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Group Strategy, Policy Coordination and Relations

MIGRATION TRENDS IN THE COJ

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Contents

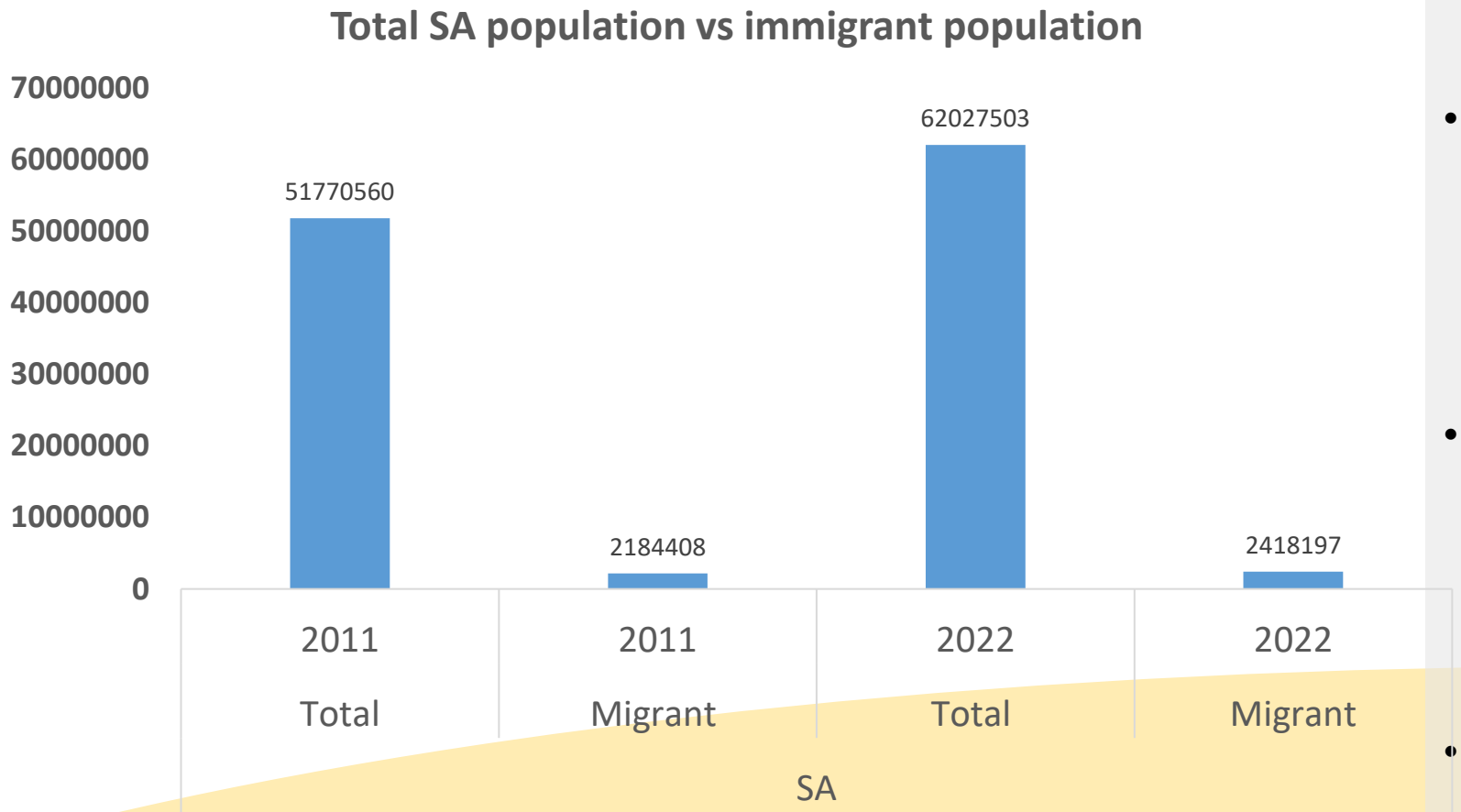
- **Introduction**
- **National migration trends**
  - Total population vs immigrant population: National, 2011 and 2022
  - Percentage distribution of immigrants by region of birth: National, 2001, 2011 and 2022
- **Provincial migration trends**
  - Distribution of immigrants by province, 2022
  - Internal migration trends: National, 2022
- **Gauteng migration trends**
  - Total population vs immigrant population: Gauteng, 2011 and 2022
- **CoJ migration trends**
  - Total population vs immigrant population: CoJ, 2011 and 2022
  - Immigrant population: CoJ, 2011 and 2022
  - Immigrant population demographics: CoJ, 2022
- **Summary**

Introduction

- This data brief presents a synopsis of key demographic characteristics of South Africa's migrant population, with a special focus on the City of Joburg.
- All data are derived from the respective population Censuses published by Statistics South Africa (StatsSA).
- A *migrant*, broadly defined, is someone who moves away from their usual residence, temporarily or permanently, for a variety of reasons including economic, social, or political (IOM, 2019). On the other hand, an *immigrant* typically refers to someone who moves to a foreign country with the intention of settling there permanently (ibid). This brief will primarily focus on immigrants, although the terms "immigrant" and "migrant" will be used interchangeably, as is common in academic literature. In other words, unless otherwise specified, immigrants/migrants in this context refers to the population born *outside of SA*.
- Caution in interpreting the data: Metro-level figures and percentages based on the 2011 Census are presented using 2016 boundaries as the 2022 boundaries had not yet been released at the time of the development of this statistical brief. The CoJ has also raised concerns with StatsSA about the accuracy of the Census 2022 metro-level figures, but analysis of the official data are valuable to help better understand our current context.
- Key observations: The data highlights several noteworthy migration trends for SA: a steadily growing migrant population, with young adults consistently being the main immigrant demographic. The picture differs slightly in the City of Joburg however, where the immigrant population in the city declined by 7.3% between 2011 and 2022.
- Similar to 2011, most migrants into the city are primarily from Zimbabwe and other SADC countries.

