

# **The Impact of Acculturation on Settlement Intention of Chinese Rural-Urban Migrants: the Mediating Roles of Socioeconomic Status and Psychological Well-being**

Zhongshan Yue

Department of Sociology  
Xi'an Jiaotong University  
28 West Xianning Road,  
Xi'an, Shaanxi Province, 710049, China  
Email: [zhshyue@xjtu.edu.cn](mailto:zhshyue@xjtu.edu.cn)  
Tel & Fax: +86-29-8266-8384

Zhixuan Chen

Department of Sociology  
Xi'an Jiaotong University  
28 West Xianning Road,  
Xi'an, Shaanxi Province, 710049, China  
Email: [czx0710@stu.xjtu.edu.cn](mailto:czx0710@stu.xjtu.edu.cn)  
Tel & Fax: +86-13624994730

Shuzhuo Li

School of Public Policy and Administration  
Xi'an Jiaotong University  
28 West Xianning Road,  
Xi'an, Shaanxi Province, 710049, China  
Email: [shzhli@mail.xjtu.edu.cn](mailto:shzhli@mail.xjtu.edu.cn)  
Tel & Fax: +86-29-82668384

\*Extended abstract prepared for presentation at the European Population Conference 2024, Edinburgh, Scotland. This study is supported by the National Natural Science Foundation of China (72174165) whose support is gratefully acknowledged.

## **Abstract**

Like their international counterparts, rural-urban migrants in developing countries such as China experience a process of acculturation. The socioeconomic and psychological determinants behind settling in cities among rural migrants have been well explored in existing literature. However, few studies have addressed the impact of acculturation on settlement intention of rural-urban migrants. Using data from a survey of migrant workers in 2015-2016 in Guangdong, China, this paper goes beyond examining the link between acculturation and settlement intention and explores mediating roles of socioeconomic status (SES) and psychological well-being for this association. Based on latent class analysis, four categories of acculturation are identified, including two subtypes of integration and two subtypes of separation. The mediating effects of socioeconomic status (assessed by perceived SES and housing conditions) and psychological well-being (assessed by life satisfaction) are partially confirmed. Compared with migrants who belonged to subtypes of separation, individuals who adopted two types of integration strategies tend to settle in cities, because integrated migrants generally enjoyed higher levels of socioeconomic status and psychological well-being than separated ones.

## Background

In recent decades, China has experienced rapid urbanization and accelerating rural-urban migration. By the end of 2020, 63.89% of China's population lived in urban areas, of whom about 249.14 million were rural-urban migrants (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2021). Within China, household registration (*hukou*) functions as something akin to an internal passport for migration and has contributed to the formation of two societies, rural and urban, within a single country (Chan, 1994). Rural-urban migrants without local *hukou* face challenges of acculturation and socioeconomic mobility that are similar to those of international immigrants. Because of their great number and important economic and social impacts on Chinese society and beyond, increasing scholarly attention has been paid to rural-urban migrants. Some scholars even link rural-urban migration to the prospect of social reintegration between rural society and urban society in China (Liang 2016).

Migrants of the young generation have stronger desires to settle in cities. However, under the *hukou* system, rural-urban migrants are generally excluded from city societies, including access to institutes of higher education, city-wide social welfare programs and many types of jobs. Most of them are far from being integrated into the mainstream of city societies. In existing literature, the socioeconomic and psychological determinants behind settling in cities among rural migrants have been well explored. Like their international counterparts, rural-urban migrants in developing countries such as China also experience a process of rural-urban acculturation. However, few studies have addressed the impact of acculturation on settlement intention of rural-urban migrants. A recent study (Xie et al., 2023) explored the effect of acculturation on rural migrants' settlement and the moderating roles of period of urban stay and migration patterns for this link. Nevertheless, it does not further analyze the mechanisms for this association, and its measures of acculturation are relatively rough. Due to the above reasons, the strength of culture may be underestimated.

To fill this gap, using data from a survey of migrant workers in 2015-2016 in Guangdong, China, this paper goes beyond examining the link between acculturation and settlement intention and explores mediating roles of socioeconomic status (SES) and psychological well-being for this association. Based on latent class analysis, categories of acculturation are identified. The mediating effects of SES (assessed by perceived SES and housing conditions) and psychological well-being (assessed by life

satisfaction) are examined behind the link between acculturation and settlement intention.

### **Mechanisms of Acculturation Affecting Settlement Intention**

In this paper, we aim to explore how acculturation determines settlement intention and attempt to unravel the “black box” in which this process occurs. Yue et al. (2020) constructed a multidimensional and bicultural framework of acculturation for rural migrants in China, bridging the gap of previous unidimensional analysis framework (Figure 1).

