

Recent trends of population evolution in France: where do the new rural inhabitants find a job?

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The results from the last French Census (2006) confirm a rising trend of population inside rural space, fuelled by people migrating from cities and their surroundings. In a reversal to previous decade, the evolution rate of population in rural territories is now larger than in the core of major cities. One may be tempted to speak of "a rush toward the country". Yet, employment is not rising at the same (relative) pace. Along with the growing place of service activities in economy and the loss of industrial jobs, the gap in employment rates between rural territories and cities is getting wider.

Thus, rural immigration is not likely to be connected in most cases with proximity to job location (at least, as far as rural immigrants of working age are concerned). This should imply, for the most recent rural inhabitants, acceptance of longer distances to places of work, potentially combined with exit strategies from labour market (and so lower activity rates). The trade-off between remote job locations and job itself would appear at household level.

With the help of information available from the last French Census, we will try to cast some light on the geography of commuting travels and its impact on household strategies coming out with the new rural demographical dynamic.