1999; Zhang 2002; Zhou and Liang 2006). This study reinforces such notions in a Fujian context. On the one hand, split households, such as spousal separation or child education in the home village, is

a significant force that encourages return migration. On the other hand, a close connection with the home village through property ownership and remittance has profound influences on settlement and return intentions. Therefore, helping rural migrants to build a home in a host city may play a critical role in the integration process of rural labour migrants.

Another significant factor, that is responsible for shaping migrants' behavioural intentions to return or to stay, is the extent that migrants fit in the community through social networks that elevate their level of self-esteem. Migrants in Chinese cities are often looked down upon by local residents; they are regarded as social pariahs, and have difficulty becoming integrated into local communities, especially for those from distant rural origins. There are many causes for such discrimination and social isolation. For instance, a biased image of rural migrants by the media, the deteriorating living environment in which migrants are forced to live, cultural differences, and low quality of life, all contribute to the continuation of social barriers prohibiting rural migrants from successful integration. Policies need to address the issues of migrants in the cities so that their living conditions, for example, can be improved.

5.3.1. The Issues of gender

To examine and explain the influences of gender-related factors in migrants' return intention is one of the major objectives of this chapter. From a theoretical perspective, neoclassical economics normally holds the view that female migrants are no different from male migrants, since they are both stimulated by regional economic differences (Dewan 1995). They exclude the complex impacts of gender in their analysis. Gender in this context refers to the roles and expectations assigned by being male or female in Chinese society. In contrast, structural economics intuitively investigates this issue in

the context of gender segmentation of labour market, and restrictions of socio-culture structure, and emphasizes the relations between gender differentiations and spatial production units and institutional barriers (Fan 2003; Assaad and Arntz 2005; Xu, Tan, and Wang 2006). More importantly, its arguments about the different initial roles of male and female workers in the labour market provide an explanation of the gender differences revealed by this research.

This research shows that there is no significant and direct impact of gender on migrants' return intention, but the factors influencing the return intention of female and male migrants are different. Concretely speaking, family-related factors, connections with place of origin, and social networks are the dominant factors explaining migration intention of female migrants; on the other hand, demographic characteristics such as age and education level, economic opportunities, and connections with the places of origin, play a significant role in shaping the return intention of male migrants. Few studies, if any, have investigated such gender differentiation in factors behind return intention of rural migrants. In conclusion, the findings show that there are some critical differences in migration behaviour and decision-making between male and female migrants. In particular, social capital is valued more by female migrants, and human capital is more important for male migrants. In other words, the economic and institutional situation in the host cities may either deter or encourage the settlement intention of male migrants, while social ties and network may have the same effects on female migrants.

The remaining part of this chapter attempts to further explain these gender differentiations in migration intentions, according to three aspects: traditional Chinese family structure, gender roles in labour market, and gender-segmented labour market in urban China.

First, among these aspects, the traditional Chinese family structure is, no doubt, a fundamental cause of gender differentiations. In China, marriage is a social institution and behaviour with specific practical and economic values, which includes family inheritance, growth in the family labour force, extent of family social networks, and family care. In the traditional Confucian system, women have been regarded as a form of property in the marriage structure (Liu 2012). After marriage, women normally move to live with their husbands, and become closely attached to their husbands' family. In particular, under a traditional Chinese family structure, husbands are considered to be the primary income earners of the family, while women are expected to take full responsibility for the care of their husbands' family. Under such a marriage arrangement, married migrant women are normally considered to be complementary economic sources of the family, and, thus, they have to return to the husband's home village, when the husband's family needs them. To this end, it is quite obvious that the personal development and success of married migrant women is the least consideration in such a family structure. Thus, male migrants tend to prioritize economic development and opportunities in the migration process. By contrast, female migrants are obliged to keep family needs as their primary concern over the whole migration process, especially when they return to their places of origin. Such marriage expectations and traditional ideas still prevail in rural China where most migrants originated. Thus potential female returnees are significantly more sensitive to family-related factors than their male counterparts.

Second, male and female migrants are having quite different roles in the labour market of China. Employers always prefer male workers for higher positions and particular tasks. Unquestionably, one important reason for this is the physical differences between males and females, especially in jobs that require manual

stamina. But more importantly, the traditional preference of boys over girls is deeply rooted in Chinese society, and plays an essential role in this phenomenon. Additionally, due to the family structure discussed earlier, the career persistence of women migrants is much more vulnerable due to family obligations. This is also one of the reasons that employers prefer to promote male migrants, who are normally perceived as breadwinners. In all these reasons, the labour market provides more opportunities to male migrants, especially those with higher educational attainment or technical skills.

Third, the migrant labour market in China is highly gender segmented. This study and other similar surveys in the scholarly literature consistently indicate that compared to males, women migrants are significantly more concentrated in careers with low skills requirements and low compensation levels, and because human capital, particularly formal education, is less rewarded for women migrants, they thus have been compelled to rely more on their social networks. This explains why human capital is more important to male migrants, and social capital is valued more by female migrants.

In summary, male migrants showed a higher level of independence when they made their return decisions; correspondingly, female migrants are more likely to be influenced by external forms and norms from their family and social bonds. The findings of this study also suggest that the migration processes for female migrants in China are more vulnerable than males, due to family obligations and, thus, married female migrants are more likely to become return migrants by external factors. Although, this outcome could be partly attributed to the different gender roles in labour markets; it is, more importantly, to be regarded as an inevitable consequence of

the family strategies which are used by migrant families to reduce the economic and social risks of migration and to maximize their family benefits.

CHAPTER SIX

6. INTERNAL RETURN MIGRANTS IN CHINA

The major purpose of this chapter is to understand the behaviour of return migrants and their current resettlement status. According to the theoretical framework proposed in Chapter Two, migration behaviour is mainly affected by the macro push-and-pull factors, social norms, motivations and abilities, and past experience, thus, this chapter attempts to explain return migration according to this theoretical framework. The findings from the empirical case studies in this part will be organized as follows: motivations and capabilities of individuals, past experiences, social norms and social networks, macro push-and-pull factors, and, lastly, discussion and conclusions.

6.1. Motivations and capabilities of individuals

6.1.1. Motivations of out-migration and return behaviour

Labour migration is a continuing process of moving among places, therefore, linking different segments of migration may help explain certain migration behaviour. In the interviews, every respondent was asked why he or she originally decided to migrate out to the cities. As a result, it seems that most of the respondents had relatively weak motivations. “Did not really think it through” and “nothing to do at home” are two of the most frequently mentioned reasons. None of the respondents claimed that their initial migration was aimed at permanently settling in cities. Among all interviewees, 25 of them (86 percent of the total) claimed that “(I) had families in the potential destination cities” as a major reason for their migration. Moreover, several interviewees reported that they immediately decided to return when their families,

who initially invited them to the cities, had moved to another city or returned. One interviewee indicated:

> At that time (first-time migration) I did not have any specific motivation. An uncle of my husband owned a plastic factory in the city and he just asked us if we wanted to get a job in his factory…. We did not have much to do at home, so we just decided to give it a try…later, his plant closed down due to the economic crisis, so we just returned（Respondent #7/46/Female）

The interview results also indicate that the necessity and initiation of their first migration had some connection with their return behaviour. Those who mentioned "something bad happened at home, I have to migrate out," tend to have longer migration duration than others. Those who mentioned "I'm young, I want to see the world," and "I want to be rich and successful" tended to be more economically successful in both places of origin and destination compared to those who were not highly motivated toward success when they first migrated out.

6.1.2. Capabilities of individuals and return behaviour

It is long recognized that self-perception of personal abilities and capabilities is linked to behavioural actions (Laird 1974). In this study, when interviewing return migrants on their perceived abilities and capabilities, interviewers focused mainly on the effects of their age, educational attainment, and physical disabilities and accidents.

