



Gender Issues in Youth out-migration from rural Australia

Di Rudd, *GES, School of Social Sciences, University of Adelaide*

This paper examines the out-migration of youth from rural Australia and explores the associated economic and social issues that tend to characterise regional populations. There has been little recognition given to the issues associated with the migration of youth that require a greater understanding of the processes underlying different types of migration in various contexts, with an emphasis placed on gender and family differentials. A particular focus is upon the high rates of youth out-migration from agriculturally-based rural communities, with the rates for females commonly exceeding their male counterparts. The lack of education and employment opportunities are perceived to be the major drivers of the rural exodus of youth, with little attention given to the more socially oriented questions relating to leaving the parental home, marriage, family ties, social mobility and community identity. Rural youth migration is a highly gendered process, associated with the male dominance of rural labour markets and also the result of social environments that may favour young men. This gives rise to larger numbers of young females leaving home and moving to cities with significant differences between the sexes in the reasons and consequences of migration. It is timely to evaluate and monitor the trends in the migration patterns of young males and females as they relate to inter-regional migration in Australia and how they impact on both rural and urban populations and the implications for the planning of services, housing, employment and education.