



Trends in youth and female migration in South Africa 1996-2011

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Introduction

Youth and female migration trends in South Africa show distinctive patterns that are of great interest from a social and economic point of view. Youth migration trends are of interest because of the implications for settlement and infrastructure planning, as well as employment opportunities: provision needs to be made for small, young, and often poor families as they break away from the extended family in terms of housing, services, amenities and employment. Female migration is of interest because of the implications it has on the composition of the family and other aspects of social and economic life. Below is a brief description of some youth and female migration trends in South Africa.

Brief Description

The youth migration trends were analysed using age cohort StatsSA Census data of 1996, 2001 and 2011 broken down for the CSIR settlement typology. The data analysis was complemented by a desktop study of population change in South Africa. The female migration trends are based on a desktop study of findings from other migration and population change studies in South Africa.

Youth migration

For the purpose of this analysis, youth is regarded as the 15-24 and 25-34 age categories of 2011 (those who were 0-19 years old in 1996), since trends were measured between 1996 and 2011 (see Figure 1 below). An increase in an age cohort in a specific type of settlement indicates that the rate of in-migration is higher than the mortality rate, whereas a decrease in an age cohort indicates both out-migration and mortality.

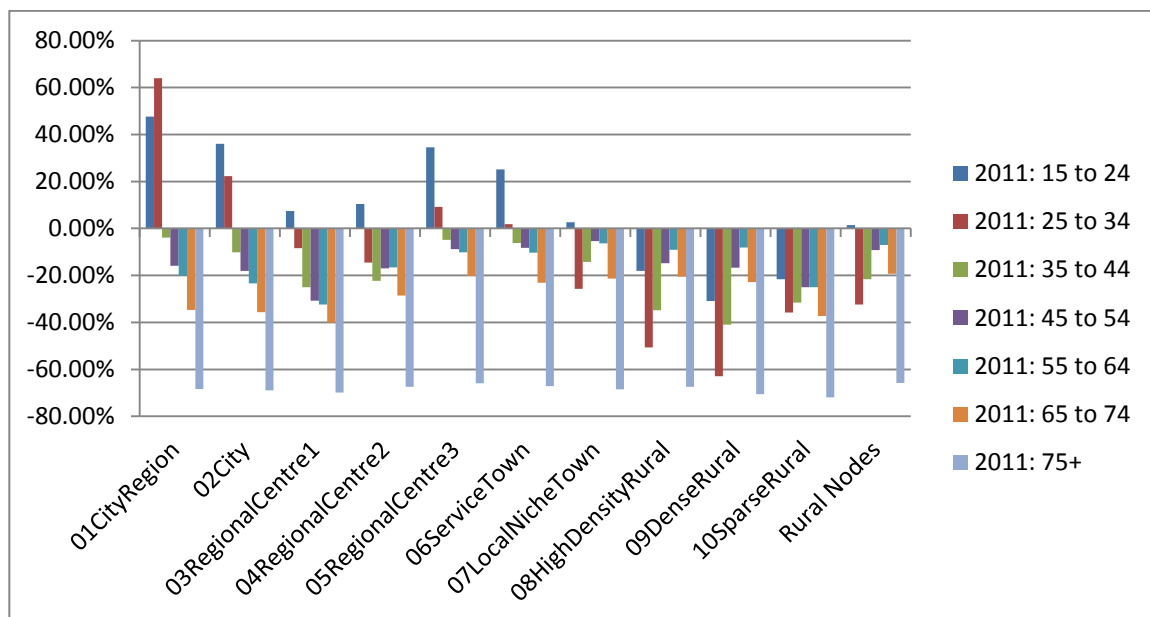


Figure 1: Percentage (%) change per age category over 15 years per settlement type





The following can be deduced from the analysis of the 15-34 year old 2011 age cohorts per settlement type:

- The percentage of 15-24 year olds increased significantly in city regions (48% positive change), cities (36% positive change), and regional centres type 3 (34% positive change). Concurrently, the dense rural, sparse rural and high density rural settlements experienced negative change in this age cohort (31%, 22% and 18% respectively).
- The percentage of 25-34 years olds increased very significantly in city regions (64% positive change), as well as in cities and in large towns/regional centres in sparsely populated areas (regional centres type 3) (22% and 15% respectively). Simultaneously this age cohort decreased very significantly in dense rural (63%), sparse rural (51%), and high density rural settlement types (36%) in particular.
- It seems that there was a high incidence of out-migration of the 0-19 year olds of the 1996 age cohorts between 1996 and 2011 from distressed rural and traditional authority areas towards urban areas (Beukes, et al., 2014; Van Huyssteen, et al., 2014).

