

Modern Territorial and Socio-Demographic Specifics of Long-Distance Commuting in Russia



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Abstract. The uneven spatial development of Russia is manifested not only in the heterogeneity of residents' settlement, but also in the transformation of the socio-economic sphere, including local labor markets shrinkage, which inevitably affects migration mobility. One of the most common types of migration is return short-term labor migration (otkhodnichestvo), in particular, long-distance commuting. Taking into account the socio-economic and socio-cultural contrasts of urban and rural areas, it is important to understand the differences in the scale of long-distance commuting and in the portrait of migrants themselves. The aim of the research is to assess regional differences in the contribution of rural and urban population to long-distance commuting, to identify socio-demographic characteristics of rural and urban rotational labor migrants. The information base includes data from the All-Russian Population Census-2020 and the selective monitoring of the use of the daily temporal resource by the

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population-2019. It is confirmed that rural population is more involved in long-distance commuting. Despite the fact that urban and rural long-distance commuting workers are involved mainly in long-term migration, the proportion of long-term departures is noticeably higher among the former, while short-term trips are more common among the latter. It is established that the majority of urban residents leave for work to other regions, while every third long-distance commuting migrant from rural areas leaves for work within the region of their residence. It is shown that Russia's regions are markedly differentiated by the share of urban and rural residents in the total number of long-distance commuting migrants, and by the ratio of the contribution of urban and rural residents to general, short-term and long-term long-distance commuting, as well as intraregional and interregional long-distance commuting work. Typical features were confirmed in the socio-demographic portrait of long-distance commuting migrants, and rural–urban differences were revealed.

Key words: otkhodnichestvo, long-distance commuting, rural–urban differences, socio-demographic portrait.

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Introduction

A manifestation of spatial transformations in Russia expressed in compression of socio-economic space, its polarization and heterogeneity of residents' settlement, is otkhodnichestvo – a return short-term labor migration. Increasing polarization of cities and rural areas leads to increase in intensity of population labor mobility, inability to earn money in place of residence, blocking of vertical mobility contribute to its development into horizontal (spatial) mobility¹. Studies of municipal areas of the Non-Black Earth Region have proven widespread prevalence of long-distance commuting among rural working population. Depending on location characteristics and socio-economic situation, such movements affect from 1.3 to 1.2 of working population (Averkiewa, 2013, p. 110). The key driver of long-distance commuting from rural areas is mass bankruptcy and liquidation of agricultural enterprises, which is especially important for regions with low agroclimatic potential in the Non-Black Earth Region of the European part of Russia (Fokin, 2016, p. 85). Prevalence of long-distance work in small towns is significantly higher than in cities, which are acceptors of labor migration. Main reasons for long-distance commuting from small towns are low pay, lack of work, dismissal and desire to change life through migration². A common feature of leaving rural and urban areas for purpose of earning money is its forced nature, largely due to the need to feed family in conditions of tightening local labor markets or discrepancy between available jobs, population skills and needs. (Averkiewa, 2016, p. 26).

¹ Nefedova T.G. (2015). Otkhodnichestvo in migration system in Post-Soviet Russia. Prerequisites. Demoscope Weekly, 641–642. Available at: <http://demoscope.ru/weekly/2015/0641/tema01.php> (accessed: April 9, 2024).

² Mkrtychyan N.V., Florinskaya Yu.F. (2017). Labor migration from Russian hinterland. Demoscope Weekly, 735–736. Available at: <http://demoscope.ru/weekly/2017/0735/tema01.php> (accessed: April 9, 2024).

It is important to determine socio-demographic portrait of long-distance commuters: gender, age, marital, educational, occupational and income characteristics of this group. Taking into account socio-economic and socio-cultural differences in urban and rural areas, it is important to study the portrait of such migrants in relation to people from urban areas and villages.

Despite attention of scientists to the topic of short-term (return) labor migration and of *otkhodnichestvo* in recent decades, it is necessary to conduct in-depth research of certain migration types, including long-distance commuting. ***Our research aims*** to assess regional differences in contribution of rural and urban population to long-distance commuting, to identify socio-demographic characteristics of rural and urban long-distance migrants.

The first research hypothesis was differences assumption in involvement degree of rural and urban population in long-distance commuting, including different frequency (short-term and long-term) and direction (intraregional and interregional). In addition, it is assumed that Russian regions are noticeably differentiated in terms of rural and urban contribution to long-distance commuting. According to the second hypothesis, there are significant differences in socio-demographic portrait of rural and urban long-distance commuting workers due to socio-economic and socio-cultural specifics of rural and urban areas and population life style.

Theoretical and methodological aspects

Research interest in return labor migration arose in the second half of the 20th century. It was caused by intensity and diversity increase of such flows at various territorial levels (from international to local), strengthening of short-term migration in everyday life and increasingly significant impact on settlement and economy (Makhrova et al., 2022). Scale and settlement characteristics of return labor migration were first studied in economic geography,

within framework *mobile transition concepts* (Zelinsky, 1971) and “*new mobility*” (Sheller, Urry, 2006), *counter-urbanization* (Halfacree, 2012), *differential urbanization and evolution of settlement* (Fielding, 1989; Zayonchkovskaya, 1991; Nefedova et al., 2015), *center-periphery concept of spatial development* (Swiaczny et al. al., 2009; Mkrtchyan, Florinskaya, 2016).

The phenomenon of pre-revolutionary *otkhodnichestvo* (mass leaving of peasants to urban areas) was actively studied by Soviet historians S.L. Burkin (Burkin, 1978), B.V. Tikhonov (Tikhonov, 1978), P.G. Ryndzyunsky (Ryndzyunsky, 1983). Then this topic fell out of scientific view for some time. Since 1980, *otkhodnichestvo* research has been resumed. We analyzed new phenomenon of “*shabashnichestvo*” (unofficial seasonal work outside the region of permanent residence), which became widespread in the 1960–1980. (Valetov, 2008). In early 1990 in connection with increasing intensity of internal return labor migration against backdrop of serious socio-economic shocks in Russia, the first works on modern, or new *otkhodnichestvo* appeared (Shabanova, 1992). In 2000 this phenomena has been studied by Russian economists, geographers and sociologists (Plyusnin et al., 2013; Nefedova, 2015a; Nefedova, 2015b ; Leksin, 2021, etc.)