*Figure 1 about here*

Below we outline the rationale of our theoretical reasoning. Based on the push and pull theory, whether in urban or rural areas, there are countless cultural factors which act to hold people within the area or attract people to it, and there are others which tend to repel them. Nevertheless, we may distinguish different categories of people who have similar responses to the same general sets of factors of urban and rural cultures. In practical research, however, it is difficult to give a definitive set of cultural factors affecting the settlement intention, other than to list those that seem to be particularly important and to note the average response of the majority group. The application of the multidimensional and bicultural framework can help us to identify these important cultural factors, from which we can categorize rural migrants into different cluster. Different acculturation strategies represent different attitudes of rural migrants towards urban and rural cultures, i.e., the pushing and pulling forces of urban and rural cultures, which determine their settlement intention. For example, integration implies that rural migrants have positive attitudes towards acquiring and retaining all dimensions of urban and rural cultures, in other words, both urban and rural cultures have strong pulling forces. If the pulling forces of urban cultures are stronger than that of rural cultures, we predict that rural migrants are more likely to settle in cities. Conversely, we predict that they are more likely to return to their hometowns or enter non-agricultural occupations. Accordingly, we expect that acculturation strategies are embedded in the pushing and pulling forces of urban and rural cultures, which have a direct effect on settlement intention.

But it is not clear why culture exerts pushing and pulling forces, and the strength of culture may not be as direct as we think. The diverse elements that compose culture and social structure can be arranged in a hierarchy of causal influences from “deep”

factors to “surface” phenomena, which underlie aspects of everyday behavior and are nevertheless crucial (Portes, 2010). In the multidimensional and bicultural framework, social ties as well as cultural identity visualize the pushing and pulling forces of culture and may be an important reason why acculturation has a direct effect on settlement intention. However, factors such as dialect and values, which are located at a much deeper level, are seldom invoked in the course of everyday life and require exceptional circumstances to bring their value to the fore (Portes, 2010). Thus, we expect that the strength of culture is complex and that the effects of acculturation on settlement intention cannot be generalized from direct effects.

Specifically, culture assumes the function of socialization. When rural migrants enter the city, a socio-cultural space that is very different from the countryside, they are bound to face a process of re-socialization. Under the circumstances, cultural factors, especially values, underlain aspects of everyday behavior, are “invoked” and suggest norms for cities to integrate members of society. Rural migrants must try to conform to these norms in order to gradually become qualified members of urban society. Acculturation at this time is not only a process of cultural change resulting from continuous contact between two cultures (Hunt et al., 2004), but also a process by which culture leads rural migrants to re-socialize in order to reposition themselves in the urban society and shape new social roles. If they respond negatively to re-socialization and reject the norms of urban society, they are likely to face role conflict or role strain, and suffer from significant pushing forces of culture and acculturation stressors, leading to lower psychological well-being and a greater reluctance to settle in cities. Conversely, rural migrants who are well re-socialized can switch roles effortlessly and thus enjoy higher psychological well-being and are more likely to settle in cities.

Along with normative expectations, culture also develops the instrumental skills needed for individuals to achieve integration and switch social roles (Portes, 2010). The urban cultures acquired by rural migrants, such as urban dialect and individual modernity, are the embodied form of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1983), which can be invested in labor market and receive corresponding returns. In this way, cultural capital can be further transformed into economic capital and realize its instrumental function, thus influencing their settlement intention. For instance, language proficiency may enhance employment opportunities, but it is difficult for rural migrants who are incompetent in the local language to find jobs, especially well-paid jobs. Rural migrants’ higher level of individual modernity, such as completing jobs on time, planning their

affairs in advance, and valuing novelty, can make them more competent in their jobs, earn more money, and be promoted more quickly(Yue et al., 2021). Therefore, we expect acculturation to be a process by which rural migrants accumulate cultural capital, helping to enhance their socioeconomic status and making them more willing to settle in cities.

In addition, studies analyzing the effect of acculturation on mental health have demonstrated the psychological and socioeconomic advantages of being bicultural(Yue et al., 2021). Accordingly, we expect that rural migrants whose acculturation strategies are more integration-oriented enjoy better psychological well-being and higher socioeconomic status, and to be more likely to settle in cities than other types of rural migrants.

## **Data and Methods**

The data used in this paper come from a social survey of rural migrants conducted from late December 2015 to March 2016 in Guangzhou. With a strong industrial base and well-developed tertiary industry, Guangzhou has been one of the main receiving cities for rural migrants in China. At the end of 2015, Guangzhou had a resident population of 13.5 million, of which 36.73% were migrants (including types of migrants other than rural-urban migrants)(Guangzhou Statistics Bureau, 2016). Because there is no sampling frame that can be used for migrants, the survey adopts a quota sampling method. Respondents were rural-urban migrants over 15 years old without Guangzhou hukou. After excluding the unqualified samples, the final sample size of the survey is 1621. The quota sampling method biases the data, which may limit the ability to generalize the findings. However, due to the relatively large and diversity of our sample, the data can be useful for analyzing the link between acculturation and settlement intention.

