

https://dspace.org/

Contemporary South African Urbanization Dynamics

Todes, Alison et al

2010-06-16
Urban Forum. Springer Science+Business Media B.V. 2010
http://hdl.handle.net/10539/11643
Todes, Alison. 2010. Contemporary South African Urbanization Dynamics. Urban Forum. (2010) 21:331–348.

Downloaded from a DSpace repository. https://dspace.org/

Urban Forum (2010) 21:331–348
DOI 10.1007/s12132-010-9094-5

Contemporary South African Urbanization Dynamics

Alison Todes · Pieter Kok · Marie Wentzel · Johan Van Zyl · Catherine Cross

Published online: 16 June 2010
© Springer Science+Business Media B.V. 2010

Abstract The paper provides an overview of urbanization patterns and trends in the current era in South Africa, focusing in particular on the key dynamics and driving forces underlying migration and urbanization. It considers overall demographic trends with regard to migration and urbanization, and points to some of the difficulties with data, and with the analysis of trends and patterns. The paper explores the changing rural context and dynamics, and some of the significant processes in this context: large-scale displacement of black people off farms, the impact of land reform, and conditions in the former homeland areas. Circular migration continues to be an important way in which households in rural areas survive, but some are unable to move, and are falling out of these networks. International migration—the consequence of both conditions in the home country and the draw of the South African economy—is another significant process fuelling mainly urban growth. The paper demonstrates the importance of cities in terms of economic growth and employment, and thus their attractiveness to migrants. Continuing migration to cities is of course a challenge for

A. Todes (✉)
School of Architecture and Planning, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa
e-mail: Alison.Todes@wits.ac.za

P. Kok
Pretoria, South Africa
e-mail: pckok3@gmail.com

M. Wentzel
Democracy and Governance, Human Science Research Council, Pretoria, South Africa
e-mail: mewentzel@hsrc.ac.za

J. Van Zyl
Social Aspects of HIV/AIDS and Health, Human Science Research Council, Pretoria, South Africa
e-mail: javanzyl@hsrc.ac.za

C. Cross
Centre for Poverty, Employment and Growth, Human Science Research Council,
Pretoria, South Africa
e-mail: ccross@hsrc.ac.za

city management, but important trends towards declining household size and the splitting up of households are also driving the physical growth of cities and demands for housing, services, and infrastructure.

Keywords Urbanization trends · Migration · South Africa · Urban growth

Introduction

South African urbanization was shaped historically by policies to control the movement and settlement of black people. Apartheid policies attempted to limit access by South Africans classified as 'Africans' to cities, and to confine many of them to 'homelands', most of which were predominantly rural and with limited economic bases. These policies, however, began to break down from the 1980s as people moved to the cities, although some settlement patterns have been remarkably persistent and movement to cities has not been as rapid as was expected. As is occurring internationally (Cohen 2003), urbanization rates have declined, and are now lower than they were under apartheid.

Research on urbanization and migration in South Africa post-apartheid has been uneven, and has been hampered by a paucity of reliable and systematic data. In the context of these deficits, this paper draws together available studies to provide an overview of urbanization patterns and trends in the current era in South Africa, focusing in particular on the key dynamics and driving forces underlying migration and urbanization.

The paper begins by providing some background on overall demographic trends with regard to migration and urbanization, and points to some of the difficulties with the data, and with the analysis of trends and patterns. The bulk of the paper, however, focuses on the dynamics underlying patterns of urbanization and migration. It explores the changing rural context and some of the key processes there: large-scale displacement of black people from farms, the impact of land reform and conditions in the former homeland areas. Circular migration continues to be an important way in which households in rural areas survive. The paper reviews these patterns, but also points to a literature showing how some are unable to move, and are falling out of these networks. International migration, mainly to South Africa's cities, is another significant process addressed in the paper. The paper considers why it is occurring, and examines what is known about migrant numbers. The draw of the cities and their significance in terms of economic growth and employment are then discussed. Continuing migration to cities is a challenge for city management, but trends towards declining household size and the splitting up of households are perhaps more important in driving the physical growth of cities and demands for housing, services, and infrastructure.

Urbanization and Migration Trends

By the time of the first post-apartheid census in 1996, just over half of the South African population (55.1%) lived in urban areas, and this number grew to 57.5% by the time of the next census in 2001. These figures reflect Statistics South Africa's (2003) definitions, which focus on classification of types of enumerator areas, but

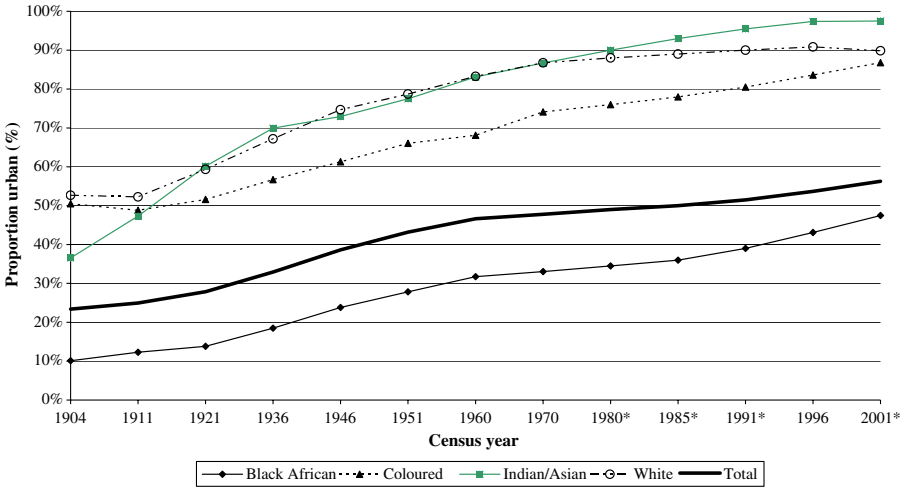


Fig. 1 South Africa's historical urbanization trends, 1904–2001. Source: Kok & Collinson (2006: 22). *Asterisk* the urbanization figures for 1980, 1985, and 1991 were not derived from the censuses themselves but are interpolations. This was necessary because these censuses excluded those parts of the country that were covered by the former homelands of Transkei, Bophuthatswana and Venda (1980, 1985, and 1991) and also Ciskei (1985 and 1991). The figures for 2001 are estimates based on the procedure described by Kok and Collinson (2006)

their own exploration of alternative definitions based on density[1] shows that South Africa could be seen as far more urbanized: 64.8% in 1996, growing to 68.5% in 2001 (Statistics South Africa 2003).