In the second decade of 2000 due to results of 2010 All-Russian Population Census and sample labor force surveys (since 2011), it became possible to assess prevalence of return labor migration. However, as noted by E.V. Antonov, if the data from sample surveys representative at the level of constituent entities of the Russian Federation, are presented in a generalized form and do not enable studying regional differentiation of labor mobility or conducting analysis at the level of municipalities and settlements, the census provided such an opportunity (Antonov, 2016, p. 55). During this period works devoted not only to national scale but also to geographic and settlement characteristics

of *otkhodnichestvo* appeared (Nefedova, 2015b; Florinskaya et al., 2015; Averkieva et al., 2016; Antonov, 2016). According to research, the main “center of gravity” for internal labor migrants (including *otkhodniks*) is the capital region (Moscow and the Moscow Region), for which the Central Federal District and the Volga region often become suppliers. The Volga region, Siberia and other Ural regions supply with people oil and gas regions of the Ural (Tyumen Region, Khanty-Mansiysk Autonomous Area and Yamal-Nenets Autonomous Area) (Florinskaya et al., 2015, pp. 34–35). The issue of *otkhodnichestvo* from rural areas and its role in providing employment to rural population was studied by K.V. Averkieva (Averkieva, 2016), leaving urban areas, in particular from small and medium-sized cities, was considered in detail by T.G. Roshchina, Yu.F. Florinskaya and N.V. Mkrtchyan³ (Roshchina, 2007; Mkrtchyan, Florinskaya, 2019).

Yu.F. Florinskaya used data from sample labor force surveys to study socio-demographic characteristics of short-term labor migrants (Florinskaya et al., 2015). Some studies used sociological methods to identify portrait of a modern *otkhodnik*, including a long-distance commuting worker (Plyusnin et al., 2013; Zhidkevich, 2016; Turakaev, Baymurzina, 2022). According to the results, a long-distance commuting worker is a middle-aged man (30–49 years old), a resident of a rural area, working at gas and oil enterprises, married and has children (Turakaev, Baymurzina, 2022; Kasatkina et al., 2023). Education level of long-distance commuters vary: in some cases, this category is

dominated by people with primary or secondary vocational education (Zhidkevich, 2016; Turakaev, Baymurzina, 2022), in others – with higher or incomplete higher education (Kasatkina et al., 2023).

However, it seems important to consider socio-demographic portrait of a long-distance commuter in a settlement context, since settlement type (rural or urban) is recognized as the basic geographical factor in population labor mobility, along with spatial position of municipality relative to the nearest regional center and tension in the local labor market (Averkieva et al., 2016, p.175). Therefore, our research will focus on differences between urban and rural short-term migrants.

We follow approach according to which long-distance commuting, along with commuting, seasonal and push-pull migration, is a type of *new otkhodnichestvo*, which is a return short-term (for less than 12 months) labor migration (Sokolova, Kalachikova, 2023). At the same time long-distance commuting, like commuting, refers to a regular form of work. Regularity is ensured by a certain work schedule and involves systematic periods of time for migrants to return to their permanent place of residence (Sokolova, Kalachikova, 2023). Therefore, in this work, *long-distance commuting refers to return short-term regular labor migration*. Difference between commuting and long-distance commuting primarily lies in frequency and duration of movements. If the first one implies more frequent (daily or several times a week) and shorter trips, then the second one – more rare and longer trips. This work uses concepts of “*otkhodnichestvo*”, “*new otkhodnichestvo*” and “*otkhod*”, as well as “*long-distance commuters*”, “*long-distance workers*” and “*commuting workers*” as synonyms.

Materials and methods

Unfortunately, there is no general statistic accounting of long-distance commuters in Russia, although statistical authorities collect information

³ Florinskaya Yu.F., Roshchina T.G. (2004). Labor migration from small towns in Russia: Scale, directions, social effects. *Demoscope Weekly*, 175–176. Available at: <http://demoscope.ru/weekly/2004/0175/analit03.php> (accessed: April 12, 2024); Mkrtchyan N.V., Florinskaya Yu.F. (2017). Labor migration from cities of Russian hinterland. *Demoscope Weekly*, 735–736. Available at: <http://demoscope.ru/weekly/2017/0735/tema01.php> (accessed: April 12, 2024).

on number of such workers at enterprises. Due to lack of statistic on the number of long-distance workers in country and regions, researchers have to use alternative and often indirect sources of information – data from sociological surveys, sample surveys and population censuses. In this research, source of information on prevalence of long-distance commuting migrants in Russian Regions was the *All-Russian Population Census-2020*. Long-distance commuters were conditionally taken to be people who go to work outside their place of residence several times a month, once a month or less, which makes it possible to separate them from commuting migrants who leave their places of residence daily or several times a week (Sokolova, Kalachikova, 2023, p. 314). At the same time, short-term migration is understood as leaving to earn money several times a month, and long-term migration meant going to work once a month or less. This approach meets authors' criteria for long-distance commuting: return, short-term and regular character.

Despite limitations of the All-Russian Population Census-2020 (among people who travel to work several times a month or less, there may be commuting and pull-push migrants who are seasonally employed outside their place of residence, as well as their transitional forms; it is not possible to determine regions receiving long-distance commuters, age of migrants, their education and occupation), its advantage is the ability to assess nationwide scale of long-distance commuting, its regional characteristics and directions, to identify settlement nature (Korolenko, 2023, p. 196).

To analyze prevalence of long-distance commuting among urban and rural population, share of long-distance workers in the total number of employed people working outside their place of residence and noting the frequency of such trips was calculated. To determine contribution of urban and rural population to long-distance commuting, their share in the total

number of long-distance migrants was calculated. To identify rural-urban differences in regional scale of long-distance commuting, constituent entities of the Russian Federation were first grouped according to share of urban and rural populations in the total number of long-distance migrants, according to the contribution ratio of urban and rural population to the total, short-term and long-term, intraregional and interregional long-distance commuting; then a matrix of correlations among Russian regions was designed according to contribution of urban and rural population to long-distance commuting of different frequency and direction. Tabular and graphical methods were used to visualize results.

Source of socio-demographic characteristics of urban and rural long-distance commuting migrants were *Selective monitoring of the use of the daily temporal resource by the population-2019*. An individual survey questionnaire contained a question about work schedule⁴, one of the answer options was “long-distance commuting.” Respondents who chose this option were classified as long-distance commuters. Despite indirect approach to identifying the category of migrants in question (on issue of work schedule), it is consistent with definition of long-distance commuting, since, according to the Labor Code of the Russian Federation, long-distance commuting implies work outside the place of residence (when daily return to cannot be ensured), with limited periods of stay (no more than 1–3 months), alternating periods of work and rest (in accordance with the work schedule)⁵, which ensures return, short-term and regular character of such trips.

Number of long-distance commuters in the total sample was 497 people, or 1.3% among working respondents, which corresponds to the All-Russian

⁴ Working respondents were asked: “What is your work schedule?”

⁵ Chapter 47. Peculiarities of labor regulation for long-distance commuters (Articles 297–302). Labor Code of the Russian Federation. Available at: <https://base.garant.ru/12125268/3201b9e922528de35860ae879600576e/> (accessed: June 6, 2024).

