

Social Identity and Settlement Intentions in Urban China: Evidence from CFPS 2014–2020

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Abstract. Based on micro-survey data from China, this paper systematically examines how social identity characteristics influence individuals' long-term and settlement intentions, focusing on the mechanisms of institutional and economic identities such as the hukou system and occupational structure. This paper considers housing assets as a proxy variable for long-term settlement capacity and uses a two-way fixed effects model to assess the impact of three core identity variables—urban hukou, full-time employment, and agricultural employment—on housing wealth. The results show that urban hukou significantly promotes housing asset accumulation, while agricultural occupations significantly inhibit this capacity. The effect of full-time employment status is unstable, possibly influenced by mobility factors. Further analysis of short-term settlement intentions reveals that both urban hukou and agricultural work positively influence individuals' residential choices, while the direction of the impact of full-time employment is heterogeneous. Furthermore, by introducing a moderation model for urban hukou and non-agricultural occupations, this paper reveals a complementary effect between identity characteristics, indicating that housing wealth accumulation capacity significantly increases and exhibits a complementary amplifying effect only when both are present. This paper expands the theoretical understanding of social identity and settlement behavior, emphasizing the nested relationship between institutional resources and occupational structure as one of the important mechanisms explaining social mobility and spatial governance in China.

Keywords: social identity, settlement intention, hukou system, occupational structure.

1. Introduction

Population migration and settlement have always been important issues of widespread global concern, with profound impacts on socioeconomic development and resource distribution. Among these, population agglomeration is a prominent research area that has attracted the attention of many scholars and policymakers [1], [2]. Over a long period, global population distribution and mobility have shown significant trends of change. Compared to developed countries with more mature economic development, population changes, migration, and agglomeration in developing countries exhibit greater volatility and complexity. Currently, approximately 80% of the world's population resides in developing countries, and the annual population growth rates for developed and developing countries are 0.3% and 1.5% respectively, indicating that developing countries lead in both population base and growth trends. Based on the enormous population size of developing countries and their

continuously evolving population patterns, changes in their population migration and settlement patterns have become an increasingly important and challenging issue [3].

In contemporary developing countries, population migration and settlement patterns usually follow certain regularities. These regularities reflect the social dynamics of population flow and also reveal institutional problems unique to developing countries. A 2023 research report by the National Institute of Urban Affairs points out that in many developing countries in Africa and Asia, populations show a trend of concentrating in large metropolitan areas and coastal cities. This trend is often accompanied by differences in income levels, infrastructure development, and urbanization rates, and population mobility and settlement in developing countries also exhibit significant “economically driven” and “policy-constrained” characteristics [4]. Numerous examples and studies indicate that specific patterns of population agglomeration may be a manifestation of imperfect social systems and further trigger a series of social problems [5], [6].

Such social problems arising from special population agglomeration patterns have appeared in multiple developing countries. In China, uneven resource allocation between cities and high housing prices has significantly increased residents’ living burdens, exacerbating urban problems such as traffic congestion, environmental pollution, and insufficient social resources [7]. Similarly, in Brazil, due to the overdevelopment of coastal cities like Rio de Janeiro, the federal government relocated the capital to Brasília in an attempt to alleviate the pressure of overpopulation. However, this measure only dispersed the capital's population to some extent but failed to fundamentally solve the problem of regional resource imbalance [8], [9]. In India, the significant urban-rural income gap prompts a large number of rural laborers to migrate to cities for higher wages. However, lagging urban infrastructure and excessive population agglomeration lead to the expansion of slums, housing shortages, and social stratification [10].

This phenomenon is not limited to major developing countries such as China, Brazil, and India, but is also a common challenge faced by many developing countries. With the acceleration of globalization and urbanization, the trend of large numbers of young laborers migrating to developed cities is becoming increasingly evident. This large-scale population movement profoundly affects individuals' life choices and further exacerbates potential problems such as urban-rural supply-demand imbalance and insufficient social services [11]. Therefore, this issue has become a key focus for academia, governments, and businesses alike. Leaders of various countries have also recognized the urgency of this issue and adopted different strategies to address it. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi once pointed out that rapid urbanization has led to slum expansion, inadequate housing, and extreme lack of infrastructure. He advocated for optimizing urban resource allocation through "Smart City" projects to provide more employment opportunities and public services for residents. Former Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan believed that high unemployment and population migration are among the main factors leading to poverty and social unrest. He proposed building more skills training centers to help urban migrant populations better integrate into the economic system¹.