There is a growing recognition internationally that 'urban' and 'rural' are not mutually exclusive categories: boundaries are blurred and are interlinked in many ways (Tacoli & Satterthwaite 2003; United Nations 2004). South Africa's apartheid history makes defining 'urban' versus 'rural' particularly problematic. Dense (and often large) settlements were created in rural areas through processes of resettlement from African freehold land, displacement from commercial farms in areas defined for white occupation, and 'betterment planning' in homeland areas. Some commentators have questioned whether these areas can really be defined as 'rural'. Many of these settlements have a limited agricultural base, and households are dependent on a combination of commuter income, remittances, pensions, and other sources. Industrial decentralization policies aimed to create manufacturing employment in some of these areas, but in many such places industrial development never took off, and in some of the others (particularly the more spatially peripheral areas) manufacturing growth that did occur has collapsed (Harrison et al. 2008).

Figure 1 shows the historical urbanization levels (percentage of the population living in urban areas) of the total South African population and by race from 1904 to 2001. It shows that urbanization rates were higher in previous periods than in the contemporary era, suggesting that post-apartheid urbanization has not been particularly rapid. Data on the growth of the nine largest cities also show a declining

[1] Using a minimum population of 1,000 per locality, and a minimum density of 500 people per km^2 at sub-place level.

rate of growth, from 3.45% p.a. in the period 1946-1970 to 3.09% between 1970 and 1996, down to 2.8% p.a. between 1996 and 2001 (SACN 2004), although two of the largest cities, Johannesburg and Ekurhuleni, grew at rates which were faster than in previous periods. This decline mirrors national population growth rates, which fell from 2.7% to 2.4% to 2% p.a. over the same periods. As is the case internationally (cf. United Nations 2004), city growth rates are predominantly the result of natural increase. For instance in Gauteng, South Africa's dominant migration destination, some 70% of growth between 1996 and 2001 was the consequence of natural increase (Cross, Kok, Wentzel et al. 2005).

Migration levels have also been remarkably constant at around 12% over the three periods studied by Kok and Collinson (2006): during apartheid (1975–1980), a period of political transition (1992–1996), and a post-apartheid period (1996–2001).

Analysis of 1996 and 2001 census data has revealed several important trends. Perhaps the most important has been a movement of people to cities experiencing economic growth, particularly the Gauteng metropolitan areas and some of the rapidly growing secondary cities. Both economic growth rates and population growth rates were variable in other metropolitan areas and secondary cities: while both were faster than average in the Cape Town and eThekwini metros, as well as in some secondary cities, other areas experienced net or absolute decline (DBSA 2005; SACN 2004). Similarly, there has been a net move away from the economically declining Eastern Cape and Northern Cape regions to the Western Cape, and to the north-east of the country (Tomlinson et al. 2003).

Figure 2 explores migration rates for different types of municipalities for the 1996–2001 period, using Census 2001 Migration Community Profile data (Statistics South Africa 2005). It shows that small town/rural municipalities had net out-migration rates, while the metros, cities and large towns were net migrant attractors. While small town/rural municipalities also experience considerable inflows of

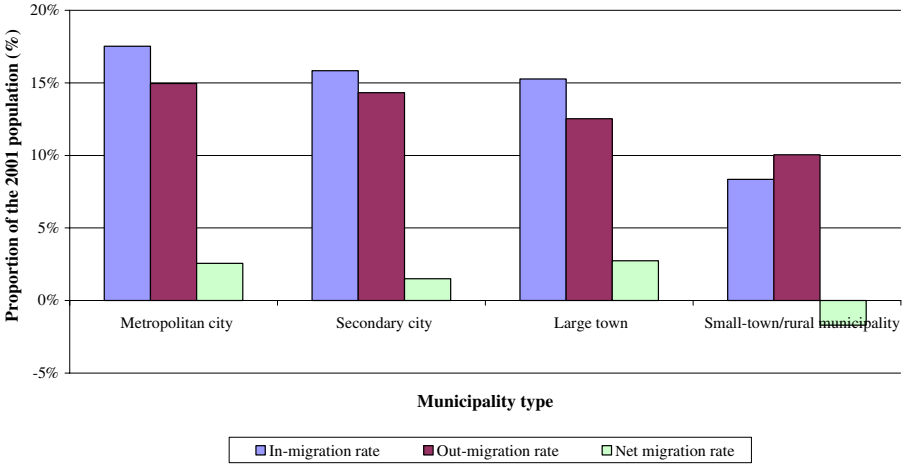


Fig. 2 Different migration rates (1996–2001) for the various municipality types, 2001. Source: Statistics South Africa (2005)

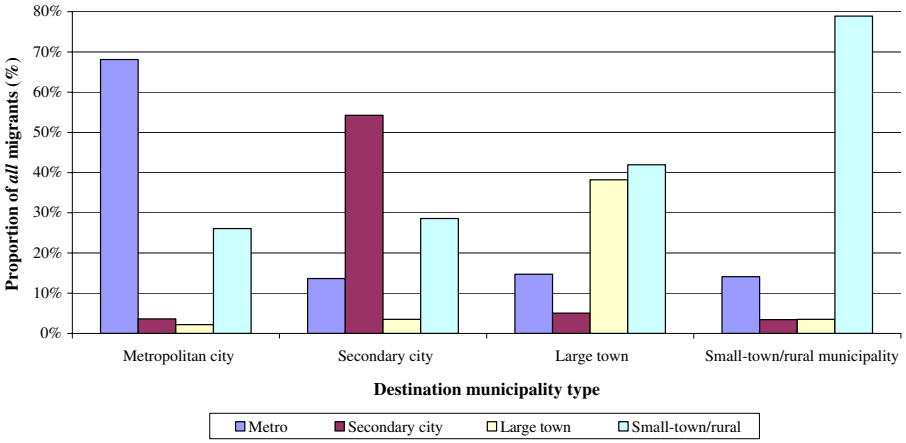


Fig. 3 Destination types of inter-municipality migration (1996–2001), by municipality type of origin. Source: Statistics South Africa (2005)

migrants, at the same time they tend to shed relatively large numbers of migrants who may be moving on to the larger cities and towns.