Population Census-2020 – 2% of employed population in Russia (Korolenko, 2023, p. 197). The questionnaire also contained questions about gender and age of respondents, region of residence, type of territory and settlement, marital status and household composition, education, characteristics of employment, income, which allow us to study socio-demographic portrait of a rural and urban long-distance worker. Disadvantages of this information base include limited sample size, which does not allow deepening analysis (for example, by region of the Russian Federation); time limit of examination; predominance of urban residents over rural residents among long-distance workers (304 people versus 194), which differs with results of other studies and is largely explained by characteristics of the sample (not representative by the settlement type of workers with a long-distance commuting schedule). Nevertheless, possibility of studying a portrait of a long-distance commuter at the settlement level, due to information availability about type of residence place, “outweighs” methodological limitations of census data.

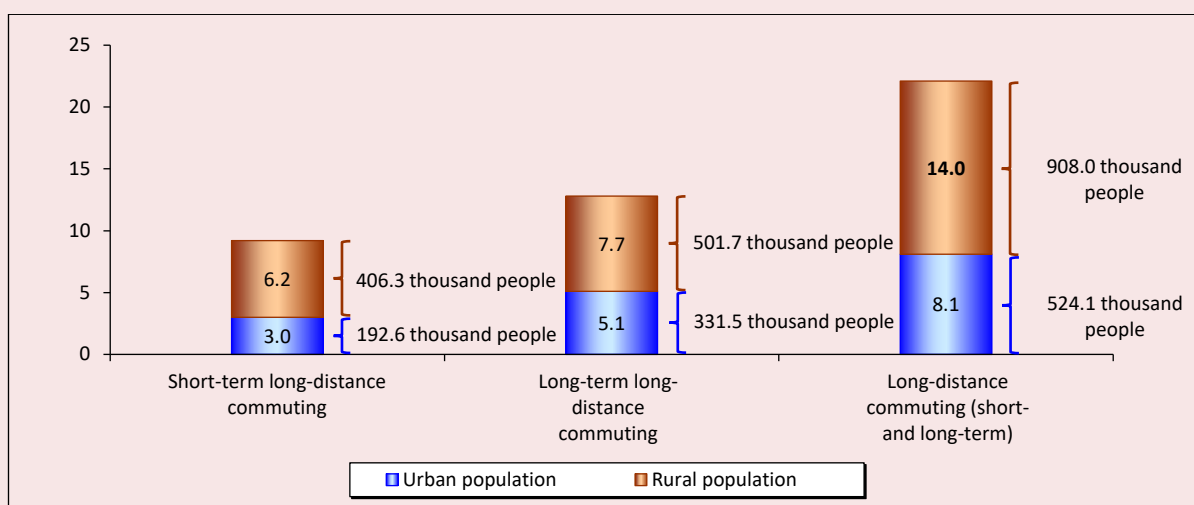
Main results

Rural and urban long-distance commuting: differences and regional specifics

Long-distance commuters make up 22% of the total employed population working outside their place of residence. 14% of them are rural and 8% are urban residents (Fig. 1). Long-term trips are more common among long-distance commuters (13% of the total employed population leaving for work, 8% are rural and 5% are urban residents). The share of short-term long-distance commuters is 9%, 6% of them are rural and 3% are urban residents.

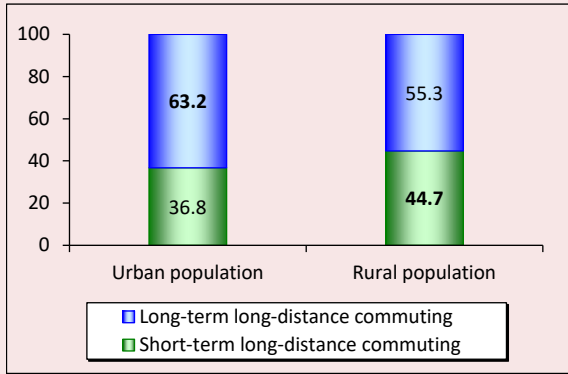
Both among urban and rural population who go long-distance to earn money, long-term migrations predominate, but their share is higher among the former (63% versus 55), while short-term trips are more common among the latter (45% versus 37; Fig. 2). Urban long-distance commuters, compared to rural ones, are more involved in interregional movements (78% versus 63), while more than a third of rural commuters travel within their region of residence (36% versus 18% for urban ones; Fig. 3).

Figure 1. Long-distance commuting of different frequency according the urban and rural percentage, % of the number of people who work outside their place of residence and who indicated departure frequency



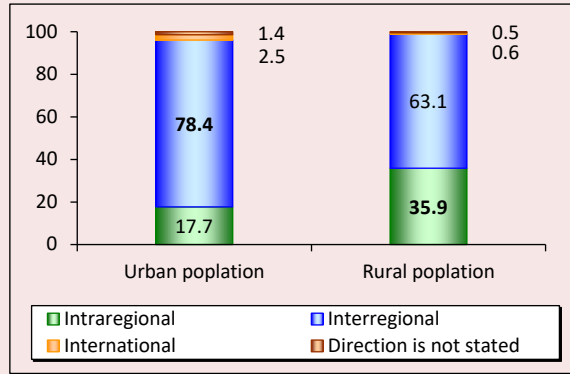
Source: All-Russian Population Census-2020. Volume 10. Labor force. Available at: https://rosstat.gov.ru/vpn/2020/Tom10_Rabochaya_sila

Figure 2. Urban and rural long-distance commuting by departure frequency, % of the number of people who work outside their place of residence and who indicated departure frequency



Source: All-Russian Population Census-2020. Volume 10. Labor force. Available at: https://rosstat.gov.ru/vpn/2020/Tom10_Rabochaya_sila

Figure 3. Urban and rural long-distance commuting by departure direction, % of the number of people who work outside their place of residence and who indicated departure frequency

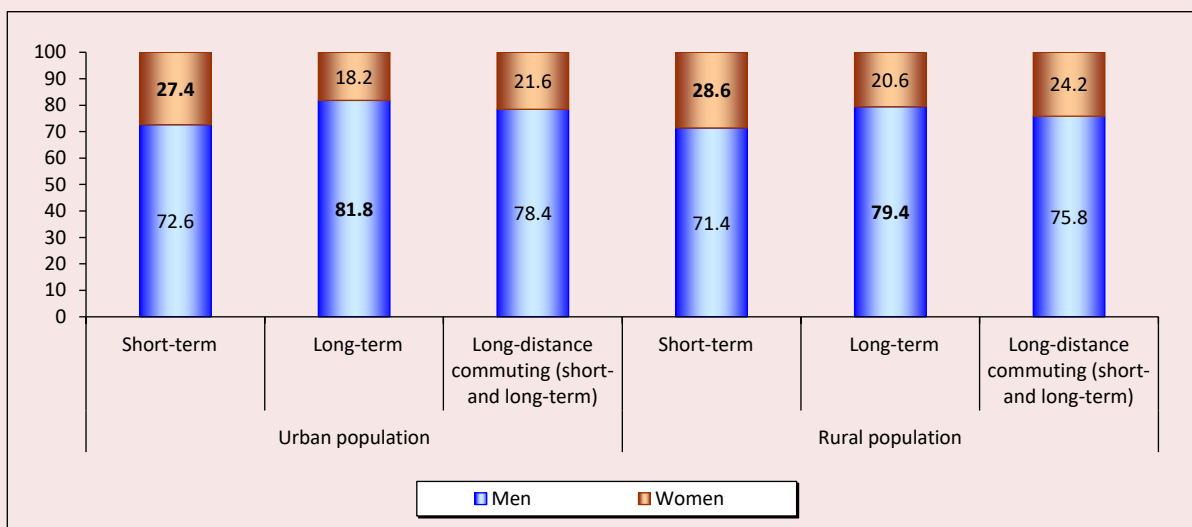


Source: All-Russian Population Census-2020. Volume 10. Labor force. Available at: https://rosstat.gov.ru/vpn/2020/Tom10_Rabochaya_sila

