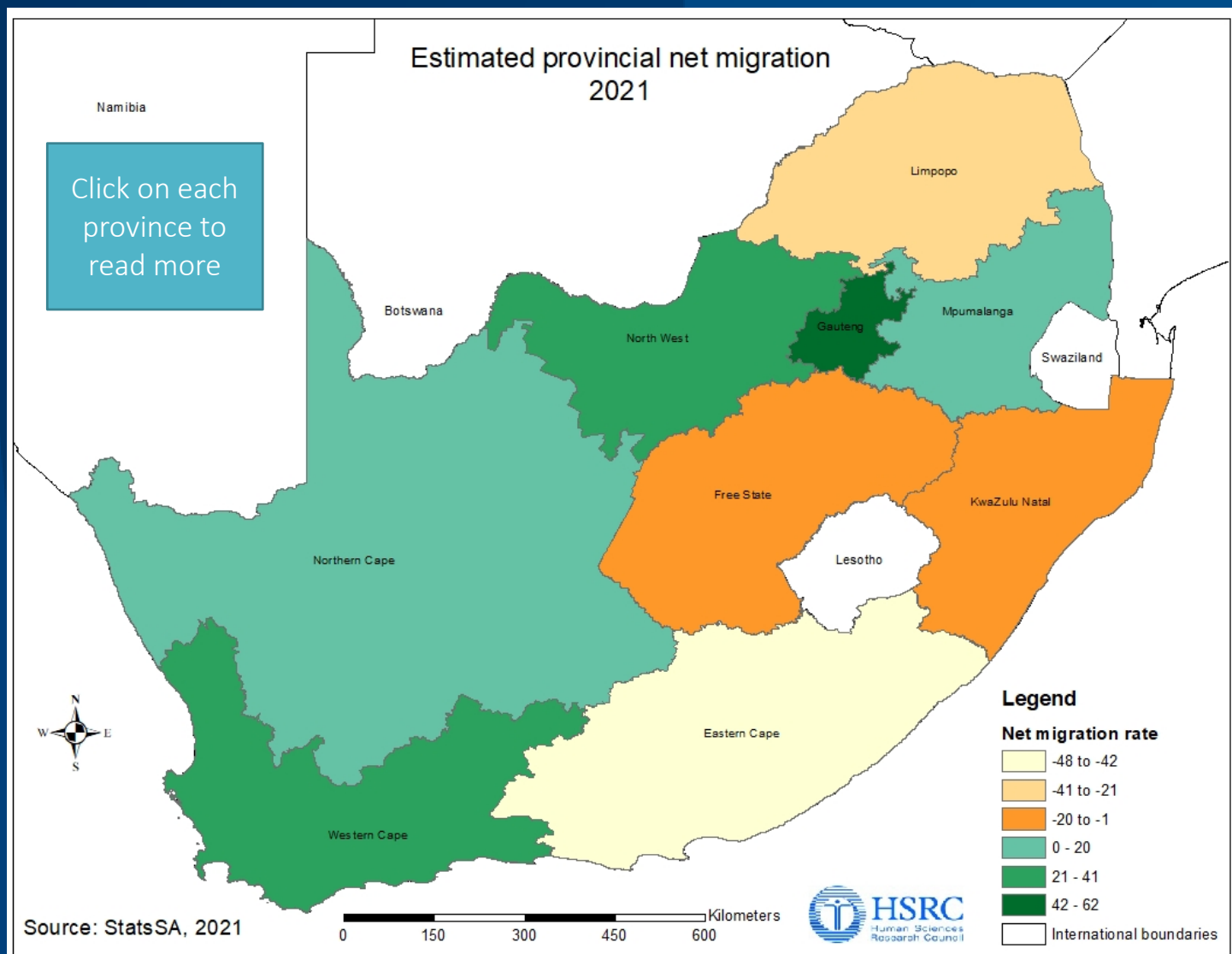


Migration Trends

The economic and political liberalisation of South Africa's economy after 1994 led to increased internal and international migration in the country. Even though this has its benefits, migration can lead to political and social tension as it is often associated with increased stress on service delivery, amongst other negative consequences. This edition of Spatial Insights briefly highlights net migration rates in South Africa at a provincial level.



Recent mid-year population estimates from Stats SA illustrate provincial migration trends based on a 5-year cohort estimate for 2016–2021. The spatial distribution of migration indicates that Gauteng, Western Cape, North West, Mpumalanga and the Northern Cape experienced positive net migration rates during this period. Four provinces experienced negative net migration, namely Limpopo, Free State, Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal. The number of international migrants entering the provinces was highest in Gauteng, with the Western Cape ranking second.

