

Migration pressures and their implications on service delivery: A comparative governance review

¹Wendy Nonthelelo Shezi & ²Hlengiwe Nomzamo Mabizela

Abstract

Three decades after democratisation, South Africa continues to experience significant migration from rural areas to adjacent cities as residents seek improved employment opportunities and better access to essential public services such as healthcare and education. This trend has raised concerns regarding the effective delivery of services, as municipalities face increased financial pressures due to the need to allocate limited resources to accommodate migrants. The growing urban populations have led to a heightened demand for critical services, including water, electricity, housing, and sanitation, often overwhelming existing infrastructure in urban areas. This article examines how internal and cross-border migration shape municipal service delivery capacity in South African metropolitan municipalities. Using a structured review of policy and academic literature and a comparative synthesis of cases from India, China, Uganda, and the DRC, the paper identifies governance mechanisms that mediate service delivery outcomes under population mobility. The findings show that planning population mismatches, weak intergovernmental coordination, and limited implementation capacity (rather than migration per se) drive service delivery inequities. While comparative cases demonstrate partial mitigation strategies, institutional and constitutional constraints limit direct policy transferability to South Africa. The study concludes with context-specific governance implications for metropolitan planning and migration-sensitive service provision.

Keywords: *overpopulation, informal settlements, service delivery, protests*

Article History:

Received: February 18, 2026

Accepted: June 3, 2026

Revised: April 4, 2026

Published online: June 12, 2026

Suggested Citation:

Shezi, W.N. & Mabizela, H.N. (2026). Migration pressures and their implications on service delivery: A comparative governance review. *International Review of Social Sciences Research*, 6(2), 294-323. <https://doi.org/10.53378/irssr.353362>

About the authors:

¹Corresponding Author. Master's degree in Public Administration. Email: 21449093@dut4life.ac.za

²PhD in Public Administration. Lecturer at Durban University of Technology. Email: HlengiweM4@dut.ac.za



1. Introduction

The South African Constitution (1996) recognizes local government as an independent sphere of government and assigns it a central role in the provision of basic services. Despite this mandate, South African metropolitan municipalities continue to face persistent service delivery backlogs, particularly in housing, sanitation, and electricity, which are further exacerbated by rapid urban population growth (Mamokhere, 2022). Auditor-General reports and municipal audits have indicated declining infrastructure maintenance capacity and increasing fiscal pressures within municipalities (Auditor-General South Africa, 2024; National Treasury, 2022). In addition, migration, both internal and cross-border, has introduced further governance and service delivery challenges (Mutereko & Shava, 2024). This trend has placed significant financial strain on urban municipalities, limiting their capacity to provide essential services effectively, especially in metropolitan areas.

While some migrants contribute positively to the economy, many rural migrants experience temporary unemployment and settle in impoverished informal settlements. Migration is a major driver of urbanization in South Africa, with metropolitan areas serving as key migration hubs (Statistics South Africa, 2023). The growing number of migrants has placed considerable strain on service provision, leading to public dissatisfaction and protests that often result in damage to infrastructure (Selod & Shilpi, 2021). In addition, urban areas have become increasingly vulnerable to flooding due to litter accumulation that obstructs drainage systems (Cai et al., 2022). Moreover, the migration of individuals places significant pressure on existing social and physical infrastructure, challenging its capacity to accommodate new residents. Consequently, municipalities must reassess their expansion strategies to manage growing populations more effectively (Hirsch, 2024).

Empirical evidence indicates that many service delivery challenges stem from migration and the absence of institutional frameworks that facilitate coordinated urban development (McGranahan et al., 2022; Mubangizi, 2021; Oluwaseyi Olatundun, 2024). This influx of migrants inevitably places additional pressure on municipal capacity, making it more difficult to achieve service delivery objectives and provide adequate services. Although the analysis encompasses diverse migration experiences and policy frameworks across developing countries, a significant gap remains in understanding how migration governance frameworks directly influence service delivery outcomes in rapidly urbanizing environments. Specifically, there is limited comparative research evaluating integrated policy strategies that effectively

balance migration-related challenges with sustainable local development. Despite the existence of a robust constitutional and policy framework, service delivery inequities persist. This paper therefore asks:

1. Through which governance mechanisms does migration affect municipal service delivery outcomes?
2. How do different migration governance arrangements mediate these effects?
3. What comparative lessons can be conditionally transferred to the South African context?

2. Literature Review

2.1. Overview of Local Government in South Africa

Within the framework of the South African government, the responsibility for service delivery falls to local government. Local government is understood as the tier of government most directly connected to the people, comprising municipalities responsible for delivering democratic and accountable governance to local communities (Nkabinde, 2024; Mabizela, 2023). Its main function involves ensuring the sustainable provision of services, promoting social and economic development, and fostering community engagement in local governance matters (White Paper on Local Government, 1998).

The South African Constitution (1996) further classify municipalities into three categories: metropolitan, district, and local. Metropolitan municipalities are situated in major cities such as Durban, Cape Town, and Johannesburg. Areas outside these metropolitan zones are organized into district municipalities, which encompass several local municipalities (Mutereko & Shava, 2024; White Paper on Local Government, 1998). In contrast, local municipalities, often located in predominantly rural areas, are structured within district municipalities (Manuel & Erasmus, 2024). The responsibilities of district municipalities include the redistribution of resources within their regions to empower local municipalities, enabling them to provide and maintain essential services, and to promote economic development. South African Metropolitan municipalities struggle with managing sustainable service delivery amid significant infrastructure backlogs in disadvantaged areas, where municipal spending exceeds revenue (Mlambo, 2018). Migration exacerbates this by increasing population pressure, straining infrastructure, resources, and job markets, which

worsens service delivery and community cohesion, leading to tensions (Xolani *et al.*, 2022; Nkabinde, 2024).

2.2. Conceptualizing Migration

Migration refers to the movement of individuals or groups from one geographic area to another, typically to establish a new residence. According to Carling (2024), migration can be viewed as both a demographic phenomenon and a deliberate decision made by individuals for various reasons, such as the pursuit of better opportunities and access to essential services. As global disparities in resource availability and opportunity continue to exist, the unequal geographic distribution of these resources often serves as a significant motivator for migration. Academic literature categorises migration into four main types: internal, external, planned and unplanned.

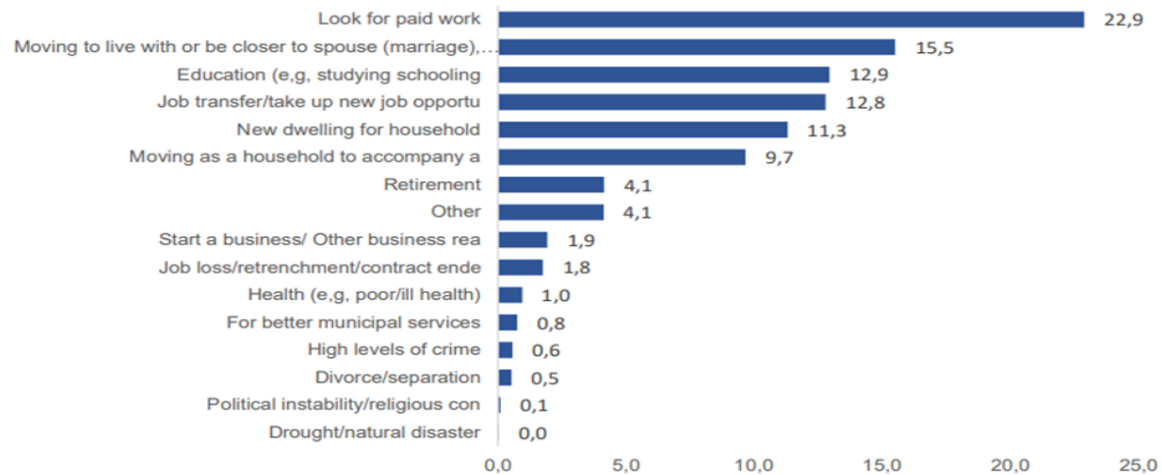
Internal migration. Internal migration involves people moving within a country for economic, educational, or social reasons, mainly from rural to urban areas in South Africa. It shapes demographics and social dynamics, mainly driven by the search for better jobs, as rural employment options are limited, and many seek higher salaries and improved conditions (Booyens & Hoogendoorn, 2025). Recent studies have shown that politics also influence internal migration, as post-apartheid policy shifts in South Africa, such as liberalised visa regimes for skilled migrants, precipitated heightened inflows; however, escalating unemployment and service delivery shortfalls, precipitated coercive measures and episodes of vigilantism (Vorvornator, 2024; Dlamini *et al.*, 2024). Politicians strategically deploy anti-migrant discourse for electoral advantage, which intensifies intra-societal tensions that indirectly reshape relocation trajectories away from antagonistic areas (Moyo & Zanker, 2020; Ndabeni, 2016). According to the Statistics South Africa report (2023), notable patterns have emerged during the migratory period between the 2011 and 2022 censuses.