By gender, men predominate among urban and rural long-distance commuters (78 and 76%, respectively; Fig. 4). The largest share of men is noted in the category of those who travel long-term to earn money (82% among urban

population and 79% among rural population). Share of women is slightly larger among short-term long-distance commuters (29% rural and 27% urban), but is still inferior to the proportion of men.

Figure 4. Urban and rural long-distance commuting by gender, % of the number of people who work outside their place of residence and who indicated departure frequency



Source: All-Russian Population Census-2020. Volume 10. Labor force. Available at: https://rosstat.gov.ru/vpn/2020/Tom10_Rabochaya_sila

Let us note regional differences in rural and urban long-distance commuting. Based on the ratio of urban and rural long-distance commuters, Russian regions were divided into three groups (Tab. 1). More than half of constituent entities of the Russian Federation found themselves in the group of regions with rural predominance in the total number of long-distance commuters (48 out of 85). The largest proportion of rural go long-distance to earn money is typical for Chechen (92%), Dagestan (91%), Karachayevo-Circassian (83%), Kalmykia (81%), Altai (79%), Tyva (78%) republics, Lipetsk (83%) and Voronezh (80%) regions. These are primarily regions with a high share of rural population: in 2021 Altai reached 71%, Chechen

Republic – 62%, Karachayevo-Circassian Republic – 57%, Dagestan – 55%, Kalmykia – 54%, Tyva – 46%. Some of them are characterized by a low standard of living, especially rural areas. They occupy the last positions among constituent entities of the Russian Federation by per capita income (Tyva, Altai, Kalmykia)⁶, as well as first places by unemployment (Dagestan, Karachayevo-Circassian Republic, Chechen Republic, Altai, Tyva, Kalmykia)⁷. This fact is confirmed by the results of Russian studies, according to which the most important push factor for leaving is low wages or income (Averkiova et al., 2016, p. 146). In addition, regions of the North Caucasus and Southern Russia are characterized by high

Table 1. Russian regions according to the ratio of urban and rural contribution to the total long-distance commuting

Group	Number	Regions
Regions with rural predominance in the number of long-distance commuters (60% or more)	48	Omsk (60%), Amur (60%), Arkhangelsk (62%), Samara (62%), Kaluga (63%), Tomsk (63%), Novosibirsk (63%), Ulyanovsk (63%), Nizhny Novgorod (64%), Kursk (65%), Rostov (65%), Tyumen (65%), Saratov (66%), Oryol (66%), Astrakhan (68%), Kurgan (68%), Penza (68%), Vologda (70%), Volgograd (71%), Belgorod (71%), Ryazan (71%), Tambov (73%), Orenburg (74%), Voronezh (80%), Lipetsk (83%), Tatarstan (65%), Kabardino-Balkaria (66%), Crimea (66%), Sakha (Yakutia) (67%), Mari El (71%), Adygea (71%), Chuvashia (71%), Bashkortostan (72%), North Ossetia - Alania (72%), Udmurtia (73%), Mordovia (73%), Buryatia (74%), Ingushetia (74%), Tyva (78%), Altai (79%), Kalmykia (81%), Karachayevo-Circassian (83%), Dagestan (91%), Chechen (92%), Chukotka Autonomous Area (70%), Krasnodar (70%), Altai (74%), Stavropol (77%) territories
Regions with urban predominance in the number of long-distance commuters (60% or more)	10	Kemerovo (63%), Sakhalin (64%), Moscow (64%), Magadan (87%), Murmansk (88%), Yamal-Nenets Autonomous Area (79%) and Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Area (71%), Sevastopol (95%), Moscow (100%), Saint Petersburg (100%)
Regions with equal contribution of urban and rural population in number of long-distance commuters (from 40 to 60%)	27	Kaliningrad (59% and 41%), Ivanovo (59% and 41%), Kirov (57% and 43%), Kostroma (55% and 45%), Chelyabinsk (54% and 46%), Yaroslavl (54% and 46%), Sverdlovsk (52% and 48%), Vladimir (49% and 51%), Irkutsk (48% and 52%), Leningrad (47% and 53%), Tversk (46% and 54%), Novgorod (44% and 56%), Tula (42% and 58%), Smolensk (42% and 58%), Bryansk (42% and 58%), Pskov (40% and 60%), Jewish Autonomous Region (45% and 55%), Yamal-Nenets Autonomous Area (57% and 43%), Kamchatka (54% and 46%), Khabarovsk (52% and 48%), Krasnoyarsk (50% and 50%), Primorsky (49% and 48%), 51%), Transbaikal (45% and 55%), Perm (41% and 59%), Komi (52% and 48%), Karelia (51% and 49%), Khakassia (43% and 57%)
Source: All-Russian Population Census-2020. Volume 10. Labor force. Available at: https://rosstat.gov.ru/vpn/2020/Tom10_Rabochaya_sila		

⁶ Inequality and poverty. Income of population within country and constituent entities of the Russian Federation (new methodology). Federal State Statistics Service. Available at: <https://rosstat.gov.ru/folder/13723>

⁷ Rating of regions by unemployment. *RIA-rating*. Available at: <https://riarating.ru/infografika/20230227/630237190.html?ysclid=lvezwrlw3k621004137>

population density in rural areas and, as a consequence, a problem of overpopulation. T.G. Nefedov and N.V. Mkrtchyan note that agriculture modernization and prevalence of non-labor-intensive crop production in southern regions revealed rural overpopulation and stimulated labor migration to cities (Nefedova, Mkrtchyan, 2017, p. 63). The Lipetsk and the Voronezh regions, which belong to the Black Earth regions of the European part of Russia, are characterized by an increased share of non-agricultural employment of rural commuters, which is associated with uncompetitiveness of local jobs compared to work in the capital region (Nefedova, Mkrtchyan, 2017, p. 65).