Source: Stats SA, 2021

[Read more](#)

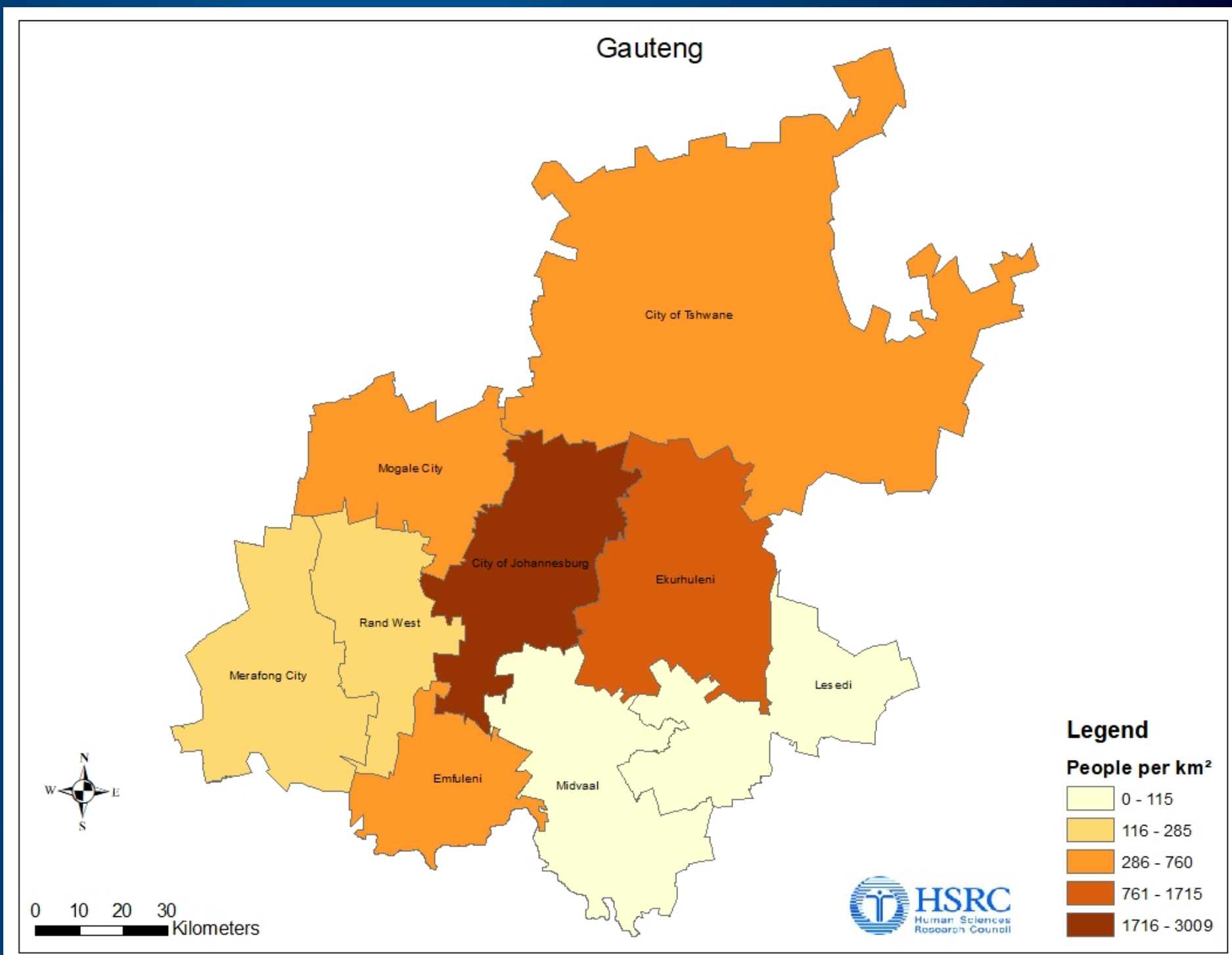
For more information, contact:

Simangele Dlamini, PhD
sdlamini@hsrc.ac.za

Gina Weir-Smith, PhD
gweir-smith@hsrc.ac.za

Net migration rate refers to the difference in the number of people migrating to an area and those migrating out of the area, calculated per number of people(1000) per year.

Click [here](#) to read more on net migration.



Gauteng is South Africa's economic hub, generating 32.5% of the country's GDP (Stats SA, 2019). It is the country's smallest but most densely populated province (Stats SA 2016; adapted by HSRC).