NATIONAL MIGRATION TRENDS

Total population vs immigrant population: National, 2011 and 2022

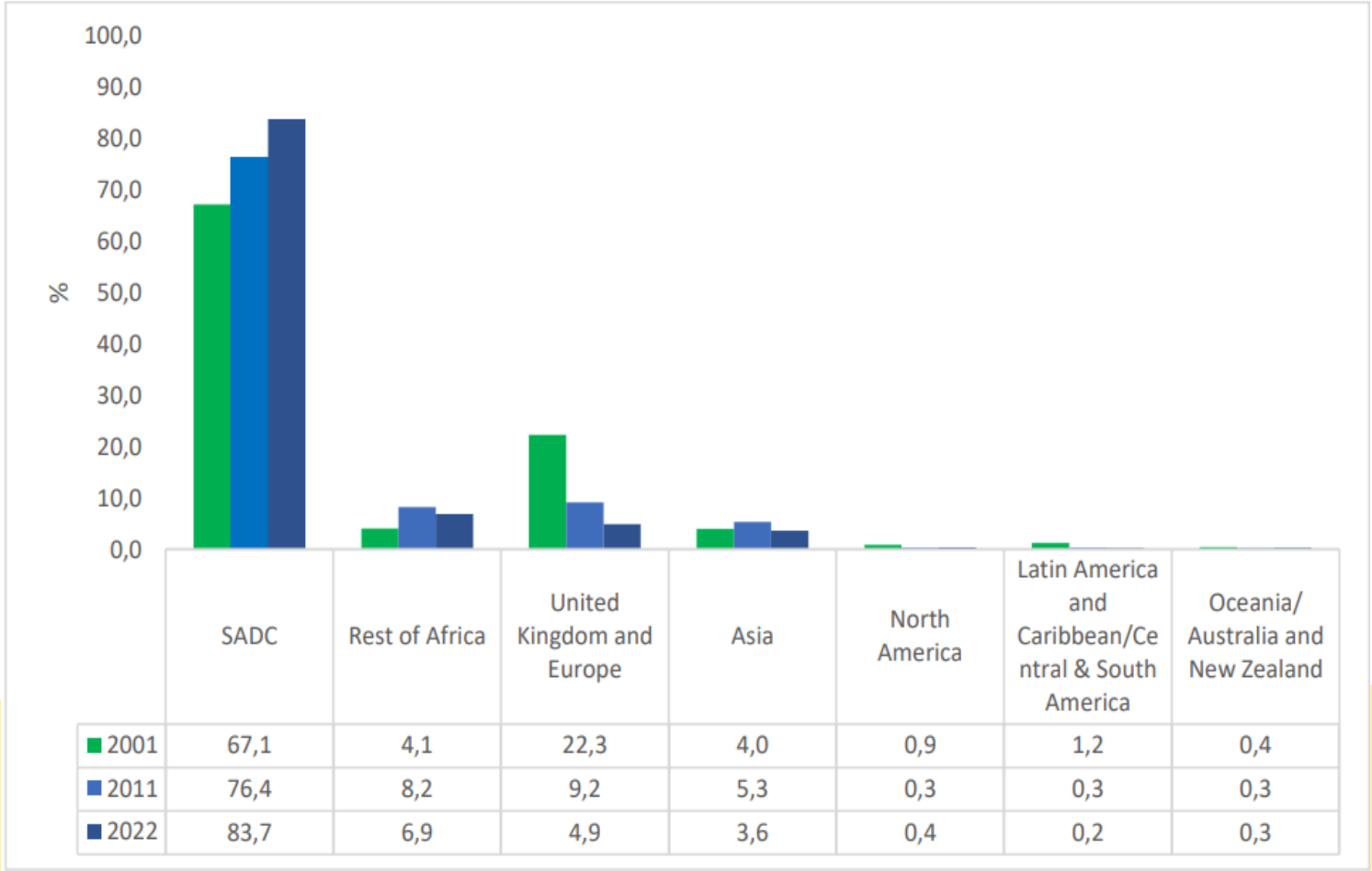


- This graph compares the population born outside of South Africa in 2011 and 2022, relative to the country's total population.
- Both the total population and the migrant population in South Africa have increased significantly from 2011 to 2022. The total population grew by over 10 million, while the migrant population increased by over 200 000.
- Despite the increase, the migrant population remains a relatively small proportion of the total South African population. In both years, it represents less than 5% of the total population of the country.
- In addition, between 2011 & 2022 the data shows that the percentage of immigrants in the City grew at slower rate (1%), on average, than the population of South Africans (1.7%).