In addition to federal cities (Moscow, Saint Petersburg and Sevastopol), 7 constituent entities were classified as regions with urban predominance among long-distance commuters – Murmansk, Magadan, Sakhalin, Moscow, Kemerovo regions, Yamal-Nenets Autonomous Area and Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Area – Yugra. These are highly urbanized regions: the share of urban population in 2021 in Saint Petersburg reached 100%, in Moscow – 98%, in Magadan Region – 96%, in Sevastopol – 94%, in Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Area – 93%, in Murmansk Region – 92%, in Kemerovo Region – 86% , in Yamal-Nenets Autonomous Area – 84%, in Sakhalin and Moscow regions – 82% each. Leadership of the Yamal-Nenets Autonomous Area and the Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Area is explained by commuting of urban population to oil production areas – to the south of the Tyumen Region, to the Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Area and in to southern part of the Yamal-Nenets Autonomous Area, to gas fields – to the northern regions of the Tyumen Region, to the central and northern parts of the Yamal-Nenets Autonomous Area, to the north-west of the Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Area (Solodnikov , 2015, p. 51). The greater involvement in urban long-distance commuting in the Magadan, Sakhalin and Kemerovo regions may be associated with the high

intensity of movements from suburbs to regional capitals and their agglomerations: Magadan, Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk and Kemerovo (Averkiewa et al., 2016, pp. 192– 193). The Moscow Region, on one hand, as part of capital region is a center of attraction for temporary labor migrants, on the other hand, it acts as a supplier of temporary return labor migrants, most often commuting workers, for Moscow. Predominance of urban population among long-distance commuters by analogy with commuting migrants, is explained by the center-rapidity factor, when in pursuit of a higher level of income, residents of the Moscow Region go to the capital to earn money, but due to gap in housing prices between Moscow and region their labor migration is of a return nature⁸.

Twenty-seven constituent entities of the Russian Federation were included in the list of regions with an equal contribution of urban and rural population. This is a rather heterogeneous group, represented by regions of the Center, North-West, Ural and Far East of Russia.

Table 2 presents a matrix of Russian regions according to the ratio of urban and rural contribution to long-distance commuting of different frequency and focus. In 31 regions of Russia, rural population predominates both in short-term and long-term, as well as in intraregional and interregional long-distance commuting (so-called “origin regions of long-distance commuters”). In 14 constituent entities of the Russian Federation, rural population prevails in short-term and intraregional commuting, and there is an equal urban and rural contribution to long-term and interregional long-distance commuting. Labor migration within these regions is carried out by rural population, while residents of urban and rural areas are equally involved in

⁸ Makhrova A.G., Bochkarev A.N. (2017). Commuting in the Moscow region: new data. Demoscope Weekly, 727–728. Available at: <http://demoscope.ru/weekly/2017/0727/tema01.php>

trips to work in other regions. In six constituent entities of the Russian Federation (federal cities of Moscow and Saint Petersburg, Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Area, Magadan, Murmansk and Sakhalin regions), urban population is involved in the majority of long-distance commuting of various frequency (short-term and long-term) and direction (intraregional and interregional). In the Chelyabinsk, Sverdlovsk, Kaliningrad, Kostroma and Ivanovo regions, long-term and interregional to earn money are mainly carried out by urban population, and within regions –

Table 2. Matrix of regions of the Russian Federation according to the ratio of urban and rural contribution to long-distance commuting of different frequency and direction

		Regions groups according to the ratio of urban and rural contribution to intraregional and interregional long-distance commuting						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	
		Urban predominance intraregional and interregional long-distance commuting	Urban predominance interregional long-distance commuting and equal contribution of urban and rural population in intraregional long-distance commuting	Equal urban and rural contribution to interregional long-distance commuting (there is no intraregional watch)	Rural predominance in intraregional long-distance commuting, equal contribution of urban and rural population in interregional watch	Rural predominance in intraregional and interregional long-distance commuting	Rural predominance in intraregional long-distance commuting and urban predominance in interregional long-distance commuting	
Groups of regions according to the ratio of the contribution of GN and SV to short- and long-term shifts	1	Urban predominance of GBV in short- and long-term long-distance commuting	6 Moscow, Saint Petersburg; Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Area; Magadan, Murmansk, Sakhalin regions	1 Sevastopol	-	-	-	1 Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Area
	2	Urban predominance in long-term long-distance commuting and equal contribution of urban and rural population in short-term long-distance commuting	2 Sakhalin, Kemerovo regions	-	-	3 Leningrad, Vladimir, Yaroslavl regions	-	5 Chelyabinsk, Sverdlovsk, Kaliningrad, Kostroma, Ivanovo regions
	3	Equal contribution of urban and rural population to short- and long-term long-distance commuting	-	2 Kamchatka, Krasnoyarsk territories	1 Nenets Autonomous Area	5 Tula, Bryansk, Tver, Novgorod regions, Jewish Autonomous Region	-	2 Kirov Region, Khabarovsk Territory
	4	Rural predominance in short-term long-distance commuting and equal contribution of urban and rural population in long-distance commuting	-	1 Republic of Komi	-	14 Perm and Trans-Baikal Territories, Crimea, Tatarstan, Khakassia, Novosibirsk, Vologda, Arkhangelsk, Amur, Nizhny Novgorod, Omsk, Samara, Kaluga, Smolensk	1 Ulyanovsk region	2 Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), Irkutsk Region

End of Table 2

			Regions groups according to the ratio of urban and rural contribution to intraregional and interregional long-distance commuting					
			1	2	3	4	5	6
			Urban predominance intraregional and interregional long-distance commuting	Urban predominance interregional long-distance commuting and equal contribution of urban and rural population in intraregional long-distance commuting	Equal urban and rural contribution to interregional long-distance commuting (there is no intraregional watch)	Rural predominance in intraregional long-distance commuting, equal contribution of urban and rural population in interregional watch	Rural predominance in intraregional and interregional long-distance commuting	Rural predominance in intraregional long-distance commuting and urban predominance in interregional long-distance commuting
5	Rural predominance of in short- and long-term long-distance commuting	-	-	-	5 Republic of North Ossetia-Alania; Tomsk, Rostov, Tyumen regions; Chukotka Autonomous Area	31 Chechen, Bashkortostan, Karachayevo-Circassian, Dagestan, Kalmykia, Tyva, Mordovia, Udmurtia, Kabardino-Balkarian, Altai, Buryatia, Adygea, Ingushetia, Mari El, Chuvashia republics; Astrakhan, Voronezh, Lipetsk, Volgograd, Orenburg, Tambov, Belgorod, Saratov, Ryazan, Kurgan, Penza, Oryol, Kursk regions; Krasnodar, Altai, Stavropol territories	-	
	Rural predominance in short-term long-distance commuting and urban predominance in long-term long-distance commuting	-	1 Primorye Territory	-	1 Pskov Region	-	1 Republic of Karelia	

Regions that are characterized by consistency in frequency and direction of long-distance commuting with vectors "short-term – intraregional" and "long-term – interregional" are highlighted green.