Figure 1 illustrates the primary motivations for individuals relocating from their current residences in 2022. It indicates that the pursuit of employment is the foremost driver of internal migration in South Africa, accounting for 22.9% of cases, followed by 15.5% of individuals moving to be closer to family members. This data suggests that the principal reason citizens migrate from one city to another is to access better opportunities and enhance their quality of life. Conversely, the motivations related to natural disasters and political instability are

minimal, at just 0.01%, indicating that South Africans are less likely to relocate due to these factors.

Figure 1

Main reason for moving previous place of residence in 2022



Source: Statistics SA, Census 2022

External migration. External migration refers to the movement of people across international borders, where people relocate from one country to another. This kind of migration happens for different reasons, such as economic opportunities, political stability, environmental factors, and family reasons. In situations where economic conditions are poor and projected to worsen, individuals are more likely to consider relocating to countries with more favourable economic prospects (Makhathini et al., 2021). According to the migration statistics report by Statistics South Africa (2022), most immigrants in South Africa come from the Southern African Development Community (SADC), where men are 47.0% and women 36.5%. Immigrants boost economic growth and diversity. However, there is a gender gap in employment: men have higher employment rates than women across all groups, non-migrants, internal migrants, and immigrants. Over one million immigrant men work, but only 400,000 women do. More immigrant women (281,553) are economically inactive than men (88,598) (Statistics South Africa, 2022).

Planned migration. Planned migration refers to a deliberate and organised strategy for moving from one location to another. This type of migration is marked by a clear purpose, with individuals setting specific goals for their move, such as seeking job opportunities, pursuing

education, or reuniting with family members (Yarina & Wescoat Jr, 2023). The reason for the planned migration is well-defined, often involving detailed preparations before the move. These preparations include thorough research on potential destinations and careful planning of the logistics involved in the relocation (Van Staple, 2021). Legal considerations are also crucial in enabling planned migration, as many countries have strict policies that create pathways for skilled workers, students, and other migrants. These legal frameworks help migrants navigate the complexities of moving while allowing governments to manage immigration according to established rules and national goals.

Unplanned migration. This type of migration happens suddenly due to unexpected events, often driven by factors outside an individual's control. This type of migration is urgent, as people may need to leave their homes or countries quickly because of war, conflict, natural disasters, or economic instability (Yarina & Wescoat Jr, 2023). It carries risks such as violating the legal rules of the host country, which can make migrants vulnerable to exploitation and restrict their access to essential services (Gianfredi *et al.*, 2019). The urgency to relocate may also hinder their ability to integrate into new communities, leading to difficulties in accessing opportunities. Unplanned migration presents risks for migrants and can also cause social and economic challenges for host communities, which may be unprepared for a sudden population increase.

Both migration types affect individuals and societies. Planned migration can boost South Africa's economy and innovation by bringing skilled migrants to improve productivity. Many migrants from neighbouring and international areas settle in informal settlements due to unplanned migration, facing difficulties in accessing opportunities and housing. This influx strains municipal resources, leading to service protests as populations demand better services from limited resources.

2.3. Experiences of Migration: India, China, Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo

Drawing from global experiences in terms of migration, India, China, Uganda, and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) are regarded as highly affected countries as they are developing countries with the highest population and are faced with migration and service delivery challenges.

India and China. Since the implementation of economic liberalization, India has experienced a significant increase in rural-to-urban migration, driven mainly by the pursuit of enhanced employment opportunities. This considerable influx of individuals and natural population growth presented various challenges for the government, particularly in housing and the provision of essential services (Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, 2020). Factors such as landholdings' scale and water availability are crucial in motivating migration. However, once individuals relocate to urban areas, upward mobility is not guaranteed. Research conducted in Bangalore, focusing on 14 slums, indicates a lack of economic advancement for residents of these areas (Singh & Basu, 2020). Consequently, the extent to which migration reduces vulnerability and improves well-being remains uncertain; although it may alleviate poverty, create job opportunities, and foster economic growth, there can still be significant social disparities associated with migration.

China's economic reforms spurred rapid population growth and regional disparities, fuelling internal migration from rural to urban areas seeking better jobs, education, and healthcare (Qi *et al.*, 2022). This migration impacts the economy and public services, making analysis vital for understanding demographic and socioeconomic trends, as regional disparities persist (Wu, *et al.* 2020). To prevent the migration influx, Zhou (2022) states that China has a hukou system in place, which restricts access to social amenities such as schools, healthcare, and housing based on place of birth. Literature also identified the 2013 China Exit-Entry Administration Law, which controls foreign nationals' entry and exit, imposing penalties for overstays, requiring permits for stays over 180 days, and setting strict visa rules (Liu & Xiao, 2022).

The surge of migration in both countries is driven by economic opportunities; however, considerable challenges created by population growth led to inadequate infrastructure and illustrated the complexity of upward mobility. China's experience with internal migration increases regional disparities while underscoring a profound impact of migration on national development.

Uganda and the DRC. Rural-urban migration has increased due to a shortage of employment prospects and food insecurities. The Ministry of Internal Affairs (2023) reported that natural disasters and a lack of opportunities contribute to migration. The Uganda Citizenship and Immigration Control Act (2009) outlines the standards that one must meet to obtain permanent residence or temporary legal residence. Those standards are that people who

have moved to Uganda lawfully and voluntarily have the right to apply for citizenship as long as they have been there for ten years or more. There are programs like The Horn of Africa Better Migration Management (BMM) Program, initiated by Uganda and its partner countries to create and enhance national migration frameworks and policies (Angenendt *et al.*, 2021).

For a very long time, the Democratic Republic of the Congo has been plagued by ongoing wars, civil turmoil, and military conflicts, which have led to forced migration and tremendous poverty. Beauchemin *et al.* (2020) emphasise that the migratory route from urban to rural areas was the primary activity for migrants, who searched for gold and other minerals. In contrast, people previously migrated from rural to urban areas for employment. Section 32 of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (2005) acknowledges the rights of migrants, while Section 33 confers additional rights related to refugees and asylum seekers. However, the government lacks a strong legal framework on migratory concerns and has never created a clear and effective migration policy (Hassan & Tularam, 2018). Evidence shows that migration happens for reasons aligning with seeking economic opportunities and better living conditions.

2.4. Migration Dynamics in South Africa

Existing literature identifies multiple pathways through which migration influences urban service delivery, including increased demand, informality, and planning mismatches (Mthiyane *et al.*, 2022; Randolph & Storper, 2023). South Africa has significant urban migration, particularly in cities like Johannesburg, Cape Town, and Durban, motivated by economic prospects attractive to the populace (Mlambo, 2024). Social and economic determinants, including access to employment, healthcare, and education, are the primary forces driving urban migration (Jilesen & Wegerif, 2023; Dlamini *et al.*, 2024). Migration can enhance a dynamic economy by augmenting productivity and innovation through a larger workforce; however, it also presents challenges for municipalities regarding service delivery. As a result, municipalities must establish adaptable and responsive service delivery frameworks to effectively manage the influx of migrants in receiving areas. Mubangizi (2021) also indicates that an inflow of migrants stresses municipalities, hence impairing their ability to deliver services and execute development goals.