Municipality level analyses show that the second-highest proportion of migrants to metropolitan cities originate in small town/rural municipalities (25%), following more than two thirds (69%) of migrants to metropolitan cities originating in other metros. As would be expected, by far the largest proportion (78%) of inter-municipality migrants into small town/rural municipalities moved from other small town/rural municipalities (Fig. 3).

Not all movement follows economic growth, however. Tomlinson et al. (2003) and Cross (2001) argue that there are significant rural-rural movements, and census figures for the 1996–2001 period show movements into some predominantly rural districts. In addition, the period since 1994 has seen a significant push away from commercial farming areas, as the following section shows. The availability of housing in small towns in some regions has also encouraged movement to these places in the absence of economic growth (Marais & Krige 2000). Government policies have shaped movements in complex ways as well (Atkinson & Marais 2006). Nor have people necessarily moved from areas of high unemployment, poverty or poor services. Kok et al. (2003) showed that areas with higher unemployment levels do not generate higher levels of out-migration. The same has been found in respect of under-serviced areas.

Data to inform patterns since 2001 is more problematic, since no new census has been undertaken. Annual provincial population estimates based on projections have been produced by Statistics South Africa, and these form the basis for municipal estimates by some agencies. Others use their own estimates and projections. In 2007 a Community Survey, covering almost 275,000 households, was undertaken by Statistics South Africa. These data do not replace the census, and the municipal figures reported here have been weighted using various statistical and demographic techniques based on provincial figures and projections of the 1996 and 2001 censuses. These figures are thus mere estimates, and there are some concerns about their accuracy due to difficulties with the weighting, inter alia.

Table 1 Populations of the largest cities, 1996–2007, and their growth rates since 1946

Indicator	Data date	Johannesburg	eThekwini	Cape Town	Ekurhuleni	Tshwane	Nelson Mandela	Buffalo City	Mangaung	Msunduzi	Total or average
Community Survey Population	2007	3,888,180	3,468,086	3,497,097	2,724,229	2,345,908	1,050,930	724,312	752,906	616,730	19,068,378
Census population	2001	3,225,812	3,090,122	2,893,247	2,480,276	1,985,983	1,005,778	701,890	645,441	553,223	16,581,772
	1996	2,639,110	2,751,193	2,563,612	2,026,807	1,682,701	969,771	682,287	603,704	521,805	14,440,990
Average annual population growth rate	2001–2007	3.16%	1.94%	3.20%	1.57%	2.81%	0.73%	0.52%	2.60%	1.82%	2.35%
	1996–2001	4.10%	2.35%	2.45%	4.12%	3.37%	0.73%	0.57%	1.35%	1.18%	2.80%
	1970–1996	2.04%	3.62%	2.97%	2.90%	3.78%	2.78%	3.79%	4.63%	4.59%	3.09%
	1946–1970	2.67%	4.41%	3.70%	2.74%	4.15%	3.86%	4.11%	4.49%	3.18%	3.45%

Source: SACN (2004); Statistic South Africa (2007)

Most data and projections, however, suggest that migration was concentrated on Gauteng, and to a lesser extent on the Western Cape. No figures on urbanization levels are available. Figures provided by Statistics South Africa for the nine largest cities suggest that most of these cities grew at relatively rapid rates during the period 2001–2007 (Table 1), but only in a few cases more rapidly than in the previous, inter-census period. These figures differ from those reported in the *State of Cities Report 2006*, and from several other estimates (see SACN 2006), and are generally much higher.

Urbanization and Migration Dynamics

The following sections explore the major drivers and dynamics shaping urbanization and migration in the current period. The rural context and its dynamics provide an important starting point for this discussion. Not only are they key to rural-urban movements, but they are also critical to understanding movements within rural areas themselves. Circular migration, as one of the main forms of movement, receives particular attention. In the South African context, international migration is an important but very different form of movement, and we explore its extent, drivers, and main patterns. Clearly, cities are providing a considerable attraction for movement from elsewhere, and we explore these issues, as well as the social processes within cities leading to internal movement and declining household size within the city.

Rural Contexts and Dynamics

Since 1994, perhaps the most notable trend has been the large-scale movement of black people off farms owned by others (mainly whites).[2] A significant study by the Nkuzi Development Association and Social Surveys (Wegerif et al. 2005) found that some 2.4 million people were displaced from farms between 1994 and the end of 2004 of whom 942,303 were evicted. The remainder left of their own accord, but often as a consequence of difficult conditions on the farm (see also Atkinson 2007). Ironically, numbers displaced were higher than in the 1984–1993 period when some 737,114 black people were evicted from farms, and a total of 1.8 million were displaced. While some workers moved to other farms, some 3.7 million of those displaced and 1.6 million of those evicted between 1984 and 2004 moved off farms altogether.

Although there has been significant displacement of black people from farms, the scale of displacement is open to debate. The Nkuzi figures do not accord with census data, which showed a rise in the African population on commercial farms, but eviction survey researchers who investigated this anomaly argued that there might have been mistakes in Statistics South Africa's classification of enumerator areas, and therefore in overall figures. Nevertheless, the scale of evictions and displacement is enormous, and the numbers involved are even higher than the 1.1 million black people who were forcibly removed from white farms between 1960 and 1983, at the height of apartheid. But it is possible that the Nkuzi figures are too high.

[2] According to census figures, some 2.9 million black South Africans still lived on farms owned by others in 2001.

Some 67% of those who were evicted have settled in and around urban areas—usually in backyard shacks or poorer parts of townships (38%) or in informal settlements (29%). The largest number is in Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal, in part due to the scale of evictions there, but also as a consequence of the attraction large urban centers there provide to migrants seeking employment (Wegerif et al. 2005). The study does not, however, make it clear to what extent evictees and other displaced farm workers have ended up in metros and large cities versus smaller towns. Yet it shows that access to employment is a smaller motivating factor in choice of location, with some 42% locating in places where they have social networks, and another 30% where they are able to access secure tenure.

Other research on displaced farm workers (see for example Atkinson 2007; and studies summarized in Todes 1999) found that they often locate in small towns,[3] some of which have weak or declining economic bases. Similarly, Cross et al. (1997, 1999) found that not many are able to move directly to metro cities; instead, most are likely to move to the nearest small town, with many remaining there indefinitely. In some provinces, a disproportionate supply of housing in small towns has also encouraged location in these places (Marais & Krige 2000). Displaced and evicted farm workers are poor and relatively unskilled in terms of employment that is available, and unemployment levels are high (Atkinson 2007). Small towns frequently have limited capacity or revenue to absorb migrants, and the Centre for Development and Enterprise (CDE 2005) links service delivery protests in 2005 to these pressures.