Source: All-Russian Population Census-2020. Volume 10 Labor force. Available at: https://rosstat.gov.ru/vpn/2020/Tom10_Rabochnaya_sila

by rural. At the same time, urban and rural population of these regions are equally involved in short-term long-distance commuting. Among short-term, long-term and interregional long-distance commuters from the Tula, Bryansk, Tver, Novgorod regions and the Jewish Autonomous Region, urban and rural residents are equally represented, while rural population is more often

involved in intraregional movements. Among short-term and long-term intraregional long-distance commuters from Republic of North Ossetia-Alania, Tomsk, Rostov, Tyumen regions, Chukotka Autonomous Area, rural residents predominate, while urban and rural are equally involved in trips outside these regions. Other regions turned out to be few in number.

In addition, 53 constituent entities of the Russian Federation are characterized by consistency in frequency and directions of long-distance commuting along “short-term – intraregional” and “long-term – interregional” vectors, with either equal urban and rural involvement or with greater inclusion of rural residents in “short-term – intraregional” vector and urban residents – in “long-term – interregional” vector. In other regions there are other variations in urban and rural participation in long-distance commuting.

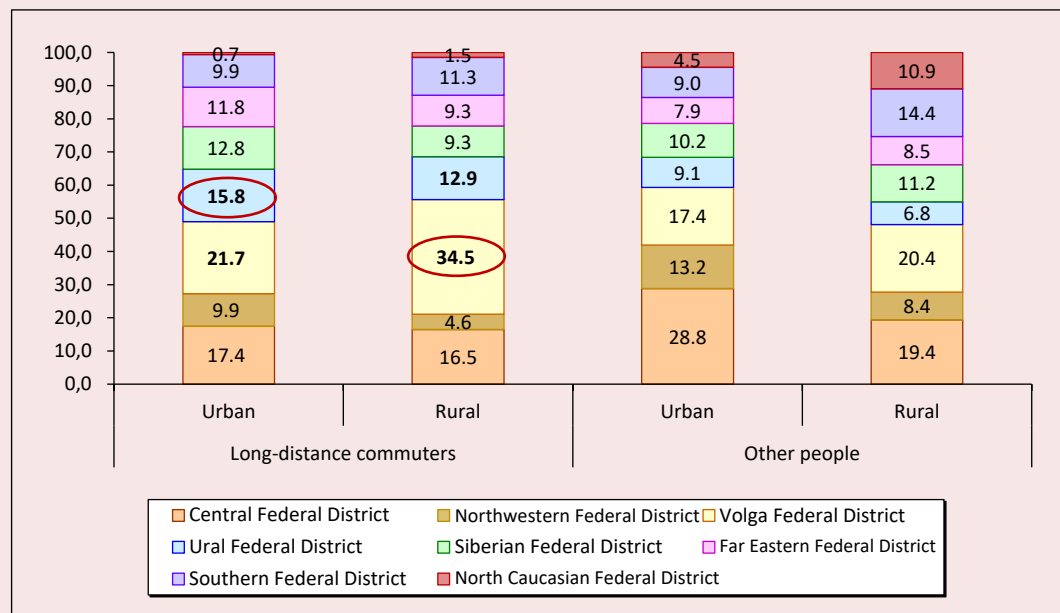
Socio-demographic characteristics of rural and urban long-distance commuters

According to sample observation, the Volga Federal District is the macroregion of rural long-distance leaving in more than a third of cases (35%; Fig. 5), which is largely consistent with results of other studies confirming its supplier role in labor migrants flow (Florinskaya et al., 2015, p. 32). Among urban

long-distance commuters the share of people from the Volga region is lower (22%) than among rural ones but the proportion of the Ural (16%) and Siberian (12%) macroregions residents is slightly higher. Compared to other categories of workers, there are significantly fewer representatives of the Central Federal District among urban and rural long-distance commuters (17% each versus 29% of urban and 19% of rural residents with other work schedules).

More than half of urban long-distance commuters are residents of small towns with population of less than 50 thousand people (58%), 45% of rural long-distance commuters live in medium-sized rural settlements with population of 200 to 1,000 people (Tab. 3). This fact confirms conclusions of researchers about the greater prevalence of labor migration among small cities, towns and rural settlements⁹ (Karachurina, Mkrtychyan, 2012; Mkrtychyan, Florinskaya, 2019).

Figure 5. Distribution of urban and rural long-distance commuters by federal districts of residence, %



Source: Selective monitoring of the use of the daily temporal resource by the population-2019. Available at: https://rosstat.gov.ru/free_doc/new_site/population/urov/sut_fond19/index.html

⁹ Nefedova T. (2015). Otkhodnichestvo in migration system of post-Soviet Russia. Geography. Demoscope Weekly, 643–644. Available at: <http://demoscope.ru/weekly/2015/0643/demoscope643.pdf> (accessed: April 24, 2024).

Table 3. Distribution of urban and rural long-distance commuters by population amount in their places of residence, %

Population amount in place of residence, thousand people	Urban population	
	Long-distance commuters	Other people
Less than 50.0	58.2	34.1
50.0–99.9	11.2	11.0
100.0–249.9	9.9	10.7
250.0–499.9	8.2	11.2
500.0–999.9	5.3	8.6
1 million or more	7.2	24.3
Population amount in place of residence, people	Rural population	
Up to 200	5.7	4.8
201–1000	45.4	34.3
1001–5000	32.0	37.1
More than 5000	17.0	23.9

Source: Sample observation of daily time use by population 2019. Available at: https://rosstat.gov.ru/free_doc/new_site/population/urov/sut_fond19/index.html

The vast majority of urban and rural long-distance workers are men (89% and 94%, *Tab. 4*), which is also consistent with conclusions of other researchers about the “male face” of long-distance commuting (Turakaev, Baymurzina, 2022; Kasatkina et al., 2023). For comparison: among urban and rural population with other work schedule, a different situation is observed (there are more women than men). Among long-distance commuters, compared to other categories of workers, there is a higher proportion

of working population: 94% of urban and 95% of rural long-distance workers versus 85% of city residents and 84% of rural residents with other work schedule.

In groups of urban and rural long-distance commuters married people predominate (62 and 66%; *Tab. 5*). At the same time, the share of “family” workers among long-distance commuters is noticeably higher compared to other categories of workers. Otherwise, marriage and family structure does not differ significantly.