Therefore, an in-depth exploration of the key factors influencing population settlement and agglomeration can provide important references for the socioeconomic development of developing countries and further offer insights for more balanced resource allocation and policy formulation globally. By studying this issue, one can better understand the intrinsic logic of population flow in the process of modernization and its profound impact on social structure, thereby promoting the optimization of social structure and urban development.

Based on the above background, this paper takes China, a typical developing country, as the research object, focusing on the settlement choices of its population. It explores how institutional identity and occupation type factors, through mechanisms of resource acquisition and social

¹ <https://smartcities.gov.in>

identification, jointly influence individuals' settlement intentions. This paper particularly focuses on two dimensions of identity: first, the urban-rural identity boundary formed by the household registration (*hukou*) system, and second, the occupational division between agricultural and non-agricultural work. It then examines how these two identities interweave in China's urbanization process to influence whether individuals choose to reside in their current homes or own property assets as an expression of their settlement intentions. Methodologically, this paper uses data from the CFPS from 2014–2020, employing a two-way fixed effects model and a Firth-corrected Logit regression model to systematically examine the impact of urban identity, occupational attributes, and individual background variables on settlement behavior. Furthermore, it introduces interaction terms to reveal potential complementary or substitute mechanisms between urban-rural systems and occupational structures.

The results indicate that urban-rural institutional identity has a significant impact on settlement behavior. Individuals with urban *hukou* are more inclined to reside in family homes and show higher investment in housing assets, suggesting that institutional identity influences individuals' urban settlement capacity through resource allocation and policy support. Simultaneously, occupational attributes are also important determinants of settlement behavior. Compared to agricultural workers, individuals engaged in non-agricultural work are more likely to settle in cities, and full-time employment significantly increases individuals' settlement intentions and housing investment, indicating that stable occupational identity not only enhances income expectations but also strengthens individuals' ability to form long-term plans in urban life. Finally, an interactive effect exists between institutional identity and occupational attributes. Empirical results show that the combination of urban *hukou* and non-agricultural occupations significantly strengthens settlement tendencies, and the coupling of institutional resources and economic capacity has a synergistic promoting effect on settlement behavior.

This paper systematically explores the key factors influencing the settlement behavior of Chinese residents from the two dimensions of institutional identity and occupational structure, expanding the research perspective in the field of population mobility and urban settlement. Its main contributions are threefold. At the theoretical level, this paper incorporates urban-rural *hukou* identity and occupational identity into the same analytical framework, revealing the linkage mechanism between institutional resource acquisition capacity and occupational stability in influencing individual settlement behavior, enriching the application and extension of social identity theory and migration decision models in the Chinese context. At the empirical level, based on nationally representative micro-tracking data from CFPS, this paper constructs dual settlement tendency indicators and employs Firth-logit and two-way fixed effects methods for robust identification, providing data support and quantitative evidence for current policy evaluations regarding new urbanization, optimal population distribution, and social integration. At the policy implication level, this paper reveals the restrictive effects of institutional identity and occupation type on urban settlement intentions, emphasizing that in promoting reasonable population flow and regional coordinated development, it is essential to simultaneously advance *hukou* system reform, improve the quality of non-agricultural employment, and optimize the supply of urban public services to achieve higher quality and more sustainable population settlement pathways.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Identity Shaping Factors