Khumalo (2022) contends that the increase in informal settlements and housing shortages in populated areas has increased, hence, inadequate urban planning and insufficient infrastructure by municipalities. Selod and Shilpi (2021) assert that municipalities experience

considerable pressure to provide basic services to an expanding urban population, and there are pronounced contradictions between service capacity and economic expansion within South Africa's contemporary migration landscape. The inflow of migrants has increased the demand for municipal services, including housing, water, power, and sanitation, due to the growth of informal settlements. This complicates and strains the consistent provision of services by municipalities as the water systems operate beyond designed capacity, refuse removal becomes inconsistent, electricity grids experience overload, and sanitation networks deteriorate.

Recent statistics (Statistics South Africa, 2023) show that the provinces of KwaZulu-Natal, Gauteng, and the Western Cape have the highest migration rates, with KwaZulu-Natal recording 603,264 residents, Gauteng at 5 million, and the Western Cape at 2 million. People are moving from their hometowns to these provinces in search of better opportunities. Additionally, these cities are recognised as major economic centres in South Africa, which further spurs significant population movement toward them. Migration is often seen as a practical choice, with individuals weighing expected benefits against their costs (Mthiyane *et al.*, 2022). A main reason for migration is the search for better employment opportunities, which provide higher wages, improved educational prospects, and better access to healthcare. Additionally, migrants aim to obtain vital municipal services, such as water, electricity, and waste management, which might be lacking in their original areas. However, the current state of South African municipalities is marked by resource shortages, which hinder their ability to effectively serve their communities. The influx of migrants can negatively affect the delivery of services, as municipalities often lack the resources and capacity to serve all residents adequately.

According to Zinatsa and Saurombe (2022), while migration transforms employment markets and local economic development, it increases competition for scarce job opportunities. These processes intensify socioeconomic disparities and generate conflict between established residents and newcomers, especially where service delivery is regarded as inequitable. Moreover, environmental and health hazards have escalated, which reveals vulnerability to climate-related threats such as floods, which impact informal settlements. Furthermore, the financial implications of addressing these hazards are the obligation of the municipalities; yet the actual population increase resulting from migration frequently surpasses official projections, resulting in revenue shortfalls and inadequately resourced service provision. These dynamics underscore a paradox: while migration is a beneficial phenomenon to developing

economies, its positive outcome depends on the state's capacity to plan, invest, and govern inclusively. Municipalities should have a balance between the economic gains of migration and the pressing need to expand services. Mitigating its consequences necessitates a dual strategy: strengthening urban governance, planning, and service delivery systems, while improving rural infrastructure to alleviate the pressures of out-migration (Olojede et al. 2020).

Table 1 indicates the different causes of migration from a global, regional, and local perspective, which compares systems used in these countries to depict the most effective system. Ratings reflect documented policy implementation evidence across multiple sources; 'strong' indicates explicit policy instruments supported by consistent implementation evidence, while 'fair' indicates moderate policy frameworks and implementation and 'weak' reflects poor or non-existent policy development related to migration.

Table 1

A comparative analysis of migration responses of the four (5) countries

	China	India	Uganda	DRC	South Africa
Response on Migration.	Strong	Strong	Strong	Weak	Weak
Guidelines Consideration of service delivery.	Strong	Strong	Fair	Weak	Fair
Challenge causing migration.	Relocation for improved health care facilities, education, and employment.	Housing, essential services, and urban exclusion of internal migration	Migration due to food insecurity and employment.	Ongoing war and civil turmoil leading to migration and	High unemployment rates and limited higher education institutions in rural areas.
Mitigation strategy.	Introduction of China's Exit-Entry Administration Law. Hukou system.	A working group was established to improve employees' conditions and access to basic services.	The Uganda Citizenship and Immigration Control Act was formulated.	No clear migration policy	Development of the rural areas to grant residents access to these facilities and promote entrepreneurship to improve job creation and employment rate.

Source: Author's Compilation (2025)

Comparative research further suggests that migration governance outcomes are shaped less by policy design than by implementation capacity. However, the literature remains fragmented across disciplinary and geographic lines, offering limited comparative insight into how governance arrangements condition service delivery outcomes. This paper addresses this

gap by presenting a structured comparative table that synthesises migration policy responses across diverse regions (Asia: China, India; Africa: Uganda, DRC, South Africa) and disciplinary lenses (governance, service delivery, socio-economic drivers).

Cases were selected via most-different-systems logic to vary migration governance, state capacity, and urbanisation, enabling governance mechanism comparisons over performance ranking. Service delivery stress peaks without migration-sensitive planning. South Africa and India show informality worsening access inequities; China's centralised registration moderates access but excludes; Uganda's regional mechanisms offer partial mitigation via external support. China's resident permits enforce compliance through penalties, fines, deportation, and strict screening. South Africa's system has loopholes enabling the Department of Home Affairs to conduct unethical acts such as fraud (e.g., document alterations), weak borders, and underfunded patrols despite tech advances, unlike China's tech leadership. South African studies note chronic municipal capacity and intergovernmental fiscal/coordination challenges.

Stronger governance improves service delivery, as in China/India's robust policies versus weaker DRC/South Africa outcomes amid unemployment/conflict. It contrasts China's Exit-Entry Law and Uganda's Immigration Act with South Africa's policy vacuum, emphasising governance in migration pressures. The framework bridges disciplinary/geographic gaps, offering insights like rural development to ease South Africa's migration burdens.

2.5. Theoretical Framework

Socio-economic constraints such as limited employment opportunities and persistent rural poverty continue to drive migration towards urban centres in search of economic security. Cities offer greater access to employment, education, healthcare, and public services, making them attractive destinations for rural populations (Lagakos, 2020). Eigelaar-Meets (2018) and Mlambo (2018) further argue that social factors, including family reunification and aspirations for improved living standards, significantly influence migration decisions, particularly among young people. In the South African context, internal migration is shaped by a complex interaction of political, economic, and social factors, increasingly amplified through social media platforms such as Twitter (X), TikTok, Facebook, YouTube, and WhatsApp (Mlambo & Mpanza, 2019). Understanding these drivers within South Africa's historical and socio-

political context is essential for designing effective municipal interventions and governance responses (Niu, 2022).

Lee's Migration Theory (1966) provides a useful framework for understanding these migration patterns. The theory suggests that migration is selective and bidirectional, influenced by push factors at places of origin and pull factors at destinations. Economic growth tends to encourage migration by reducing barriers and increasing opportunities, whereas economic decline has the opposite effect. Lee's (1966) push-pull framework, encompassing origin push factors such as rural unemployment and inadequate services, destination pull factors including urban employment and educational opportunities, intervening obstacles, and personal characteristics, helps explain the movement of people from rural areas to metropolitan municipalities such as Gauteng and eThekweni. In South Africa, rural poverty and inadequate amenities continue to push migrants toward urban centres such as Cape Town and Durban, contributing to housing shortages, service backlogs, and the expansion of informal settlements (Nkabinde, 2024). Nevertheless, the model has limitations because it underemphasises social networks, policy interventions, and post-migration outcomes such as skills mismatches and social unrest (Nwuzor & Nkwede, 2023; Oluwaseyi Olatundun, 2024).

The implications of large-scale migration for metropolitan municipalities can also be understood through Urban Systems Theory, developed by Walter Christaller in 1933. The theory conceptualises cities as interconnected systems composed of physical, social, economic, and institutional elements. It emphasises that changes within one component of the urban system inevitably affect others, and that urban sustainability depends on effective integration among these interconnected parts (Shi et al., 2021). Applied to South African metropolitan municipalities, the theory highlights how rapid population growth generated by migration places pressure on housing, infrastructure, transportation networks, and service delivery systems, often exceeding municipal capacity.

