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# Social Capital as Survival Strategy for Immigrants in South Africa: A Conceptual Framework

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## Abstract

Social survival strategies are premised on relations anchored around ethnicity, culture, nationality, and language. Out of this strategy is the concept of social capital which is defined as the link that allow people to discover opportunities as well as employment based in social relationships with previous migrants. There is no doubt that foreign nationals utilise different forms of social capital to achieve different means—the reliance on family at the point of entry to access shelter and employment opportunities whereas they access friendships and networks within the employment circles to access other employment opportunities. The aim of this research is to detail how foreign nationals employ social capital networks as a survival strategy in South African urban townships using Diepsloot, found in the northwest of Johannesburg, as a case study. It is an important study because there is a lack of literature linking social capital as a survival strategy. We focus on social capital because it is a propeller—at least at initial and transition stages of migration—to access other forms of survival strategies. This paper, before all else, derives a conceptual framework that should guide the empirical part of such a research.

**Keywords:** migration, survival strategy, migrant networks, social capital networks theoretical framework, conceptual framework

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## 1. Introduction

Social survival strategies are premised on relations anchored around ethnicity, culture, nationality, and language. Out of this strategy is the concept of social capital which is defined as the link that allow people to discover opportunities as well as employment based in social relationships with previous migrants [1]. Recent literature, for example [2–4], has reflected on social capital networks as a facilitator of survival among foreign nationals in the context

of the South African development trajectory and international migration. Regardless, the focus on how social capital networks actually facilitate continued migration is inadequate to guide policy and legislative shift on immigration. Inevitably, this implies absent or inadequate social interventions to support foreign nationals residing in South African urban townships. This is of interest because the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa as well as a number of international declarations ratified by South Africa guarantee social, physical, and economic rights to those that 'live in the Republic' [5]. This implies a need to understand the role and extent of social capital network as a survival strategy among foreign nationals. Such knowledge will expose the gap and, therefore, facilitate the development of responsive and progressive state-driven interventions meant to uphold the full rights of foreign nationals in South Africa.

Therefore, ultimately, this research intends to understand how foreign nationals in South Africa use social capital networks to survive through a case study, Diepsloot, an urban township in the northwest of Johannesburg. This paper proposes a conceptual framework that should guide the empirical part of this research when collecting, processing, and analysing data and information to interrogate, thereafter, interpret the empirical findings. This implies that we do not present or discuss empirical research results in this paper. However, we derive and present an interpretive framework and, consequently, a conceptual framework—described in [6]—from a systematic interrogation of academic and non-academic literature.

## 2. The approach

The debate on what is and what is not a conceptual framework remains a contested terrain. Ravitch and Riggan [7] point out three perceptions of this terminology. The first perception and probably the most misleading does not distinguish between theoretical and conceptual frameworks. The second looks at a conceptual framework as a visual representation of how a research is organised or how its major theoretical tenets are organised. The last one views conceptual frameworks as a node that links all elements of a research process—that is, conceptualisation, supporting literature, procedure and methods, framework for interpretation of empirical results as well as the disposition, positionality, and interest of the researcher. In this paper, we describe a conceptual framework as an advanced outline of how an empirical research should proceed after interrogating literature on the subject of interest [8]—in this case, social capital as a survival strategy for immigrants in South Africa. The description combines the second and third perspectives highlighted in [7]. Wotela [6, 9] has outlined a seven-step procedure of conceptualising conceptual frameworks in research. The write-up begins with an understanding of the research setting—Diepsloot, an urban township in Johannesburg and then the research problem in context—survival strategies among foreign nationals where we explore both social capital networks and state social support. Thereafter, we review methods, data, findings, and conclusions of past and current studies assessing social capital among foreign nationals to establish the knowledge gap on this subject as well as the methodological precedence. Most studies reviewed employed a quantitative

research strategy and, therefore, established the extent and significance of survival strategies employed by immigrants in South Africa. However, we are more concerned with how this plays out. Therefore, we have proposed a qualitative research strategy. We then proceed to develop a framework for interpreting the empirical findings in a proceeding paper. Again with this knowledge we have proposed a combination of migration and sociological frameworks. Finally, we propose a conceptual framework that details steps to be followed when empirically assessing the use of social capital as a survival strategy for immigrants in South Africa. In each of these areas of focus, we apply a thematic summative content analysis [10] when summarising and synthesising literature before writing up.