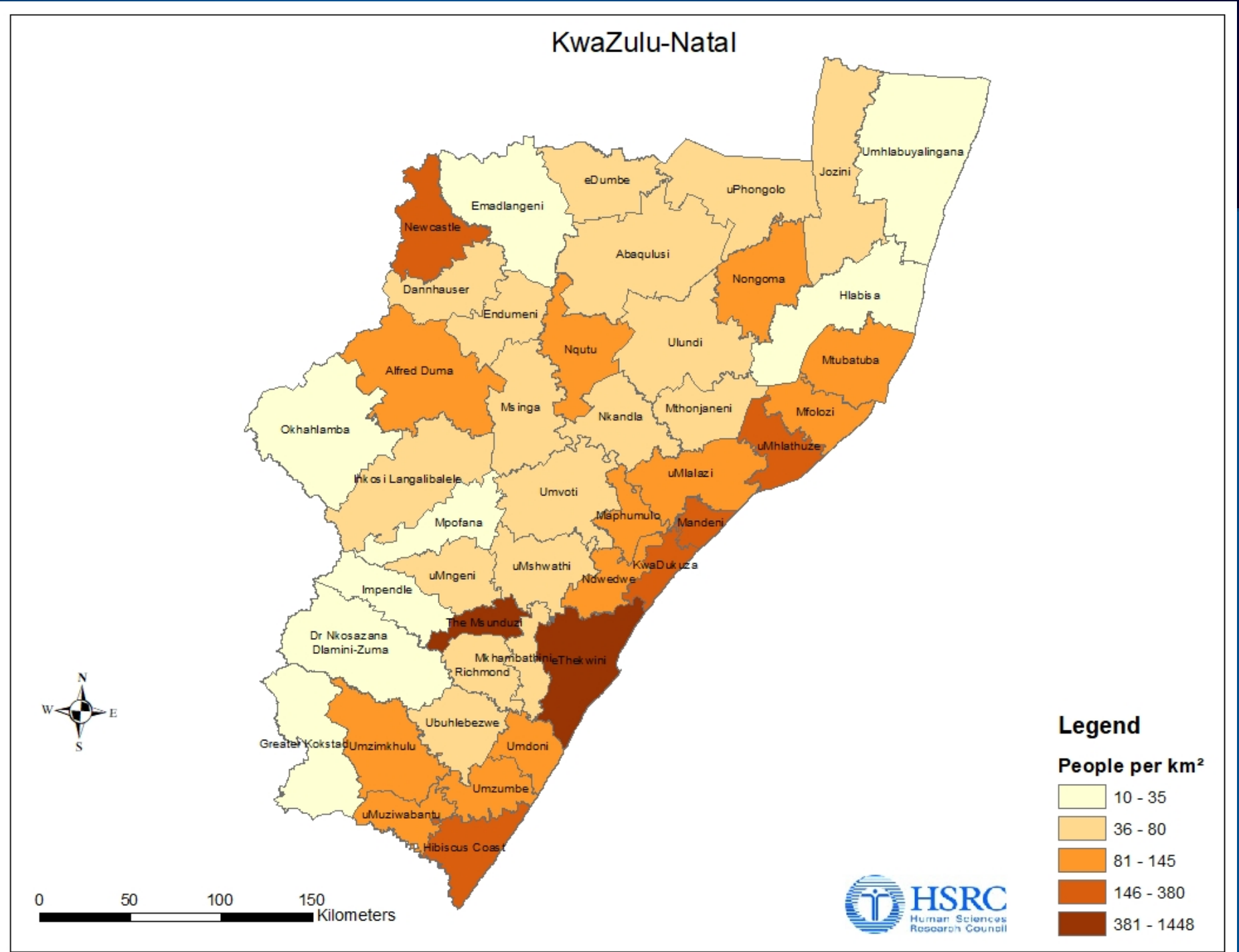
Gauteng is estimated to have received the highest number of in-migrants between 2016-2021, with a positive net migration of 62.0. It is estimated that the province received 1 553 162 in-migrants during this period. The largest contributors to this in-migration are Limpopo (353 346) and KwaZulu-Natal (232 459). The City of Johannesburg is the largest recipient of migrants into the province.

Source: Stats SA, 2021

[Read more](#)

[Go to first page](#)





After Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal is the second largest contributor to the economy of the country, generating a percentage share of national GDP of 16% (Stats SA, 2019).

