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Migrations Like Any Other? Internal Migrations of Immigrants in the French Countryside (2011-2015)

SHORT ABSTRACT

A well-known feature of the demographic renewal of the French countryside is the settlement of international migrants. However, internal migrations of immigrants towards rural areas have been largely understudied. Through the study of census data (INSEE, 2013), this paper brings another perspective on the demography and geography of immigration in France, by analyzing internal migrations of immigrants in metropolitan France between 2011 and 2015, especially towards rural and suburban areas. It shows strong evidence that the movement of immigrants has been a key factor in the demographic growth of rural areas, especially through the process of suburbanization. The results reveal the similarities between immigrant and non-immigrant individuals who migrated towards the countryside (in terms of age, family situation and occupational categories); they also highlight several features which are specific to the situation of immigrants in rural areas.

LONG ABSTRACT

The literature on the location of immigrants focuses on their concentration in urban areas, in France as well as in many Western countries. This concentration is the result of successive waves of cumulative migrations, which tend to maintain the existing location patterns. However, new patterns of immigrant settlement have been unveiled in several countries, including settlement in non-gateway cities and regions or non-metropolitan areas (Lichter, Johnson, 2006; Massey, 2008; Hardwick, 2014; Farrell, 2016). In France, the arrival of immigrants in rural areas has been studied through the lens of the demographic renewal of these areas: in the 2000s, *international migrations* towards rural areas have developed, especially migrations from North-European countries (Buller, Hoggart, 1994; Cognard, 2011), accounting for the complexity of globalization and urbanization processes beyond major cities.

In this paper, we aim at shifting the attention to *internal migrations* of immigrants towards non-metropolitan (i.e. suburban and rural) areas, in order to better understand the role of immigrants in current spatial and demographic transformations of our societies.

Firstly, this paper gives a new look at the geography of immigration in France, showing that the changes in the residential patterns of immigrants in France are not only the result of international

migrations, but also of internal mobilities of immigrants. In other words, this paper studies the participation of immigrants to contemporary processes of social and demographic changes in non-metropolitan areas, such as the suburbanization and the demographic renewal of remote rural areas.

Secondly, this paper aims at questioning the relevance of the immigration criterion in the study of residential mobilities towards rural and suburban areas: what are the socioeconomic and demographic individual characteristics of immigrants migrating towards the countryside? Are these characteristics different or similar to the ones of non-immigrant movers?

Data and methods

To accomplish our goals, we use the French census data of 2015 at the individual level. This is the most detailed source of data to analyze geographical and residential patterns of immigrant settlement, especially outside major urban centers. The data describe the individual characteristics and the location of more than 230 000 immigrants who have done an internal migration in France between 2011 and 2015. To describe extensively non-metropolitan areas, we use a French functional typology (the *Zonage en Aires Urbaines 2010*) that allows to identify suburban areas as well as more remote rural areas, and that contains about 39% of total population and 18% of immigrants in France.

In the first part of the paper, we describe the evolving patterns of immigrant settlement due to internal migrations. We also conduct a cartographic analysis (Fig. 1 for instance) to assess the differences between the patterns of international immigrant settlement and the patterns of internal immigrant settlement. In the second part of the paper, we conduct several binary logistic regression models to find out the determinants of internal migration towards the countryside of both immigrants and non-immigrants and compare the two of them. The first models include traditional individual characteristics (sex, age, household composition, socio-professional categories, education level and geographical context of residence before the migration). The second type of models include additional characteristics for immigrants only - current nationality, country of birth and duration of stay in France – to control for the heterogeneity of immigrant groups (Table 1).

Results

This presentation is based upon a paper recently published in a French peer-reviewed journal (Fromentin, 2019). Thus, most of the analysis has already been conducted, even though we are still working on this question as part of a larger project.

1/ Patterns of internal mobility of immigrants towards non-metropolitan areas

We first show that on a national scale, and including urban centers, internal migrations of immigrants reproduce the general pattern of immigrant settlement in France. However, suburban areas appear slightly overrepresented among internal migrations of immigrants in comparison with their overall spatial distribution. We also demonstrate that suburban areas are specialized in the arrival of internal immigrants while remote rural areas have been much more concerned with direct international migrations in the recent years (Fig. 1). This leads to a differentiated geography of recent arrivals of immigrants in France.

2/ Determinants of internal migrations for immigrants and non-immigrants

Models 1b and 1c show common determinants of internal migration (towards urban, suburban or rural areas) between immigrants and non-immigrants. Life-cycle effects, social effects and household composition effects are similar between the two populations: internal migration tend to occur more at young ages, for couples and among highly educated people. However, internal migrations appear more socially selective among non-immigrants than immigrants.

In terms of internal migrations towards suburban and rural areas, models (2b and 2c) also show strong similarities in the determinants of migration: individuals aged of 45 to 59 years old are more likely to move to the countryside, as well as women and people living as families (rather than couples). The geographical context of the previous place of residence is also an important determinant, as people coming from the countryside are much more likely to do an internal migration to another non-metropolitan area. However, the determinants are socially different between immigrants and non-immigrants: while for non-immigrants, migration towards non-metropolitan areas is mostly a low-class type of migration; for immigrants, it is also a self-employed (such as traders and craftsmen) and retiree characteristic, which suggests the existence of very specific profiles among immigrants moving to the countryside.