### 3. The physical research setting; Diepsloot in context

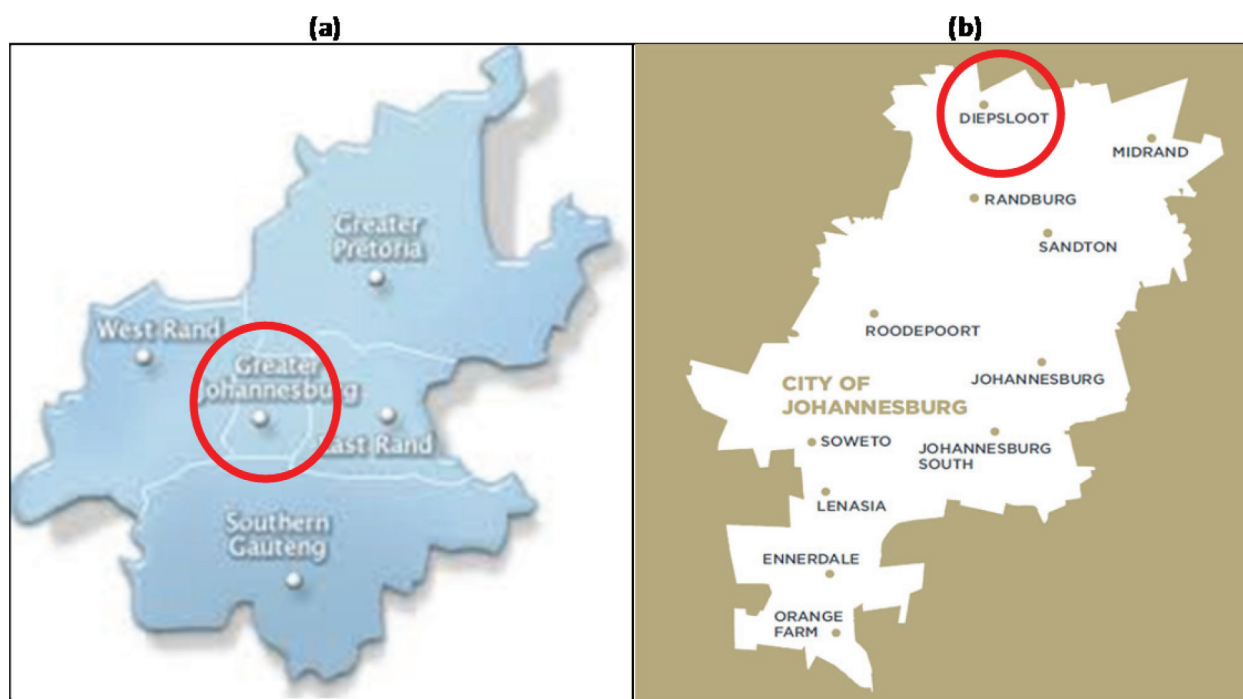
First of all, **Figure 1** shows, the current official boundary of South Africa. As Wotela and Letsiri [11], point out this boundary



**Figure 1.** The map of South Africa showing its neighbouring countries. 'Map of South Africa with English labels' by Htonl-Own work. Licenced under CC BY-SA 3.0 via Commons - [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Map\\_of\\_South\\_Africa\\_with\\_English\\_labels.svg#/media/File:Map\\_of\\_South\\_Africa\\_with\\_English\\_labels.svg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Map_of_South_Africa_with_English_labels.svg#/media/File:Map_of_South_Africa_with_English_labels.svg).