NATIONAL MIGRATION TRENDS

Percentage distribution of immigrants by region of birth: National, 2001, 2011 and 2022

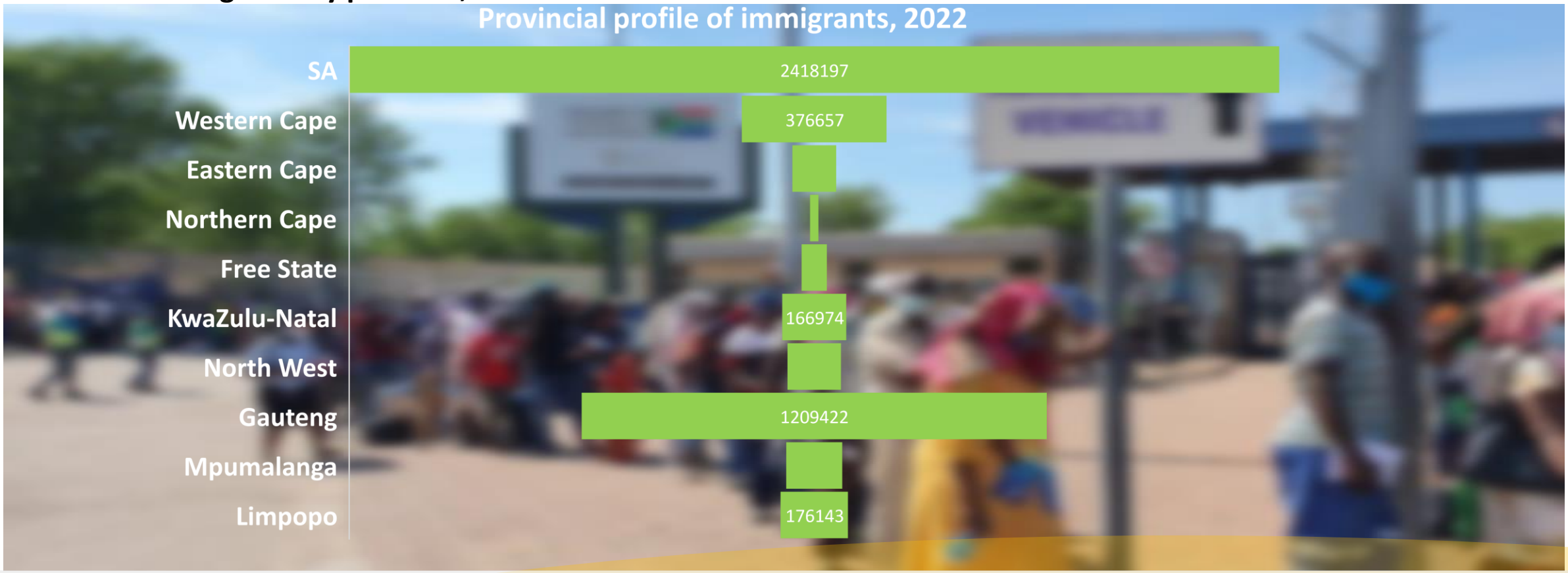
- In 2001, most immigrants to South Africa came from neighboring countries within the SADC region, accounting for over two-thirds of the total migrant population (67.1%). The next largest group was from the UK and Europe (22.3%), while other regions contributed a smaller proportion.
- By 2011 and 2022 the distribution narrowed. The SADC region remained the top source, accounting respectively for 76.4% and 83.7% of all migrants.
- Interestingly, the proportion of immigrants from the UK and Europe decreased significantly to only 4.9% in 2022, down from 9.2% in 2011. In contrast, the proportion of immigrants from the rest of Africa increased slightly, rising to 8.2% in 2011 but reduced to 6.9% in 2022.



	SADC	Rest of Africa	United Kingdom and Europe	Asia	North America	Latin America and Caribbean/Central & South America	Oceania/ Australia and New Zealand
2001	67,1	4,1	22,3	4,0	0,9	1,2	0,4
2011	76,4	8,2	9,2	5,3	0,3	0,3	0,3
2022	83,7	6,9	4,9	3,6	0,4	0,2	0,3

PROVINCIAL MIGRATION TRENDS

Distribution of immigrants by province, 2022



- Gauteng remains the epicenter of migration in South Africa. Better economic opportunities, jobs, and the promise of a better life are some of the factors that attract people to the province (StatsSA).
- Census 2022 data shows that approximately half of immigrants settle in the province (1.2mill), followed by the Western Cape (376 657 or 16% of the immigrant population).
- Provinces with the least number of immigrants in 2022 were the Free State (66 208) and Northern Cape (22 531).

PROVINCIAL MIGRATION TRENDS

Internal migration trends: National, 2022

Distribution of the population by province of birth and province of usual residence, Census 2022

Province of place of birth	Province of usual residence									In-migration	Out-migration	Net-migration
	WC	EC	NC	FS	KZN	NW	GP	MP	LP			
WC	5 163 398	115 102	28 411	12 319	25 617	7 634	98 519	9 309	6 326	2 043 626	303 237	1 740 389
EC	1 134 674	6 696 087	15 144	48 160	194 489	74 077	495 494	34 509	13 312	431 883	2 009 859	-1 577 976
NC	76 481	16 285	1 188 256	20 367	9 639	33 074	64 947	6 806	5 050	152 158	232 649	-80 491
FS	60 247	24 351	21 643	2 626 762	33 047	75 309	349 952	30 991	13 084	278 406	608 624	-330 218
KZN	89 660	56 258	4 837	24 709	11 626 610	19 457	738 399	86 222	12 509	603 265	1 032 051	-428 786
NW	26 411	8 567	33 906	21 574	12 321	3 086 960	375 556	18 863	24 034	647 671	521 232	126 439
GP	241 313	86 385	19 849	67 767	129 530	187 502	9 513 562	171 217	146 988	5 188 286	1 050 551	4 137 735
MP	24 395	7 635	3 061	10 986	27 604	29 011	501 190	4 434 841	68 381	648 017	672 263	-24 246
LP	21 591	6 489	3 517	8 080	7 722	87 141	1 378 304	149 109	6 046 238	459 831	1 661 953	-1 202 122