The dependent variable in this paper is settlement intention, which includes four options: “agricultural returnees”, “non-agricultural returnees”, “settlers” and “undecided”. The independent variable in this paper is acculturation, which is measured based on the multidimensional and bicultural framework using Cantonese proficiency, the use of native dialect/Mandarin Chinese when talking with urbanites in Guangzhou, urban social ties, rural social ties, individual modernity, attitudes toward culture maintenance, urban identity, and rural identity. A mediating variable in this paper is

psychological well-being, assessed by life satisfaction. The other is socioeconomic status, assessed by perceived SES and housing conditions. In addition, this paper controls for common demographic characteristics, migration characteristics, and other factors that may affect settlement intention in order to examine the net effect of acculturation (see Table 1).

*Table 1 about here*

All of the above variables measuring acculturation were used in latent class analysis to identify acculturation strategies of rural migrants. Through ANOVAs and post-hoc comparisons, we can characterize and compare settlement intention, psychological well-being, and socioeconomic status of rural migrants by acculturation cluster. Subsequently, we used OLS regression and multinomial logistic regression in order to preliminarily explore the mediating effects of psychological well-being and socioeconomic status. Finally, we further use the KHB model to decompose the mediating effects of psychological well-being and socioeconomic status.

### **Preliminary findings**

After combining AIC, BIC, aBIC, Entropy, LMR LRT p-values, and ALMR LRT p-values, a four-class acculturation model was the best fit for the data. As shown in Table 2, C1, C2, C3 and C4 accounted for 25.85%, 23.81%, 21.08% and 29.26% of the total sample respectively. In order to distinguish between these four classes, apart from calculating the mean and standard deviation of the acculturation variables in each cluster, we calculated range score (RS), plus urban composite RS and rural composite RS. For more detailed calculations, please see Yue et al.(2020).

*Table 2 about here*

Continuing the research(Yue et al., 2020), we can define Berry's(2005) four categories of acculturation based on the urban composite RS and rural composite RS. "Integration" should have a positive urban composite RS and a positive rural composite RS, "assimilation" should have a positive urban composite RS and a negative rural composite RS, "separation" should have a negative urban composite RS and a positive rural composite RS, and "marginalization" should have a negative urban composite RS and a negative rural composite RS. Since both C1 and C3 have negative urban composite RS and positive rural composite RS, they are two subtypes of the separation category: C1 has the highest rural composite RS and its urban composite RS is negative

but small in absolute value; C3 has the lowest urban composite RS and the second lowest but positive rural composite RS. By contrast, C1 has a higher SES (see Table 3) and has more potential to move to the integration category; C3 is more vulnerable in terms of both socioeconomic status and psychological well-being (see Table 3) and is at greater risk of falling into marginalization. Thus, we define C1 and C3 respectively as “integration-potential separation” and “marginalization-risk separation”. There are also two subtypes of integration category: C2, with higher rural composite RS and lower urban composite RS, is “rural-oriented integration”; C4, with higher urban composite RS and a lower rural composite RS, thus is “urban-oriented integration”.

Subsequently, we compare settlement intention and mediating variables by acculturation cluster in Table 3. The Pearson chi-square test shows that settlement intention is significantly related to acculturation. In contrast, C2 and C4 are more likely to become “settlers” or “non-agricultural returnees”, while C1 and C3 have higher possibility to be “agricultural returnees”. Among the mediating variables, ANOVAs show that perceived SES, housing conditions and life satisfaction are significantly associated with acculturation. In socioeconomic status, the post-hoc analyses show that C4 has a significantly higher perceived SES than C1, C2 and C3, while C2 and C4 have significantly better housing conditions than C1 and C3. In psychological well-being, post-hoc analyses show that life satisfaction is significantly higher in C2 than in C1, C3 and C4, and there is no significant difference between C1 and C4. In summary, C2 and C4 enjoy higher socioeconomic and psychological well-being.

*Table 3 about here*

Table 4 gives the results of OLS regressions for perceived SES, housing conditions and life satisfaction. To assess the socioeconomic status and psychological well-being resulting from acculturation, we ran three models using C4 as the reference group. The results show that C4 has the highest socioeconomic status and C2 has the highest psychological well-being. Overall, there have both socioeconomic status and psychological well-being advantages of being bicultural.