The increasing concentration of migrants in metropolitan areas has heightened the importance of urban governance and institutional capacity. Post-1994 decentralisation reforms sought to strengthen local government and improve service delivery; however, governance challenges continue to constrain municipal performance. Scholars such as De Visser (2014) emphasise the crucial role of the Financial and Fiscal Commission in promoting equitable revenue sharing across spheres of government. Despite these efforts, intergovernmental fiscal transfers remain characterised by vertical imbalances that limit municipal innovation and

responsiveness. Hendricks (2016) notes that national government dominance persists despite decentralisation initiatives, while critics point to the inefficiencies of conditional grants in achieving intended service delivery outcomes. Fiscal autonomy deficits further reinforce urban-rural inequalities, prompting calls for formula-based allocation systems and performance-linked incentives to improve accountability and equity.

Beyond fiscal constraints, municipal capacity deficits significantly affect the ability of metropolitan municipalities to manage migration-related pressures. Skills shortages, politicisation of appointments, and leadership failures have contributed to growing service delivery backlogs. Although metropolitan municipalities generally outperform smaller local authorities, governance audits reveal persistent weaknesses in administrative capacity and strategic planning. SALGA (2020) reports identify substantial training gaps, while coalition politics often fragments decision-making processes and delay infrastructure development. Consequently, scholars advocate professionalisation, depoliticisation, integrated planning, and enhanced monitoring mechanisms to improve municipal responsiveness. Recent theoretical developments further emphasise the importance of adaptive governance. Zapata-Barrero (2024) introduces the concept of resilient cities capable of navigating multi-level governance constraints through innovative migration management strategies. Similarly, migration governance literature highlights the need for adaptive by-laws, boundary-spanning leadership, and context-sensitive policy transfer mechanisms to address growing urban migration pressures (Tshabalala, 2025).

One of the most visible consequences of migration-driven urbanisation is the expansion of informality and unequal access to services. Research by Brandau and Beretu (2025) demonstrates how peri-urban informal settlements often function as survival strategies for newly arrived migrants. However, residents of these settlements frequently experience exclusion from formal water, sanitation, and electricity networks. Upgrading programmes have encountered challenges related to land tenure and titling, while empirical evidence highlights barriers such as corruption and unequal access to service connections (Davies *et al.*, 2020; López *et al.*, 2019). Comparative studies reveal significant variation in municipal approaches across cities such as Johannesburg and Cape Town (Lynge *et al.*, 2022; Maseko, 2021; Wood, 2020). The growing relationship between migration and urban informality has intensified sanitation challenges and reinforced demands for migrant-inclusive urban planning,

participatory budgeting mechanisms, and incremental formalisation strategies aimed at improving service access and social inclusion.

The pressures generated by migration, service delivery deficits, and socioeconomic inequalities also contribute to social tensions within metropolitan communities. Literature suggests that multiple factors shape the emergence of xenophobic violence in urban areas (Kerr *et al.*, 2019; Sempijja & Mongale, 2022). Misra *et al.* (2017), through a social capital perspective, highlights the breakdown of social relationships that often precedes township violence. Quantitative studies frequently associate unemployment and economic insecurity with scapegoating behaviours (Adewoye, 2024; Akinyemi, 2025), while qualitative research points to institutional weaknesses, including police complicity, as contributing factors (Olukayode, 2025). Mutukwa (2022) advocates strengthening social networks to reduce xenophobic tensions, whereas Maseng (2024) identifies both threats to social cohesion and opportunities for fostering integration through positive social interactions. Policy analyses frequently attribute xenophobic tensions to failures in social integration and service provision, while community dialogue initiatives have demonstrated potential for improving social cohesion. Nevertheless, further research is required to develop more comprehensive and intersectional approaches to measuring and promoting social cohesion in diverse urban settings.

Migration also places increasing pressure on municipal service delivery systems. While migration can contribute positively to economic development, many rural migrants experience temporary unemployment and settle in informal settlements characterised by inadequate infrastructure. Metropolitan municipalities have become primary destinations for internal migrants, resulting in rapid urbanisation and intensified demand for public services (Statistics South Africa, 2023). The growing population has placed considerable strain on municipal service provision, contributing to public dissatisfaction, service delivery protests, and infrastructure damage (Selod & Shilpi, 2021). Environmental challenges have also emerged, with increased waste accumulation and blocked drainage systems heightening the risk of urban flooding. These conditions illustrate the complex relationship between migration, urban governance, and service delivery outcomes in South Africa's metropolitan municipalities.

Drawing on Lee's Migration Theory and Urban Systems Theory, this study conceptualises service delivery outcomes as the result of interactions between migration drivers, governance mechanisms, institutional capacity, and urban system dynamics. The

framework proposes that when population growth generated by migration exceeds the pace of infrastructure development, fiscal capacity, and institutional coordination, service delivery inequalities become more pronounced. Consequently, effective urban governance and adaptive migration management emerge as critical determinants of sustainable service delivery within South African metropolitan municipalities.

3. Methodology

The study employs a semi-systematic literature review. Searches spanned five databases: Google Scholar, Scopus, ResearchGate, the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), and other institutional libraries using predefined strings related to migration, municipal governance, and service delivery. Sources were screened based on relevance, methodological clarity, and publication quality. This semi-systematic review mapped studies on internal and external migrants, drawing from social science journals, government reports, government gazettes, policies, and dissertations from 2016 to 2026, but restricted to English sources, the sole language accessible to the author. Searches of various publications were conducted in these databases containing “migration” in titles, abstracts, or keywords, alongside “rural-urban migration in South Africa,” “Internal migration and its impact on metropolitan municipality,” or “migration implication on service delivery” AND “migration experience in India, China, Uganda and Democratic Republic of Congo”. This approach aimed to limit the volume of publications while emphasising studies related to the South African context (and specific comparative geographies identified), thereby maintaining a geographical focus on the relevant dynamics of migration and its effects on service delivery.

From an initial set of 162 records, 14 duplicates were eliminated, along with 17 more via automated screening, resulting in 131 records for screening. Title and abstract review of studies, reports, and online materials identified these 131 as potentially relevant. Applying inclusion/exclusion criteria narrowed the pool to 103 for failing to align with study aims or lacking methodological rigor. Full-text assessment of the 103 further eliminated 15 sources due to irrelevance and quality issues, leaving 88 for final inclusion in the synthesis.

A literature review facilitated the identification, analysis, and synthesis of patterns within the secondary sources. Complementarily, comparative policy analysis systematically scrutinised frameworks such as exit-entry administration laws, the hukou system, and immigration control acts across contexts, elucidating commonalities, divergences, and

outcome determinants while delving into implementation nuances through focused case examinations.

4. Findings and Discussion

4.1. Escalating Pressure on Municipal Basic Services

The escalation of internal migration has imposed considerable strain on municipal infrastructure, originally designed to serve a specific resident population within jurisdictional boundaries. Predominantly constructed during the apartheid era and subsequently expanded in the post-apartheid democratic period to accommodate urban influxes, this infrastructure, including sewage systems, water pipelines, and electricity networks, has become obsolete. Consequently, these ageing assets undermine municipalities' capacity for effective service delivery.

4.2. Expansion of Informal Settlements and Associated Risks

Historically, marginalised groups in South Africa commuted from rural areas to urban cities for employment opportunities; however, prohibitive transport costs and the absence of affordable housing compelled migrants to establish informal settlements in racially segregated zones designated for such populations. Decades later, comparable migratory patterns persist across South African metropolitan municipalities, resulting in the creation of informal settlements over time. This escalation creates adverse health outcomes for peri-urban communities, alongside environmental degradation, including air pollution from untreated sewage overflows that remain unaddressed for extended periods, land contamination due to inadequate waste collection attributable to deficient infrastructure, such as accessible roadways, and heightened vulnerability to flooding among residents, whose structures occupy precarious locations without the oversight of qualified quantity surveyors or engineers to ensure structural integrity (Zapata-Barrero, 2024). Although migration may alleviate poverty, create job opportunities, and foster economic growth, there can still be significant social disparities associated with migration as relocating does not guarantee upward mobility, the extent to which migration reduces vulnerability and improves well-being remains uncertain (Singh & Basu, 2020).