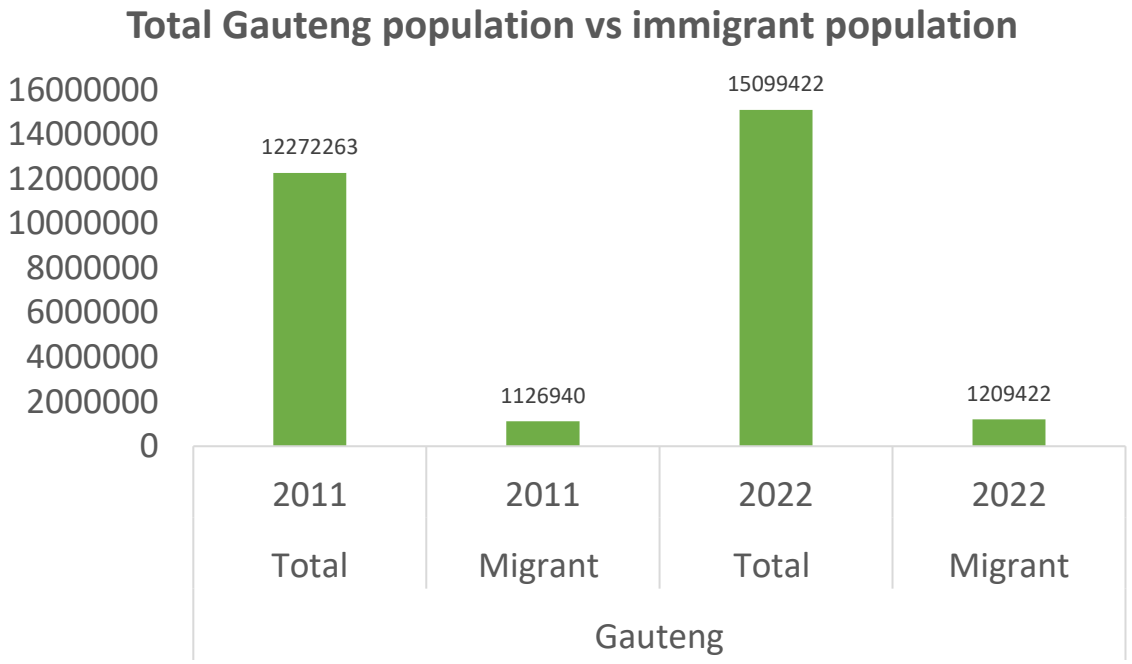
Note: This table excludes cases where the province was unspecified, not applicable and do not know

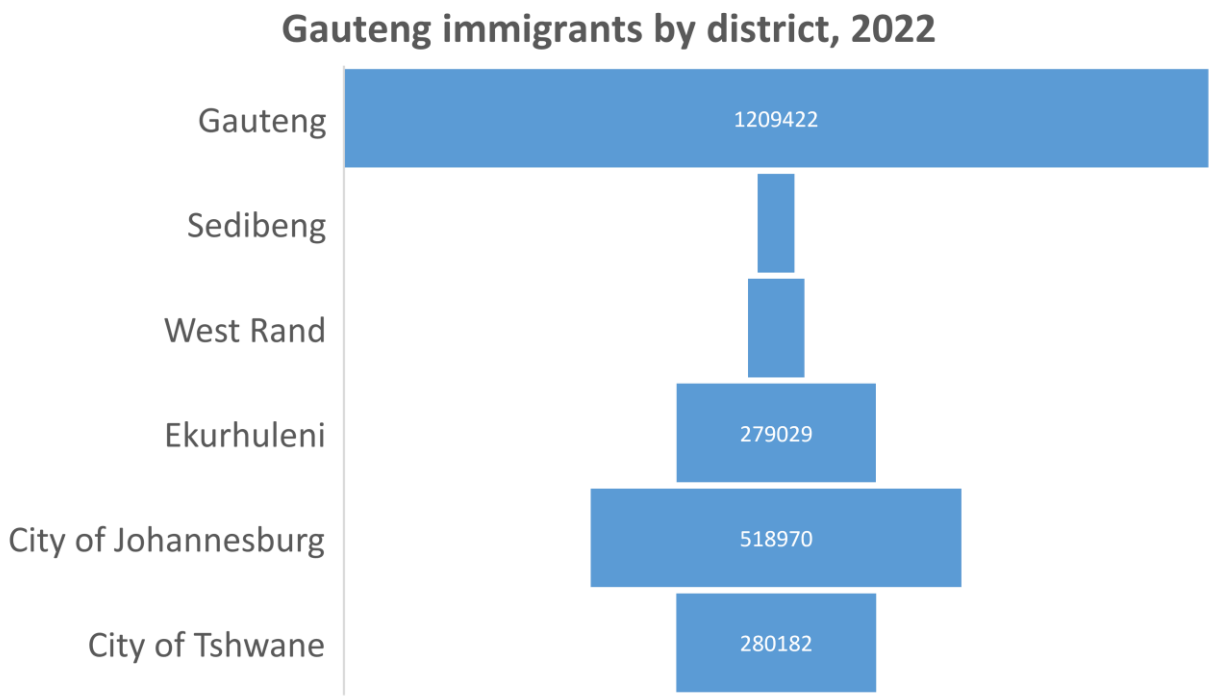
This table presents interprovincial migration data within South Africa, showing the movement of people between their province of birth and their province of usual residence (i.e. internal migration):

- Gauteng remains the preferred destination for internal migrants, with the highest in-migration figures across all birthplaces (5.2mill); followed by the Western Cape (2mill).
- The Eastern Cape and Limpopo show the largest net loss of population due to out-migration exceeding in-migration.