Table 4. Distribution of urban and rural long-distance workers by gender and age, %

Gender	Long-distance commuters		Other people	
	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
Men	89.1	94.3	44.1	46.9
Women	10.9	5.7	55.9	53.1
Age	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
Under 29 years old	12.1	6.7	12.4	9.6
30–39 years old	27.2	30.3	26.5	22.8
40–49 years old	25.4	28.4	22.2	25.0
50–59 years old	18.5	24.0	18.2	24.6
60 or older	4.6	3.8	8.2	8.4
Age group	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
Under working age	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Working age	94.1	94.8	85.2	84.3
Over working age	5.9	5.2	14.8	15.7

Source: Sample observation of daily time use by population 2019. Available at: https://rosstat.gov.ru/free_doc/new_site/population/urov/sut_fond19/index.html

Table 5. Distribution of urban and rural rotational long-distance commuters by marital status and family type, %

Marital status	Long-distance commuters		Other people	
	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
Registered marriage	61.5	66.0	56.6	60.3
Not registered marriage	7.2	6.2	6.1	5.6
Widower/Widow	5.3	2.1	5.9	6.8
Divorced	12.2	12.4	16.9	13.6
Broke up	2.3	3.6	2.2	2.2
Never been married	11.5	9.8	12.3	11.5
Family type	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
Married couple with children under 18 years old	41.1	42.3	32.5	32.6
Single	28.9	26.3	28.9	26.6
Married couple	27.3	28.9	30.1	33.1
Single with children under 18 years old	2.6	2.6	8.5	7.8

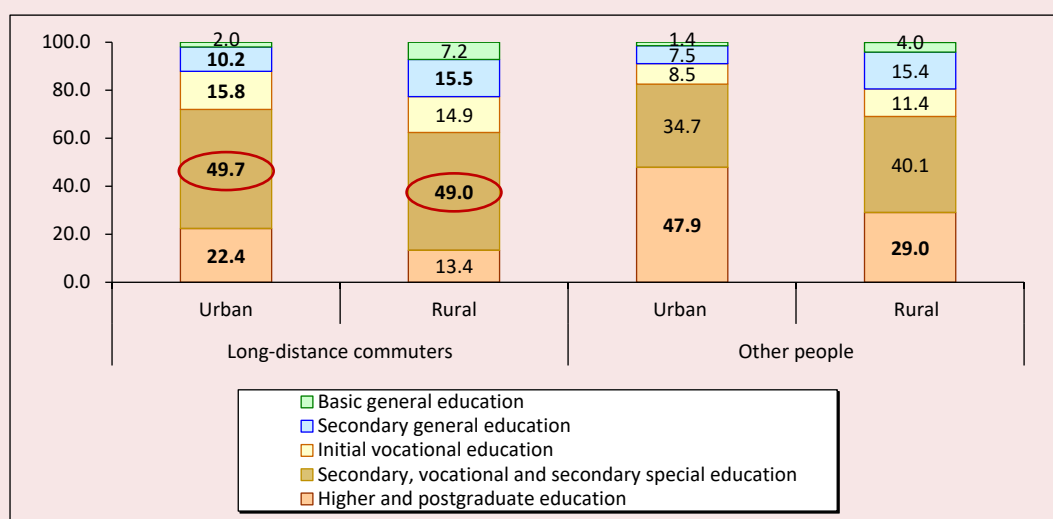
Source: Sample observation of daily time use by population 2019. Available at: https://rosstat.gov.ru/free_doc/new_site/population/uov/sut_fond19/index.html

Both urban and rural long-distance workers are more likely than other workers to be married and have children: 41% of urban and 42% of rural long-distance commuters versus 33% of urban residents and 33% of rural residents with other work schedules. Therefore, long-distance commuters, regardless of their original territory, are characterized by a more “family” way of life, which confirms the thesis about prevalence of desire to

“provide for the family” over other motives for otkhodnichestvo (Averkiewa, 2016, p. 26).

Long-distance workers, compared to other categories of workers, more often have secondary vocational, secondary specialized and primary vocational education, and less often higher education, especially if they are from rural areas (Fig. 6). Among urban long-distance commuters there is a higher proportion of specialists with higher

Figure 6. Distribution of urban and rural long-distance commuters by education level, %



Source: Selective monitoring of the use of the daily temporal resource by the population-2019. Available at: https://rosstat.gov.ru/free_doc/new_site/population/uov/sut_fond19/index.html

education (22% versus 13% of rural ones), while among rural migrants there is a higher proportion of specialists with a general secondary education (16% versus 10%) and basic general education (7% versus 2%).

Long-distance commuters more often either work in open facilities, outdoors (46% urban and 50% rural), or have a traveling nature of work (15% urban and 20% rural; *Tab. 6*). Among urban long-distance commuters, compared to rural ones, there are more people employed in industry, retail and offices (23% versus 14%), while for rural long-distance workers it is more common to work in less comfortable conditions – on street or on road.

Unfortunately, sample survey data do not allow us to analyze sectoral structure of employment of long-distance commuters. However, research by HeadHunter company revealed a trend of increasing

demand for long-distance commuters in areas where this type of work had not previously been widely used. According 2021 data, number of long-distance vacancies in companies in restaurant and hotel businesses increased by 127%, in companies in housing and communal services sector – by 149%, in companies creating consumer goods – by 100%. Analysts attribute this trend to “personnel shortage” influence, which pushed employers to expand geography of their search for long-distance commuters¹⁰.

According to the sample survey, long-distance workers are more often employed in working occupations: operators, machine operators, installation and machine operators (36% urban and 38% rural) or are skilled workers in agriculture and industry (24% urban and 23% rural). Among urban long-distance workers, proportion of specialists with

Table 6. Distribution of urban and rural long-distance commuters work and occupation types, %

Work type	Long-distance commuters		Other people	
	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
Work in open facility or market, outdoors, at construction site, in vehicle and other outdoor places	46.1	50.0	9.8	17.7
Have a traveling nature of work	15.1	20.1	4.9	6.6
Work inside special facility or structure (pavilion, greenhouse, car service station, etc.)	15.5	15.5	10.0	14.3
Work in production, retail or office space inside a building, or at the home of a customer (employer)	23.0	14.4	73.2	60.0
Work remotely (using the Internet)	0.3	0.0	1.0	0.3
Work from home (homework)	0.0	0.0	1.1	1.1
Group of activities	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
Operators, operators, plant and machine operators	35.8	38.2	9.4	13.3
Qualified agricultural and industrial workers	24.1	22.5	11.4	12.5
Service sector workers, housing and communal services	13.0	18.8	16.4	17.7
Mid-level specialists	12.4	8.4	13.7	12.0
Unskilled workers	4.3	8.9	5.7	12.5
Highly qualified specialists	7.7	2.6	32.5	22.5
Heads (representatives) of government and management bodies	2.0	0.5	5.1	4.4
Workers involved in preparing information and processing documents	0.7	0.0	5.8	5.1

Source: Sample observation of daily time use by the population 2019. Available at: https://rosstat.gov.ru/free_doc/new_site/population/urov/sut_fond19/index.html

¹⁰ Long-distance commuting: 2021 results. HeadHunter. Available at: <https://hh.ru/article/29806?ysclid=1vb0js2i9i457507615> (accessed: April 24, 2024).

medium and higher qualification levels is slightly higher (12% and 8%, respectively), while among rural workers there are workers in service sector, housing and communal services (19%), unskilled personnel (9%), which largely correlates with differences education. The fact that almost every fifth long-distance commuter from rural areas is an employee in service sector or housing and communal services confirms the trend of changes in sectoral structure of demand for workers in this category.