3/ Determinants of internal migrations towards non-metropolitan areas among immigrants

The last series of models focus on the immigrant population only, to study the heterogeneity of this group in terms of internal migrations towards non-metropolitan areas. It proves a significant effect of the country of birth: immigrants from the EU are more likely to do an internal migration towards rural and suburban areas; as well as immigrants that have been living in France for many years and those who have acquired French nationality (model 4).

There are also important differences in the determinants of internal migrations towards suburban or remote rural areas. Immigrants moving to suburban areas are more likely to be quite young, belong to middle or upper classes, and come from countries of Africa or Asia. On the other hand, internal migration of immigrants towards remote rural areas are the fact of immigrants recently arrived in France, born in EU countries, stayed foreigners, living in couples and self-employed (traders, craftsmen).

Figure 1. The geography of internal and international migration in France in 2015

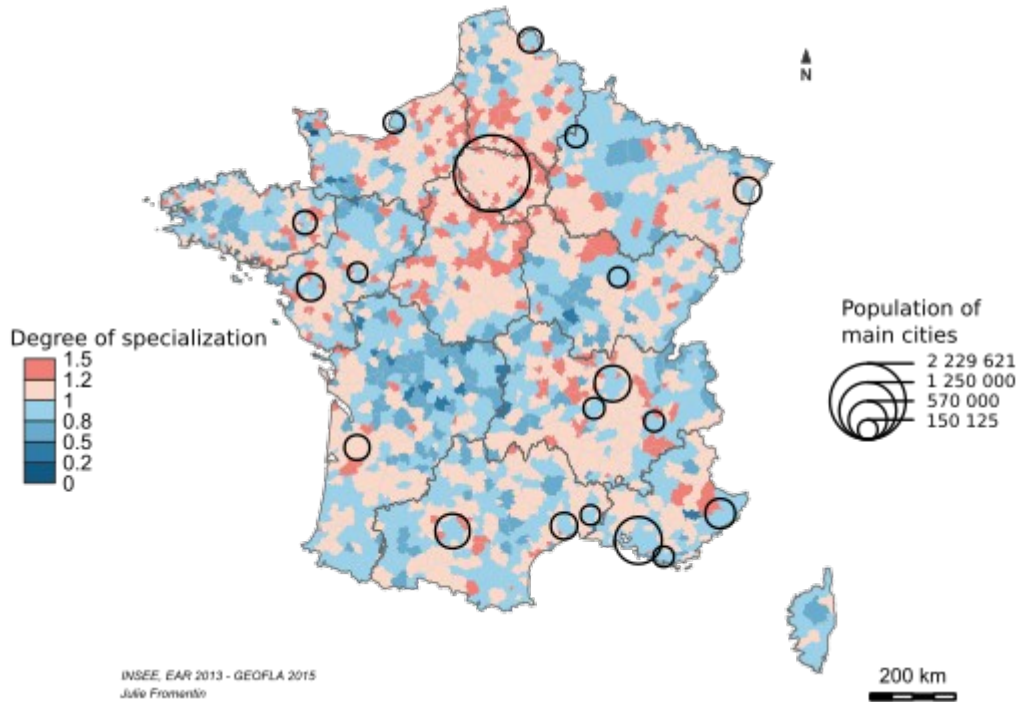


Table 1. Description of the binary logistic models

Model	Dependent variable	Independent variables	Population
Model 1a	Internal migration (VS no migration)	Immigration status, sex, age, origin of migration, socio-professional categories, household composition, level of education	immigrant and non-immigrant population
Model 1b	Internal migration (VS no migration)	sex, age, origin of migration, socio-professional categories, household composition, level of education	non-immigrant population
Model 1c	Internal migration (VS no migration)	sex, age, origin of migration, socio-professional categories, household composition, level of education	immigrant population
Model 2a	Internal migration towards non-metropolitan areas (VS towards metropolitan areas)	Immigration status, sex, age, origin of migration, socio-professional categories, household composition, level of education	immigrant and non-immigrant population
Model 2b	Internal migration towards non-metropolitan areas (VS towards metropolitan areas)	sex, age, origin of migration, socio-professional categories, household composition, level of education	non-immigrant population
Model 2c	Internal migration towards non-metropolitan areas (VS towards metropolitan areas)	sex, age, origin of migration, socio-professional categories, household composition, level of education	immigrant population
Model 3	Internal migration (VS no migration)	Country of birth, duration of residence in France, current nationality, sex, age, origin of migration, socio-professional categories, household composition, level of education	immigrant population

Model 4	Internal migration towards non-metropolitan areas (VS towards metropolitan areas)	Country of birth, duration of residence in France, current nationality, sex, age, origin of migration, socio-professional categories, household composition, level of education	immigrant population
Model 5a	Internal migration towards suburban areas (VS internal migration towards other non-metropolitan areas)	Country of birth, duration of residence in France, current nationality, sex, age, origin of migration, socio-professional categories, household composition, level of education	immigrant population
Model 5b	Internal migration towards remote rural areas (VS internal migration towards other non-metropolitan areas)	Country of birth, duration of residence in France, current nationality, sex, age, origin of migration, socio-professional categories, household composition, level of education	immigrant population

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