4.3. Political Influence

Post-apartheid South African migration patterns are fundamentally shaped by the politics of a policy paradox, whereby the democratic government, in a bid to support nation-building, initially liberalised visa regimes for skilled migrants (Vorvornator, 2024; Dlamini et al., 2024), precipitating a sharp increase in inflows, especially from SADC states. Yet, increasing unemployment levels and chronic shortfalls in service delivery led to a turn towards coercive measures such as mass deportations and restrictive amendments that deprived refugees of their rights to work and healthcare. Politicians strategically use anti-migrant discourse, framing foreigners as criminals and undeserving competitors for scarce resources, to gain electoral advantage, which exacerbates xenophobic tensions and vigilantism, which in turn indirectly alters trajectories of relocation away from antagonistic areas, as migrants seek safer destinations. This political manipulation of migration narratives creates a self-perpetuating cycle of policy liberalisation for economic needs and restrictionism for political survival, exposing how migration governance in South Africa places electoral calculations above coherent humanitarian or economic objectives, with profound implications for intra-societal cohesion and regional mobility patterns (Moyo & Zanker, 2020; Ndabeni, 2016).

4.4. Tension Between Long-Term Residents and Newcomers

Empirical findings indicated that informal settlers or ‘newcomers’ normally invade land, illegally connect electricity and water by tampering with cables and water pipes, which then becomes an inconvenience for the formal residents as their electricity and water rates increase due to the large number of people consuming both water and electricity in the area (Mensah, 2022). Moreover, the absence of formalised waste disposal systems leads to environmental degradation and uncleanliness in the area. Infrastructure, including roadways and educational facilities, sustains damage amid protests staged by these groups. Increase in crime as some of the ‘newcomers’ relocate to seek employment, and when they fail to obtain employment due to employment scarcity, they resort to crime to sustain themselves (Xolani et al., 2023). Lastly, frequent power disruptions stemming from overloaded transformers and electrical malfunctions cause food spoilage. These challenges create interpersonal tensions among residents. Service delivery shortfalls fuel frustrations, sparking protests and xenophobic violence against perceived foreign competitors. In South Africa, inadequate public goods

delivery intensifies relative deprivation, hindering developmental state ambitions (Niyitunga, 2024).

4.5. Weaknesses in Municipal Planning and Forecasting

South African municipalities get overwhelmed by migration influx due to poor planning (Mubangizi, 2021). Municipalities ought to forecast incoming population volumes with precision, thereby enabling proactive provisioning of services corresponding with anticipated demand. However, unplanned migration poses risks like breaching the host country's legal rules, making migrants susceptible to exploitation and limiting their access to essential services (Gianfredi *et al.*, 2019). The urgent need to move can also impede their integration into new communities, resulting in challenges in accessing opportunities. Additionally, this type of migration can create social and economic difficulties for host communities, which may be unprepared for a sudden population surge.

4.6. Municipal Governance and Capacity Gaps

Policy frameworks often fail in implementation despite strong designs due to systemic barriers like incentive misalignment, capacity deficits, coordination breakdowns, legitimacy gaps, socio-political contestation (e.g., xenophobia), and patronage/corruption risks. These manifest in South African municipal governance through service delivery protests and xenophobic tensions, highlighting execution shortfalls rather than policy absence amid fragmented governance and contested urban inclusion (Mutereko & Shava, 2024; Ndabeni, 2016; Mutukwa, 2022). Comparative cases offer tools, but constitutional decentralisation and political economy constraints limit transferability.

Misaligned incentives prioritise short-term gains (e.g., risk avoidance, political signalling) over goals, causing vertical/horizontal friction and clashing with local patronage rewards, evading outcome accountability. Insufficient capacity, thin management, procurement, and staffing shortages hamper execution; South African cases like Eastern Cape municipalities rely on consultants amid "gaping staff vacancies," worsened by rapid investment scaling (Seopetsa, 2020). Coordination failures fragment efforts among government, businesses, and communities, creating duplication, conflict, and "multi-key safes" with no accountability owner; weak South African institutions isolate implementation from policy. Legitimacy gaps arise from ignoring cultural needs or excluding public input, breeding

distrust and non-compliance with unrealistic goals. Patronage diverts resources via bribes and favouritism, fuelling divisions and undermining responsiveness.

4.7. What is Transferable to South Africa (and What is Not)

Constitutional constraints. South Africa's Constitution guarantees universal rights to mobility and services (Sections 21, 27-29), rendering China's birthplace-tied hukou restrictions and DRC's unenforced protections largely inapplicable without amendments risking judicial invalidation. Uganda's residency pathways, however, are transferable by conditioning benefits on duration/contribution within SA's justiciable framework, promoting regulated integration over exclusionary birth-based barriers.

Inter-governmental relations realities. Chapter 13's cooperative mandates enable the adoption of Uganda's BMM-style regional coordination for migration data-sharing across spheres, complementing IDPs. China's central mandates offer fiscal pact lessons, but India's unitary strains clash with SA's devolved Schedule 4B competencies, where municipalities independently address housing amid vertical tensions unsuited to top-down controls.

Municipal finance. Equitable Share formulae can incorporate China's penalty-revenue models and India's backlog metrics for migrant-adjusted MIG grants, incentivising proactive planning. DRC's subsidy-dependent voids, however, presuppose national bailouts infeasible under SA's revenue-constrained metros (below 15% own-source), lacking central investment capacities.

Political economy. Economic pull factors from India/China parallel post-1994 urbanisation, supporting rural revitalisation grants to dampen outflows. Authoritarian enforcement in China bypasses SA's xenophobia-prone electoral dynamics, while DRC's conflict migration ignores stable democratic pressures distorting cadre priorities away from inclusive growth.

Sudden population surges overload water supply, electricity, sanitation, and transportation networks, resulting in illicit connections, power outages, and systemic failures, as evidenced in eThekweni Municipality, where migratory pressures exceed infrastructural capacity. These dynamics intensify housing, healthcare, and educational backlogs, promoting overcrowding, protracted delays, and informal settlements that undermine equitable service provision. In contrast to China, where there is a system in place with effective implementation, supported by a variety of efficient transportation options. Unregulated migration further

disrupts spatial configurations, impeding zoning regulations, waste management, and sustainable urban development, thus requiring anticipatory planning frameworks aligned with Lee's paradigmatic model.

5. Recommendations

Municipalities, in collaboration with national government departments and oversight institutions, should develop comprehensive strategies for renewing and expanding urban infrastructure while simultaneously promoting rural development. Strengthening rural economies through industrial development and investment can create employment opportunities, reduce the drivers of internal migration, and alleviate pressure on infrastructure and public services in metropolitan municipalities. To achieve this, district, local, and metropolitan municipalities should collaborate with key stakeholders, including the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA), the Small Enterprise Development and Finance Agency (SEDEFA), the Department of Small Business Development (DSBD), the Companies and Intellectual Property Commission (CIPC), and the South African Revenue Service (SARS). These partnerships should focus on promoting entrepreneurship among rural residents by providing training on business development, business registration, access to funding opportunities, financial management, and tax compliance. Such initiatives can empower individuals to create sustainable livelihoods within their local communities rather than migrating to urban centres in search of employment.

The study further recommends the development and enforcement of regulations aimed at preventing unlawful land invasions. At the same time, policymakers should review existing legislative and policy frameworks governing land and housing to address ambiguities that may unintentionally encourage informal occupation of land. Effective enforcement measures should be complemented by the provision of affordable and adequate housing alternatives for informal settlement residents. The availability of suitable relocation options would strengthen the legitimacy of law enforcement interventions and support efforts to prevent the expansion of informal settlements while safeguarding the rights and dignity of affected communities.

Community participation is also essential in managing informal settlement growth. Formal residents should be encouraged to report land invasion activities and emerging informal developments to municipal authorities at an early stage. Early intervention enables municipalities and law enforcement agencies to address unlawful occupation before

settlements become established. Once settlements are occupied, eviction processes become more complex, requiring court orders and adherence to legal procedures designed to protect the constitutional rights of occupants.