*Table 4 about here*

Table 5 gives the results of the multinomial logistic regressions for settlement intention. To assess the direct effect of acculturation on settlement intention, as well as the mediating effects of perceived SES, housing conditions, and life satisfaction, we ran a model using C4 as the reference group. For example, by contrast, for every unit increase in life satisfaction, the odds of C3 becoming “agricultural returnees” rather



than “settlers” will decrease by 32.1%.

*Table 5 about here*

Figure 2 summarizes the effects of acculturation on mediating variables, the effects of mediating variables on settlement intention, and the tests of the mediating effects. As shown, at least two coefficients are statistically significant between acculturation and perceived SES, housing conditions, and life satisfaction.

*Figure 2 about here*

Table 6 gives the total, direct and indirect effects resulting from the KHB decomposition. Acculturation has a significant effect on rural migrants’ settlement intention. For instance, C3 is the most likely to become “agricultural returnees” rather than “settlers”, followed by C1, C2 and C4; the direct effects of C1, C2 and C3 accounted for 83.66%, 103.32% and 77.97% of the total effects, respectively.

*Table 6 about here*

In contrast to C4, acculturation has at least one significant indirect effect on settlement intention. For example, in terms of the indirect effect of C1, C1’s perceived SES is relatively lower than C4’s. Via perceived SES, their odds of becoming “agricultural returnees” rather than “settlers” are significantly higher, accounting for 7.1% of the total effect. Compared to C4, C1 has worse housing conditions, through which they are significantly more likely to be “agricultural returnees” rather than “settlers”.

## **Summary and discussion**

Our research adds to a growing body of literature on the link between acculturation and settlement intention in two ways. First, our paper breaks through the unidimensional analytical framework and verifies the settlement effect of acculturation based on a multidimensional and bicultural framework (Yue et al., 2020), hoping to raise the importance of culture in related research. Second, this paper further explores the mechanisms of acculturation on settlement intention, revealing how the deeper forces of culture gradually come to the fore in the decision-making process of rural migrants’ settlement intention.

Firstly, we use latent class analysis to identify four acculturation strategies of rural migrants, including two subtypes of integration and two subtypes of separation, and the absence of assimilation and marginalization in Berry’s (2005) model. ANOVAs verify

the socioeconomic and psychological advantages of being bicultural.

The regression results show that acculturation strategies have a significant effect on both types of well-being. Meanwhile, acculturation strategies, psychological well-being and socioeconomic status have significant effects on settlement intention. These suggest both that acculturation can directly influence rural migrants' settlement intention and that psychological well-being and socioeconomic status are two possible mediators. The former reflects the direct strength of culture to influence settlement intention. Urban and rural cultures each have their own pushing and pulling forces on rural migrants' settlement intention, with urban cultures playing pulling roles, making it more likely that rural migrants will choose to stay in the city or return home for non-agriculture employment. Specifically, the pulling forces of urban cultures are the voluntary or involuntary acquisition of urban cultures by rural migrants. If they feel difficulties and pressure in the process of acculturation, and resist the acquisition of urban cultures, the pulling forces of urban cultures will be transformed into pushing forces for them to choose to return home. Similarly, rural cultures exert pulling forces that enhance the willingness of rural migrants to return home. But these pulling forces may also be converted into pushing forces under certain conditions, prompting them to stay in the city.

Finally, this paper tested the mediating effects of psychological and socioeconomic status using the KHB decomposition. The results show that bicultural orientation, i.e., integration, enjoys superior psychological well-being and higher socioeconomic status compared to separation. On the one hand, the cultural space of urban society, which is very different from that of rural society, presents to rural migrants the cultural norms that they must observe in order to become qualified members of urban society. The closer rural migrants are to such norms, the more likely they are to be integrated in urban socio-cultural spaces, face less pressure to switch roles, and enjoy higher levels of life satisfaction. On the other hand, the cultural capital accumulated by rural migrants through the process of re-socialization in the city has an instrumental function that can be converted into superficial socioeconomic status. Psychological well-being and socioeconomic status, which are influenced by different cultural forces, help them to better identify their positions and increase their urban-settlement intention.

The findings of this paper have some policy implications. On the one hand, in the process of accelerating the urbanization of the rural migrants, attention should be paid not only to increasing the urbanization rate of the household population, but also to the

cultural and psychological “civilization” of rural migrants. On the other hand, rural migrants returning home for non-agriculture employment are one of the important groups in the revitalization of the countryside, and they have deeper emotional and cultural connections to the countryside than urban residents supporting rural revitalization, and they are more likely to return to build the countryside by the pulling forces of rural cultures. Furthermore, while the direct impact of acculturation on settlement intention is self-evident, it is also important to pay attention to the psychological and socioeconomic consequences of acculturation in order to actively guide the process of re-socialization and civilization of rural migrants.