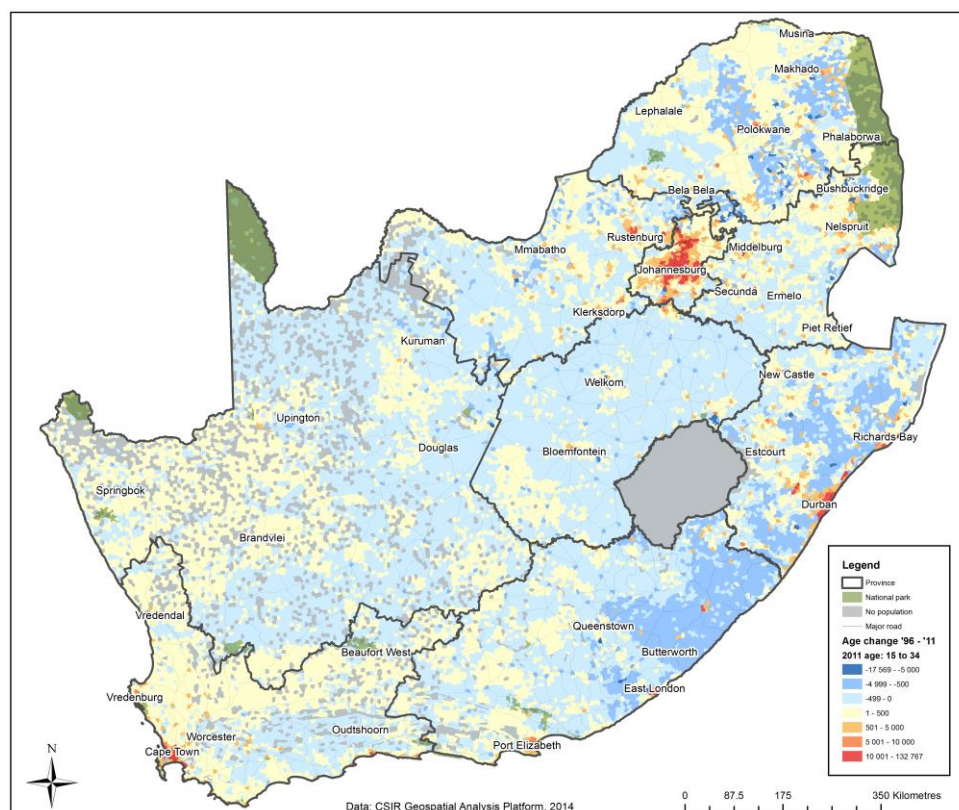


Figure 2: Population change between 1996 and 2011 for the youth (the 15-34 cohorts in 2011)

In this figure, red indicates actual numbers where the age cohort has increased, blue indicates contraction, while light yellow indicates small changes. Thus, when looking at the actual numbers, the following can be concluded from Figure 2:

- The city regions of Gauteng, eThekweni, Cape Town and Nelson Mandela Bay experienced an increase in the number of youths, as do a few other cities and regional centres such as Richard's Bay, Pietermaritzburg, Rustenburg, Mthatha and East London.





- A decrease in youth population numbers can be seen particularly in the rural parts of the Eastern Cape, KwaZulu Natal and Limpopo, as well as many small towns in the Free State, North West and the Eastern Cape provinces (Beukes, et al., 2014; Van Huyssteen, et al., 2014).

These trends are confirmed by many studies, for example Grieger, et al. (2014) in a study of rural Mpumalanga found that the most likely to migrate are young adults between 18 and 25, followed by very young children (0-5 years) and that the least likely to migrate are those over 60 years old. The National Income Dynamics Study (NIDS) is South Africa's first nationally representative individual-level longitudinal study conducted in 2008 and again in 2010/11 of the same individuals of 7300 households. The study found that the largest proportion of migrants is between 20 to 30 years old. It also found that the highest proportion of labour migrants (29%) originates from KwaZulu Natal, while Gauteng is the biggest migration (all types) destination province (Clarke, et al., 2014).

Furthermore, the number of households is growing almost double than the population and the average household size is getting smaller. Youth migration is a big contributing factor to the increase in the number of households. Unmarried youth moving independently from place to place contribute greatly to the decline in household size. Many of these households are temporary and unstable of character, and smaller and more insecure than the parent household, for they are often unemployed and living off social grants. They also often find temporary accommodation, lodge temporarily with other families, or end up in informal accommodation from which they struggle to find a way out (Todes, et al., 2010). The increase in the number of households has specific implications for service delivery in most areas, but particularly in areas with a weak or declining economic base.

Enabling female migration

Men tend to migrate alone to urban areas, while women tend to migrate to join their husbands or other close family members who have already migrated, if they are enabled to do so (Núñez-Carrasco, et al., 2011). Posel, et al. (2006) in their study of labour migration suggest that the state's provision of social grants has a gender-specific effect on the supply of labour. Earlier research have found that social grants foster a culture of economic dependency and reduce the supply of labour, and this may be generally true for men, but Posel, et al. found that among women, the social pension of another female person in the household encourages participation in the labour supply through female migration. This trend is confirmed by Ardington, et al. (in Grieger, et al., 2014) in a study of rural KwaZulu Natal. Women pensioners typically share more of their income and time in caring for their households than male pensioners. A female pensioner is enabled to take over the support for and care of the children, enabling other women in the economically active age category to migrate, and to migrate for longer periods of time. Other factors enabling female labour migration are: access to agricultural land (for extra income and food security), better education, and more children over the age of 6. A pension income helps overcome the direct cost of initial migration, fund the time needed to find a job that poorer households cannot afford, and it allows others in the household to take over the care of the children (Posel, et al., 2006). Thus women are enabled to migrate to cities when they join their partners or when they have an existing social network, if they have the money to migrate and look for work, and if there is someone to care for the children back home.

These trends have implications for the composition of the family and other social aspects such as breaking up or reuniting families, and if their children will grow up in urban areas, for children are more likely to migrate to urban areas if their mothers already live there (Grieger, et al., 2014).

Collaborators/Acknowledgements

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Sources

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For more information

For more information on the Integrated Urban Development Framework, contact the SACN. For more information on the South African Settlement Typology see <http://stepsa.org/>. For more information on population data and GAP see <http://www.gap.csir.co.za/>.

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