According to Wegerif et al. (2005), some two thirds of farm evictions are work-related. They locate evictions from farms within a context of stresses on commercial agriculture, which has led to a decline and casualisation of agricultural employment. Regular employment declined by 170,000 over the period from 1993, to a total of 480,000 in 2002, while casual work has increased to 460,000 over the same period (Aliber 2007).[4] The last few decades have seen a deregulation of the agricultural sector with the removal of marketing boards, subsidies, and most tariff protections. South Africa operates in an increasingly globalized market, in competition with several countries, many of which depend on subsidies. Countries in the European Union and the USA, for instance, still benefit from massive agricultural subsidies. In response to these pressures, commercial farmers have introduced new technologies and mechanized further. Extensive consolidation has occurred, with the number of farms dropping from 57,980 in 1993 to 45,818 in 2002. Periods of drought have also been associated with high levels of farm evictions, as has the introduction of minimum wages for farm workers (Wegerif et al. 2005).

In addition, farmers have responded to legislation granting tenure rights to longstanding farm workers with illegal evictions. In some cases, farmers have used the development of Reconstruction and Development Programme housing schemes in towns as a way to move workers off farms (Wegerif et al. 2005). Fear of crime by

[3] Census data discussed in the previous section suggest that while there is considerable migration into smaller towns, this is matched by out-migration. These figures suggest that there must be considerable onward migration in these settlements and/or that different experiences between settlements are being aggregated in the figures.

[4] In 1986, there were 816,660 regular employees and 534,781 casual employees, although the latter figure dropped in later years (Wegerif et al. 2005).

white farm owners is cited by the CDE (2005) as a further significant reason for displacement from farms.

For farm workers, living in town enables better access to services and facilities and there is greater freedom, but living costs are higher and there is less opportunity to supplement incomes through farming (Atkinson 2007; Wegerif et al. 2005). While some prefer farm life, only 27% of evicted farm workers living in towns want to return to it; and amongst the now-urbanized youth, there is little interest in farming (Wegerif et al. 2005).

Land reform so far has not provided much of an alternative to urban migration. Wegerif et al. (2005) comment that the scale of land reform has not matched the extent of evictions from farms, and that farm workers have hardly benefited through the program. By July 2005, land reform had provided land or improved tenure rights to some 164,185 households,[5] only 7,543 of which were farm worker households. Although the scale of delivery has increased since 2002 (Aliber 2007), delivery rates have been modest, and fall well below intentions. By the end of 2004, only 4.3% of land had been redistributed, against a target of 30% by 2014 (CDE 2005).

Aliber (2007) argues that there is general agreement that land reform is not creating the livelihoods that were expected. In many cases, production has declined so that profits for beneficiaries are well below the wage bill previously paid to workers prior to transfer, although there are non-monetary benefits. Although beneficiaries may begin by attempting to farm in the way that was done before, Andrew et al. (2003) find that households generally follow farming practices that are prevalent among resource-poor households in communal areas, and largely use agriculture to supplement off-farm incomes. Inadequate land, poor capacity, and a lack of post-settlement support are often seen as major reasons for the limited benefits of the program (Hall 2004). Although policy from 2000 shifted to placing a greater emphasis on commercial farming, the CDE (2005) reports that some 80% of those settled in this way are still using land for subsistence.

Within the former homeland areas, some 4 million people in 2 million households practice some form of agriculture, but in most cases it is at a subsistence level. Only 1.1% of these households depend on farming as a main source of income, while 2.8% use it as an additional source of income. Most households depend heavily on grants and remittances, and thus on linkages to urban areas (see the following section). Even agricultural production has depended to a degree on remittances, and has been affected by their relative decline.[6] Agriculture nevertheless functions as an aspect of food security for households involved in production, but for a rising proportion of households (88.3% in 2004) it is an additional rather than a main source of food (6.3%). Agriculture as a main source of food has declined quite sharply from 32.9% in 2000 (Aliber et al. 2005). Andrew et al. (2003: 3) summarize the main constraints to land-based livelihoods in these areas as

> ...a combination of population pressures and land shortages, resource constraints (labour, tools, skills, finances and livestock), input and output market problems (a combination of price, institutional and infrastructural problems), institutional

[5] Of these, 90,282 were cases of restitution, while 73,903 were cases of redistribution or tenure reform.
[6] I.e., as employment opportunities for unskilled workers have declined.

> problems linked to land tenure and administration that exacerbate degradation processes and increase the risks of losses and natural disasters...

There have been some initiatives to promote agricultural production in these areas, although they have been relatively limited in scale. Small-scale sugar out-grower production has been most successful, while schemes to link small-scale producers to markets have had some success (Aliber 2007), but there are many schemes that do not go beyond a survivalist level in practice, despite their intentions. At the same time, the availability of social grants provides a level of security, allowing households to remain in these areas, surviving through multiple income sources. The availability of grants, however, does not inhibit entry into labor markets, but rather seems to facilitate patterns of circular migration (Posel et al. 2006).

In some areas, economic restructuring and its consequences in terms of job losses in mining and manufacturing (for example, in the clothing industry) have led to a decline in income sources for rural households (through remittances or commuting incomes), and out-migration to both cities and small towns is occurring (Bank & Minkley 2005). Large-scale movement to more accessible small towns in the Eastern Cape is occurring even in the absence of employment in these areas.

In the late 1990s, several studies examined what had happened to 'displaced urban settlements', i.e., the often dense settlements created in rural areas largely through government resettlement programs (CDE 1998; Krige 1996; Meth 1998). Many of these were at a distance from areas of work, and households depended on commuting or migrant remittance for survival. Although industrial decentralization policy had provided a level of employment in a few of these places, in many of these instances employment declines had occurred. Despite expectations that people would rapidly move out of these areas after the ending of influx control and apartheid, studies found that while there was a level of out-migration from some such places, people remained in others. Better housing than in the cities, lower service costs, the existence of transport subsidies, and social links and networks explained some of these patterns. It is not clear, however, how patterns have changed since then.