Getting old was the most frequently mentioned reason in this category for returning. The youngest respondent who mentioned age issues as his reason for return was only 32 years old. Moreover, for almost all of those who were older than 40, the age factor became the major determinant of returning. While, those who experienced a longer duration of migration felt stronger about the aging issue, especially females. Even the relatively young interviewees showed their concern about getting old. Here are some examples:

Working in here (origin) is just my temporary plan; I'll migrate out again next

year…. Of course I'll be back when I am old. Now we just make a living on the mere strength of my young age. We have to retire to the hometown. There is no way we could make it in cities. (Respondent #1/25/Married/Male)

I have this feeling that I have become very old. The employers in the cities prefer teenagers around twenty…We are manual workers, not like your university graduates. The speed of aging is much faster. (Respondent #21/36/Married/Male)

Of course I'll be back when I get old….
Interviewer: what age would be considered as old?
Probably after I get married. (Respondent #18/22/Unmarried/Female)

In terms of gender differences, female respondents are more sensitive to age-related issues. For instance, four cases showed that wives even have to persuade their husbands to return because of age-related issues. Here are two examples:

He (respondent's husband) did not want to return at that time. I just told him we have to go back, we are too old to drift in the cities and his foot was injured.... Finally, I had him convinced. (Respondent #12/49/Female)

I would not come back if I could decide. At that time, I felt I could still work in the cities for at least another five years. But my wife just kept saying that we should go back and start our own business at home; we could be more relaxed that way…anyway, I recognized that we had saved some money, so I just agreed to return (Respondent #29/43/Male)

To further clarify the age-related issue for return migrants, one important question needs to be answered. Are they too old to work in cities, so that they have to return? This question was directly asked of eight respondents. It turned out that five male migrants and one female migrant claimed that they could still work in cities at the time they chose to come back, but they just had that feeling that they had to return when they would reach a certain age:

I felt I was too old, so I just returned…there was nothing wrong physically, and I surely could find a job in the cities; in fact, my boss tried to retain me when I decided to return. But you know: you have to return when you reach a certain age. (Respondent #29/48/Male)

Interviewer: Is the business downturn the real reason that you chose to go back?

> No, the business was good at that time. We had very friendly relations with the surrounding residential community…but you know, we were old. It's just not appropriate for us to keep drifting in the cities" (Respondent #10/49/Female)

Next, the effects of relatively lower educational attainment on migrant behaviour have been widely discussed in related studies. In the interviews, 14 respondents (48 percent of the total) mentioned this issue. Almost all of them regarded low educational attainment as one of the major obstacles for their growth and development in cities. However, lower level of education was not cited as the direct reason that caused their return. Here are two examples:

> The development in cities will be of course hindered by a low education level, we have no idea about the new high tech stuff….
> Interviewer: is the low education level the cause of your return?
> I don't think so; abandoning school is my choice back then. If you made me choose again now, I would do the same. (Respondent #27/48/Male)

> Education level? Of course the higher the better, it's quite clear that all those white collars who sit in the office with higher salaries are university students like you; people like us just do manual labour….
> Interviewer: is the low education level the cause of your return?
> No, it's not the concern that time. I think a low education level wouldn't affect job opportunities. (Respondent #8/38/Male)

It is quite clear that a low educational attainment was not perceived as an explicit problem for migrants in the low-end of the segmented urban labour market. It would be a problem only if they attempted to shift themselves to the mainstream labour market. However, most of the interviewees were not able to do so.

A low educational attainment may also severely affect migrants' self-perceptions, and if migrant workers do not regard low education levels as problems for themselves, they will not have the motivation or desire to change it. This, could make their precarious migration process even more fragile and unstable. For example, for those with an extremely low education level, i.e., failure to graduate from junior school, only three out of ten respondents mentioned that education was a problem for them;

the seven other interviewees in this group did not recognize low educational attainment as a problem for them. Here are two examples.

> I went to junior school for around a week, and then I just ran away…. I don't think these education certificates have anything to do with the future. We are villagers and we always are no matter what. (Respondent #25/25/Male)

> (The education level) is worthless…in the factory I used to work; many workers in my team had a higher education level, but the salary level is the same. (Respondent #23/41/Female)

However, according to interviewers' observations, low educational attainment is expected to affect this group of people the most. Furthermore, in terms of migrants with a middle level of educational attainment, or who have graduated from junior high school, they seem more concerned about their education level compared to those in the extremely low education group. Eight out of twelve respondents (27 percent of the total interviewees) with a middle level of educational attainment mentioned issues of education level in the interview. All of them regarded a relatively low education level as one of the major obstacles to their growth and success in cities. One respondent who identified low educational attainment as a direct cause of returning was in this group：

> It's hard to say. I have the feeling that there is no future for me to work in the cities; I can only find jobs with very low salaries….
> Interviewer: Is low education level the cause of your return?
> Kind of, as I said, there's no future and the jobs are tiring and worthless. (Respondent #17/26/Male)

Physical disabilities and accidents are further important influential factors affecting the outcomes of their return. Four male respondents (14 percent of the total) claimed that they had to return because of physical disabilities or accidents, whereas, one female respondent had to return due to her husband's foot problems. For those five

interviewees, disabilities or accidents were no doubt major causes of their return; two of them indicated they strongly regretted the decision, but had no other choice.

> I had a car accident when I returned home for spring festival in 2003. Since then I have never migrated out again…. My friends in Shanghai called me several times and suggested that I come to Shanghai again. Personally, I wanted to go as well. But how could I do that with my injury? It would be way too expensive to see a doctor over there. (Respondent #11/47/Male)

6.1.3. Capabilities of individuals and current resettlement situations

The following section will focus on the effects of abilities and capabilities of individuals on the current resettlement situations of return migrants. Three major factors will be discussed in this part: education, training and experience; decision making power; and self-evaluation.

Educational attainment is commonly considered, to be an important determinant of the labour market outcomes of individuals (Psacharopoulos 1994; Lai 1998). According to these interviews, however, there is hardly any evidence to indicate a relationship between educational attainment and the current resettlement situation of return migrants. Specifically, the effects of educational attainment are evident for those who failed to graduate from elementary school or who had graduated from university, and their education levels seem to be important factors in explaining their current income situations. However, for those migrants in the middle-level educational group, the utility of educational attainment on their current labour market performance was ambiguous and unpredictable. For example, some interviewees, who dropped out of junior high school, performed remarkably well in the place of origin, whereas, others with high school education struggled for a long time.

While the effects of formal schooling were mixed, another variable in this group that could provide a much stronger explanation for their current resettlement situations relates to both training experience and occupation certifications obtained

during the migration process. This factor seemed to be very crucial in elevating their job market performance in places of origin. Those who claimed that they learned something, including special skills, knowledge, and social skills in the migration process performed significantly more effectively, compared to those who did not. More importantly, training experience and occupation certifications obtained during migration turned out to be valuable for those who had successfully started their own businesses in their places of origin. For example, six out of seven self-employed interviewees indicated that the professional training and experience they gained in the cities were essential to their success. Here are two examples:

> My education level is low and my husband is also semi-literate, the business is purely dependant on our skills…the skills we learned in the factory in Guangdong. I worked in that factory for 5 years, and then my husband worked in the same factory for another 3 years…we have experience in all the garment procedures, I think we are the only ones with such solid experience and skills among all people who are involved in this business, in this region…I went back to Guangdong once, to learn how to make woolen cloth, at that time, woolen cloth was not as popular as it is now in Chengdu. Anyway, I have confidence that we make the best woolen cloth in this community area. (Respondent #9/37/Female)

> Interviewer: compared to other barbershops in town, what is your major advantage?
> Advantage is too strong a word. I think the major difference between my shop and others was the outlook at that time. When I started my business here, most of the barbershops in town were quite old-style, and they barely even put a pair of scissors to use. I came back from Chengdu, and I brought a new style and image to this business. For example, I started a special perm and custom shampoo in this town." (Respondent #6/35/Male)

As discussed in the previous chapters, decision making power and self-evaluation are two important determinants of migrant labour market performance in cities. According to the interviews, male respondents showed stronger decision making powers than females. Interestingly, two female respondents, who indicated they took all of their important decisions independently, are remarkably economically

successful in places of origin. The following citation comes from a female interviewee who successfully started her own fashion business after return.