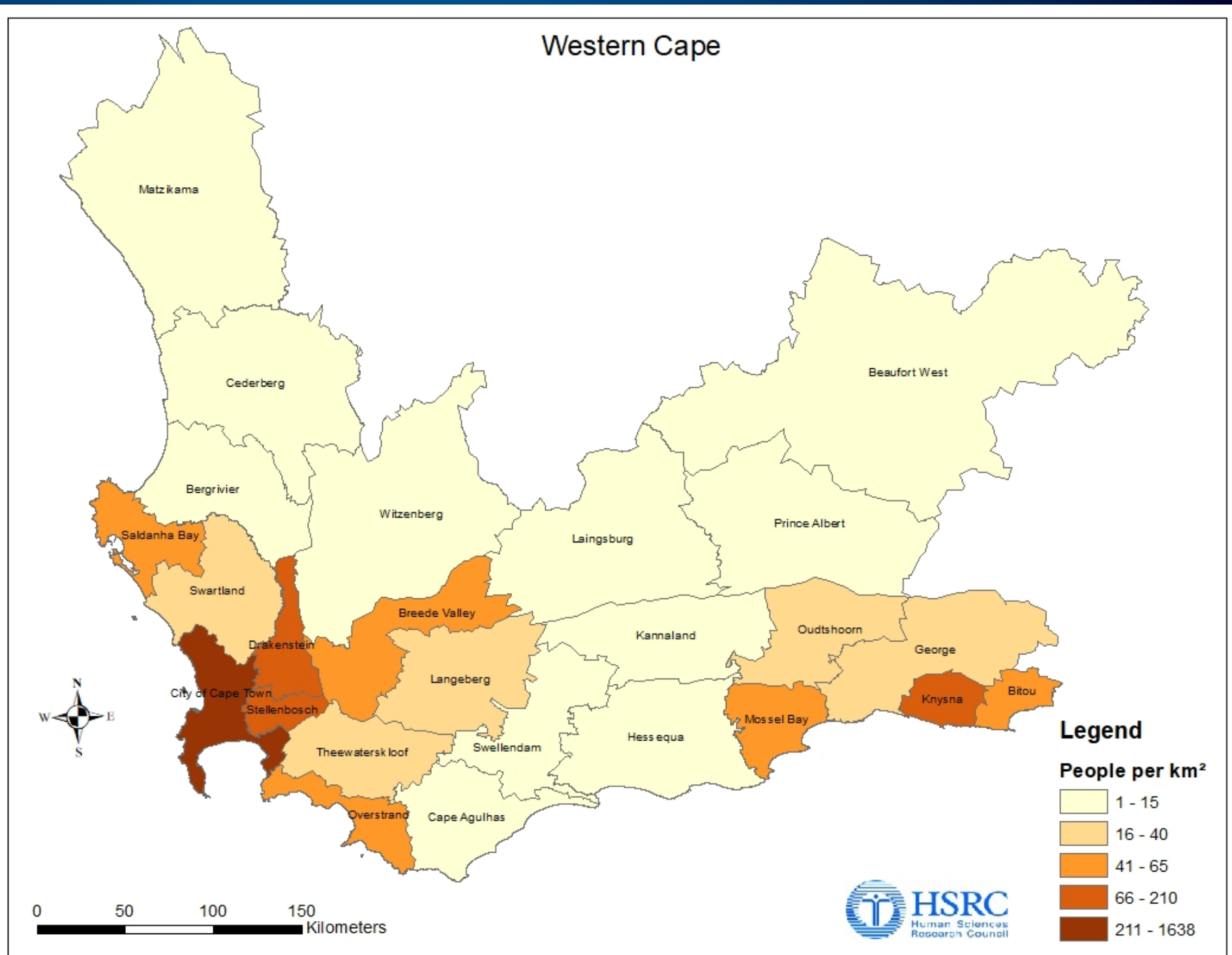
It is estimated that between 2016-2021, KwaZulu-Natal had 375 583 out-migrants and 287 420 in-migrants, leading to a negative net migration of -7.6. The largest recipient of migrants in the province is eThekweni Metro municipality. The majority of the out-migrants (232 459) migrated to Gauteng.

Source: Stats SA, 2021

[Read more](#)

[Go to first page](#)





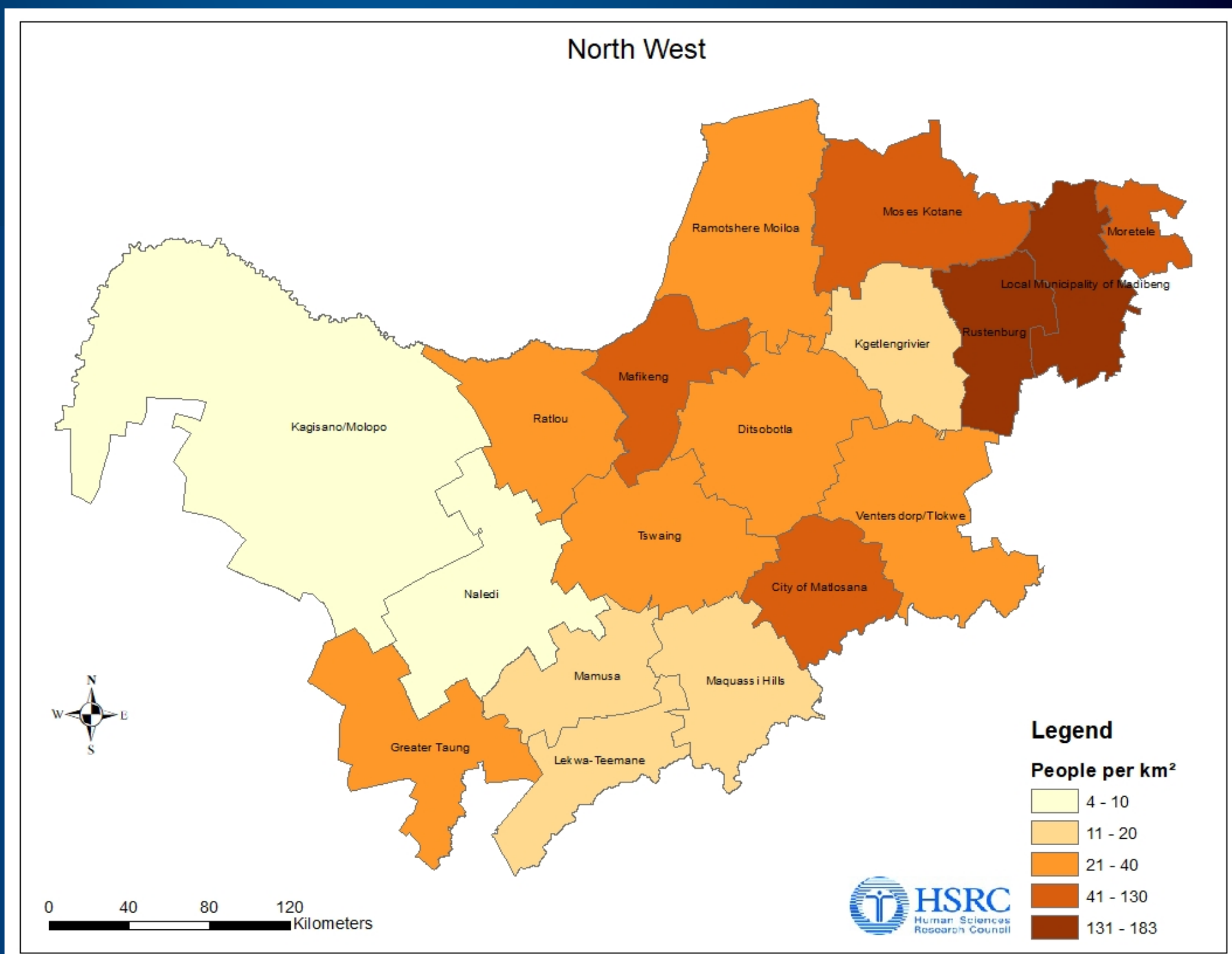
During 2016-2021, the Western Cape received 468 568 in-migrants and 178 013 out-migrants, leading to a positive net migration rate of 40.8. The City of Cape Town is the largest recipient of migrants in the province. The largest number of in-migrants to the province are from the Eastern Cape (176 984) and Gauteng (98 647).