Circular Migration

The migrant labor system was a key feature in the economic development of South Africa and was associated with legislation that inhibited and controlled the urbanization of African people. Many commentators assumed that it would disappear post-apartheid, as people would be able to settle permanently near the places where they worked. However, Posel (2003) argues that there is no evidence to support the assumption that circular labor migration ended or even declined during the 1990s (see also Cox et al. 2004; MXA 2005).

While the formal system of migrant labor has long collapsed and employment of mine workers, once the major source of employment for migrants, has declined significantly since the late 1980s (Davies & Head 1995), forms of circular migration continue to exist and new forms seem to have emerged. Cox et al. (2004) suggest that circular migrants are taking up a range of poorly paid and insecure work in the informal sector, and in areas such as domestic work, security, and transport. Increasingly, women are migrating in search of income (Hunter 2006; Posel 2003),

although many women pushed out of rural areas are unable to find work and can be pushed into dependent relationships with men to survive (Hunter 2006).

The existence of circular forms of fragmented migration is common in contexts where insecure labor market conditions exist (Roberts 1989) since it allows families to diversify sources of household income and risks. In the South African context, land in rural areas continues to represent a 'sense of security, identity and history and a preferred place for retirement'(Posel 2003: 1). The high cost of living in urban settlements may also be an important factor, while the care of young children provided by the rural household makes it possible for working-age women to move in search of work (Posel 2003).

Although circular migration provides vital income support, the majority of African migrant households in rural areas are poor (Posel 2003), and labor migrants are more likely to come from poor provinces (Gelderblom 2006). Nevertheless, the poorest of the poor are unable to migrate, since they do not have the necessary finances or the kinds of social networks that migration requires (Collinson et al. 2006: 32). A study by McIntosh Xaba & Associates (MXA 2005) in KwaZulu-Natal similarly showed that the very poor are least mobile, and become trapped in places that offer limited opportunities for survival, whilst the better-off use diverse assets to commute frequently. Bank and Minkley (2005) work on the Eastern Cape shows how the decline of both older forms of migrant income and incomes from commuters have undermined the possibility of mobility as a livelihood strategy, or of maintaining both urban and rural bases, and many are finding themselves trapped in slums in either rural or urban areas.

International Migration

The shape, scope, and scale of migration have changed significantly since the democratization of South Africa in the early 1990s. The opening up of the country has enabled many potential migrants from the rest of the continent, Asia and the Indian subcontinent to migrate to South Africa. The new democracy is also attractive to people who would previously never have considered moving to South Africa (or been able to do so) and those who seek refuge from persecution and war (Crush & Williams n.d.).

There are multiple reasons for international migration to South Africa. Deteriorating economic conditions in home countries, for example high unemployment rates, low wages, and growing urban and rural poverty, have compelled many migrants to leave their countries of origin in search of better lives. Political tension, marginalization of minority ethnic groups, civil war, and ecological deterioration in some sending countries has also contributed to migration. South Africa's dominant economic position in the region has made the country a preferred destination not only for regional migrants, but also for migrants from the rest of Africa. Furthermore, economic prosperity and attempts to embed South Africa in the global economy as well as high rates of emigration have led to increasing opportunities for skilled migrant workers. The impact of HIV/AIDS on rural livelihoods already threatened by poverty, food insecurity, and insecure access to social services has increased cross-border movements in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region. The existence of social networks in both South Africa and the sending countries is an important factor facilitating migration to South Africa. The

recent xenophobic attacks, however, may well begin to change the attractiveness of South Africa to migrants.

One of the most contentious issues in the migration debate in South Africa is the number of foreign nationals currently living in the country. Various estimates have been made; for example Human Rights Watch estimated that between 1.2 million and 3 million Zimbabweans were living illegally in South Africa in 2006 (*Sunday Independent* 24 December 2006), while the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe estimated that there were 1.2 million Zimbabweans living in this country at the time (*Daily Mirror* 10 January 2007). More recent estimates suggest that the figures are even higher. Chinese researchers have put the total illegal Chinese population in South Africa at between 100,000 and 200,000 (*Pretoria News* 6 December 2006). Although official figures of legal border crossings are readily available, it is not clear how many people are illegally in the country at this point in time. There is, furthermore, no reliable research methodology for determining the actual total number of immigrants in South Africa.

In 2004 the Department of Home Affairs deported slightly more than 167,000 undocumented migrants of whom 49% were Mozambican and 43% Zimbabwean. In 2005, a total of nearly 210,000 undocumented migrants were deported (DHA 2006). The 2001 census showed the total foreign-born population in South Africa to be 1,025,072, including 687,678 from the SADC region, 228,318 from Europe, and 41,817 from the rest of Africa (Crush et al. 2005). The 2007 Community Survey conducted by Statistics South Africa found that 2.7% of South Africa's population was born outside the country, about half (46.8%) of whom were located in Gauteng. According to these data, some 1,309,500 people were foreign born, not very many more than in 2001. These figures, however, are likely to represent an undercount since undocumented migrants often choose to be invisible and would not readily participate in official censuses and surveys.

In the last decade, the numbers of legal border crossings have exploded. In South Africa, the annual number of visitors from other SADC countries had increased from around 1 million in the early 1990s to over 5 million in 2005 (Crush, et al. 2005).[7] The bulk of this cross-border traffic consisted of people moving temporarily to South Africa for various non-work-related reasons, for example tourism, visiting relatives, medical services, shopping, and education (Wentzel & Tlabela 2006).

From a historical perspective, there are wide fluctuations in the trends of documented immigration to South Africa. Since the 1990s, and especially after 1994, there has been a significant decline in the number of people being granted permanent residence. For example in 1990, 14,499 immigrants were granted permanent residence, while only 2,138 permits were issued in 2005 (DHA 2006). Crush and Williams (n.d.: 4) attribute this trend to 'a shift in policy and implementation of legislation towards a more restrictive fortress stance'.

Although some groups of cross-border migrants who are working in South Africa are moving to farms and mines, the bulk of migration appears to be directed to the cities. There is also localized evidence that migrants to farms later move on to the cities (Wentzel & Tlabela 2006); thus cross-border migration is likely to be a contributing factor to metropolitan and large-city growth in South Africa.

[7] Obviously, these figures would be inflated by numbers of people making multiple visits, such as informal traders, shoppers, and even commuters crossing on a regular basis.