> In many aspects, I did not do very well, but I'm very independent, and there's no one I could depend on either. I learned from my two marriages that people can only depend on themselves…. Of course, I will listen to others' suggestions, but you have to make your own decision eventually…. At that time, everyone just persuaded me to stay in Beijing; I myself decided to return. The same thing happened when I decided to open this shop…. (Respondent #12/42/Female)

Furthermore, respondents who took their return decisions more cautiously, i.e., taking a longer time and planning carefully, seem to perform more effectively after their return than those who did not.

Next, the effect of self-evaluation was tricky. Those who frequently mentioned "I am very satisfied with the status quo" normally showed relatively poor economic conditions, but not the worst. The following quotation comes from a chef who earned 1200 yuan a month after returning from the city.

> I feel satisfied with my life right now; I could earn more money if I want to, but is it necessary? Speaking of money, I always believed that enough is the best…. I think those big bosses may not have the comfortable life that I do…. (Respondent #11/47/Male)

In contrast, those who were in better economic conditions, especially those who started their own businesses, seem to feel relatively "badly" about themselves.

> You may think the business in my barbershop now looks good, right? The truth is: no. I'm very tired, and the revenues fluctuate. Some of my friends from the same barbershop in Chengdu have already become the big bosses. They themselves don't need to touch the scissors for a long time. And I'm insanely busy every day…the major reason is that my abilities are not good enough…I am thinking about changing my career, and haircutting is not a good business. (Respondent #6/35/Male)

Those who return to farms or to take care of families normally have no clear self-evaluation. Here are two examples.

Nothing good or bad, every day is the same for me, free and relaxing.

(Respondent #15/27/Female)

Self-assessment? I have no idea about this. Nothing is worth assessing here. I'm just an old farmer. (Respondent #21/36/Male)

6.2. Past experiences

Past experiences are strongly reflected in current behaviour. Specifically, this study mainly attempts to investigate the connections between migration experiences and return migration. The two groups of factors that will be discussed respectively in this part, are, bad experiences in cities, and general experiences in migration processes

6.2.1. Bad experiences in cities and return behaviour

Four kinds of bad experiences are summarized from the narratives: discrimination, language barriers, high cost of living in cities and strange habits and customs.

First, only four respondents (14 percent of the total) confirmed that they encountered discrimination in cities. However, three respondents who stated they never encountered any form of discrimination actually did, according to further analyses of their interview contents. Older respondents seem to be more sensitive to this issue. However, none of the respondents recognized their encounters with discrimination as major causes of their return. Here is an example.

Discrimination existed. The boss of the restaurant in Guangzhou had frequently used the word "outsiders" to call us, and always blamed bad things on the 'outsiders; his wife--she did not say that much--but was xenophobic in practice….
Interviewer: is discrimination the reason for your return?
No, I don't think so. We had migrated out for such a long time. We had gotten used to this kind of thing already. I don't think it's a big deal. Most of the urban residents are good. (Respondent #11/47/Male)

It seemed that most of the migrants had prepared to encounter some level of discrimination in the cities before their migrations. Thus, when they actually met the problem, they easily absorbed, adapted to or even ignored it.

Second, ten respondents (34 percent of the total) mentioned that they had suffered from language barriers in cities. However, most of them did not treat it as a serious problem. Only two respondents (six percent of the total) indicated that they had very hard time in the cities because they could not speak the local dialect. However, all of them managed to overcome this problem at last. Moreover, eleven of the respondents (42 percent of the total) never experienced this problem at all. However, it is noteworthy that eleven respondents counted "familiar with native dialect" as one of the advantages of living in the place of origin, and most of them were older than 35. This indicated that language is a pull factor in attracting migrants to return, rather than a push factor that expels migrants from the cities.

Third, in terms of the high cost of living in the cities, no evidence indicates that this factor would drive migrants away from the cities. Seventeen respondents (58 percent of the total) claimed that their costs of living in the cities were higher than in the places of origin, but most of them also indicated they could earn more in the cities, and four respondents (14 percent of the total) even claimed that they spent more money after their return.

> The living expenses in the city are much higher than those at home. I don't have to pay for accommodation and food at home. However, I could earn more in city….
> Interviewer: is the high living expense one of the reasons causing you to return?
> No, we can afford the living expenses in the city. It's just not necessary to do so. (Respondent #7/31/Male)

Notably, those with relatively high spending habits in the cities seem to perform relatively better in the places of origin. The two following citations are both from interviewees who successfully started their own businesses after return.

> I am a spendthrift. That's why I could not save any money and always ran into debt. Now, that, I'm running my own business, I'm very cautious and sensitive about this. I am afraid that I will be infatuated with gambling again. That will just ruin everything. (Respondent #12/42/Female)

> I am always a spendthrift. When I was in the university, my family spoiled me. Even now, I'm not that kind person who is very aware of his expenses. Sometimes I even thought that one could earn more if he spends more. It's all about psychology I think. (Respondent #2/30/Male)

Strange habits and customs like dietary habits seem to have some effects on return behaviour. Ten respondents (34 percent of the total) claimed that they experienced problems with strange habits and customs in the cities, but most of them also indicated that they adapted later on. However, it is worth noting that, two respondents, who indicated that they had a strong antipathy toward urban habits and customs, had a migration duration of less than three years. Here is an example.

> My adaptive capacity is very poor…the diet in the city I worked in is terrible. It's barely tasteless. I was nearly anorexic in those days. (Respondent #26/23/Female)

> I normally associated with my villagers in the cities. I just felt like a round peg in a square hole. I felt uncomfortable in every aspect in daily life when I was in the city. (Respondent #18/22/Female)

6.2.2. Past experience and current resettlement situations

Professional skills and experience obtained in the migration process showed great effects on the migrants' current performance in the discussions in the section 6.1.3. Similarly, the discussions of the effects of social networks on the resettlement situations in the section 6.3.4 showed that the urban social networks, that migrants normally built up in the migration process, help to improve their current earning performance. These findings show that migrants' past experience influences their resettlement situations. The following section presents more details in this regard.

First, the duration and the complexity of the migration experience has a direct effect on migrants' current earning performance. For example, those with a migration duration of less than three years were in much worse economic condition, compared to other interviewees. However, for those with a migration duration of more than three

years, there is no significant correlation between migration duration and their current situations. Respondents who returned to farms or to take care of their families seem to have a relatively shorter migration duration. Promotion to a leadership position in the migration process seems to have a great effect on their current labour market performance. Those who reported that they had been promoted in their urban workplaces performed significantly better in the places of origin than others. They also tended to give positive self-evaluations to their migration experience. Here are two examples.

> When I first came to the factory, I was a total rookie…when I decided to return, I was a deputy head of a workshop…. My biggest advantage? I think I am relatively outgoing and confident. (Respondent #22/25/Male)

> When I graduated from university and first arrived in Yunnan, I knew nothing. I just started from the very bottom of that (pickled vegetable) company. I was sad about it at that time…after half a year, the company just promoted me as the regional supply manager…. When I decided to return, I was the deputy manager of the marketing department…. When I look back on my whole career these days, I think the experience in Yunnan was very important for my current career. In Yunnan, I had participated in literally every aspect of a pickled vegetable company; I became an expert in that industry. (Respondent #2/30/Male)

Second, even though, the findings from the previous chapter indicated that most rural-urban migrants were largely isolated from the urban mainstream. The interviews of return migrants reveal that the urban life styles and habits they acquired in cities would actually affect their lives after returning, and even further affect their labour market outcomes after return. Here are two examples. Specifically, the following quotation demonstrates how the life-style and habits obtained in cities affect their current labour market outcomes.