Long-distance commuters, compared to other categories of workers, are less likely to have a fixed start and end time of the working day: 61% urban and 67% rural long-distance workers versus 82% urban and 79% rural workers with a different schedule (*Tab. 7*). As a result, average working week

of long-distance workers exceeds the same indicator for population with a different work schedule: 50 hours for urban long-distance workers and 48 hours for rural long-distance workers versus 38 hours for urban and 38 hours for rural workers with a different schedule. At the same time, average leave duration for long-distance commuters corresponds to its duration for other categories of workers. However, among rural long-distance commuters there was a smaller proportion people with paid leave (75% versus 82% among urban long-distance workers and 81% of rural with other work schedules); 1/4 of long-distance commuters from rural areas do not have opportunity (desire) to go on paid leave.

Income of long-distance commuter is significantly higher compared to other categories of workers (*Tab. 8*). In 2019 net monthly income of

Table 7. Working hours of urban and rural long-distance commuters

Characteristic	Long-distance commuters		Other workers	
	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
Fixed time of working day start, %	60.9	66.5	81.8	78.5
Fixed time of working day end, %	60.5	65.5	80.6	77.1
Average number of working hours per week	50	48	38	38
Paid leave, %	82.2	74.7	86.7	81.4
Duration of paid leave, average number of days	33	34	38	34

Source: Sample observation of daily time use by population 2019. Available at: https://rosstat.gov.ru/free_doc/new_site/population/urov/sut_fond19/index.html

Table 8. Distribution urban and rural long-distance commuters by net monthly income and average household income, per member, %

Net monthly income	Long-distance commuters		Other workers	
	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
Up to 30 thousand rubles.	23.7	29.8	54.8	79.0
From 30 to 50 thousand rubles.	41.9	54.4	28.8	16.3
From 50 to 70 thousand rubles.	22.6	7.0	9.5	3.2
From 70 to 90 thousand rubles.	7.5	5.3	3.9	1.2
From 90 thousand ruble. and more	4.3	3.5	2.9	0.3
Average income	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
Net monthly income, rub.	46545.0	35368.6	27870.9	20164.5
Average household income, per month, rub.	61266.4	45492.3	51010.4	36257.8
Average income per household member, per month, rub.	29770.0	20988.6	23538.5	15648.1
Contribution of employee income to average household income, %	76.0	77.7	54.6	55.6

Source: Sample observation of daily time use by population 2019. Available at: https://rosstat.gov.ru/free_doc/new_site/population/urov/sut_fond19/index.html

long-distance commuters reached from 30 to 50 thousand rubles (42% urban and 54% rural), while for workers with a different schedule its amount most often did not exceed 30 thousand rubles (55% urban and 79% rural). Average net monthly income of urban long-distance commuter was 46,545.0 rubles – 67% higher than income of other urban residents. Rural long-distance workers had average monthly net income of 35,368.6 rubles, which is 75% more than income of other rural workers. Income gap of urban and rural long-distance commuters amounts 32%, which is comparable to income gap of other urban and rural residents (38%).

Average income of households of long-distance commuters is higher than the same indicator for other categories of workers (for urban long-distance commuters – by 20%, for rural ones – by 26%), which is also reflected in a higher level of per capita income per household member (for urban long-distance workers – by 27% , for rural ones – by 34%). At the same time, average household income gap of long-distance commuters in urban and rural areas reaches 35% (for other categories of workers – 41%), average per capita income gap per household member – 42% (for others – 50%).

Contribution of net monthly income of long-distance commuters to the total household income is by 20% higher compared to other categories of workers: for people from urban areas – 76% versus 55%, for people from rural areas – 78% versus 56%. This fact confirms importance of long-distance commuting for well-being of the whole family and not only of the worker himself.

Results and discussion

Research testing hypotheses, identifying rural-urban differences in prevalence of long-distance commuting and in portraits of long-distance commuters.

This work confirmed that rural population, compared to urban one, is more involved in long-distance commuting. Urban and rural residents

engaged in long-distance commuting to earn money are mainly involved in long-term migration. Among urban workers the share of long-term departures is significantly higher. Among rural ones short-term departures are more common. This pattern is also reflected in departure directions of long-distance commuters: the majority of urban residents leave to work in other regions, while every third rural worker goes to work within their region of residence. Therefore, we can conclude that migration vector of rural long-distance workers is significantly shorter compared to urban ones. This may be due to the more pronounced “attachment” of rural workers to their households. Urban workers do not have such a “burden” and can travel greater distances and for longer periods of time. At the same time, rural long-distance commuting may be associated with desire to work in more developed and larger nearby settlements, in which there are more opportunities for employment and earnings, while urban residents are driven by the same desire but only in relation to more developed regions.

Constituent entities of the Russian Federation are highly differentiated both in the share of urban and rural residents in the total number of long-distance commuters and in the ratio of urban and rural contribution to general, short-term and long-term long-distance commuting, as well as to intraregional and interregional commuting. The designed matrix of Russian regions according to the ratio of urban and rural contribution to long-distance commuting of different frequency and direction made it possible to establish that 53 regions are characterized by consistency in frequency and directions of long-distance commuting with vectors “short-term – intraregional” and “long-term – interregional” (with equal urban and rural involvement or with greater rural involvement in the first vector and urban – in the second one), while there are different variations in rural and urban participation in long-distance commuting in other regions.

During analysis of socio-demographic portrait of a long-distance commuter, typical features were confirmed: a man of working age (30–49 years), a resident of the Volga region, a resident of a small town or a medium-sized rural settlement, with a family, with a secondary specialized or secondary vocational education, a worker or qualified specialist in agriculture, industry, working in open facilities or having a traveling nature of work, having a relatively high level of income, making the largest contribution to his household budget. Compared to other categories of workers, long-distance commuters are less likely to have a fixed working day; their working week is longer, with a comparable length of vacation. It can be stated that this category of workers is subject to greater physical and mental stress.

Research revealed differences in portraits of urban and rural long-distance commuters. Urban workers a higher level of education and, as a result, more often occupy positions of mid- and higher-level specialists, work in more comfortable conditions and have a higher level of income.

Rural workers are characterized by a lower level of education, are more often specialists in service sector and housing and communal services or unskilled workers, work in less comfortable conditions, are less likely to have paid leave, have a lower income compared to urban workers but higher compared to other categories of rural workers.

Therefore, this research contributes to development of ideas about settlement characteristics of long-distance commuting, including regional differences and socio-demographic specifics of urban and rural long-distance workers. Revealed diversity of regions in terms of urban and rural contribution to different types of long-distance commuting confirms the need to take into account development and implementation of migration and socio-economic policy measures. Understanding socio-demographic differences between urban and rural workers is important for managing internal migration processes, since return labor migration is seen as a mean for maintaining employment and well-being of population while keeping their place of residence.

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