Research indicates that population settlement and agglomeration patterns are influenced by a combination of multiple factors, which can be broadly categorized into economic, social, and psychological factors. From an economic perspective, income level, employment opportunities,

housing costs, and infrastructure conditions constitute the core drivers affecting population migration and settlement. The classic migration model proposed by Harris and Todaro [12] suggests that expected income disparities are the primary mechanism driving rural labor migration to cities. Social factors include cultural environment, social networks, and accessibility of public services, which have a profound impact on shaping population settlement patterns by enhancing individuals' sense of belonging and security [13]. At the psychological level, identity has gradually become an important theoretical perspective for understanding population mobility and settlement behavior. Abrams [14] proposes that identity not only profoundly influences individual behavioral choices but also plays an important role in shaping social interaction patterns. Taking developing countries as an example, China, as the world's most populous country, exhibits unique complexity and importance in its population mobility and settlement issues. Shen [15] further points out that China's hukou system significantly restricts the possibility of rural populations migrating and settling in cities, with profound implications for the continued existence of the urban-rural dual structure.

However, the development of a market economy provides opportunities for individuals to achieve social mobility through occupational choices. Cui's [16] research indicates that occupational identity plays a crucial role in moderating the impact of hukou restrictions on population migration, especially in economically developed eastern coastal regions, where this trend is more pronounced. Furthermore, the interactive relationship between occupational identity and hukou identity is an important theoretical cornerstone for understanding China's population migration and settlement decisions. For example, Liu, Ren, and Fan's [17] empirical analysis points out that the diversification of urban employment opportunities and the implementation of urban-rural integration policies have significantly enhanced migrant workers' occupational identity, thereby strengthening their willingness to settle long-term in cities. These studies suggest that the dynamic relationship among economic development, policy optimization, and individual identity is an important topic for future exploration of China's population mobility and settlement behavior.

2.2. The Hukou System and Its Identity-Shaping Function

The hukou system originated from China's "Baojia system" during the Song Dynasty and gradually established the modern urban-rural dual hukou structure in the early days of the People's Republic of China. This hierarchical system strictly differentiated urban and rural residents, becoming an important basis for resource allocation [18]. In recent years, with socioeconomic development, policies have gradually relaxed, implementing reforms such as the points-based household registration system, the abolition of agricultural and non-agricultural hukou distinctions, and the opening of hukou in second and third-tier cities, attempting to break down urban-rural barriers and promote population mobility [19].

China's hukou system profoundly influences urban-rural resource allocation and social security systems, leading to significant inequality. In terms of resource allocation, urban residents enjoy better public services than rural residents, including education, healthcare, and employment opportunities. Secondly, in terms of social security, urban hukou holders receive higher benefits in old-age insurance, medical insurance, and housing welfare, while migrant workers and rural residents face more difficulties regarding old age, health, and housing issues [20]. Furthermore, the hukou system has aggravated the urban-rural dual structure, leading to a large influx of rural population into cities. Although they contribute to the urban economy, they still face immense employment and living pressures and do not enjoy the same social security benefits as urban residents, which further deepens the social divide between urban and rural areas [21]. As Pi & Zhang [22] pointed out, despite China's rapid economic development, the hukou system still leads to unequal resource allocation and social welfare, further exacerbating social inequality.

In the process of urbanization, the hukou system has played a crucial role. This institutional restriction deeply affects individuals' psychological identity and sense of belonging. On the one hand, hukou status serves as an important basis for resource allocation and social opportunities, significantly impacting individuals' sense of belonging when integrating into urban communities [23]. On the other hand, Cui [16] discussed the impact of the hukou system on resource allocation and the social identity of urban-rural migrant populations, pointing out that hukou restrictions directly affect individuals' sense of belonging and psychological identity to cities. Non-local hukou holders may face institutional exclusion, thus feeling psychologically marginalized, which affects their social identity.

2.3. Occupational System and Its Identity-Shaping Function

Occupational identity refers to an individual's identification with and sense of value regarding their professional role. It significantly affects their sense of social status, economic stability, and sense of belonging to their city of residence [24], [25]. High occupational identity often leads to higher social recognition and economic returns, making individuals more likely to feel a sense of belonging. Moreover, high-status occupations, through better living conditions, extensive social networks, and more resources, further enhance people's desire to settle in their current city. Simultaneously, Huot, S., & Rudman, D. L. [26], through empirical research on occupational identity and migration behavior, found that the positive relationship between occupational identity and urban belonging significantly influences individuals' settlement decisions. These studies support the link between occupational identity and settlement intentions, providing a reference for policymaking.