> We just redecorated the house last year, demolished all the old walls and tiles and replaced with new cement and ceramic tiles. We also got a bathroom with a shower…. The local government provided some help, but mostly, we depended on ourselves…. We have lived in a big city for years. Everywhere in the city is so clean. That is also a good thing for the children; the old house was too

unsanitary. (Respondent #24/39/Male)

Interviewer: did the experience in cities have effects on your current life?
Of course it has: this (pointed to a computer). Before my migration, I did not even know there was a "computer," not to mention the internet. I learned to use a computer only in the city. At that time, I went to the internet cafes practically every day after work…played games, watched movies and everything…. I told myself that I have to buy a computer when I return…. Now the village has the internet as well, it's very convenient…. I have obtained much information about specialty crops cultivation from the internet….It would be impossible to run my little mushroom workshop without this computer.... (Respondent #17/26/Male)

Table 6.1. Summary table of interviewed returnees

ID	Gender	Age (at 2012)	*Hukou* status	Educational attainment[1]	Return duration (at 2012)(years)	Return place[2]	Migration duration (years)	Destination cities /provinces	Current industry[3]	Current job	Monthly income
1	Male	25	Agricultural	4	6	1	2	Chengdu	2	Technical worker	2500
2	Male	30	Non-agricultural	6	5	2	2	Yunnan	2	Self-employed	6000+
3	Male	50	Non-agricultural	5	9	1	9	Yunnan	4	Driver	1500
4	Male	30	Non-agricultural	5	11	1	3	Chengdu	6	Chef	2000
5	Male	44	Agricultural	4	7	2	13	Chengdu	2	Self-employed	6000+
6	Male	35	Agricultural	3	10	1	5	Chengdu	6	Self-employed	6000+
7	Male	31	Agricultural	4	6	1	5	Chengdu	2	Technical worker	3000
8	Female	38	Agricultural	2	7	2	2	Guangzhou	2	General labour	1000
9	Female	37	Agricultural	5	3	3	12	Guangzhou	6	Self-employed	5000
10	Female	49	Non-agricultural	3	5	1	16	Zhejiang	6	Waiter	900
11	Male	47	Agricultural	3	3	1	16	Shanghai	6	Chef	1200
12	Female	42	Non-agricultural	2	3	1	15	Xi'an etc.	5	Self-employed	6000+
13	Male	42	Agricultural	2	1	4	24	Guangzhou etc.	1	Special raising	1500
14	Male	35	Agricultural	3	1	4	15	Fujian etc.	1	Farmer	600
15	Female	27	Agricultural	2	4	4	6	Zhejiang etc.	7	Child-care giver	0
16	Male	28	Agricultural	2	12	4	0	Guangzhou	3	Painter	2500
17	Male	26	Agricultural	3	1	4	9	Zhejiang	1	Specialty crops grower	1600
18	Female	22	Agricultural	3	4	4	2	Zhejiang	7	Child-care giver	0
19	Female	40	Agricultural	3	12	5	2	Zhejiang	7	Child-care giver	0
20	Female	40	Agricultural	2	4	5	3	Zhejiang	1	Farmer	800
21	Male	36	Agricultural	2	8	5	2	Zhejiang	1	Farmer	800
22	Male	25	Agricultural	3	4	5	6	Zhejiang etc.	5	Self-employed	3000
23	Female	41	Agricultural	1	1	5	6	Shanghai	7	Child-care giver	0
24	Male	39	Agricultural	2	3	5	10	Guangdong etc.	1	Specialty crops grower	2500
25	Male	25	Agricultural	2	1	5	7	Zhejiang	1	Farmer	1000
26	Female	23	Agricultural	3	2	5	2	Zhejiang	7	Child-care giver	0
27	Male	48	Agricultural	3	5	5	4	Zhejiang	1	Specialty crops grower	2500
28	Male	40	Agricultural	3	3	5	9	Zhejiang	1	Specialty crops grower	2000
29	Male	43	Agricultural	3	6	5	5	Fujian	6	Self-employed	2500

1. Educational attainment: 1,No education; 2,Primary school; 3,Junior secondary school; 4,Vocational school; 5,Senior secondary school; 6,University

2. Return place:1,Lezhi county, Sichuan province; 2,Zhongtian town, Lezhi county, Sichuan province; 3,Chengdu city, Sichuan province; 4,Panxi village, Fuliang county, Jiangxi province; 5,Xixi village, Fuliang county, Jiangxi province

3. Current industry: 1,Agriculture; 2,Manufacturing; 3,Construction; 4,Transportation; 5,Wholesale and retail; 6,Services; 7,No industry

6.3. Social-related factors

6.3.1. Social norms and return behaviour

Social norm is a concept frequently cited in migration studies (Organista et al. 1997; De Jong 2000; Osaki 2003). There are numerous social and cultural practices that constitute any social norm. In this study, one of the most important aspects of the Chinese social norm will be discussed: the sense of family.

First, homesickness is the most frequently mentioned term in this category. In total, 25 respondents (86 percent of the total) claimed that this was one of the important causes of their return. The following quotation represents a typical statement on this issue.

> There were no specific reasons (for my return). I really missed my home, so I just returned. Business in the city was pretty good, when we decided to return. But you know, there is an old saying, "leaves will fall back to their roots." Sometimes, it's very true. (Respondent #17/47/Male)

It is noteworthy that there are no significant gender differences with regard to homesickness, that is, both female and male respondents emphasized this in discussing the reasons for their return. Furthermore, there are also no age differences with regard to this issue. Homesickness as a reason for return is not only frequently mentioned by older respondent, but also by those under 30.

> I really missed my home when I was out. I was just 18 when I left my home. I did not think so much at that time that everything is interesting, and everything is so much fun, so I did not come back home in the first year. After two years in the city, I started to realize that my home is much better than here. I just wanted to go home every couple of days. More freedom at home, I think this is the major concern for me. (Respondent #16/28/Male)

> I missed my home so much when I was out, and I even cried due to homesickness. Now I don't. I am at home now anyway. I would miss home again if I left. People always call us Jiangxi old-fashioned. I think that actually makes sense. We are a group of people who can leave our land but never leave

our homes. (Respondent #18/22/Female)

When interviewers made a detailed inquiry about what they missed the most in terms of their homes, their most frequently mentioned responses were, children, for female interviewees; unrestrained and free feelings, for males.

> (What I missed most was) my kids at home. When I left for the city, they were too small to call me mother. What poor kids! When we worked in Suzhou-Hangzhou, we could only come back once a year. In two of those years, we failed to buy the train tickets, so I could not go back. My children cried so much when I called home and I did the same. We had no choice. It would be too harsh for their father himself to be in the city alone, and I have to help him out. (Respondent #19/40/Female)

> What did I miss most about home? Freedom, unrestrained life, I think. I felt I was in a prison when I worked in the city…the day, I quit my job, I just felt emancipated, finally. (Respondent #24/39/Male)

While, many interviewees mentioned homesickness as their concern, however, most of the respondents did not list it as the direct cause of their return to their places of origin. Only two respondents indicated that homesickness was the major cause for their return, and, not surprisingly, they both performed relatively poorly in the places of origin.

Second, marriage was identified as another important factor in their migration decision-making process. Almost all of the married respondents recognized that marriage was an important consideration when they made their return decisions. Both males and females, no matter how long they had been married, all mentioned this reason frequently.