Source: Stats SA, 2021

[Read more](#)

[Go to first page](#)



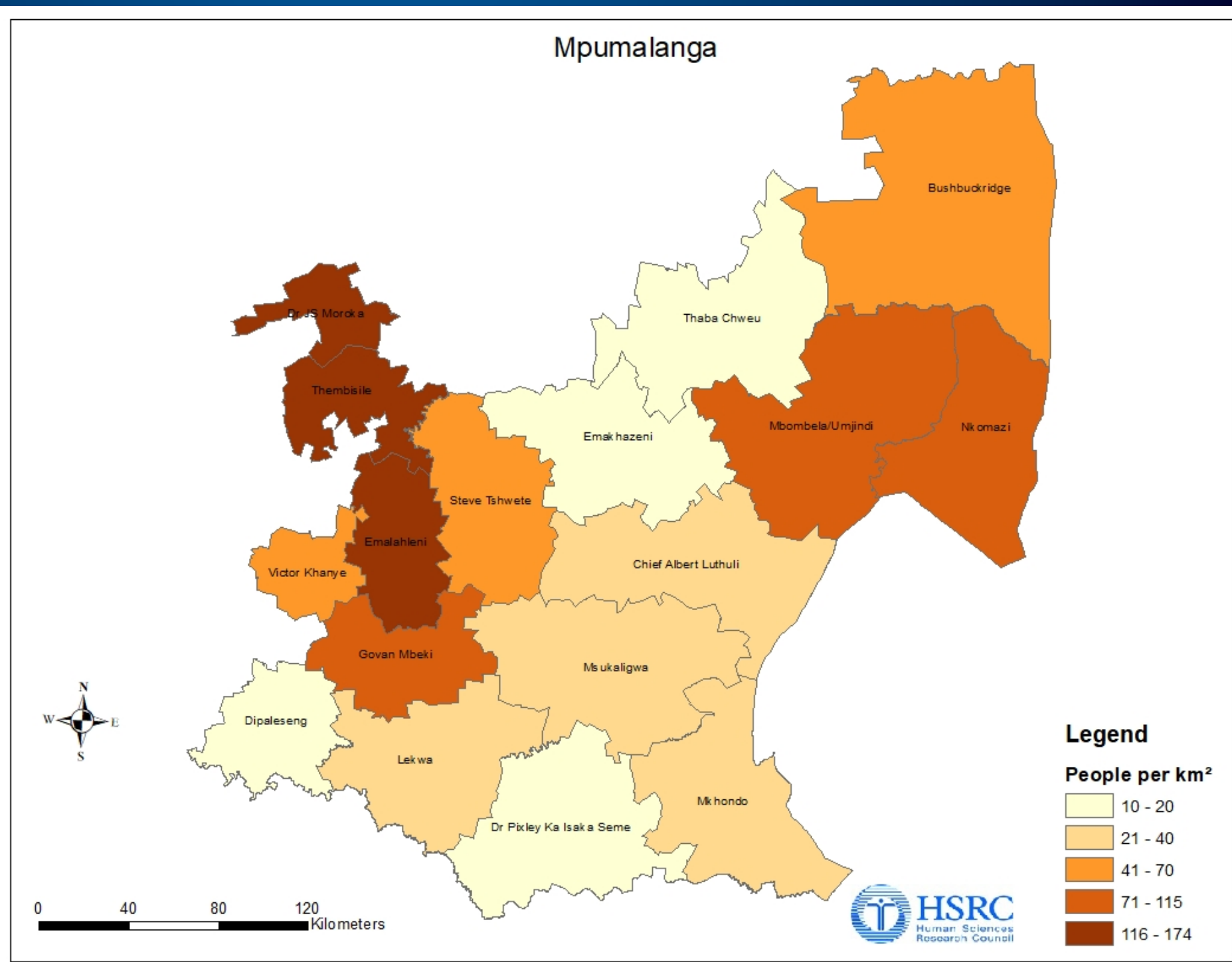


During 2016-2021, the North West had 205 723 out-migrants and 318 604 in-migrants, leading to a positive net migration rate of 27.4. Rustenburg and Madibeng municipalities are the most densely populated municipalities in the province (Stats SA, 2016; adapted by HSRC). The