Urban Contexts and Dynamics

Movement to urban areas is less about 'bright lights' than an assessment of economic opportunities and survival chances in a context where the economy is overwhelmingly urbanized, with some 63% of Gross Value Added (GVA) concentrated in the nine major cities, and 30% of GVA in another 17 centers. As the *State of Cities Report 2006* (SACN 2006: 2–7, 8) notes:

> Cities, and more specifically large cities, are the mainstays of most countries' economies... They offer the largest concentration of customers and provide the biggest markets in the country. They provide the key distribution functions in most national and regional economies and the global economy. The highest concentrations of education facilities are found in the cities... Cities are the engines of the national economy...

Research conducted for the National Spatial Development Perspective found that the dominance of the major cities within the national spatial economy has been evident for decades (The Presidency 2003). Although a level of de-concentration occurred between the 1970s and the 1990s as low-waged industries, supported by industrial decentralization incentives, moved to the periphery in response to competition, re-concentration appears to have occurred since then. Over the 1996–2003 period, Gauteng grew at 3.7% p.a. in economic terms compared to national growth of 2.5% over the same period, and far faster than other provinces. These patterns have been underpinned by sharp job losses in low-waged industries such as clothing—the effect of a strong rand and of South Africa's openness to international competition (Robbins et al. 2004)—and by rapid growth in the tertiary sector, particularly in the financial and commercial sectors.

Figure 4, from the *State of Cities Report 2006* (SACN 2006), shows the rapid economic growth which occurred in the major cities, and particularly the Gauteng metros, over the 2001–2004 period. Although the nine cities on average grew at rates which were only slightly higher than the national figures, the Gauteng metros grew much faster, at rates of between 4.7% p.a. and 5.5% p.a. Very rapid growth is also occurring in some of the secondary cities (SACN 2004).

Around half of employment is concentrated in the nine major cities, and about 25% in Gauteng metros. Rising rates of economic growth are being accompanied by increases in employment in the cities, although employment increases are still less than economic growth rates. Over the 2001–2004 period, employment growth rates were only slightly faster in the nine cities than nationally, but they were much faster in the Gauteng metros and in eThekwini (SACN 2006; see Table 2). Unemployment levels are slightly lower in most of the major cities than nationally, and also lower than in the main migrant sending regions (Kok & Aliber 2005).

Employment, though, is increasingly available for skilled rather than unskilled workers (SACN 2006), and migration is driven by expectations of employment, not necessarily by actual employment (Kok & Aliber 2005). Still, poverty levels are on average lower in urban than in rural areas, although there are pockets of deep poverty in urban areas (Cross, Kok, Wentzel et al. 2005; SACN 2006), while service levels are far higher.

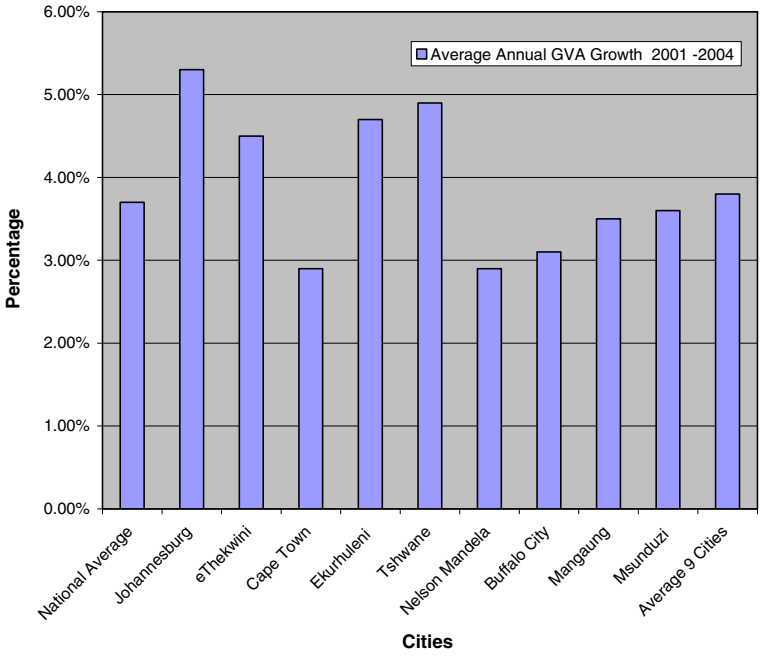


Fig. 4 Annual average GVA growth in the nine major cities and nationally, 2001–2004. Source: SACN (2006), based on figures from Global Insight

Declining Household Size and City Growth

The trend towards declining household size, and the splitting of households, is perhaps more important than migration to the expansion of cities and the pressures they

Table 2 Employment and unemployment in the cities, 2001–2004

	Annual average employment growth rate (%) 2001-2004	Unemployment 2004 (%)
Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality	2.48	23.56
Ethekwini Municipality	2.29	28.09
City of Cape Town	1.61	23.40
Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality	2.53	29.14
City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality	2.31	22.32
Nelson Mandela	1.54	36.87
Buffalo City	1.28	39.08
Mangaung	1.70	26.42
Msunduzi	1.77	33.12
Total nine cities	2.15	26.75
National	2.06	27.13

Source: Derived from SACN (2006); based on Quantec data

experience. The average size of a South African household fell from about 4.5 in 1996 to 3.9 in 2001, increasing the number of households by 30% (PCAS 2003). While the 2007 Community Survey argues that average household size has remained constant since 2001, a recent Unisa study reports that household size declined further to 3.69 in 2005.

Youth migration is an unrecognized causal factor in the decline of household size. Until very recently, migration activity by South African youth—unmarried people moving from place-to-place on their own—was seen as unusual. The social and political controls under colonialism and apartheid worked against youth moving independently from their homes, and youth migration was generally concealed within married household migration, or alternatively within labor migration. This situation has changed: indications from several recent Human Sciences Research Council studies (Cross 2001; Cross, Kok, Van Zyl et al. 2005; Cross et al. 1997, 1999; Cross, Kok, Wentzel et al. 2005) are that youth are now migrating on their own in significant numbers, that much of this migration is intra-urban, and that youth and unmarried adults move on different circuits from married people and established couples. This new mobility among youth and unmarried people bears directly on the question of shrinking households in South Africa.