> It is totally different after marriage. You can go anywhere when you are single, but now you are married, and everything in your mind is related to your family…it needs some stability. There would be many inconveniences as well if we all migrated out. (Respondent #1/25/Male)

> I think it is normal for people like me to migrate out when we are single. After marriage, it is very troublesome to move around, especially with a kid. For

> example, you have found an ideal job in this city, but what about your husband? It is not that easy to find good jobs for both of you, and besides, what about the children? It is, hence, much simpler if we stay at home. (Respondent #26/23/Female)

The continuing migration process for females was more constrained by marriage than for males. Three female respondents (27 percent of the total female interviewees) suspended their migration for their marriages, but none of the male respondents indicated that marriage was the direct cause of their return. In fact, there was a case in the interviews that the whole life of the respondent was closely connected with her marriages.

> It's kind of pathetic. It's like my whole life is these three marriages. Every time I got married, I migrated to a new place, started a new life…I have never had a clear clue of what exactly I want to pursue. (Respondent #14/42/Female)

Third, taking care of their families seems to have a stronger impact on their return behaviour than marriage itself does. Eight female respondents (72 percent of the total female interviewees) recognized this as the direct cause of their returning home. Five of them returned, and only took care of their families in the places of origin; two male migrants (10 percent of the total male interviewees) mentioned family care as one of the considerations when they made their return decisions, but none of them returned to be a full-time caregiver. In addition, for those five full-time family caregivers, they all returned to take care of their children not their elders, and four out of five of them were planning to migrate out again when their children grow up.

> I'm now just taking care of my children at home. I have two children, the younger one still needs breast-feeding, and the older one is not obedient. How could I leave them to my parents.... Of course I want to migrate out again, and to earn more money. When my kids get old enough, I'll leave them to my parents and migrate out to my husband city for sure. (Respondent #26/23/Female)

6.3.2. Family-related factors and current resettlement situations

First, there is an interesting pattern; those who claimed that their homes were much better than any other places they had been, performed relatively poorly in places of origin. In fact, three out of four respondents who made this claim returned to their farms which subsequently suffered from poor economic performance.

> I think there is nowhere even comparable to my hometown. Ningbo, the city I had migrated to, isn't it beautiful? But I just feel comfortable in my hometown, and do not want move again. I was born and bred here, and I think my roots are here. (Respondent #14/35/Male)

Second, in terms of marriage status, almost all of respondents were married to their villagers, but there were three exceptions, whose spouses were from cities; and all of them were economically successful in the places of origin. The following citation comes from a very successful entrepreneur.

> I met my wife in the college. We were together after I found my first job. In fact, the reason that I returned is her allergy to the weather in Yunnan …I started my business which is picking vegetables, after returning. (Respondent #2/30/Male)

6.3.3. Social networks and return behaviour

Female respondents seem to be more closely connected with primary social networks (families, villagers) in the cities, and younger respondents seem to make more new friends than older respondents did. Furthermore, almost all of the respondents indicated that they had friends, and had made new friends, in cities; however, none of them indicated that these social networks had any direct impact on their return decisions. In conclusion, except in the case of those self-employed respondents, urban social networks were normally superficial, thus, they could hardly affect migrants' return behaviour.

> Of course I had friends in the city. We had good relationships back then…. But it (decision to return) was my own business, I wouldn't discuss it with them, and they wouldn't say anything about it…. They sent me to the station when I returned…. I lost contact with almost all of them. I had made a lot of friends in

> the city, but none of them could compare to my friends here, of course not. (Respondent #17/26/Male)

Notably, those who returned to their original villages were normally closely associated with their families and their existing social ties before they originally migrated to cities. In the interviews, they normally used the term "villagers" a lot. Comparatively, those who returned to the towns or cities often seem to be more associated with new friends that they made in the cities.

6.3.4. Social networks and current resettlement situations

Previous studies in the literature reveal that different types of social networks may have totally different impacts on the labour market performance of migrants (Ryan et al. 2008), and the evidence from this study largely supports such a conclusion. According to the interviews, the impact of primary social networks (i.e., families, natives, and friends at home) and advanced social networks (i.e., urban friends and fraternity) were greatly distinguished from each other.

Most respondents indicated that their social networks in the places of origin did not change at all, after their migration. One respondent even mentioned that his relations with some local friends became closer after he returned home.

> How could it be unfamiliar? We are all villagers… I introduced several young men from my village to the factory where I worked in Shanghai, and their families were very pleased about that…. Our connections become even closer than they were before. We now play Mahjong together all the time… (Respondent #13/47/Male)

Furthermore, four respondents (14 percent of the total) claimed that they kept in touch closely with their "old friends" after they migrated out. Two interviewees even indicated that they spent more money on social activities after they returned than when they were living in the cities. However, it seems that these social activities had

no significant effect on elevating their income after returning. The two following citations are both from interviewees who returned to be poorly-paid famers.

> I have kept in touch with my friends when I lived in the city; I sent them money for certain ceremonies…. I recommended several villagers to the factory I worked in….
> Interviewee's wife: he just really values his face and reputation, but eventually, people just take advantage of him and he gets nothing. (Respondent #28/40/Male)

> Sigh…no…I spend more money at home. I have many friends and relatives here, so, you have to visit them now and then, and that costs a fortune. In the city, there is no such cost…. Inviting them for a dinner party will cost a lot of money. (Respondent #25/25/Male)

Compared to primary social networks, advanced social networks such as urban-friends social networks, professional social networks, and schoolmates, are much more effective in helping some respondents to improve their current economic performance. In fact, almost all respondents, who successfully started their own businesses, claimed that they have kept in touch with their friends or acquaintances in the cities, and it was very important for their businesses. One respondent even indicated that she and her husband followed the suggestions of their urban friends, in order to choose their return destinations, and then, carried out their business plan. She said in the interview:

> We originally intended to go back to the village, but one of our friends in Guangzhou, who was a successful business man from Chengdu, told us we should go back to Chengdu, and our skills (making clothes) would be more useful there. He even helped us to choose our current place of work…. How could we find out such information without his help? (Respondent #12/42/Female)

Next, professional networks seem to be the most important and effective way for return migrants to elevate their earnings in places of origin. Three out seven self-employed respondents (10 percent of the total) indicated that to keep in close

touch with people in the same occupation as theirs was essential for maintaining their current business. Here is an example.

> My major social circle in Chengdu is the fraternity network. We share information about business…we meet each other from time to time, to have beer, to play Mahjong, and more importantly, we discuss how to continue our businesses…. I'm now thinking of changing my career. This was a suggestion from one of the folks. I'm planning to follow him once I quit barber shop. (Respondent #6/35/Male)

Schoolmates were another important social networks for respondents younger than 30. Three respondents (10 percent of the total) recognized that they found their current jobs through classmates.

> My first job after returning was to help in a video store…. It's owned by one of my senior high classmates. At that time (just after I returned), I had nothing to do at home, so I always hung out in his store. Then he said, why I don't just work in his store…and then I did. (Respondent #4/30/Male)

Another two respondents (seven percent of the total) indicated that their schoolmates who were in the cities provided urban job information to them, while they were at home. Here is an example.

> I always keep in touch with them (junior school classmates who work in the cities), even after I returned…. My best friend in the junior school, she is now a manager in a factory in Shenzhen. She called me many times and invited me to come to her factory and promised me a good paying job…. I of course want to go, but what about my little children…. When my children grow up, I'm still planning to go to Shenzhen, while, there is nothing here anyway." (Respondent #26/23/Female)

6.4. Macro push-and-pull factors

From a macro structural perspective, return migration has normally been explained as the result of changes in economic and policy conditions in both rural and urban areas (Qiu 2001; Wang and Yuan 2003; Ding 2005; Huang 2009; Sheng and Hou 2009; Xiao and Yao 2009; Zhang 2009). Specifically, return migration is attributed to the changes between rural and urban areas in following aspects: wage rates (Dustmann

2003), employment opportunities (DaVanzo 1976; Lindstrom 1996), cost of living (Durand, Massey, and Zenteno 2001), and immigration regulations and regional policies (Conway and Cohen 1988; Olesen 2002).