Municipal Integrated Development Plans (IDPs) should incorporate migration-sensitive population projections and demographic forecasting models supported by intergovernmental data-sharing agreements. Such planning mechanisms would enable municipalities to anticipate population growth and align infrastructure investments with future service demands. However, these initiatives must be accompanied by adequate fiscal transfers, technical support, and administrative capacity to prevent the continuation of existing planning and service delivery gaps.

Strengthening governance and accountability mechanisms is equally important. Municipalities should implement robust internal control systems supported by digital technologies to improve transparency, reduce irregularities, and enhance operational efficiency. Recruitment processes should be fully digitized to allow online applications, automated screening of qualified candidates, and electronic communication with applicants. Shortlisting outcomes and interview schedules should be communicated digitally to selection panel members, while interviews should provide both physical and virtual participation options. To enhance accountability and minimise opportunities for maladministration, all interviews and recruitment processes should be recorded and retained for audit purposes. These measures can contribute to improved policy implementation, regulatory compliance, leadership effectiveness, and institutional governance.

Furthermore, municipalities should adopt data-driven migration forecasting systems integrated into their IDPs. Pilot projects, such as migration-monitoring dashboards in eThekweni Municipality, could link Statistics South Africa migration data to infrastructure planning and budgeting processes. Dedicated migration management units reporting to Mayoral Committees could strengthen coordination across municipal departments and between different spheres of government. In parallel, rural revitalisation programmes and targeted grants should prioritise youth skills development and employment creation to address the underlying push factors of migration.

A phased implementation approach is recommended. The first year should focus on conducting municipal capacity audits and identifying institutional gaps. The second year should prioritise policy harmonisation and coordination between municipalities, provinces,

and national government departments. The third year should introduce performance-based incentives linked to service delivery and equity indicators. In addition, municipalities should leverage public-private partnerships to upgrade informal settlements and improve access to basic services. Such interventions should be guided by inclusive and migrant-sensitive urban governance frameworks that promote social integration, equitable service provision, and sustainable urban development.

6. Conclusion

Despite various initiatives undertaken by local governments, disparities in access to basic services persist, particularly regarding equitable service provision and sustainable infrastructure development. This study demonstrates that migration exacerbates existing service delivery inequalities primarily through governance and institutional capacity constraints rather than through demographic pressures alone. Comparative evidence further suggests that effective migration governance depends less on the existence of policy frameworks and more on institutional alignment, administrative capacity, and political feasibility. Consequently, addressing service delivery inequities in South Africa requires confronting these structural constraints directly rather than relying solely on technical planning reforms.

Several limitations emerged from the cross-country comparative analysis. Governance remains a complex and multidimensional concept that lacks a universally accepted definition, creating challenges for analysing and comparing policies, institutions, and decision-making processes across different national contexts. Furthermore, the categorisation of migration into broad types, such as voluntary and forced migration, may oversimplify the complexity of migration experiences and obscure important individual and contextual variations. The study was also constrained by scale-related challenges associated with the Modifiable Areal Unit Problem (MAUP), whereby findings may vary depending on the spatial unit of analysis, such as national, provincial, or municipal levels. Limited access to comparable data further restricted analysis at certain scales, thereby constraining a more comprehensive understanding of migration dynamics. These limitations highlight the need for more holistic approaches that consider migration's broader developmental implications, including its effects on Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicators, urban resilience, and inclusive growth.

The study is also subject to methodological limitations. Reliance on secondary data sources restricted the depth of phenomenological insights and excluded the lived experiences of migrants that could have been captured through interviews and other primary data collection methods. Such perspectives may provide valuable understanding of migration networks, social media influences, and adaptation strategies. In addition, the ten-year temporal scope excluded pre-2016 trends, potentially understating the long-term effects of policy evolution on migration and service delivery outcomes. The comparative analysis across five countries also presents a risk of overgeneralisation, as it may overlook significant intra-national variations, such as differences between Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal. Furthermore, the absence of quantitative modelling limits the ability to establish causal relationships between governance arrangements and service delivery outcomes. The use of predominantly English-language sources may also introduce bias by privileging formal academic scholarship while underrepresenting local and vernacular perspectives.

Building on these limitations, future research should prioritise empirical validation through mixed-methods studies within South African metropolitan municipalities. Such studies could incorporate migrant surveys to test the applicability of Lee's migration framework and examine the relationship between migration flows and service delivery backlogs. Longitudinal research is also needed to assess the effects of policy interventions, such as the Border Management Authority (BMA) Act, on social cohesion, migration governance, and xenophobic attitudes over time. Further investigation into the gendered dimensions of migration could provide deeper insights into the experiences of women and other vulnerable groups within informal settlements through ethnographic and longitudinal approaches.

Future studies should also expand comparative analyses to include BRICS+ countries and other emerging economies to examine how fiscal transfers, governance arrangements, and institutional capacity influence migration resilience and service delivery outcomes. In addition, experimental and quasi-experimental research designs could be employed to evaluate the effectiveness of community dialogue initiatives and social cohesion interventions in addressing xenophobia and strengthening social capital. Such studies would provide valuable evidence on the scalability and sustainability of these interventions, informing policy development and implementation at local, provincial, and national levels.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

Funding

This work was not supported by any funding.

AI Declaration

The author declares the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in writing this paper. In particular, the author used Perplexity in summarising key points and paraphrasing ideas. The authors take full responsibility for ensuring proper review and editing of contents generated using AI.

References

- Adewoye, S. E. (2024). Systematic review of dispositional determinants of xenophobic behaviours among South Africans: Implications for psychological-based intervention. *The open psychology journal* 17 (1) 1-10, 2024. <https://doi.org/10.2174/0118743501279866240409074450>
- Akinyemi, I. T. (2025). *The intersection of racial history and xenophobia: Social economic consequences for Nigerians in South Africa*. Abo Akademi University. <https://urn.fi/URN:NBN:fi-fe2025061568398>
- Angenendt, S., Biehler, N., & Kipp, D. (2021). *Cities and their networks in EU-Africa migration policy: Are they really game changers?* (SWP Research Paper No. 8/2021). German Institute for International and Security Affairs. <https://doi.org/10.18449/2021RP08>
- Auditor-General South Africa. (2023). *Local government audit outcomes 2021/22*. <https://www.agsa.co.za/Reporting/MFMAReports/MFMA2022-2023.aspx>
- Auditor-General South Africa. (2024). Consolidated general report on local government audit outcomes 2022–23. Parliament of South Africa. https://www.parliament.gov.za/storage/app/media/OISD/Reports/Auditor_General/2024/august/28-08-2024/MFMA_Report_2022-23_FINAL.pdf
- Beauchemin, C., Flahaux, M.-L., & Schoumaker, B. (2020). Three sub-Saharan migration systems in times of policy restriction. *Comparative Migration Studies*, 8(1), Article 19. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40878-020-0174-y>
- Booyens, I., & Hoogendoorn, G. (2025). Theorising township tourism: Moving beyond the “slum.” *Annals of Tourism Research*, 111, 103918. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2025.103918>
- Brandau, N., & Beretu, T. (2025). Improving informal settlements for community development in Cape Town. *Africa's Public Service Delivery and Performance Review*, 13(1), Article 942. https://hdl.handle.net/10520/ejc-apsdpr_v13_n1_a942