Job stability enhances individuals' sense of belonging to the city and increases their willingness to settle by providing reliable security and benefits, thereby reducing uncertainty in their lives [27]. In the Chinese context, civil servants and state-owned enterprise employees can enjoy housing, medical, and pension benefits provided by the state [28]. Research has found that individuals with high job stability are more inclined to reside long-term in cities, with this being particularly evident in small and medium-sized cities with comprehensive welfare systems [29]. At the same time, the concentration of career development opportunities critically impacts migration and settlement intentions, especially when career advancement is highly correlated with regional economic advantages [30].

Occupational identity influences individuals' settlement choices through various psychological and social mechanisms. First, occupational identity provides a clear social positioning, allowing individuals to gain social recognition and respect through their professional status, thereby strengthening their sense of belonging to the city they reside in [31]. Second, the sense of occupational achievement fulfills individuals' pursuit of value and meaning; high achievement is often associated with higher job satisfaction and a stable demand for living environment [32]. Additionally, occupations also establish extensive interpersonal connections through social networks, which can provide emotional support and practical resources, further solidifying individuals' intention to settle in the city [33].

3. Data and Methodology

3.1. Data

This paper is based on individual and household-level data from the China Family Panel Studies (CFPS) between 2014 and 2020. In the data processing, the following core variables were retained: "settlement intention" as the dependent variable, "identity" as the main independent variable, and demographic and socioeconomic characteristics such as age, gender, income level, and education

level as control variables. By integrating and merging data from each wave between 2014 and 2020, a solid data foundation and variable setup were provided for subsequent empirical analysis.

3.2. Variables

3.2.1. Dependent Variables

The dependent variables in this paper primarily include long-term settlement intention, housing asset value, and short-term residential status. Among them, short-term settlement intention (*is_home*) is a binary variable used to measure whether respondents intend to settle in their current place of residence, with a value of 1 indicating intention to settle and 0 indicating no intention. Housing asset value (*log_houseasset*) is a continuous variable, referring to the natural logarithm of the total value of household housing, serving as an important economic indicator for measuring the basis of individual long-term settlement. This variable reflects the household's asset accumulation level in their current location, thus to some extent reflecting their settlement capacity and intention.

3.2.2. Core Independent Variables

The core independent variables in this paper mainly include the respondent's hukou type, employment status, and occupational nature. These identity variables help reveal the impact of institutional differences on settlement intentions. First, whether one possesses urban hukou (*urban_hukou*) is a binary variable, with a value of 1 indicating the respondent has urban hukou and 0 indicating rural hukou. This variable reflects the institutional identity difference under China's urban-rural dual system, which is an important factor affecting access to social resources and residential choices. Second, whether one is engaged in full-time employment (*is_fulltime*) is also a binary variable, with a value of 1 indicating full-time employment and 0 indicating part-time or unemployed status.

It is used to measure the stability of individual labor participation and employment form, thereby affecting their long-term development plans in their current place of residence. Additionally, whether one is engaged in agricultural work (*is_agri_job*) is also a binary variable, with a value of 1 indicating the respondent primarily engages in agriculture-related occupations and 0 indicating non-agricultural occupations. This variable reflects the structural position of occupation type in the urbanization process, thereby potentially influencing their settlement choices.

3.2.3. Control Variables

This study also introduces a series of control variables to more accurately identify the impact of identity factors on settlement intentions. Among them, age is a continuous variable, recording the respondent's age at the time of the survey, aiming to control for potential influences of different life cycle stages on settlement choices; gender is a binary variable, with a value of 1 indicating male and 0 indicating female, used to control for systematic bias arising from gender differences; *educationdegree* is a categorical variable, reflecting the respondent's highest educational attainment, serving as an important indicator of human capital; *personal_allincome* is a continuous variable, recording the respondent's total personal income in the previous year, reflecting their economic capacity, to control for the interference of income differences on settlement choices.