majority of in-migrants to this province were from Gauteng (111 507).

Source: Stats SA, 2021

[Read more](#)

[Go to first page](#)



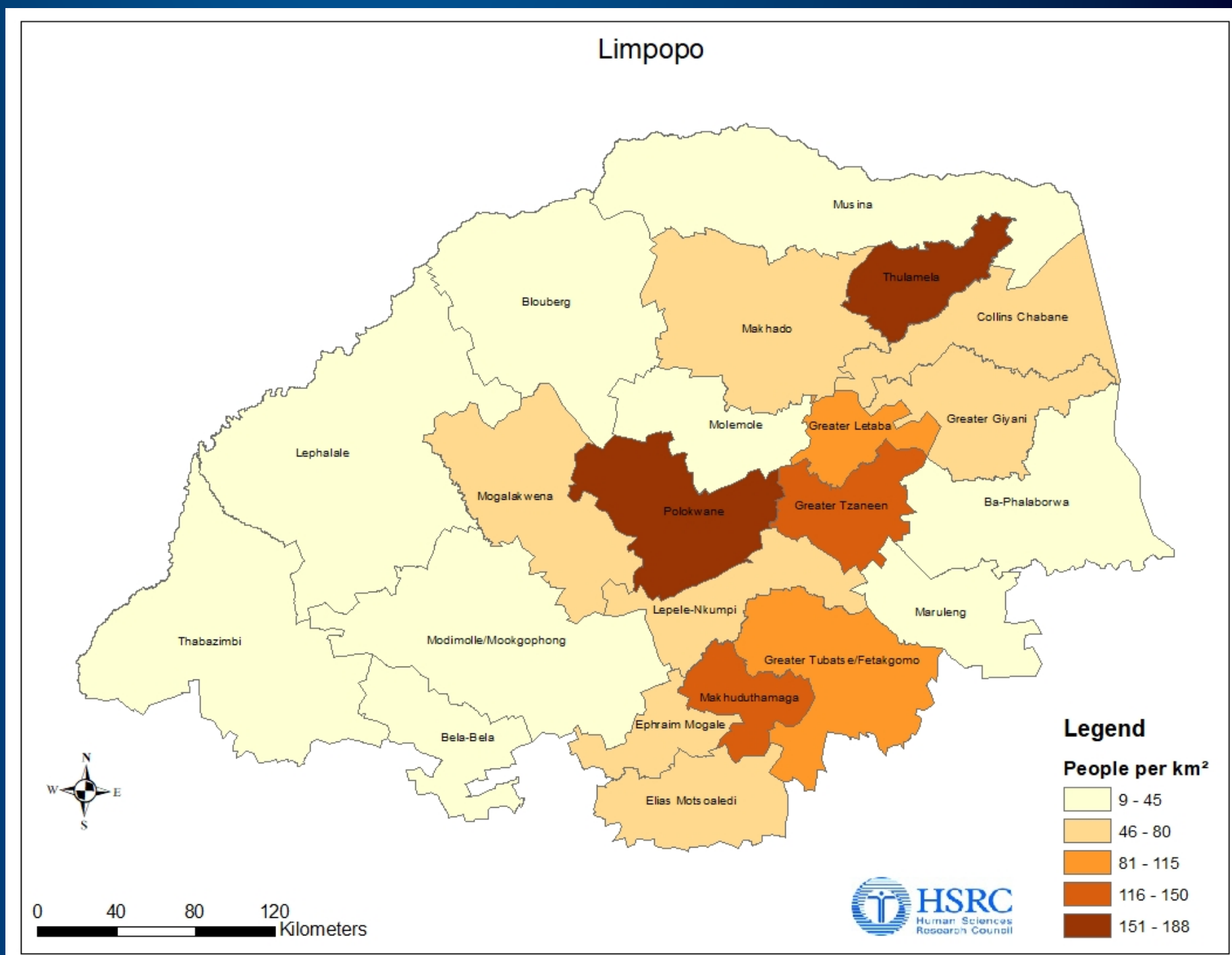
During 2016-2021, Mpumalanga had 220 302 out-migrants and 281 336 in-migrants, leading to a positive net migration rate of 12.9. The majority of in-migrants to this province were from Gauteng (82 955).