When young people leave home to migrate to another place, the new households that result are both smaller and more insecure than the parent households. This phenomenon drives down the average size of the South African household, and also raises the risk of spreading poverty. What distinguishes youth migration is its temporary and unstable character. Youth who migrate are on a different circuit from adult families. They move through temporary accommodation or lodge temporarily with established families, using mainly rental arrangements without formal leases.

While there is a tendency to assume that the housing subsidy accounts for household splits, as different members of the household attempt to access government housing units individually, recent studies suggest that this explanation may be too simplistic. Rather, shrinking households need to be understood in the context of household dynamics, wide-scale social trends, and urban poverty. Youth migration as described above is one part of the equation. There is also evidence (Cross 2005) that it is the child support grant in particular which has been most instrumental in allowing households to split, triggering poverty-related migration inside the cities as households lose members.

Much of this apparent migration appears to be into shack accommodation, from where the new smaller families that result are likely to find no feasible way out again. The families that result from household splits and intra-city migration by younger people are often workerless, because single mothers need to provide constant child care, and therefore are unable to draw income from the job market. Their separate existence depends on social grants, and they have no wage base to fund a move to better housing.

Further, Cross, Kok, Wentzel et al. (2005), suggest that households splitting up among the middle and lower poor contributes to intra-urban migration and residential instability. In addition to contributing to the formation of metro poverty pockets, this kind of migration potential may put in question the sustainability of subsidy housing among the categories of the urban poor who are surviving on government grants. Due to affordability issues, it would appear that people with

formal housing may be leaking back into poverty pockets in the shack settlements, raising the demand for shack housing. The extent and significance of this trend, however, remains to be established.

Thus, in contrast to assumptions that poverty in cities is driven solely by rural to urban migration, Cross, Kok, Wentzel et al. (2005) suggest that a significant amount of actual poverty emerges inside the metro cities, and is dispersed by the kinds of migration streams that are triggered by poverty processes at household level.

Conclusion

This paper has shown that the major metropolitan areas and some of the rapidly growing secondary cities have been the main focus of migration in the post-apartheid era. These trends have been underpinned by both economic growth within these areas and conditions in rural areas: extensive displacement from farms, the failure of land reform policies, and further decline in the agrarian base of the rural areas of former homelands. Circular migration is a common form of movement in this context, allowing households to forge multiple livelihoods across space, but not all households have been able to circulate or move to survive. Some remain trapped in rural areas and small towns with limited economic opportunities. Within the cities, international migration is an increasingly important source of growth, but the pressure on cities is not predominantly the result of migration. Natural increase remains the most importance source of growth, and declining household size and fragmenting households account for a growing proportion of the lateral spread of cities.

Can the cities cope? While cities presently have less capacity than needed to respond to these challenges, they have greater capacity than smaller, and particularly rural, municipalities. In contrast to these latter municipalities, they have been more successful in providing infrastructure and services, and have largely managed to keep up with a growing population (Hemson et al. 2007). Nevertheless, South African cities are confronting the limits of the emphasis on delivering new housing and services. While bulk infrastructure in cities was not problematic for many years, it is now reaching capacity in many places (SACN 2006) and key infrastructure for energy generation is no longer sufficient. In addition, existing infrastructure has been insufficiently maintained. Cities also confront the demands of a growing middle class in a context where public transport and other elements of the public realm have been poorly developed. Thus, the challenges that cities face are not simply related to rising urbanization and migration, but are also the consequence of internal dynamics.

Acknowledgments Michael Aliber is thanked for his assistance with suggestions and comments on the rural section of the paper.

References

Aliber, M. (2007). Agricultural employment scenarios: pre-workshop discussion note for the Employment Growth and Development Initiative, Human Sciences Research Council.

Aliber, M., De Swardt, C., Du Toit, A., Mbhele, T., & Mthethwa, T. (2005). *Trends and policy challenges in the rural economy: four provincial case studies*. Cape Town: HSRC Press.

Andrew, M., Shackleton, C., & Ainslie, A. (2003). *Land use and rural livelihoods: have they been enhanced through land reform?* Cape Town: University of the Western Cape. PLAAS Policy Brief No. 5.

Atkinson, D. (2007). *Going for broke. The fate of farm workers in Arid South Africa*. Pretoria: HSRC Press.

Atkinson, D., & Marais, L. (2006). Urbanization and the future urban agenda in South Africa. In R. Tomlinson, U. Pillay, & J. du Toit (Eds.), *Democracy and delivery: urban policy in South Africa* (pp. 22–49). Pretoria: HSRC Press.

Bank, L., & Minkley, G. (2005). Going nowhere slowly? Land, livelihoods and rural development in the Eastern Cape. *Social Dynamics, 31*(1), 1–38.

CDE (Centre for Development and Enterprise). (1998). *South Africa's 'discarded people': survival, adaptation and current changes*. Johannesburg: Centre for Development and Enterprise.

CDE. (2005). *Land reform: a place to stay not to farm*. Johannesburg: Centre for Development and Enterprise.

Cohen, B. (2003). Urban growth in developing countries: a review of current trends and a caution regarding existing forecasts. *World Development, 32*(1), 23–51.

Collinson, M., Kok, P., & Carenne, M. (2006). *Migration and changing settlement patterns: multilevel data for policy.* Pretoria: Statistics South Africa. Report 03-04-01.

Cox, K., Hemson, D., & Todes, A. (2004). Urbanization in South Africa and the changing character of migrant labour in South Africa. *South African Geographical Journal, 86*(1), 7–16.

Cross, C. (2001). Why does South Africa need a spatial policy*?* Population, migration, infrastructure and development. *Journal of Contemporary Studies, 19*(1), 111–127.

Cross, C. (2005). Why are households shrinking in South Africa? Paper presented to the Joint Population Conference, Bloemfontein.

Cross, C., Kok, P., Van Zyl, J., O'Donovan, M., Mafukidze, J., & Wentzel, M. (2005). *Understanding the city's demographic future: towards modelling the evidence on population and household growth*. Human Sciences Research Council: Pretoria. Research report for the City of Johannesburg Department of Planning.

Cross, C., Kok, P., Wentzel, M., Tlabela, K., Weir-Smith, G., & Mafukidze, J. (2005). *Poverty pockets in Gauteng. How poverty impacts migration.* Report to the Gauteng Inter-sectoral Development Unit.