In the context of China, the global financial crisis that begun in 2008 has been widely considered as the main cause of return migration since then (Ge and Lin 2009; Ma and Jin 2009; Sheng and Hou 2009; Wang and Deng 2009; Zhang and Wang 2009). This study partly supports this argument. Specifically, three respondents (10 percent of the total) stated that the economic depression in their destination cities caused by the global financial crisis is the direct reason for their return. For example:

> We returned in the middle of 2009. The factory had just closed down. The parent company was fine, but the boss of the company decided to close the factory to get some cash. The whole thing was caused by the financial crisis. Many factories closed in the city during that time.
> Interviewer: so, many people like you were unemployed that time, all of them are returned?
> Many of them chose to return, for sure; some of them also went to other cities, they had many relatives there, you know. But I think the proportion of returnees is higher….
> Interviewer: have you tried to find another job in the city?
> It's very hard. The whole industry was in a downturn. Only a few factories were hiring, but they had very bad conditions. It wasn't worthwhile. We also went to Guangzhou before returning. My brother is there. But we could not find any jobs there either, so we just returned. (Respondent #27/48/Male)

The economic depression in the southeast coastal China can be regarded as one of the major push factors responsible for a large scale return migration starting in 2008. Researchers also indicate that the rapid growth of the rural economy in the traditional migrant-sending area is an important pull factor in recent return migration (Huang 2009; Yue et al. 2010a). The interviews with return migrants in a typical urban fringe area, Lezhi County, in this study, provide some evidence to support such an argument. Specifically, all of the interviewees in Lezhi County claimed that rapid local

economic growth is the most important reason for their decisions to return and for their intentions to remain. Here are two examples.

> Zhongtian town has developed very rapidly in recent years. Pickling vegetables has long been a traditional industry in Zhongtian. The major reason that it developed so slowly before was due to bad transportation conditions. In recent years, local government has made a great effort on road construction. Now a highway from Chengdu to Chongqing goes through Zhongtian, and the whole industry has been totally driven up…. My pickle workshop is ancestral but I could not sell any of my stock out of town at that time, and thus, I had to migrate out…. After the road was constructed, the government identified Zhongtian town as an exclusive industry zone of pickled vegetables. Supporting facilities has since been gradually built up…. Currently, Sichuan province is the number one producer of pickled vegetables nationwide. In Sichuan, Zhongtian town is the second largest pickle production center. So I don't have any reason to migrate out again as long as I'm in this industry. (Respondent #5/44/Male)

> When I returned, I was originally planning to migrate out again. I thought that the family economic condition would be much better if we (interviewee and her husband) both worked…. And then this factory was built. It's right in front of the house. So when it recruited, I just came…Of course, it turned out to be much more convenient than migrating out. I can now earn some money and also take care of my children. I don't have to encounter all the hardships that I otherwise, would, in cities…. The compensation level is relatively low here and the work is heavy. But accordingly, my expenses were much less at home…. Many workers in these factories are the same as me. They also migrated out before, and returned to take care of children, and, they found that they could earn some money at the same time. You see, most of workers in these factories are females. (Respondent #8/38/Female)

6.5. Discussion and conclusions

According to the findings presented above, return migration is shaped by many different factors that operate at various levels. Recently, however, scholarly attention has been specifically attracted by the global financial crisis that begun in 2008. A large wave of return migration--six to nine percent of the total rural-urban migrant workers--was triggered by the financial crisis (Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security 2008; National Population and Family Planning Commission of China 2009; Sheng and Hou 2009). In this study, three out of 29 interviewed return migrants

(10 percent of the total) identified the global financial crisis as one of the causes of their return. This finding supports the literature that deals with the significant impact of the global financial crisis on return migration. Furthermore, this result indicates that having at least a poorly-paid job, is the key to survival for a rural migrant worker in urban China. Otherwise, many rural migrant workers have to return immediately to places of origin when they lose their jobs in the cities, due to extremely low social insurance coverage, low rate of home ownership, and low levels of social integration in the urban area.

Compared to the preponderance of discussions about the macro determinants of return migration after 2008, the research on the effects of micro and meso factors such as personal motivations and social norms on China's return migration is, however, insufficient due mainly to a lack of high quality data. This study thus contributes to the current literature by shedding light on the role of these factors in the context of China. Furthermore, the impacts of migration motivation on return migration are not discussed substantially in the literature. To that end, this study finds that return migrants tend to have weak migration motivations, and rely significantly on their family ties in destination cities. Thus their migration process becomes very vulnerable when their initial family ties are broken. There is some discussion about the impacts of personal capabilities on return migration. Based on the survey of return migrants in Qianan City of Hebei province, Wang and Bai (2009) argued that compared to urban labourers, migrant workers are more vulnerable to age discrimination, which is a common feature of the migrant labour market within destination cities. They further argued that the pension insurance coverage of migrants is poor, and forces older migrants to return. The findings of this study are, somewhat, consistent with this argument. Getting old is, indeed, one of the most frequently mentioned reasons in the

interviews for returning, while, female respondents even show stronger concern about age-related issues. However, further analysis of this topic calls into question some of the conclusions made by Wang and Bai (2009). Specifically, it seems that older migrants are not really forced to return to their places of origin. They can still find jobs in the cities; however, they choose to return voluntarily based on their feelings of affection for their home villages. In other words, "getting old" is more likely to indicate a preference rather than a physical limitation, according to this study.

Furthermore, some research indicates that migrants with a low educational attainment are more likely to return (Sheng and Hou 2009; Zhang and Wang 2009). In comparison, this study shows that return migrants with a low educational attainment do not normally identify their poor educational background as a reason for their return. It thus indicates that low educational attainment is not perceived as an explicit problem for migrants in the low-end of segmented urban labour markets. In addition, this finding also implies that the precarious migration process of rural migrant workers would be even more fragile and unstable, because, if migrants do not perceive their low educational levels as their problem, they will not be motivated to change it.

Human capital factors, such as education and experience, have been traditionally regarded as the major determinants of one's labour market performance. In terms of return migration, some analysts argue that the skills and experience accumulated in the cities are very important for return migrants (Chen and Wang 2009; Xu and Xing 2009). Such an argument is strongly supported by this study. Those who claimed that they have learned specialized skills, knowledge, or social abilities in the migration process, are much more economically successful in places of origin compared to those who did not. Specifically, it is found that the skills and experience gained in the cities

are very valuable resources for those who successfully started their own businesses upon their return to their places of origin. Furthermore, the positive effects of the skills and experience obtained in cities on their current earning performance are much more important than a formal education.

Next, the effects of behaviour and cognitive factors on labour market performance, are well documented in the literature (Heckman, Stixrud, and Urzua 2006). However, related discussions on return migrants and their resettlement are quite rare. This study, thus, attempts to shed some light on this topic. The results show that with a more cautious and independent return decision, a return migrant seems to attain a higher economic status in the place of origin. Furthermore, the findings on self-evaluation show that, the migrants, who felt good about themselves, were either unemployed, underemployed, or had low incomes; in comparison, those who ran their own businesses in places of origin, expressed greater anxieties about their current status and future.

Furthermore, according to the new migration economics, return migration could be explained as a response that emerges when the family strategy of rural-urban migrants is threatened in the cities (Stark and Bloom 1985; Galor and Stark 1991). This study supports this argument. First, marriage is an important factor in the return decision-making process. Both male and female respondents recognized marriage as an important consideration when they took return decisions. Second, taking care of families in the place of origin as an essential part of the family strategy seems to have an even stronger impact on their return behaviour than does marriage itself. Specifically, family care was reported as the direct cause of return for eight female respondents. Given the fact that females are normally responsible for most family care

in Chinese families, it comes as no surprise that female migrants are more affected by such factors.