## References

- National Bureau of Statistics of China. (2021). Main data of the 7th national Population Census [Major Figures on 2020 Population Census of China]. [http://www.stats.gov.cn/tjsj/zxfb/202105/t20210510\\_1817176.html](http://www.stats.gov.cn/tjsj/zxfb/202105/t20210510_1817176.html)
- Li Qiang & Li Ling. (2014). Peasant Workers' Modernity and Urban Adaptation from the Perspective of Acculturation. *Nankai Journal (Philosophy, Literature and Social Science Edition)*, 3, 129–139.
- Liang Zai. (2016) China's Great Migration and the Prospects of a More Integrated Society. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 42(1), 451-471.
- Berry, J. W. (2005). Acculturation: Living successfully in two cultures. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 29(6), 697–712. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2005.07.013>
- Bourdieu, P. (1983). The forms of capital. *Handbook of Theory and Method*.
- Hunt, L. M., Schneider, S., & Comer, B. (2004). Should “acculturation” be a variable in health research? A critical review of research on US Hispanics. *Social science & medicine*, 59(5), 973–986.
- Portes, A. (2010). Migration and social change: Some conceptual reflections. *Journal of ethnic and migration studies*, 36(10), 1537–1563.
- Xie, S., Chen, J., & Wei, L. (2023). The strength of culture: Acculturation and urban-settlement intention of rural migrants in China. *Habitat International*, 138, 102855.
- Yue, Z., Fong, E., Li, S., & Feldman, M. W. (2020). Acculturation of rural–urban migrants in urbanising China: A multidimensional and bicultural framework. *Population, Space and Place*, 26(1), e2278. <https://doi.org/10.1002/psp.2278>
- Yue, Z., Wang, B., Li, S., Fong, E., & Feldman, M. W. (2021). Advantages of being bicultural: Acculturation and mental health among rural-urban migrants in China. *Cities*, 119, 103357.

