The Determinants of Internal Migration In Turkey

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Abstract

Internal migration has had a great impact on Turkey’s population dynamics for decades. According to the 2000 population census, nearly 28% percent of the population was born in a different province that they now reside in. This ratio goes up to 62% for Istanbul, a major province that has drawn migrants for years. Although, it is claimed in numerous studies that rural-urban migration that centers on a few urban areas seems to be the predominant pattern of internal migration, we aim to investigate further to see if new patterns of internal migration have emerged.

The immense socioeconomic differences between regions shape inter-regional migration. The dynamics of migration differ across regions as each region has its unique geographical and socioeconomic structure. However, previous studies suggest that despite these differences, there are common economic and social factors that affect internal migration.

Gender differences also have an important role in determining internal migration patterns, which is apparent when we consider the differences in reasons for migration between different genders. Although education levels have increased significantly for females over the last decade, marriage and dependent migration still overwhelm other relevant factors such as job seeking. This shows that one needs to distinguish between different genders when analyzing internal-migration.

Thus, this paper presents an empirical study on the determinants of internal migration in Turkey. Using data from the 1990 and 2000 population censuses, we present a descriptive analysis and estimate an extended gravity model of migration. We show that both economic factors such as income differentials and unemployment rates, and social factors such as presence of social networks have a significant impact on migration. Moreover, following in part the approach of family migration models, we examine the effect of uncertainty on migration in our model.

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