Source: Stats SA, 2021

[Read more](#)

[Go to first page](#)





During 2016-2021, Limpopo had 467 693 out-migrants and 278 581 in-migrants, leading to a negative net migration rate of -31.9. The largest number of out-migrants from the province (353 346) migrated to Gauteng.

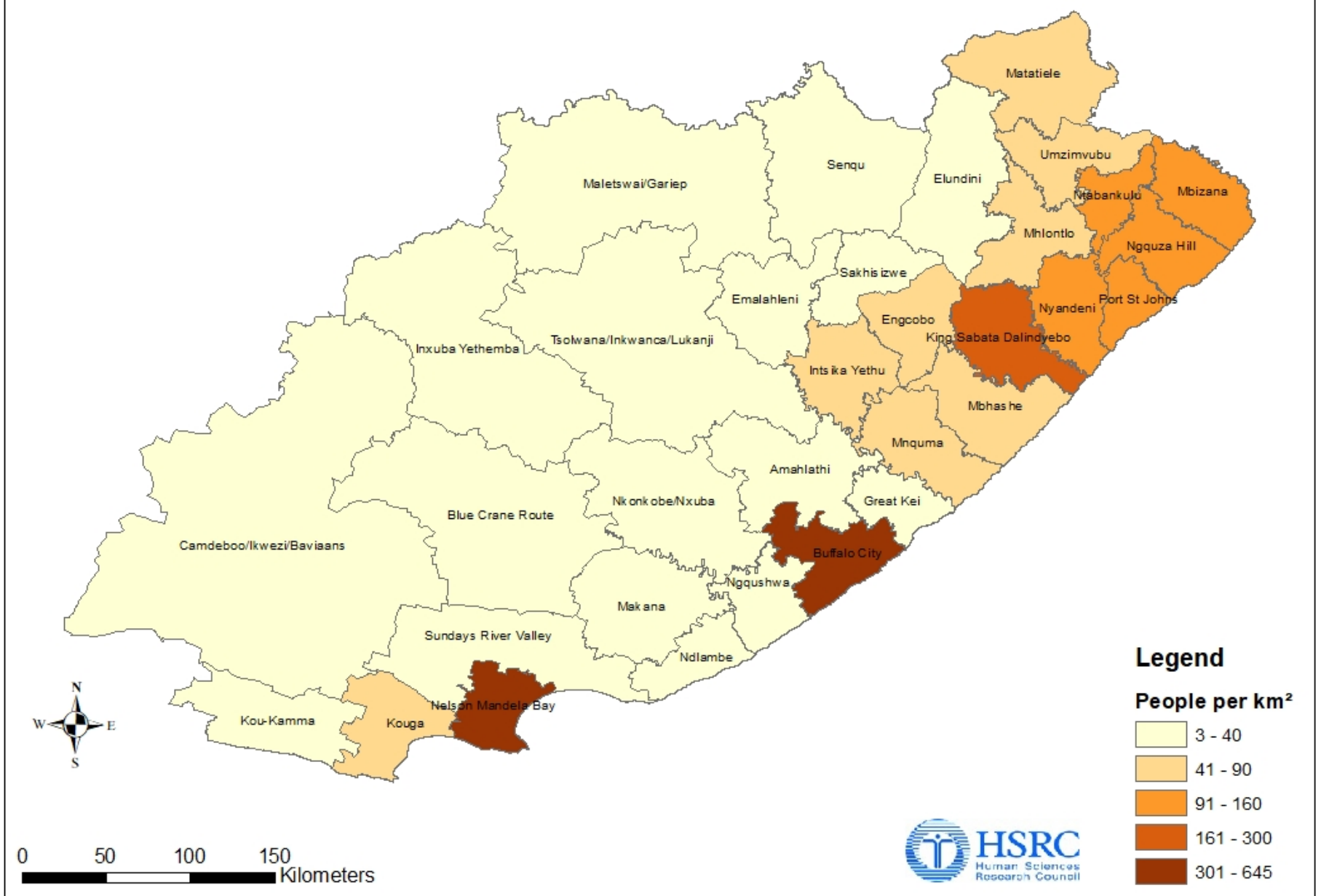
Source: Stats SA, 2021

[Read more](#)

[Go to first page](#)