- Cai, Y., Li, C., & Zhao, Y. (2022). A review of the migration and transformation of microplastics in inland water systems. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 19(1), 148. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph19010148>
- Carling, J. (2024). Why do people migrate? Fresh takes on the foundational question of migration studies. *International Migration Review*, 58(4), 1757–1791. <https://doi.org/10.1177/01979183241234750>
- Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996. (1996). Department of Justice and Constitutional Development. <https://www.justice.gov.za/constitution/SACConstitution-web-eng.pdf>
- Davies, R., Kosec, K., Nkonya, E., & Song, J. (2020). Global land reform experiences: A review for South Africa. *Southern Africa—Towards inclusive economic development (SA-TIED) working paper*, 98, 1–39.
- De Visser, J., & Ayele, Z. (2014). *Intergovernmental fiscal relations in South Africa and the role of the Financial and Fiscal Commission: A 20-year review*. Financial and Fiscal Commission. <http://hdl.handle.net/10566/4724>
- Democratic Republic of the Congo. (2005). Constitution of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (2005). <https://constitutionnet.org/sites/default/files/DRC%20-%20Congo%20Constitution.pdf>
- Dlamini, N., Anwana, E., & Reddy, M. (2024). Internal migration: An analysis of associated risks and vulnerabilities of women and youth in KwaZulu-Natal. *African Journal of Inter/Multidisciplinary Studies*, 6(SI2), 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.51415/ajims.v6i1.1353>
- Eigelaar-Meets, I. (2018). *Internal migration in post-apartheid South Africa: The cases of the Western and Northern Cape* (Doctoral dissertation, Stellenbosch University). Stellenbosch University.
- Gianfredi, V., Moretti, M., Gigli, M., & Fusco-Moffa, I. (2019). Unplanned migration flow: The acceptance system response, Perugia. *Acta Bio Medica: Atenei Parmensis*, 90(3), 253–260. <https://doi.org/10.23750/abm.v90i3.7343>
- Government of India, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs. (2020). *A revenue neutral approach to lower stamp duty and registration charges for affordable housing*. <https://mohua.gov.in/upload/uploadfiles/files/Revenue-Neutral-Approach-to-Lower-Stamp-Duty-and-Registration-Charges-for-Affordable-Housing.pdf>
- Government of India, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs. (2024). *Annual report 2023–24*. <https://mohua.gov.in/upload/uploadfiles/files/HUA-Annual-Report-2024-for-Portal-with-cover.pdf>
- Government of India. (2017). *Report of the working group on migration*. Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation. <https://mohua.gov.in/upload/uploadfiles/files/1566.pdf>
- Hassan, O. M., & Tularam, G. A. (2018). The effects of climate change on rural-urban migration in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA): The cases of Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya and Niger. In *Applications in water systems management and modeling*. IntechOpen. <https://doi.org/10.5772/intechopen.72226>
- Hendricks, C. (2016). The impact of fiscal decentralisation on the responsiveness of sub-national governments: A South African case study. *Administratio Publica*, 24(1), 59–77.
- Hirsch, A. (2024). *South Africa country study: Migration trends, policy, implementation, and outcomes*. New South Institute. <https://nsi.org.za/publications/south-africa-migration-study-nsi-report>

- Jilesen, R., & Wegerif, M. (2023). Climate, environment and migration: Experiences of migrants in South Africa. *Afrika Focus*, 36(2), 195–222. <https://doi.org/10.21825/af.v36i2.22183>
- Kerr, P., Durrheim, K., & Dixon, J. (2019). Xenophobic violence and struggle discourse in South Africa. *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 54(7), 995–1011. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0021909619851827>
- Khumalo, M. W. (2022). *An investigation into the impact of rural–urban migration on local government service delivery: A case study of eThekweni Municipality* (Doctoral dissertation, University of KwaZulu-Natal).
- Lagakos, D. (2020). Urban-rural gaps in the developing world: Does internal migration offer opportunities? *Journal of Economic perspectives*, 34(3), 174–192. <https://doi.org/10.1257/jep.34.3.174>
- Lee, E. S. (1966). A theory of migration. *Demography*, 3(1), 47–57. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2060063>
- LGSETA. (2024). The role of the local government sector in promoting renewable energy and the implications on skills development. *CIGFARO Journal (Chartered Institute of Government Finance Audit and Risk Officers)*, 24(3), 18–22. https://hdl.handle.net/10520/ejc-imfol_v24_n3_a6
- Liu, T., & Xiao, W. (2022). The intention to stay of the floating migrant population: A spatiotemporal meta-analysis in Chinese cities. *Population, Space and Place*, 28(7), e2574. <https://doi.org/10.1002/psp.2574>
- López, O. S., Bartolomei, R. S., & Lamba-Nieves, D. (2019). Urban informality: International trends and policies to address land tenure and informal settlements. *Center for a New Economy (CNE)*.
- Lynge, H., Visagie, J., Scheba, A., Turok, I., Everatt, D., & Abrahams, C. (2022). Developing neighbourhood typologies and understanding urban inequality: a data-driven approach. *Regional studies, regional science*, 9(1), 618–640. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21681376.2022.2132180>
- Mabizela, H. N. (2023). *Monitoring and evaluation on the performance of local government in South Africa: Insight from selected district municipalities in KwaZulu-Natal* (Doctoral dissertation). University of KwaZulu-Natal.
- Makhathini, M. S. M., Moyo, I., & Nshimbi, C.C. (2021). Human mobility in the Southern African Development Community region: Some best practices for migration management from the European Union. In J. Crush, V. Amisi, A. A. Abebe, & A. A. Tawodzera (Eds.), *Intra-Africa migrations* (pp. 70–85). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003163680>
- Mamokhere, J. (2022). Understanding the complex interplay of governance, systematic, and structural factors affecting service delivery in South African municipalities. *Commonwealth Youth & Development*, 20(2). <https://doi.org/10.25159/2663-6549/12230>
- Manuel, L. B., & Erasmus, L. J. (2024). A sustainable differentiated funding model for South African district municipalities. *Journal of Local Government Research and Innovation*, 5, Article 163. https://hdl.handle.net/10520/ejc-jolgri_v5_n1_a163
- Maseko, M. M. (2021). *Social media, protest and citizen participation in local government: A comparison between the City of Cape Town and Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipalities: 2010 to 2017*. School of Government, Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences

- Maseng, O. J. (2024). Migration vis-à-vis philoxenia in the South African context: Implications for African continental integration. *International Journal of Research in Business and Social Science*, 13(5), 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.20525/ijrbs.v13i5.3353>
- McGranahan, G., Mitlin, D., Satterthwaite, D., Tacoli, C., & Turok, I. (2022). *Africa's urban transition and the role of regional collaboration*. International Institute for Environment and Development.
- Mensah, J. K. (2022). Electricity and informal settlements: Towards achieving SDG 7 in developing countries. *Energy Research & Social Science*, 93, 102844. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.erss.2022.102844>
- Ministry of Internal Affairs. (2023). *Annual statistical abstract: FY 2022/23 – Theme: Enhancing production, dissemination and use of statistics for policy, planning and decision making*. <https://mia.go.ug/sites/default/files/2025-06/MIA%20Annual%20statistical%20Abstract%202022-23%20BOOK.pdf>
- Misra, S., Goswami, R., Mondal, T., & Jana, R. (2017). Social networks in the context of community response to disaster: Study of a cyclone-affected community in coastal West Bengal, India. *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction*, 22, 281–296. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijdrr.2017.02.017>
- Mlambo, D. N., & Mpanza, S. E. (2019). Emerging determinants of youth migration from an Afrocentric perspective. *African Renaissance*, 16(1), 123–142.
- Mlambo, V. (2018). An overview of rural–urban migration in South Africa: Its causes and implications. *Archives of Business Research*, 6(4), 63–70. <https://doi.org/10.14738/abr.64.4407>
- Mlambo, V. H. (2024). Navigating the economic impacts of migration in Africa: A comprehensive review. *Artha – Journal of Social Sciences*, 23(2), 47–69. <https://doi.org/10.12724/ajss.69.3>
- Moyo, K., & Zanker, F. (2020). *Political contestations within South African migration governance*. Arnold Bergstraesser Institute.
- Mthiyane, D. B., Wissink, H., & Chiwawa, N. (2022). The impact of rural–urban migration in South Africa: A case of KwaDukuza municipality. *Journal of Local Government Research and Innovation*, 3, 56. https://hdl.handle.net/10520/ejc-jolgri_v3_n1_a56 <https://doi.org/10.4102/jolgri.v3i0.56>
- Mubangizi, B. C. (2021). Rural-urban migration and smart cities: Implications for service delivery in South Africa. *African Renaissance*, 18(1). https://hdl.handle.net/10520/ejc-aa_afren_v18_n1_a10
- Mutereko, S., & Shava, E. (2024). District Development Model and its role in enhancing shared services in South African local government. *African Journal of Public Affairs*, 15(1), 46–67. https://hdl.handle.net/10520/ejc-ajpa_v15_n1_a4
- Mutukwa, R. N. (2022). *Immigration and social cohesion: Examining lived experiences and relations between locals and immigrants in Philippi, South Africa (2008–2017)* (Master's dissertation, University of the Western Cape). <http://hdl.handle.net/10566/12880>
- National Treasury. (2022). Budget review 2022. <https://www.treasury.gov.za/documents/national%20budget/2022/review/Prelims.pdf>
- Ndabeni, L. L. (2016). *An analysis of rural–urban linkages and their implications for policies that sustain development in a space continuum*. Ministry of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs.