Cross, C., Mngadi, T., Mbhele, T., Mlambo, N., Kleinbooi, K., Saayman, L., et al. (1997). *An unstable balance: Migration, infrastructure, livelihoods and small farming on the eastern seaboard. Part one: KwaZulu-Natal*. Midrand: Development Bank of Southern Africa.

Cross, C., Mngadi, T., Mbhele, T., Mlambo, N., Kleinbooi, K., Saayman, L., et al. (1999). *An unstable balance: Migration, infrastructure, livelihoods and small farming on the eastern seaboard. Part Two: Eastern and Western Cape*. Midrand: Development Bank of Southern Africa.

Crush, J., & Williams, V. (Eds) (n.d.). *Criminal tendencies: immigrants and illegality in South Africa.* Migration Policy Brief No. 10. Southern African Migration Project.

Crush, J, Williams, V., & Peberdy, S. (2005). Migration in Southern Africa. Paper prepared for the Policy Analysis and Research Programme of the Global Commission on International Migration.

Davies, R., & Head, J. (1995). The future of mine migrancy in the context of broader trends in migration in South Africa. *Journal of Southern African Studies, 21*(3), 439–450.

DBSA (Development Bank of Southern Africa). (2005). *Overcoming underdevelopment in South Africa's second economy.* Midrand: Development Bank of Southern Africa. DBSA Development Report No. 4.

DHA (Department of Home Affairs). (2006). *Annual report, 2005–2006*. Pretoria: Department of Home Affairs.

Gelderblom, D. (2006). *Limits to the urbanization of poverty in South Africa*. Pretoria: Department of Sociology, UNISA.

Hall, R. (2004). *Land and agrarian reform in South Africa: a status report*. Cape Town: University of the Western Cape. PLAAS Research Report No. 20.

Harrison, P., Todes, A., & Watson, V. (2008). *Planning and transformation: Learning from the South African experience*. London: Routledge.

Hemson, D., Karuri, G., & Carter, C. (2007). *State capacity.* Report for the Presidency Scenarios 2019, Pretoria.

Hunter, M. (2006). *Informal settlements as spaces of health inequality: the changing economic and spatial roots of the AIDS pandemic, from Apartheid to Neoliberalism*. Centre for Civil Society Research Report No. 44.

Kok, P., & Aliber, M. (2005). *The causes and impact of human migration: case studies of migration from the Eastern Cape, Northern Cape and Limpopo to the nine major cities in South Africa*. Report to the Department of Trade and Industry.

Kok, P., & Collinson, M. (2006). *Migration and urbanisation in South Africa*. Pretoria: Statistics South Africa. Report 03-04-02.

Kok, P., O'Donovan, M., Bouare, O., & Van Zyl, J. (2003). *Post-apartheid patterns of internal migration in South Africa*. Cape Town: Human Sciences Research Council.

Krige, S. (1996). *Botshabelo: former fastest-growing urban area in South Africa approaching zero population growth*. Urban and Regional Planning Occasional Paper No. 20, University of the Orange Free State.

Marais, L., & Krige, S. (2000). Who received what where in the Free State, 1994–1998: an assessment of post-apartheid housing policy and delivery. *Development Southern Africa, 17*(4), 603–619.

MXA (McIntosh Xaba & Associates). (2005). *Role of women. Rural-urban linkages and household livelihoods.* Report to the Provincial Planning and Development Commission, Pietermaritzburg.

Meth, P. (1998). Rethinking the dumping grounds: The case of Bilanyoni. PhD thesis, University of Cambridge.

PCAS (Policy Coordination and Advisory Services, The Presidency). (2003). *Towards a ten year review.* Tshwane: Office of the Presidency. PCAS Social Sector.

Posel, D. (2003). Have migration patterns in post-apartheid South Africa changed? Paper presented at the Conference on African Migration in Comparative Perspective, Johannesburg, 4–7 June.

Posel, D., Fairburn, J., & Lund, F. (2006). Labour migration and households: a reconsideration of the effects of the social pension on labour supply in South Africa. *Economic Modelling, 23*(5), 836–853.

Robbins, G., Todes, A., & Velia, M. (2004). *Firms at the crossroads: the Newcastle-Madadeni clothing sector and recommendations on policy responses*. School of Development Studies Research Report No. 61. Report to the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Economic Development and Tourism.

Roberts, B. (1989). Urbanization, migration, and development. *Sociological Forum, 4*(4), 665–691.

SACN (South African Cities Network). (2004). *State of the cities report, 2004*. Johannesburg: South African Cities Network.

SACN. (2006). *State of the cities report, 2006*. Johannesburg: South African Cities Network.

Statistics South Africa. (2003). *Investigations into appropriate definitions of urban and rural in South Africa*. Pretoria: Statistics South Africa. Report No. 03-02-21 (2001).

Statistics South Africa. (2005). *Census 2001: migration community profile*. Statistics South Africa: Pretoria. Unpublished data set prepared for the HSRC.

Statistics South Africa. (2007). *Community survey. Municipal Data on Household Services*. Pretoria: Statistics South Africa. Report 03-01-22 (2007).

Tacoli, C., & Satterthwaite, D. (2003). *The urban part of rural development: the role of small and intermediate urban centres in rural and regional development*. London: International Institute for Environment and Development.

Presidency, T. (2003). *National spatial development perspective*. Pretoria: The Presidency.

Todes, A. (1999). Urbanization theme paper: urbanization in the 1990s. Paper for the Project on Spatial Guidelines for Infrastructure Investment and Development, Coordination and Information Unit, Office of the Deputy President.

Tomlinson, R., Abrahams, G., & Gildenhuys, B. (2003). The changing nature of South African housing demand: element three of the department of housing's programme to develop a new policy. Report to the Department of Housing, Pretoria.

United Nations. (2004). *World urbanization prospects: the 2003 revision*. New York: United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

Wegerif, M., Russell, B., & Grundling, I. (2005). *Still searching for security. the reality of farm worker evictions in South Africa.* Polokwane North & Johannesburg (Social Surveys): Nkuzi Development Association & Social Surveys.

Wentzel, M., & Tlabela, K. (2006). Historical background to South African migration. In P. Kok, D. Gelderblom, J. Oucho, & J. van Zyl (Eds.), *Migration in South and Southern Africa. Dynamics and determinants*. Cape Town: HSRC Press.

Copyright of Urban Forum is the property of Springer Science & Business Media B.V. and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.