In addition, county-level fixed effects (*countyid*) and year fixed effects (*year*) are introduced in multiple regression models to control for unobservable factors such as regional development level and time trends that might potentially affect settlement intentions, thereby improving the robustness and explanatory power of the model estimates. Through the design and control of the above variables, this study attempts to comprehensively present the potential relationship between identity

characteristics and settlement intentions, providing a solid data foundation and logical framework for subsequent empirical analysis. Variable definitions and descriptive statistics are shown in Table 1:

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Definition	N	Mean	SD	Range
is home	Is living at home	121954	0.683	0.465	1
log houseasset	House value	135073	11.31	3.451	18.2
urban hukou	Value of household property	119786	0.269	0.443	1
is fulltime	Is full-time employed	56447	0.363	0.481	1
is agri job	Is engaged in agricultural work	98257	0.428	0.495	1
age	Age	98911	45.52	18.07	95
gender	Gender	98911	0.497	0.5	1
nonagr	Is engaged in non-agricultural work	98257	0.572	0.495	1
educationdegree	Education level	121403	5.971	4.861	20
personal allincome	Personal income	135637	9880	24455	1.20E+06

3.3. Methodology

This study constructs individual-level longitudinal panel data based on the China Family Panel Studies (CFPS) data from 2014 to 2020, aiming to explore the impact of different social identity characteristics on individuals' settlement intentions. Given the differences in dependent variable types and data structures, this paper employs both a Two-Way Fixed Effects (TWFE) model and a Logit regression model to improve the accuracy of estimation results and causal explanatory power.

In the analysis of long-term settlement intention, this paper uses the logarithm of housing asset value ($\log_houseasset$) as the dependent variable. This variable is a continuous indicator with multiple time sections. In the modeling process, to control for unobservable heterogeneous factors at the time and regional levels, this paper employs a two-way fixed effects model, introducing fixed effects for both region and year dimensions. These are used to control for unobservable variables at the regional level and to capture time trends across different years, thereby reducing the interference of temporal variations on the results. The regression model is as follows:

$$Settle_{ipt} = \alpha + \beta identity_{ipt} + \mathbf{X}'_{ipt}\gamma + \tau_t + \mu_p + \varepsilon_{ipt}$$

where $Settle_{ipt}$ represents the settlement intention of individual i residing in province p in year t , $identity_{ipt}$ is the core independent variable representing identity, $\mathbf{X}'_{ipt}$ represents control variables, τ_t and μ_p are time and province fixed effects respectively, and ε_{ipt} is the random error term.

Regarding the measurement of short-term settlement intention, this paper further employs a Logit regression model for estimation. This model is suitable for determining the correlation between categorical variables and explanatory variables. Since the short-term residential status variable does not involve a multi-period panel structure, this model does not introduce fixed effects but focuses on examining the impact of different identity variables on current residential choices, and further explores this through a moderation effects model.

4. Empirical Results

4.1. Long-term Settlement Intention

This paper uses the logarithm of total housing assets ($\log_houseasset$) as a proxy indicator for individuals' long-term settlement capacity and intention, employing a two-way fixed effects regression model to examine the impact of three core identity variables on long-term settlement

intention. The regression results are presented in Table 1. First, from the regression results for urban hukou, this variable has a significant positive impact on housing asset value. Compared to rural hukou, individuals with urban hukou have a significant advantage in housing asset accumulation, demonstrating a strong long-term settlement capacity. Whether full-time employed (is_fulltime) did not show a significant impact.

Although full-time employment often implies a more stable employment status and source of income, its explanatory power for housing assets is limited. This may reflect the increasingly blurred boundaries between full-time and non-full-time work in the current labor market, or that other uncontrolled variables are more decisive for long-term settlement. Whether engaged in agricultural work (is_agri_job) showed a significant negative effect, indicating that individuals engaged in agricultural work are at a clear disadvantage in housing asset accumulation, and their long-term settlement capacity is relatively weak.

This may be related to factors such as unstable agricultural income and weak capital conversion capacity. Institutional identity and occupation type have a significant impact on long-term settlement intention, while the form of employment has limited explanatory power for housing assets as a long-term settlement intention. This finding indicates that in China's social structure, settlement intention is closely related to an individual's position within the institutional system and their economic foundation.