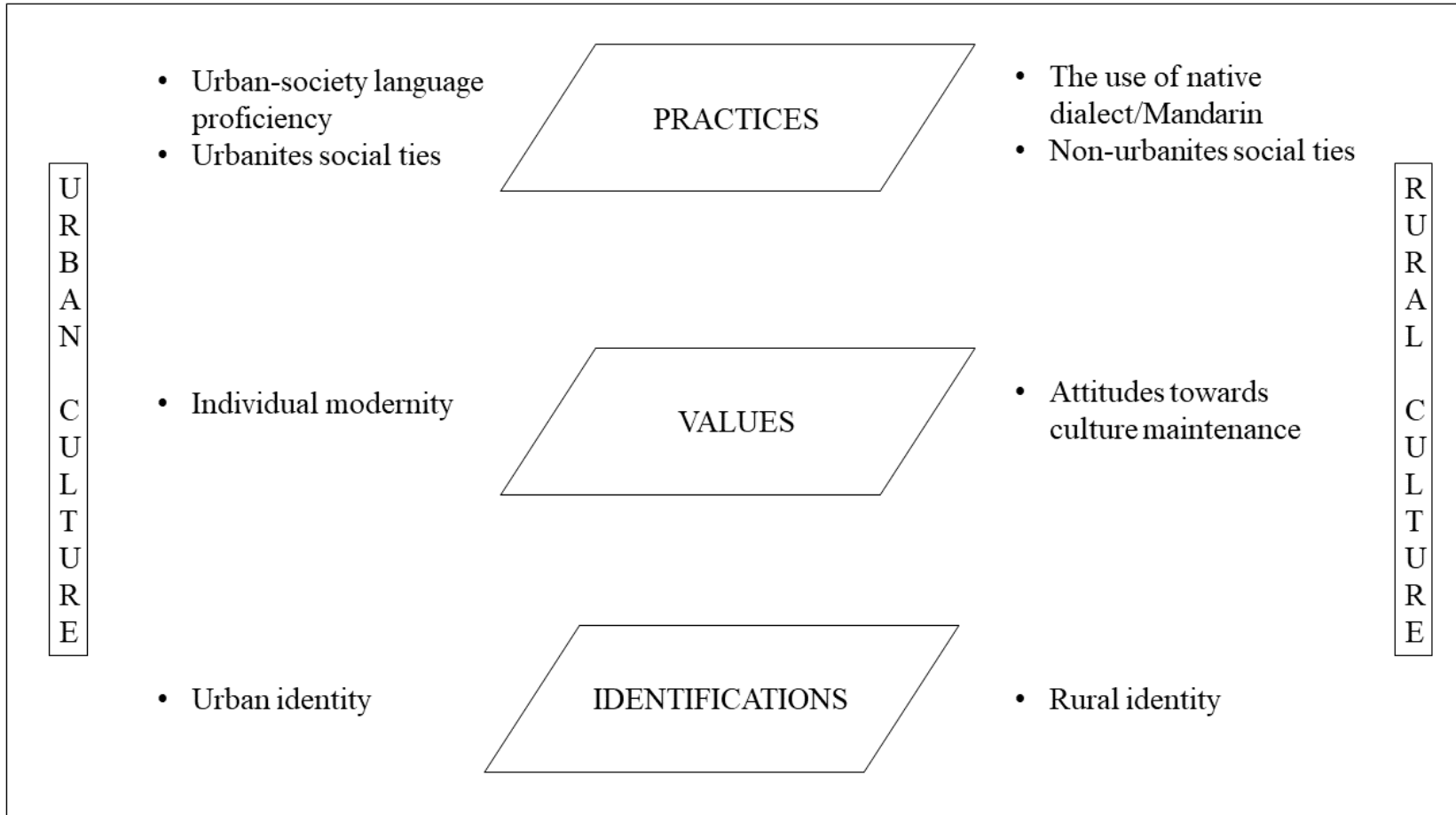


Figure 1 A multidimensional and bicultural framework of acculturation (Yue et al., 2020)

**Table 1. Descriptive information about variables (N=1466)**

Variable	Mean / Percentage	SD	Range
<b>Settlement intention</b>			
Agricultural returnees	13.44%	/	0, 1
Non-agricultural returnees	24.15%	/	0, 1
Settlers	33.42%	/	0, 1
Undecided	28.99%	/	0, 1
<b>Acculturation</b>			
Rural culture			
Using of native dialect/Mandarin			
Speak Cantonese	28.58%	/	0, 1
Bilingual	11.73%	/	0, 1
Speak native dialect or Mandarin	59.69%	/	0, 1
Nonurbanite ties	8.68	11.10	0-199
Cultural maintenance	3.71	0.66	1-5
Rural identity	4.03	0.62	1-5
Urban culture			
Cantonese proficiency			
Cannot understand	21.56%	/	0, 1
Can understand some Cantonese but cannot speak	23.33%	/	0, 1
Can both understand and speak some Cantonese	22.78%	/	0, 1
Proficient in Cantonese	32.33%	/	0, 1
Number of local urbanites	1.45	3.17	0-30
Individual modernity	2.45	0.36	1-3
Urban identity	3.01	0.81	1-5
<b>Socioeconomic status</b>			
Perceived SES	4.22	1.62	1-10
Objected SES: housing conditions	6.75	1.67	1-9
<b>Psychological well-being</b>			
Life satisfaction	2.90	0.71	1-5
<b>Characteristics of rural migrants</b>			
Individual characteristics			
age	34.19	11.18	15.67-77.58
Education attainment (ref. primary school or below)			
Junior high school	41.75%	/	0, 1
Senior high School, vocational school, or technical secondary school	29.26%	/	0, 1
College or university	13.10%	/	0, 1
Male (ref. female)	52.05%	/	0, 1
Han Chinese (ref. Minority ethnicity)	96.86%	/	0, 1
Married (ref. unmarried)	65.48%	/	0, 1
Income (natural logarithm)	8.15	0.67	0-10.60
Plow land (ref. no)	82.67%	/	0, 1
Migration characteristics			
Duration of stay (years)	7.54	6.68	0.83-37.58

Interprovincial migration (ref. intraprovincial migration)	58.80%	/	0, 1
Working status			
Number of weekly working hours	61.55	19.03	4-147
Type of occupation (ref. manual workers)			
Semi-manual workers	49.18%	/	0, 1
Non-manual workers	28.17%	/	0, 1
Self-employed (ref. employee)	26.88%	/	0, 1

**Table 2. Rural composite RS and urban composite RS of acculturation clusters (N = 1466)**

	Rural composite RS	Urban composite RS
C1: Integration-potential separation (N=379, 25.85%)	0.61	-0.04
C2: Rural-oriented integration (N=349, 23.81%)	0.48	0.09
C3: Marginalization-risk separation (N=309, 21.08%)	0.41	-0.21
C4: Urban-oriented integration (N=429, 29.26%)	0.12	0.23