- Niu, F. (2022). A push-pull model for inter-city migration simulation. *Cities*, 131, 104005. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2022.104005>
- Niyitunga, E. B. (2024). Xenophobia: A hindrance factor to South Africa's ambition of becoming a developmental state. *Frontiers in Human Dynamics*, 6, 1337423. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fhumd.2024.1337423>
- Nkabinde, B. (2024). *Rural–urban migration patterns to enhance service delivery in KwaZulu-Natal: eThekweni Municipality* (Doctoral dissertation, Durban University of Technology).
- Nkabinde, B., Lekhanya, L. M., & Dorasamy, N. (2024). Rural–urban migration challenges in South Africa: Case of KwaZulu-Natal (SA). *Journal of Economic and Social Development*, 11(2), 140–156.
- Nwuzor, C., & Nkwede, J. O. (2023). Impact of rural–urban migration on infrastructural development in Nigeria: The Ebonyi State rural communities experience. *South East Journal of Political Science*, 9(2). <https://journals.npsa-se.org.ng/index.php/SEJPS/article/view/37>
- Olatundun, E. O. (2024). *The impact of internal migration on housing shortage and affordability: The case of Cape Town, South Africa* (Master's thesis, University of the Western Cape).
- Olojede, O. A., Agbola, S. B., & Samuel, K. J. (2020). Technological innovations and acceptance in public housing and service delivery in South Africa: Implications for the Fourth Industrial Revolution. *Journal of Public Administration*, 54(2), 162–183. <https://hdl.handle.net/10520/EJC-1a9fb75007>
- Olukayode, O. (2025). Xenophobic Violence in South Africa: Economic Competition or Ethnic Scapegoating?(2019-2025).
- Oluwaseyi Olatundun, E. (2024). *The impact of internal migration on housing shortage and affordability: the case of Cape Town, South Africa*. University of the Western Cape. <https://hdl.handle.net/10566/12904>
- Qi, W., Deng, Y., & Fu, B. (2022). Rural attraction: The spatial pattern and driving factors of China's rural in-migration. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 93, 461–470. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2019.03.008>
- Randolph, G. F., & Storper, M. (2023). Is urbanisation in the Global South fundamentally different? Comparative global urban analysis for the 21st century. *Urban Studies*, 60(1), 3–25. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00420980211067926>
- Selod, H., & Shilpi, F. (2021). Rural–urban migration in developing countries: Lessons from the literature. *Regional Science and Urban Economics*, 91, 103713. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.regsciurbeco.2021.103713>
- Sempijja, N., & Mongale, C. O. (2022). Xenophobia in urban spaces: Analyzing the drivers and social justice goals from the Ugandan-Asian debacle of 1972 and xenophobic attacks in South Africa (2008-2019). *Frontiers in Sustainable Cities*, 4, 934344. <https://doi.org/10.3389/frsc.2022.934344>
- Seopetsa, T. (2020). Challenges facing the implementation of public policies in South Africa since the dawn of democracy. *Educator Multidisciplinary Journal*, 4(1). <https://journals.co.za/doi/pdf/10.10520/ejc-educor-v4-n1-a8>
- Shi, Y., Zhai, G., Xu, L., Zhou, S., Lu, Y., Liu, H., & Huang, W. (2021). Assessment methods of urban system resilience: From the perspective of complex adaptive system theory. *Cities*, 112, 103141. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2021.103141>

- Singh, C., & Basu, R. (2020). Moving in and out of vulnerability: Interrogating migration as an adaptation strategy along a rural–urban continuum in India. *The Geographical Journal*, 186(1), 87–102. <https://doi.org/10.1111/geoj.12328>
- South African Local Government Association. (2020). *Community protest: Local government perceptions*. South African Local Government Association. [https://nationalgovernment.co.za/entity_annual/2166/2020-south-african-local-government-association-\(salga\)-annual-report.pdf](https://nationalgovernment.co.za/entity_annual/2166/2020-south-african-local-government-association-(salga)-annual-report.pdf)
- Southern African Development Community. (2023). *Migration data in the Southern African Development Community*. Migration Data Portal. <https://www.migrationdataportal.org/regional-data-overview/southern-africa>
- Statistics South Africa. (2023). General Household Survey, 2023. <https://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/StatsInBrief/StatsInBrief2023.pdf>
- Statistics South Africa. (2023). *Migration profile report for South Africa: A country profile*. Statistics South Africa. <https://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/03-09-17/03-09-172023.pdf>
- Statistics South Africa. (2024). *Migration profile report for South Africa: A country profile 2023*. Statistics South Africa. <https://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/03-09-17/03-09-172023.pdf>
- Tshabalala, X. (2025). Governing mobility through exemptions: Cross-national dependencies, immigration policy, and migrant labour in South African historical perspective. *Critical Sociology*, 51(1), 55–69. <https://doi.org/10.1177/08969205231225404>
- Uganda Citizenship and Immigration Control (Amendment) Act, 2009, Act 5 of 2009. <https://citizenshiprightsafrika.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Uganda-Citizenship-and-Immigration-Amendment-Act-2009.pdf>
- Van Stapele, N. (2021). Providing to belong: Masculinities, hustling and economic uncertainty in Nairobi “ghettos.” *Africa*, 91(1), 57–76. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0001972020000844>
- Vorvornator, L. K. (2024). Examining migration leverage and coercion between sending and host countries and their success and failure: The global perspective. *African Renaissance*, 21(2).
- White Paper on Local Government. (1998). Department of Constitutional Development. https://www.cogta.gov.za/cgta_2016/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/whitepaper_on_Local-Gov_1998.pdf
- Wood, A. (2020). Tracing urbanism: Methods of actually doing comparative studies in Johannesburg. *Urban Geography*, 41(2), 293–311. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02723638.2019.1659072>
- Wu, Y., Zhou, Y., & Liu, Y. (2020). Exploring the outflow of population from poor areas and its main influencing factors. *Habitat International*, 99, 102161. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.habitatint.2020.102161>
- Xolani, T., Mkhize, N., & Mlambo, V. H. (2022). The meaning of service delivery protest: A case study of South African local government. *Humanities and Social Sciences*, 29(4), 131–140. <https://doi.org/10.7862/rz.2022.hss.31>
- Yarina, L., & Wescoat, J. L., Jr. (2023). Spectrums of relocation: A typological framework for understanding risk-based relocation through space, time and power. *Global Environmental Change*, 79, 102650. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2023.102650>

- Zapata-Barrero, R. (2024). Resilient cities and migration governance: When developing migration governance capacity becomes a policy priority for cities. *Frontiers in Political Science*, 6, 1448589. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpos.2024.1448589>
- Zhou, J., & Hui, E. C. M. (2022). The hukou system and selective internal migration in China. *Papers in Regional Science*, 101(2), 461–483. <https://doi.org/10.1111/pirs.12651>
- Zinatsa, F., & Saurombe, M. D. (2022). Tied migrant labor market integration: Deconstructing labor market subjectivities in South Africa. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13, 806436. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.806436>