This study has also put emphasis on social-related factors including social norms and social networks. The traditional sense of family as one of the most common social norms has been studied in China's return migration. Some researchers argue that home affection and place attachment are very important reasons causing migrants to return in China (Huang 1999). The findings of this study support such an argument. Homesickness is frequently mentioned by the respondents. Notably, both older returnees and those under 30 years old claimed that "homesick" is one of the major reasons for their return.

In terms of the effects of social networks on return migration, a case study in Jintang County of Sichuan province indicates that return migrants are normally isolated in the cities. It is thus very hard for them to build new social networks in cities, which can replace the deep ties of friends and family bonds that developed over the course of their early lives in rural villages. The emotional stress caused by the absence of a social networks in destination cities is an important reason for return migration (Chen 2009). In comparison, this study reaches a different conclusion. A new urban social networks was apparently established by most respondents when they decided to return. However, this new urban network tended to be very superficial and fragile, and moreover, it was not strong enough to affect their return behaviour. In other words, the urban social networks of migrants are neither push nor pull factors that affect return migration decisions.

In addition, previous studies also indicate that different types of social networks may have different impacts on the labour market performance of migrants (Ryan et al. 2008). But, the related research about the relations between different types of social

networks (workplace, neighborhood, family) and the economic performance of return migrants is inadequate in the literature. The results from this study suggest that different types of social networks have different kinds of impacts on returnees. Primary social networks seem to have very little effect on their current labour market performance. In comparison, the positive effects of advanced social networks (i.e., urban-friend networks, workplace network, and schoolmate network) are very important, especially for those who successfully started their own businesses in their places of origin.

Past experience has been identified as an important determinant of one's behaviour by behavioural economists (Bowles, Gintis, and Osborne 2001). Specifically, many researchers highlighted the impact of bad experiences in cities on return behaviour. For example, Yang and Yang (2006) argue that discrimination against migrants in cities is one of the major reasons for return migration; however, their argument is not supported by this study, where none of respondents recognized the experience of discrimination as a major cause of their return. The reason for this is because most of the migrants were prepared to encounter some level of discrimination in the cities prior to their migration. Thus, when they actually encountered this problem, they were able to cope with it.

The language barrier and the high living cost in the cities are widely reported as important obstacles to rural-urban migrants, and are important concerns in their return migration decisions (Yang and Yang 2006; Cheng 2007). According to this study, one third of the respondents reported that they suffered from language barriers in the cities; however, all of them managed to overcome this problem. It is worth noting that many respondents identified "the familiarity with the native dialect" as an important advantage of returning to their places of origin. In conclusion, language is a pull

factor that attracts migrants to return, but not a push factor that expels migrants from the cities. Next, in terms of the high living cost in cities, there is no evidence to show that this factor drives migrants away. In some cases, the respondents even claimed that they spent more money after their return.

The above analysis, based on the in-depth interviews in Sichuan and Jiangxi provinces, has explored the determinants of the return behaviour and the resettlement status of return migrants, in China. The study sheds some light on the roles of macro, meso, and micro factors, and generates a comprehensive understanding of the return migration process in China. As well, the discussions and findings of this study complement the current literature. However, due to the limitations of the sample, and the possible bias inherited in the qualitative research method, more studies on the return migration in various localities in China are necessary, in order to further substantiate these findings.

CHAPTER SEVEN

7. CONCLUSIONS

7.1. Summary of key findings

This study aims to understand the characteristics, behaviour, and labour market outcomes of rural-urban migrants, in different phases of their migration processes in China. In particular, the empirical research investigated the migrant labour market outcomes and return intentions of rural-urban migrants in urban Fujian, and explored the experience of returned migrants in migrant-sending areas in Sichuan and Jiangxi provinces. Finally, this chapter summarizes the key findings of the whole thesis according to the theoretical framework presented in Chapter Two.

First, the research finds that the multi-phased migration process of rural migrants in China is synthetically shaped by macro, meso, and micro factors, and further indicates that these factors are not likely to affect migrants simultaneously, that is, the significance and strength of each of the factors largely depends on considerations of space (i.e., places of origin and destination) and time (different phases in the migration process).

In the first stage of the migration process, migrants moved to cities and stayed on as migrant workers; the majority of these migrants were confined to the lower end of urban labour markets, with low wage levels, poor living conditions and a lack of social benefits coverage. They worked primarily as unskilled general labourers with little possibility for upward social mobility. They lived mostly in factory dormitories or in rental housing which were weakly connected to the urban community. Therefore, their physical environment makes it difficult to move out from the

entrapment of migrant labour markets, or to become integrated as members of the urban community. In terms of their *hukou* status (official rural/urban identity), the majority of the rural-urban migrants who are currently working in the cities still have agricultural household registration status, i.e., they are officially still peasants.

The overall condition of rural-urban migrant workers in the first phase of the migration process could be characterized as poor; they experienced low compensation levels, poor living conditions, poor urban-resident identity recognition, and a low-level of social integration. Consequently, all of these "urban life dilemmas" could possibly trigger the return intentions of rural-urban migrants when they were still working in their destination cities. This study further examines these influential factors in the process of shaping migrants' return intentions.

First, some relations have been found between economic conditions and their return intentions. Income issues and housing problems were reported as the second and third major considerations favouring their return intentions, in addition to family factors. Consequently, poor economic conditions and their derivative issues are important push factors when migrants make their decisions to return. But the findings from this study do not support the idea that high income would be a positive factor in driving them to settle in the cities.

Second, the relation between their identity recognition and migration behaviour is intriguing. *Hukou* registration status is the basic identity recognition for each individual in China. A non-agricultural *hukou* registration in a certain urban area is the prerequisite for accessing urban citizens' rights and welfare in that area. However, the results of this study reveal that the lack of non-agricultural *hukou* registration has no significant effect on migrants' return intentions. In fact, in addition to the declining influence on return intentions, the role of *hukou* registration status, which has been

traditionally recognized as one of the most influential factors that affect rural-urban migrants, has diminished in the entire migration process, according to the findings of this study. This result might be explained by the fact that except for a nominal cultural identity differentiation, the actual discriminatory and benefit loss caused by the *hukou* registration status for migrants has been largely diminished recently. In addition, the existing barriers that keep migrants away from urban resources and welfare (like social insurance, housing, education etc.) could be simply caused by other things, such as the applicability of social insurance programs or low income levels.

Interestingly, in contrast to the inconspicuous role of practical identity recognition (*hukou* registration), cognitive identity recognition--self-assessment--appeared to have a significant effect on their return intentions. For example, those who self-identify as rural peasants are more likely to return. In conclusion, even though, the direct effect of actual identity recognition has diminished, migrants could also be imperceptibly affected by the cognitive identity of "rural and urban people" through their living conditions and mass media, thereby affecting their migration behaviour.

Furthermore, the level of social integration in destination cities is found to be a significant factor that influences migrants' return intentions. The analysis indicates that social trust and the adoption of urban lifestyles are two significant negative factors on their return intentions, and with better local integration status, migrants are less likely to return. In other words, the isolation in cities is a breeding ground of return intentions.

Except for these push factors that cause their intentions to return, the connections with the places of origin are found to be important pull factors with regard to their return intentions. First, it seems that immovable property of migrants, such as land and the houses they possessed at their places of origin, are the essential considerations

when they make migration plans. This result is hardly surprising, given the fact that the majority of migrants cannot afford to purchase any housing in their destination cities, land and houses in their places of origin are critical “refuges” for their future lives.