Table 2: The Shaping Effect of Identity on Long-term Settlement Intention

VARIABLES	(1) log_houseasset	(2) log_houseasset	(3) log_houseasset	(4) log_houseasset
urban_hukou	0.635*** (0.035)			0.705*** (0.079)
is_fulltime		-0.005 (0.062)		-0.086 (0.070)
is_agri_job			-0.166*** (0.037)	-0.126 (0.079)
age	-0.003*** (0.001)	0.000 (0.002)	0.004*** (0.001)	0.007*** (0.002)
gender	-0.005 (0.025)	0.014 (0.048)	-0.055** (0.028)	-0.037 (0.057)
educationdegree	-0.037*** (0.003)	-0.035*** (0.005)	-0.039*** (0.003)	-0.030*** (0.006)
personal_allincome	0.000*** (0.000)	0.000*** (0.000)	0.000*** (0.000)	0.000*** (0.000)
Observations	85,855	25,285	67,240	17,710
R-squared	0.131	0.179	0.140	0.219
Standard errors in parentheses				
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1				

4.2. Short-term Settlement Intention

When examining individuals' short-term settlement intentions, Table 4 shows that both identity attributes and occupation types influence residential choices to some extent. First, urban hukou has a stable and significant positive impact on short-term settlement, indicating that institutional identity still plays an important role in shaping individuals' willingness to settle temporarily. Individuals with urban hukou are more inclined to maintain stability in their current residence, possibly reflecting the advantages of accessing social resources and public services associated with urban hukou. The influence of occupational variables exhibits some heterogeneity.

Agricultural workers are significantly more inclined to short-term settlement in multiple models, suggesting that the strong geographical dependence of agricultural occupations and relatively stable lifestyle contribute to their short-term settlement intentions. In contrast, the effect of full-time employment is unstable, showing opposite results in different models, indicating that the impact of this variable on settlement intentions may be influenced by factors such as individual mobility expectations, industry differences, or sample composition, warranting further detailed analysis in future research.

Urban identity and agricultural occupation have a relatively stable positive effect on short-term settlement intentions, while the labor market embeddedness reflected by full-time employment has a more complex impact on settlement intentions. This finding reveals the important shaping mechanism of institutional identity and occupational attributes on population spatial choices in the context of urbanization in developing countries.

Table 3: The Shaping Effect of Identity on Long-term Settlement Intention

VARIABLES	(1) is_home	(2) is_home	(3) is_home	(4) is_home
urban_hukou	0.487** (0.247)	0.079*** (0.015)		
is_fulltime	-4.434*** (1.419)		2.516*** (0.108)	
is_agri_job	3.704*** (1.420)			0.136*** (0.014)
Observations	39,698	109,227	54,031	88,071
Standard errors in parentheses *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1				

4.3. Complementary Role of Institutional and Occupational Identity

To further identify the interactive relationship between institutional identity and occupational attributes on housing wealth accumulation, this paper introduces an interaction term design for urban hukou and non-agricultural occupation (nonagr). The regression results show that the interaction term between the two is significantly positive in all models, revealing a significant complementary effect between institutional resources and occupation type. Urban hukou and non-agricultural occupation do not independently affect housing wealth, but rather work synergistically to jointly promote the increase in housing assets.

A single non-agricultural occupation did not show a significant positive effect on housing wealth, and while the effect of urban hukou was positive, its marginal increase in housing wealth was limited

without the support of a non-agricultural occupation. In contrast, when individuals simultaneously possess both urban hukou and non-agricultural occupational attributes, their housing asset level significantly increases, forming a cumulative effect. This result verifies that the advantage of institutional identity needs to rely on the modernity of occupational structure to achieve more effective wealth conversion, and the economic returns of non-agricultural occupations also need to be embedded in the urban institutional environment to be realized.

Therefore, the dual matching of urban institutional embeddedness and occupational modernization is an important prerequisite for promoting individual housing wealth accumulation. The above findings not only emphasize the structural role of social identity in the process of economic accumulation but also further corroborate the institutional logic and occupational path dependence behind housing wealth inequality in developing countries.