**Table 3. Settlement intention, perceived SES, housing conditions and life satisfaction by acculturation clusters.**

	C1: Integration-potential separation		C2: Rural-oriented integration		C3: Marginalization-risk separation		C4: Urban-oriented integration		ANOVA or chi-squared test
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	F/Pearson chi-squared
Settlement intention									100.537***
Agricultural returnees	0.203	/	0.129	/	0.168	/	0.054	/	
Non-agricultural returnees	0.251	/	0.258	/	0.275	/	0.196	/	
Settlers	0.293	/	0.269	/	0.233	/	0.497	/	
Undecided	0.253	/	0.344	/	0.324	/	0.254	/	
Socioeconomic status									
Perceived SES	3.989	1.714	4.430	1.381	3.544	1.620	4.725	1.525	38.260***
housing conditions	6.443 <sup>a</sup>	1.790	6.960 <sup>b</sup>	1.546	6.579 <sup>a</sup>	1.772	6.972 <sup>b</sup>	1.537	9.579***
Psychological well-being									
Life satisfaction	2.877 <sup>c</sup>	0.752	3.130	0.651	2.636	0.652	2.885 <sup>c</sup>	0.680	31.507***

Note. / denotes not applicable. Within each row, means with the same superscript letter (i.e., a, b, or c) are not significantly different from one another. \*p<0. 05, \*\*p<0. 01, \*\*\*p<0. 001

**Table 4. Results of OLS regression models on perceived SES, housing conditions and life satisfaction.**

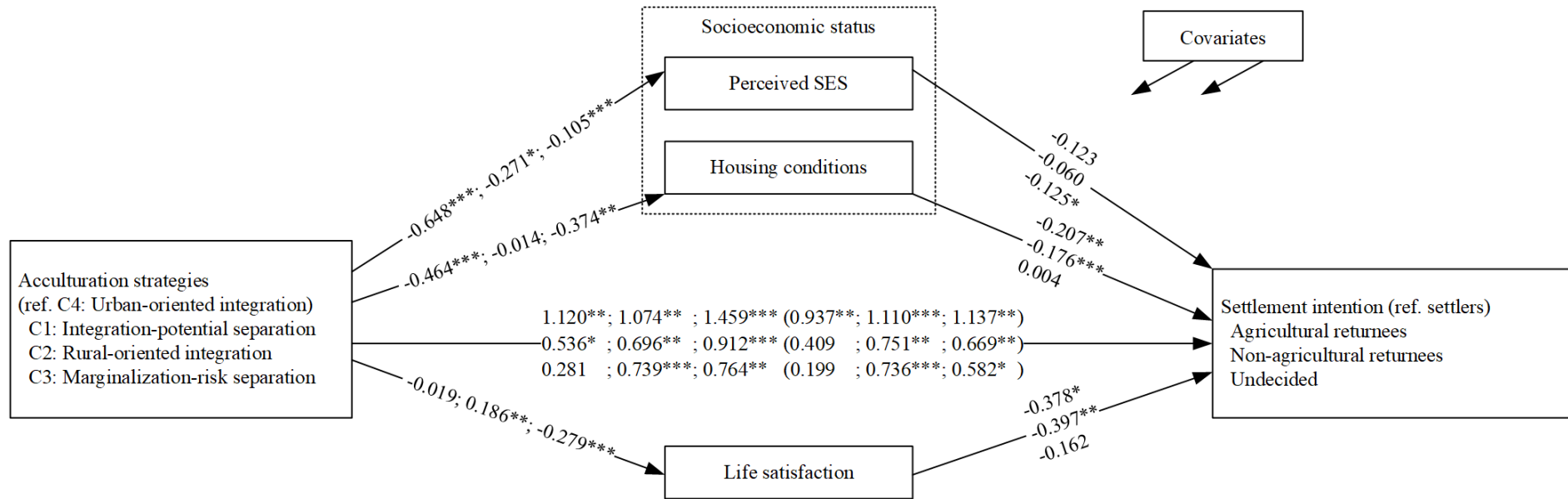
Variable	Perceived SES	Housing conditions	Life satisfaction
	B(SE)	B(SE)	B(SE)
Acculturation strategies (ref. C4: Urban-oriented integration)			
C1: Integration-potential separation	-0.648*** (0.123)	-0.464*** (0.129)	-0.019 (0.053)
C2: Rural-oriented integration	-0.271* (0.124)	-0.014 (0.129)	0.186** (0.054)
C3: Marginalization-risk separation	-1.105*** (0.133)	-0.374** (0.138)	-0.279*** (0.138)
Covariates		Controlled	
Constant	3.513***	5.934***	1.634***
Observation	1256	1256	1256
R <sup>2</sup>	0.109	0.104	0.119
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.096	0.092	0.107

Note. \* p<0. 05, \*\* p<0. 01, \*\*\* p<0. 001.