GAUTENG MIGRATION TRENDS

Total population vs immigrant population: Gauteng, 2011 and 2022

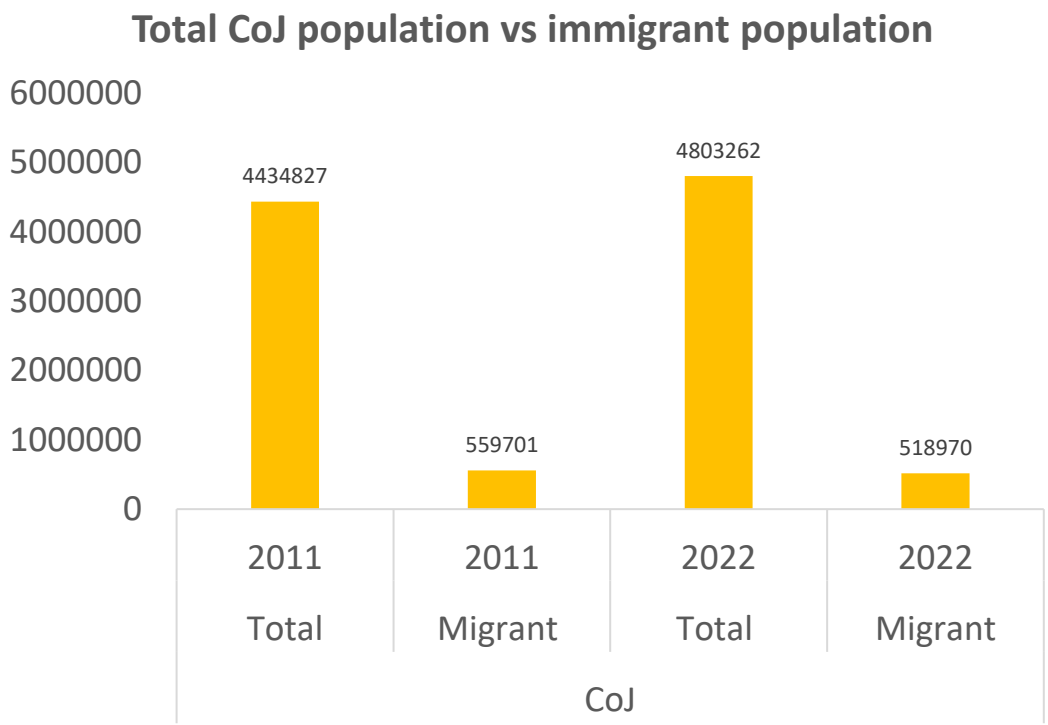




- The total population increased from 12.3mill in 2011 to 15.1mill in 2022, while the immigrant population reportedly increased from 1.1mill to 1.2mill in 2011 and 2022 respectively.
- Similar to the National trend, the annual average population growth of immigrants in Gauteng (0.6%) during the same period was significantly less than the population growth of the province (2%).
- The majority of immigrants in Gauteng are concentrated in Johannesburg (518 970 or 43%) and Tshwane (280 182 or 23%).