Table 4: Complementary Role of Institutional and Occupational Identity

VARIABLES	(1) log_houseasset	(2) log_houseasset	(3) log_houseasset
interaction	0.650*** (0.098)	0.616*** (0.095)	0.805*** (0.044)
urban_hukou	0.159* (0.090)	0.175** (0.089)	
nonagr	-0.049 (0.040)		-0.060 (0.039)
age	0.002** (0.001)	0.003*** (0.001)	0.003** (0.001)
gender	-0.041 (0.028)	-0.045 (0.028)	-0.040 (0.028)
educationdegree	-0.037*** (0.003)	-0.038*** (0.003)	-0.037*** (0.003)
personal_allincome	0.000*** (0.000)	0.000*** (0.000)	0.000*** (0.000)
Observations	67,112	67,112	67,112
R-squared	0.145	0.145	0.145
Standard errors in parentheses *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1			

4.4. Visual Comparison of Identity Characteristics on Long- and Short-term Settlement Intentions

Building on the empirical analysis presented earlier, to further enhance the intuitiveness and interpretability of the results, this paper uses figures and tables to illustrate the impact pathways of three core identity variables—urban hukou, full-time employment, and agricultural employment—on settlement intentions and housing wealth accumulation. It specifically highlights the marginal effects of identity variables on short-term settlement intentions and uses the mean housing assets as an indicator to depict the interactive effects between institutional identity and occupational structure, thereby helping to understand how social identity characteristics shape individuals' settlement choices across different dimensions.

Figure 1 shows the average marginal effects of the three identity variables on the probability of short-term settlement. The results indicate that the marginal effect of urban hukou is positive and its confidence interval does not cross zero, suggesting that urban identity, to some extent, increases the probability of individuals choosing to reside at home. Agricultural work has a particularly significant impact on settlement intentions, with a positive and large marginal effect, indicating that agricultural workers are more inclined to settle locally due to strong occupational geographical dependence and high migration costs. In contrast, the marginal effect of full-time employment status is significantly negative, and its confidence interval is also far from zero, suggesting that, after controlling for other variables, the mobility characteristic of full-time employment may weaken individuals' short-term settlement tendency, reinforcing the empirical finding that there is an asymmetric impact between identity variables and settlement behavior.

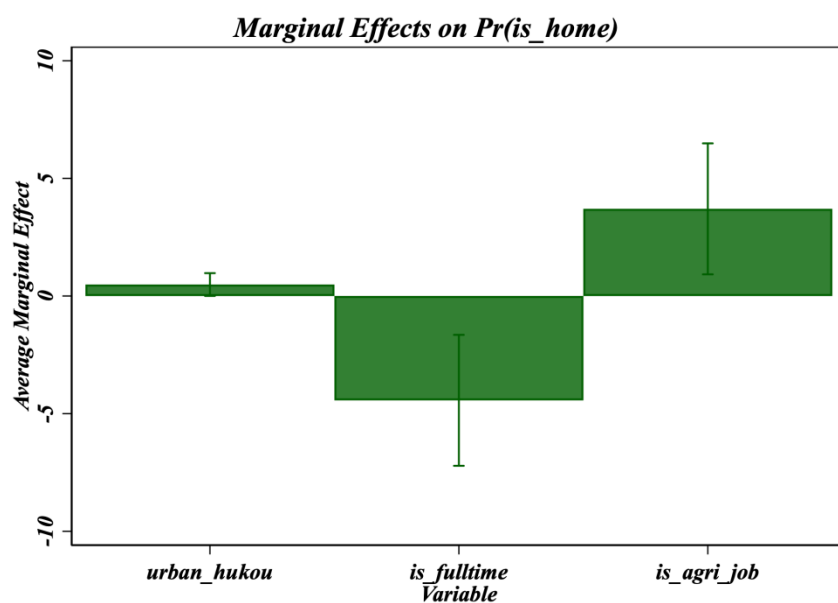


Figure 1: Marginal Effects on Pr(is_home)