Eastern Cape



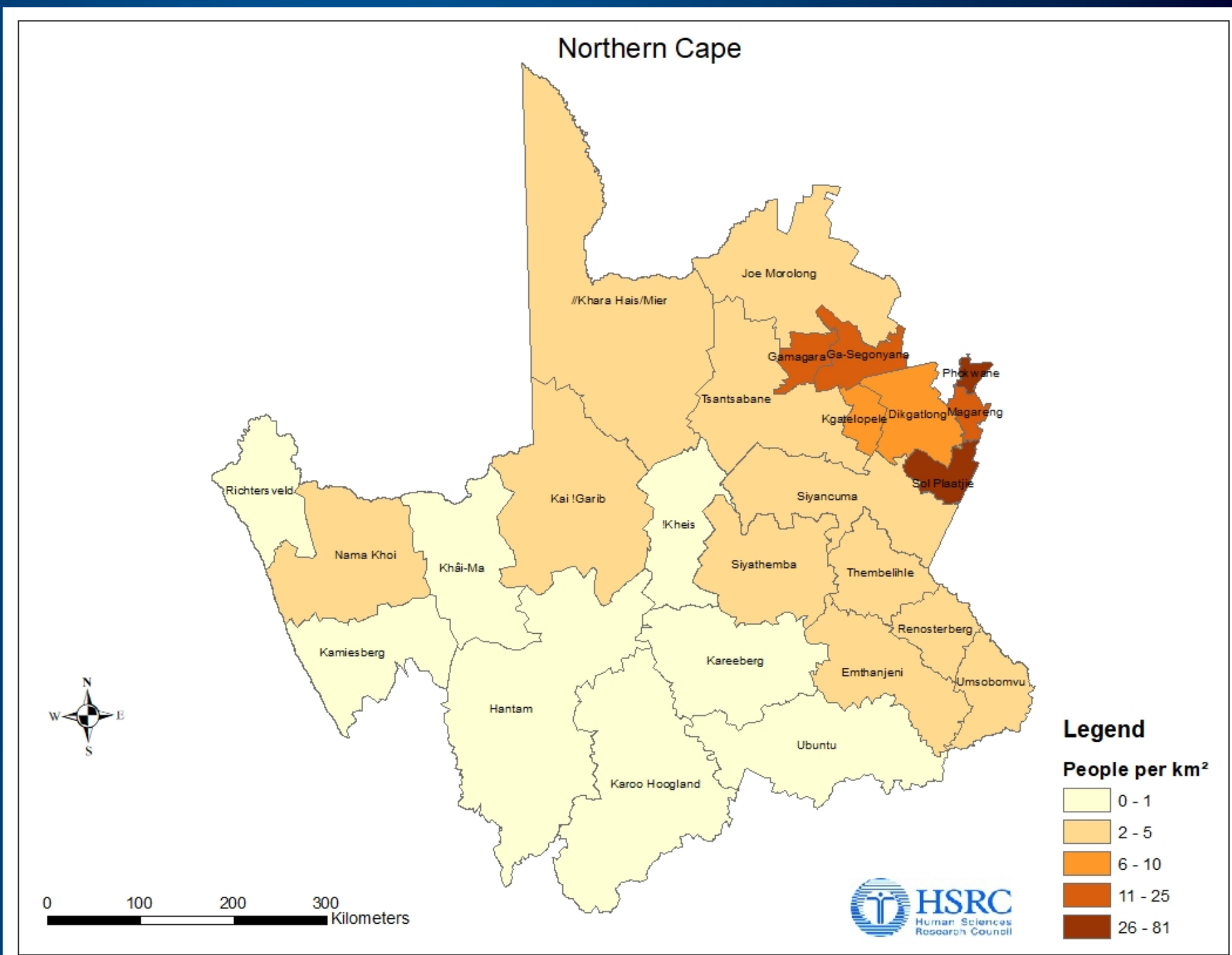
During 2016-2021, the Eastern Cape had 514 888 out-migrants and 191 931 in-migrants, leading to a negative net migration rate of -48.3. The largest number of out-migrants from the province (176 984) migrated to the Western Cape, followed by migration to Gauteng (147 876).

Source: Stats SA, 2021

[Read more](#)

[Go to first page](#)





During 2016-2021, the Northern Cape, the largest but least populated province in the country (Stats SA 2016; adapted by HSRC), had 76 954 out-migrants and 88 507 in-migrants, leading to a positive net migration rate of 8.9. The majority of in-migrants to this province were from North West (24 787).

Source: Stats SA, 2021

[Read more](#)

[Go to first page](#)



For more information, contact:

Simangele Dlamini, PhD
sdlamini@hsrc.ac.za

Gina Weir-Smith, PhD
gweir-smith@hsrc.ac.za

The HSRC must be acknowledged for all published and unpublished works, including the maps used in this series. The following citation is suggested:

Dlamini, S. & Weir-Smith, G. (2021). Migration trends: Spatial Insights Edition 1. Pretoria: eResearch Knowledge Centre, Human Sciences Research Council. <http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.11910/16611>