COJ MIGRATION TRENDS

Total population vs immigrant population: CoJ, 2011 and 2022

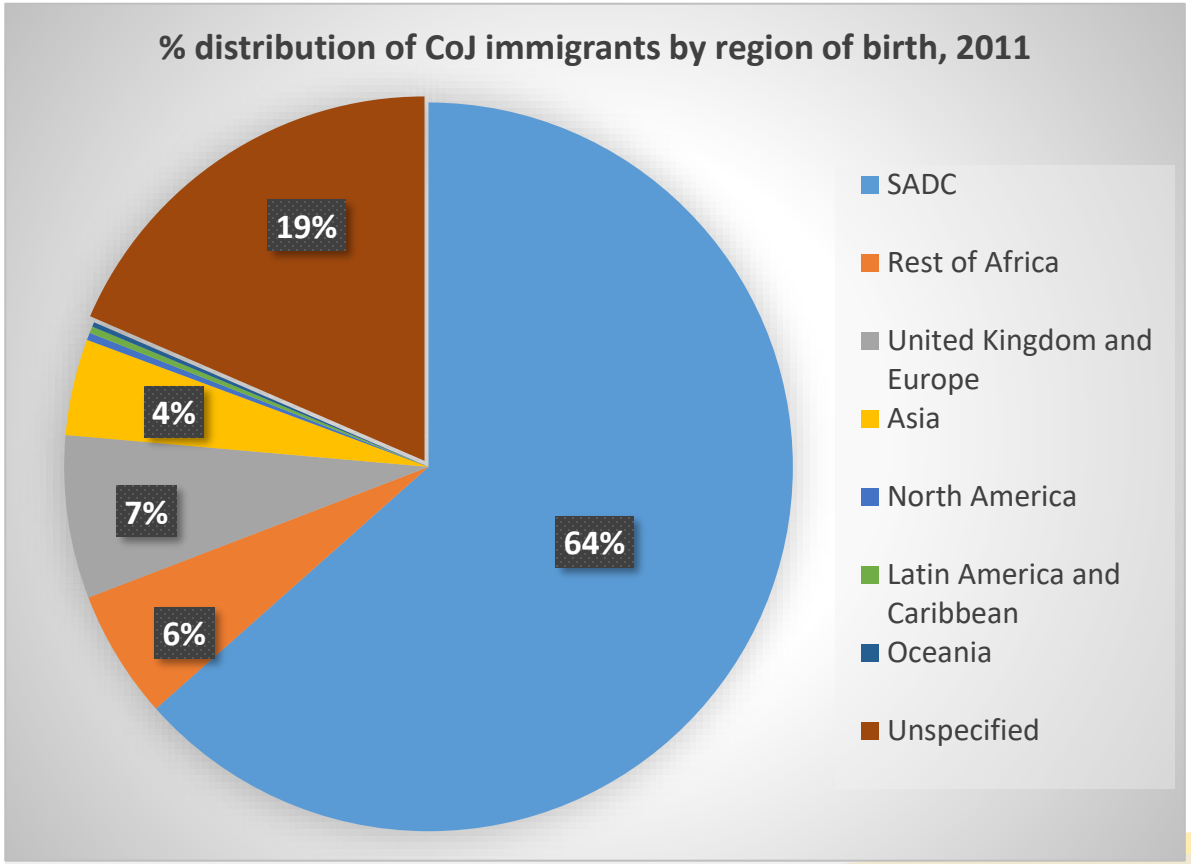


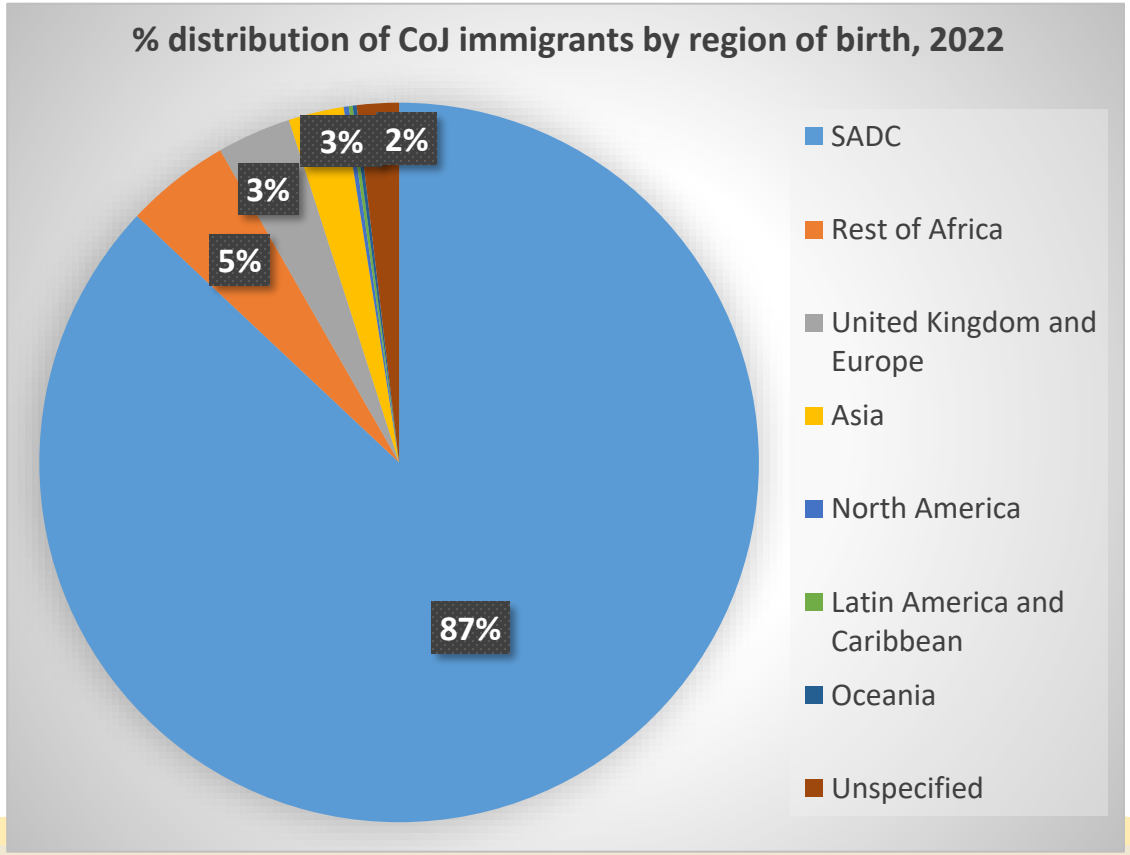
- Between 2011 and 2022, the total population of the City of Joburg reportedly grew slightly from 4.4mill to 4.8mill (about 0.7% average annual growth).
- Surprisingly, the immigrant population decreased from 559 701 to 518 970 in the same period (-0.7 average annual growth). This is contrary to the prevailing narrative that suggests a growing number of immigrants in the city.
- In 2011, the immigrant population comprised 13% of the total CoJ population. This dipped to 11% by 2022.
- By comparison, in New York City immigrants comprised 37% of the city's population in 2020.

Pic: https://www.georgeherald.com/News/Article/National-News/the-people-of-sa-by-numbers-201809210847