Figure 2 further illustrates the wealth disparity among four combinations of urban hukou and non-agricultural occupations, using the mean housing wealth as an indicator. It can be seen that the fourth group, combining urban hukou with non-agricultural occupations, has significantly higher housing wealth levels than the other groups, demonstrating a notable cumulative effect from the 叠加 of identities. While individuals with only urban hukou (Group 3) or only non-agricultural employment (Group 2) have slightly higher housing wealth than Group 1, none reached the level of Group 4. This result directly supports the hypothesis that institutional identity and economic occupation have complementary effects, meaning that individuals' housing wealth accumulation capacity is most significant only when they possess both urban institutional resources and non-agricultural economic opportunities.

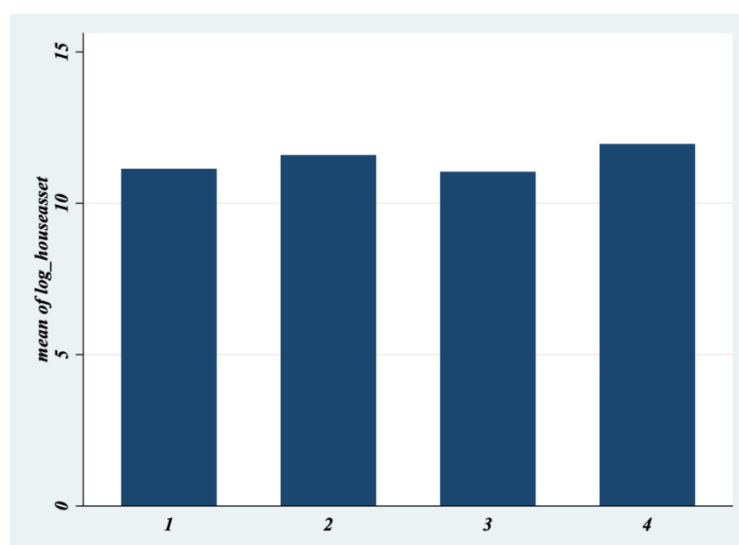


Figure 2: Housing Wealth Levels Across Different Population Groups

5. Conclusion

This study, based on data from the China Family Panel Studies (CFPS) from 2014 to 2020, systematically analyzed the impact of social identity characteristics on settlement intentions, revealing the crucial role of the hukou system and occupation type in shaping individuals' spatial choices. The research found that urban hukou significantly and positively influences individuals' long-term and short-term settlement intentions, indicating that institutional identity remains an important basis for acquiring settlement resources and forming a sense of urban belonging. At the same time, agricultural work significantly enhances individuals' short-term settlement intentions, but shows a clear disadvantage in long-term housing accumulation, reflecting the dual impact of occupation type on settlement stability and economic capacity. Furthermore, the interaction between urban hukou and non-agricultural occupations significantly and positively impacts housing wealth accumulation, exhibiting a complementary effect, meaning that when both are present, they produce a synergistic effect greater than the sum of individual variables.

Based on these findings, this paper proposes three policy recommendations. First, further reforms to the hukou system should be promoted to lower institutional barriers for non-urban hukou groups to settle in cities. The coverage of basic public services should be expanded in small and medium-sized cities, allowing more rural hukou populations to enjoy education, healthcare, and housing security, thereby enhancing their settlement intentions and capabilities. Second, the stability needs of agricultural workers in short-term settlement should be addressed by strengthening rural infrastructure construction and public service provision to improve their quality of life, while also guiding rural laborers to shift to non-agricultural industries to enhance their long-term housing accumulation capacity. Third, policy design should consider the complementary mechanisms between identities, establishing linkage mechanisms in vocational training, urban settlement policies, and housing support. This should particularly focus on supporting migrant populations who have both non-agricultural employment and the intention to settle in cities, unleashing their potential for housing accumulation. Through the synergistic optimization of institutional identity and occupational structure, population mobility can be more effectively promoted, urbanization quality can be improved, and urban inclusivity and sustainable development capacity for diverse groups can be enhanced.

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