In the migrant survey, 55 percent of respondents claimed that they were planning to engage in commercial and business activities after they returned, while the findings from interviews with actual return migrants indicate that they made a good choice. Those who returned and successfully started their own businesses in the places of origin have better economic and living conditions, compared to others. Analysis further revealed “the secrets” of their success, which are, first, the skills and experience they accumulated in urban employment settings; and second, the social networks they established in cities during their urban sojourn. This result regarding social networks leads to another interesting finding in this study that different types of social networks have different effects on the resettlement status of returnees. In particular, the primary social networks seem to have very little effect on their current labour market performance. In comparison, the positive effects of advanced social networks, such as the urban-friend social networks, the professional networks, and the schoolmate networks, are very pronounced.

It is worth noting that the importance of family-related factors with regard to return migration is revealed in the analyses of both return intentions and actual returnees. Family issues were reported as the major consideration when the interviewed returnees explained their return behaviour, and their significant effect on the return intention was also revealed by the regression model. Specifically, in the analysis of actual returnees, marriage is revealed to be an important influential factor in the return decision-making process. Moreover, taking care of families in the places of origin as

an essential part of the family strategy seems to have an even stronger impact on return behaviour than does marriage itself. In addition, "homesickness" is the most frequently mentioned term when interviewees explained their return behaviour. In short, return migration could be explained as a part of the migrant's family strategy.

7.2. Implications for migrant policies

First, for policy makers in the developed migrant-receiving regions, given the nature of the migrant labour market, it is important to implement and enforce existing labour regulations and policies, because effective monitoring of minimum wage policies and enforcing of mandatory social insurance programs are pressing issues facing local labour agencies. Furthermore, since industries value occupational skills significantly, local governments should develop occupational training programs that specifically target migrant workers. Tax breaks and subsidies could also be provided to those enterprises, in order to facilitate skill development at the corporate level.

Next, this study also finds that the threshold for rural migrants to be integrated into the urban communities is extremely high in developed migrant-receiving cities like Quanzhou. Therefore, abundant job opportunities, along with a high threshold of social integration, may be partly responsible for the extremely high mobility and instability of rural-urban migration in China. Thus, local governments may need to take effective measures to protect the rights of migrants, considering their high levels of social mobility. For example, temporary positions are severely problematic because employment contracts are required by Chinese labour laws, but are not strictly enforced at the local level. Therefore, policies are needed to improve the compliance rate by enterprises, especially small and private enterprises, to protect migrants' rights in cities.

For the under-developed migrant-receiving regions, this study first reveals that the labour markets in these areas are gender segmented, therefore, policy makers in these areas should be first fully aware of this issue, and then take actions to mitigate gender discrimination in local labour market.

Second, this study also finds that variables related to human capital are mostly insignificant in improving migrant earning performance in these regions. In other words, migrants in these areas are typically concentrated in the extreme low end of the labour market with low-level skill and education requirements. It is, thus, very hard for migrants to get an effective return on their human capital. However, a low return on human capital does not mean that migrants in these areas are utterly powerless or unable to improve their income-earning capacity. Migrants in these areas were more likely to depend on their urban social networks. For example, the case study in Ningde shows that, compared to developed regions, migrants in under-developed regions are more likely to purchase housing and eventually become settled and socially integrated in destination cities. Therefore, policy makers in these regions should pay more attention to the elimination of the social isolation and segregation of migrants, and endeavor to help them to integrate in the local communities.

In addition to social capital, self-employment was found to be a significant way to improve migrants' earnings in less developed areas. In fact, among all the factors included in the model, self-employment is the most effective variable in improving migrants' earnings. Therefore, policy makers should encourage migrants to consider various self-employment possibilities, and, more importantly, to provide necessary support that helps them to start their businesses, and protects their properties in cities.

Beyond migrant earnings, the evidence shows that housing conditions and social insurance coverage for migrants are not good in either developed or underdeveloped

regions. Most migrants were living in factory dormitories or rented housing. The average floor area is less than 10 m^2. However, the housing problem for migrants in cities is complex. It involves many subtle aspects, such as limited urban resources and migrant's preferences (some migrants prefer to live in temporary housing in cities to save money or to facilitate further migration). More research is required to examine this issue. In terms of social insurance coverage, the participation rates of the four national mandatory social insurance programs (unemployment, disability, medical care, and old-age pension) of migrants are extremely low. Three reasons could be attributed to these low coverage rates. First, the current urban social insurance programs are not well designed to meet the needs of highly mobile migrant workers. Second, factories, especially small-scale private enterprises, are known to ignore the rules and regulations with regard to social insurance, and the related supervisory authorities are normally ineffective at enforcing them. Third, social insurance programs for migrants, especially those with low levels of education, is not well delivered by the state or understood by the migrants. For instance, many poorly educated migrants in the survey reported that they had never heard of social insurance at all. These shortcomings in the delivery of social benefits need to be cautiously treated, in order to address the social insurance needs of urban migrants.

Losing large numbers of rural migrants may severely impact host cities, especially for labour intensive industries. To this end, if cities wish to retain migrants over the long run, the economic and social realities that largely affect migrants' return intentions must be clarified and addressed. First, among demographic and work variables, only the level of education significantly affects migration intentions. Therefore, increasing the level of education through training and adult schooling could be one of many options that urban policy makers can initiate, if retaining

migrants is deemed to be important for urban development. Second, and in spite of assertions to the contrary, the findings of this study show that *hukou* status is not a significant determinant of migrants' return intentions. As well, the diminishing role of *hukou* status has been affirmed by migrants during the in-depth interviews. This is not to say that policy makers should completely neglect the effects of the *hukou* system; rather, the results indicate that policy makers should not exaggerate the effects of the *hukou* system, and should pay more attention to other more influential factors, such as provision education for children in cities.

Furthermore, place attachment is found to significantly affect migrant return intentions. This indicates that helping rural migrants to build homes in host cities may play a critical role in the integration process of rural labour migrants. In addition, children's education in cities has been widely identified as an important determinant of migrants' return intentions. Such an argument is corroborated by in-depth interviews with return migrants. In particular, interviewees reported widely that the primary and secondary education of their children in the cities is no longer a severe problem; the real problem is kindergarten or preschool education. The fees are normally high, and accessible school resources are extremely limited. Many young mothers were, then, forced to return, in order to take care of their preschool children. Hence, policy makers should pay more attention to the issue of kindergarten education for migrants' children in the cities.

In addition, this study shows that the determinants of migration intentions are largely gender differentiated. As we have seen, the migration process of female migrants was far more likely to be affected by family-related factors such as marriage, child care, and elder care. Therefore, employers in the cities normally showed a strong preference for male migrants, in both initial recruitment and career promotion. Several

measures could be considered to address these issues. First, the coverage of the basic pension and medical insurance programs in rural China needs to be improved, in order to ease the pressures of elder care for migrant families. Second, as was discussed earlier, it is important to improve the quality of education for migrant children in the cities, especially at the kindergarten and preschool levels.

Finally, compared to the destination areas, migrant-sending regions are often resource poor, are constantly challenged by population pressures, and have few social and economic opportunities. Therefore, the arrival of large numbers of return migrants may exacerbate these problems in migrant-sending regions. In this regard, several studies reported that some major migrant-sending provinces in China have planned for the possibility of a sudden inflow of return migrants associated with economic fluctuations, such as those which occurred due to the global economic crisis in 2008. Such active planning may be important and effective, given the sheer number of return migrants nowadays (Sheng and Hou 2009; Zhang and Wang 2009). Furthermore, because return migrants tend to bring the skills and knowledge they accumulated in cities to their places of origin, and are likely to make full use of them, local governments should accept this as a competitive advantage for promoting local industry, and take effective measures to assist return migrants' reemployment at the local level. In particular, as some migrants are interested in starting their own businesses, policies to enhance access to capital through loans and credit for small business should be established.

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