COJ MIGRATION TRENDS

Immigrant population: CoJ, 2011 and 2022

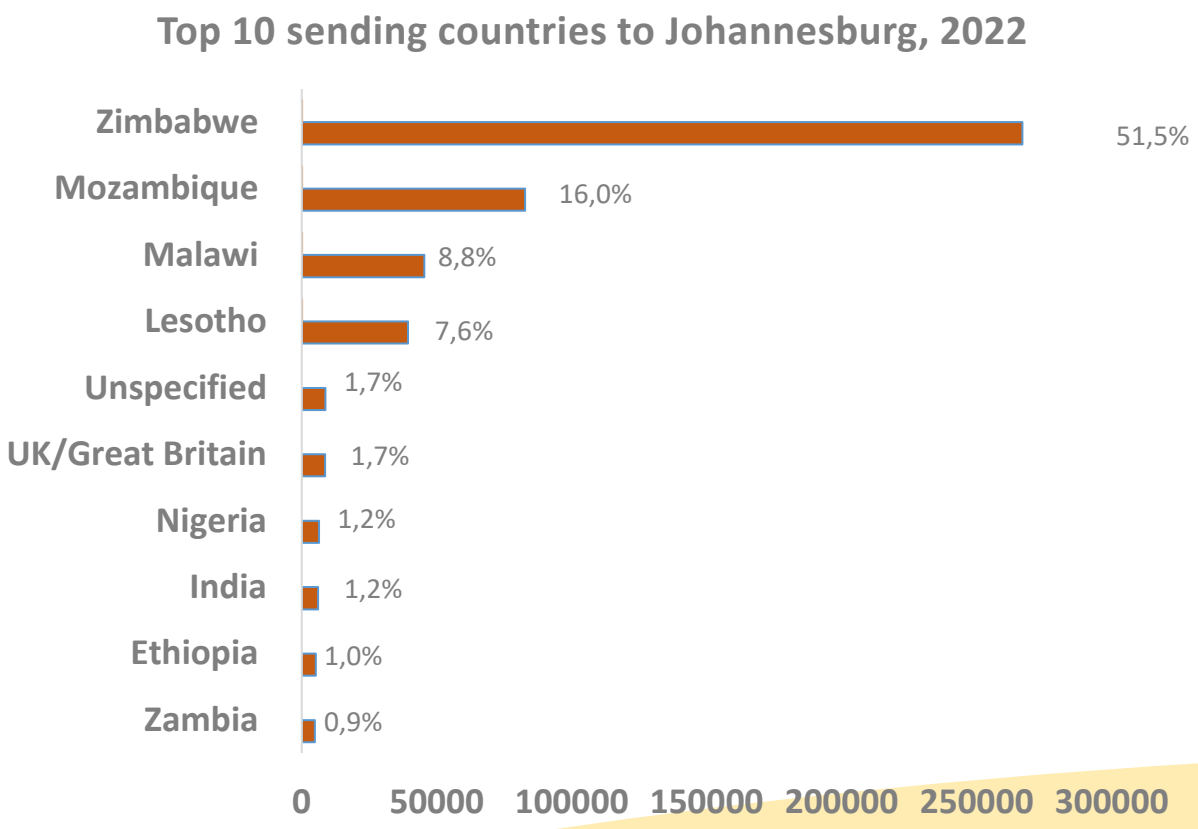




- Similar to SA, most migrants in Joburg come from SADC countries. In 2011, immigrants from SADC accounted for 64% of the immigrant population and 87% in 2022.
- Notably, the percentage of immigrants from the UK & Europe, Rest of Africa and Asia saw a decline between 2011 and 2022, mirroring the National trend.
- The percentage of immigrants from North America, Oceania, Latin America and the Caribbean remained relatively low (0.3%) in both years.