**Table 5. Results of multinomial logistic regression models on settlement intention (ref. settlers)**

Variable	Agricultural returnees	Non-agricultural returnees	undecided
	OR/logit	OR/logit	OR/logit
<b>Acculturation strategies (ref. C4: Urban-oriented integration)</b>			
C1: Integration-potential separation	2.552** / 0.937** (0.864) / (0.339)	1.505 / 0.409 (0.337) / (0.224)	1.221 / 0.199 (0.267) / (0.210)
C2: Rural-oriented integration	3.035** / 1.110** (1.067) / (0.352)	2.120** / 0.751** (0.484) / (0.228)	2.087*** / 0.736*** (0.437) / (0.209)
C3: Marginalization-risk separation	3.119** / 1.137** (1.147) / (0.368)	1.952** / 0.669** (0.488) / (0.250)	1.789* / 0.582* (0.419) / (0.234)
<b>Socioeconomic status</b>			
Perceived SES	0.884 / -0.123 (0.063) / (0.071)	0.942 / -0.060 (0.051) / (0.054)	0.882* / -0.125* (0.045) / (0.051)
Housing conditions	0.813** / -0.207** (0.052) / (0.064)	0.839*** / -0.176*** (0.042) / (0.050)	1.004 / 0.004 (0.050) / (0.050)
<b>Psychological well-being</b>			
Life satisfaction	0.679* / -0.387* (0.111) / (0.164)	0.672** / -0.397** (0.084) / (0.125)	0.850 / -0.162 (0.100) / (0.117)
<b>Covariates</b>		<b>Controlled</b>	
Constant	1.246 / 0.220 (2.244) / (1.801)	4.598 / 1.526 (6.798) / (1.478)	8.959 / 2.919 (11.466) / (1.328)
Observation		1256	
Pseudo R2		0.116	
Chi-square		388.96***	

Note. Settlement intention (ref. stay in the city). () denotes standard error. \* p<0.05, \*\* p<0.01, \*\*\* p<0.001.



**Figure 2 Regression coefficients for the link between acculturation and settlement intention**

Note. The coefficients for C1, C2, and C3 in each path are shown in order. The coefficients between acculturation and each mediating variables are standardized regression coefficients, derived from OLS regressions; the coefficients between acculturation and settlement intention and between each mediating variables and settlement intention are logit values, derived from Mlogit regressions. Numbers in parentheses are the direct effects of acculturation affecting willingness to stay, controlling for all mediating variables. The coefficients at the top, middle, and bottom of each path correspond to the three categories of settlement intention in addition to the reference group, respectively.

**Table 6. KHB decomposition results for mediating effects (ref. settlers)**

	Agricultural returnees			Non-agricultural returnees			undecided		
	Coef.	z	percent	Coef.	z	percent	Coef.	z	percent
<b>Total effect</b>									
C1	1.120**	3.34	100.00	0.536*	2.43	100.00	0.281	1.36	100.00
C2	1.074**	3.07	100.00	0.696**	3.08	100.00	0.739***	3.57	100.00
C3	1.459***	4.04	100.00	0.912***	3.75	100.00	0.764**	3.36	100.00
<b>Direct effect</b>									
C1	0.937**	2.77	83.66	0.409	1.82	76.16	0.199	0.95	70.79
C2	1.110**	3.16	103.32	0.751**	3.29	107.91	0.736***	3.52	99.51
C3	1.137**	3.09	77.97	0.669**	2.68	73.39	0.582*	2.49	76.15
<b>Indirect effect</b>									
C1	0.183*	2.08	16.34	0.128	1.77	23.84	0.082	1.59	29.21
C2	-0.036	-0.44	-3.32	-0.055	-0.83	-7.91	0.004	0.08	0.49
C3	0.321**	2.95	22.03	0.243**	2.76	26.61	0.182**	2.61	23.85
<b>Via perceived SES</b>									
C1	0.080*	2.00	7.10	0.039	1.08	7.23	0.081*	2.25	28.81
C2	0.033	1.38	3.09	0.016	1.00	2.32	0.034	1.62	4.58
C3	0.136	1.70	9.31	0.066	1.10	7.26	0.138**	2.38	18.12
<b>Via housing conditions</b>									
C1	0.096**	2.40	8.58	0.081**	2.53	15.19	-0.002	-0.09	-0.71
C2	0.003	0.11	0.28	0.003	0.14	0.36	0.000	-0.07	-0.01
C3	0.077*	2.08	5.31	0.066*	2.20	7.20	-0.002	-0.11	-0.21
<b>Via life satisfaction</b>									
C1	0.007	0.33	0.66	0.008	0.38	1.42	0.003	0.33	1.11
C2	-0.072*	-2.00	-6.69	-0.074*	-2.31	-10.59	-0.030	-1.30	-4.08
C3	0.108*	2.12	7.41	0.111**	2.64	12.15	0.045	1.32	5.94

Note. \* p<0. 05, \*\* p<0. 01, \*\*\* p<0. 001.