

## Rural Exodus in Brazil High Among Young Women

Contributed by Brazzil Magazine  
Wednesday, 15 September 2004

A survey by Brazil's Applied Economic Research Institute (Ipea) has found that although the so-called rural exodus, the migration of countryside dwellers into urban centers, fell off in the 1990s, it remained high mainly among young women. This is a serious problem in the Northeast and Central West regions of Brazil. The Ipea survey discovered that 54.6% of all rural migrants between 1990 and 1995 came from the Northeast.

That works out to a loss of 1.2 million people in five years, or around 30% of the total rural population.

The survey points out that migration is directly related to jobs and that young women seek work in the services sector or as maids.

The survey also found one possible answer to the question of why more women abandon the farm: in rural areas women have a higher level of education than men (55% of young men have only a fourth grade education; for women the number is 42%).

In other words, only 45% of the men have more than four years of formal education; while 58% of the young ladies have studied more than four years.

This wave of rural migration has created succession problems on the farm because nowadays when the old folk pass away the children are no longer around to take over the family property.

"Many farms are turning into weekend retreats for the rich or being sold to agribusiness firms," laments Eugenio Peixoto, of the Land Reform Institute (Incra).

### Migration Change

The high unemployment rate in large urban centers, together with the social programs the government has been implementing in needy regions, has contributed to a change in migratory movements in the country.

In an unprecedented study based on information contained in the 2000 Population Census, conducted by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE), it is shown that migration is closely related to low levels of schooling and that the majority of people who migrate are unsuccessful and end up returning home, and many simply prefer to remain in their regions of origin.

Among the total of 5.1 million people who migrated between 1995 and 2000, 66% didn't complete fundamental education (grades 1 to 8), and, "in the current situation, with qualification requirements and unemployment, they are unable to find jobs," IBGE specialist, Fernando Albuquerque, affirms.

In his view, up to the decade of the '80's, migration in Brazil was marked by a huge exit of people from the Northeast who established themselves, basically, in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. At present, he explained, migration no longer offers the possibility of social mobility.

"The stagnation of the Brazilian economy in recent years and the lack of vocational training have reduced Northeasterners' search for opportunities in the Southeast, as well as providing a motivation for people to return to the states where they were born," Albuquerque added.

According to the study, São Paulo remains the state that attracts most immigrants, but it has lost part of the share of the population with the highest educational qualifications: 11 thousand fewer people who have 15 years or more of schooling.

São Gonçalo, in the Rio de Janeiro metropolitan region, was the Brazilian municipality with the largest immigrant population, followed by Nova Iguaçu, also in Rio, Osasco, in São Paulo, and the city of São Paulo itself.

The new thematic publications based on the Census show, for example, that, in 2000, nine million handicapped people were employed in Brazil, and over half earned more than two minimum wages.

With respect to religion, the new studies confirm that older people are more religious. As far as color or race are concerned, the data show that people of Asian origin have the highest levels of schooling and the highest income.

Agência Brasil