COJ MIGRATION TRENDS

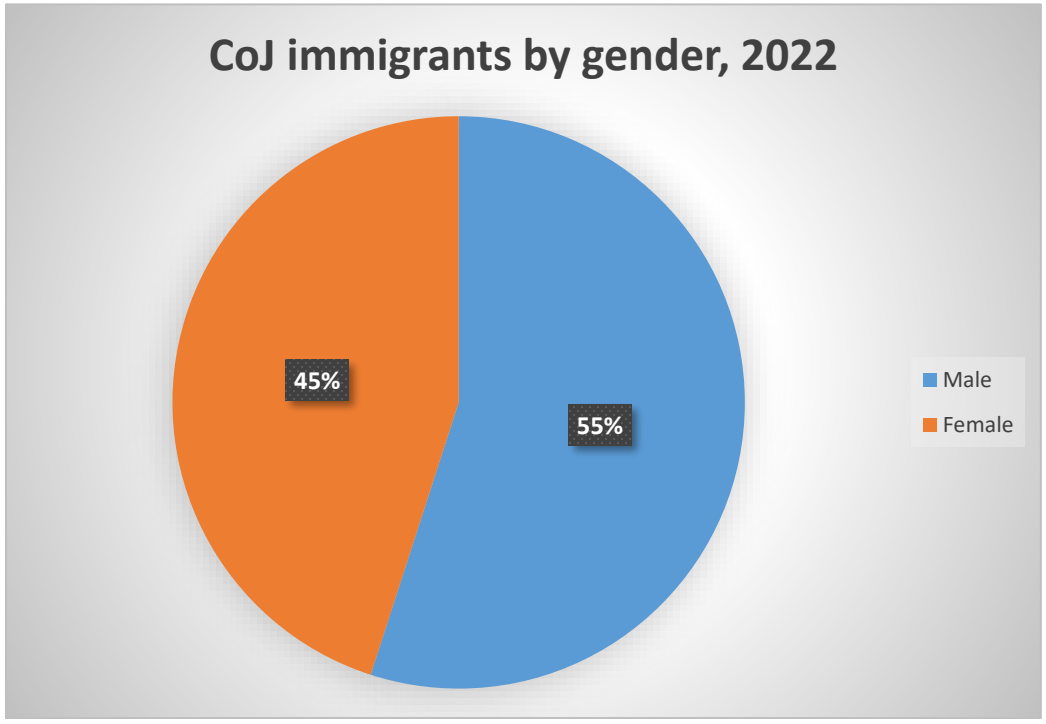
Immigrant population: CoJ, 2022



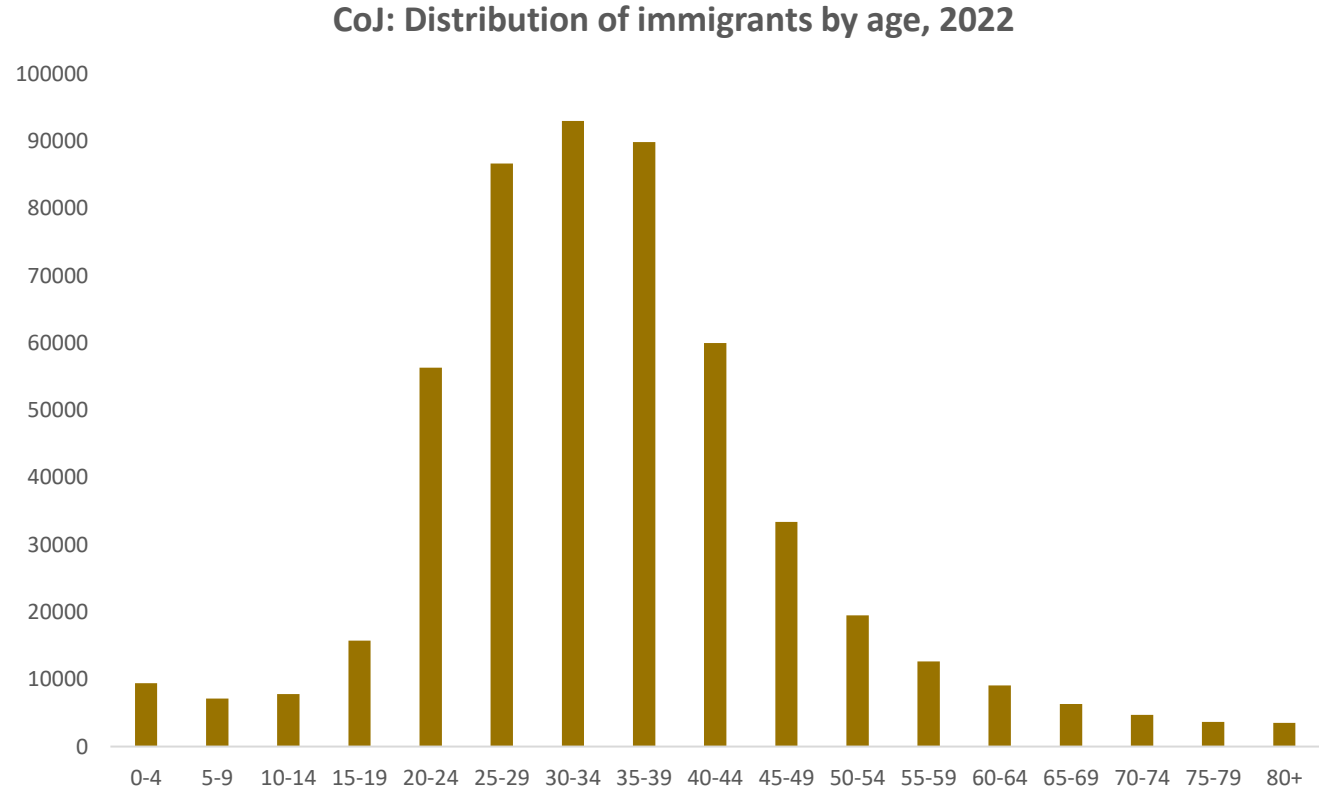
- Neighboring African countries contribute the largest numbers of immigrants to Johannesburg:
  - In 2011, Zimbabweans accounted for 58% of the immigrant population in the city, followed by Mozambican's (20%), and Lesotho and Malawi, each accounting for 7%.
  - Similar to 2011, the majority of immigrants to Joburg in 2022 came from Zimbabwe, making up more than half of the total of immigrants (51.5%), followed by Mozambique (16%) and Malawi (8.8%) and Lesotho (7.6%), respectively.
  - In 2022, the UK/Great Britain and India accounted for only 1.7% and 1.2% of immigrants, respectively.

COJ MIGRATION TRENDS

Immigrant population: CoJ, 2022



- In 2022, most immigrants in the City of Joburg were male, accounting for 55% of the migrant population.



- The majority of immigrants are between the ages of 25 and 39 years. This suggests that the city attracts a younger migrant population, likely for work or study opportunities rather than permanent relocation.
- The census data also reveals relatively low numbers of immigrant children (0-14) and older persons (60+) despite recent reports that foreigners are flocking to retire in South Africa.

SUMMARY

Key insights from the data brief include:

- The total population of SA increased from 51.8mill in 2011 to 62mill in 2022. There was also an increase in the migrant population during this period, albeit relatively small in comparison to the total population of the country.
- The SADC region has consistently been the primary source of immigrants to the country since 2001, with its dominance increasing from 67.1% in 2011 to 83.7% by 2022. Conversely, immigrants from the UK and Europe significantly decreased over this period, dropping from 22.3% in 2001 to only 4.9% in 2022.
- Census 2022 data reveals that Gauteng remains a popular destination for immigrants, the majority of who settle in the province (50%), followed by the Western Cape (16%), while the Free State (2.7%) and Northern Cape (0.9%) have the least number of immigrants.
- While the total population of CoJ reportedly grew moderately between 2011 and 2022, surprising the migrant population experienced a slight decline over the 11-year period.
- Similar to SA, most immigrants in Joburg come from SADC countries. In particular, Zimbabwe has the highest number of immigrants in Joburg. The next largest groups come from Mozambique, Malawi, and Lesotho. Other countries contribute much smaller percentages, indicating less significant migration flows.
- Johannesburg attracts a predominantly young, working-age population of immigrants, with males outnumbering females in most age groups. Most immigrants are between the ages of 25 and 39 years. The low numbers of children and elderly migrants suggest that after the age of 50 migrants may leave and return home to their families.