*'... stretches from the Atlantic Ocean on its west to the Indian Ocean on its east. To its South are the two Oceans while to its north is Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, and Swaziland to its east. There is also Lesotho right within its boundaries. As detailed in [12–14], this boundary was established in 1910 after combining two Boer independent countries – The South African Republic (formerly the Transvaal Colony) and the Orange Free State (formerly the Orange River Colony) – and the two British colonies, that is, the Cape Colony and the Natal Colony. Obviously, the previous four international boundaries that make-up the current South Africa are a product of the Berlin Conference of 1884 to 1885 that decided on international boundaries of the African continent'.*

Second, the map also shows that South Africa has nine provinces but the province of focus for this paper is Gauteng Province towards the north eastern side of the country. Third, as **Figure 2(a)** shows this Province has five sub-regions including a metropolitan municipality called the Greater City of Johannesburg. Lastly, as shown in **Figure 2(b)**, Diepsloot, our research context, is located to the northwest of the City – that is, 35 kilometres away from the Johannesburg central business district and 5 kilometres away from Dainfern, Sandton, and Fourways, which are some of the affluent suburban areas in the northwestern part of Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality where the notable numbers of Diepsloot residents work. Diepsloot occupies a total areas of about 5.6 square kilometres with an estimated population of 350,000 people in about 30,000 households [15]. This translates to 62,724 people per square kilometre making the township one of the most densely populated area in the City of Johannesburg.



**Figure 2.** The map of Gauteng Province and the City of Johannesburg. The Map of Gauteng Province sourced from <http://www.saaccommodation-finder.com> and the Map of Johannesburg sourced from <http://www.localgovernment.org.za>.



According to the Tswelopele Education Foundation [16], the Johannesburg Municipality established Diepsloot in 1995 as a transit camp for people who were being removed from Alexandra, Honeydew, and Zevenfontein. On inception, the Township received 200 families. They relied on farm work for sustenance. By 1996, Diepsloot was still a reception area with temporary settlements. To date, it has grown with about 13 extensions (Wards 95 and 113) mostly informal settlements with minimum basic services because of increasing pressure on services [17].

Though Diepsloot is mainly a Black African township, its outlook is ethnically diverse. The majority of its population comes from the Limpopo Province comprising the Pedi, Shangaan, Tsonga, and the Venda. Twenty-three percent of the township comprises foreign nationals mostly from Bangladesh, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Pakistan, Somalia and Zimbabwe [18]. Zuberi and Sibanda [19] have established the relationship between migration status, nativity, and labour force outcomes in the post-apartheid labour market in South Africa. They found that migrants from the Southern African region are relatively young (20–29 years old) and migration reduces with age. Proportion of male immigrants in the labour force is higher than South African born males because of higher education attainment among foreign nationals compared with South African males. For some time, the people in this Township co-existed and lived in harmony despite their diverse background up until 2008 when xenophobia manifested with the May 2013 incidents of lootings and abusing foreign nationals became apparent. A non-governmental organisation, PlanAct [20], attributes these tensions to competition for housing and employment. The notable proportion of foreign nationals makes it an interesting case study on survival strategies and social capital.

As is the case with most townships in developing countries especially in Africa, Diepsloot comprise of a young population—that is, about 56% is less than 35 years old [21]. About 74% of its population is economically active with 47% employed in both the formal and informal sectors implying that half of this population is unemployed [3, 18]. As an intervention, the state provides temporary employment through the Expanded Public Works Programme—an infrastructure development programme whose focus in to provide employment to the poor South African households [22].

The economy of Diepsloot is a mixture of formal and informal businesses. The former are found in well planned shopping malls while the latter are found almost anywhere and mostly deal in basic groceries, hair salons, food and beverage. Such businesses barely survive and their profit margins are insufficient to get people out of the poverty trap. Similarly, the inadequate housing in Diepsloot comprises formal and informal structures side by side—that is, makeshift houses called shacks, state subsidised houses, and bank financed houses. South Africans, who own most of the formal houses, have erected backyard dwelling units that they rent out to foreign nationals and fellow South Africans who have not received state subsidised unit. In sum, Diepsloot residents fall in the low to lower-middle income groups. It is, therefore, not surprising that their living standard range from low (abject poverty) to moderate (hand-to-mouth) characteristics that go hand in hand with disease and crime.

#### 4. Survival strategies employed by foreign nationals in South Africa: Social capital versus state social support

South Africa is a major recipient of migrants from countries in Southern Africa and beyond. Official reports show that amidst increasing but sporadic xenophobic attacks, immigration into South Africa has continued. For an example, the 2011 Census results show revealed a stable inflow of foreign nationals in South Africa between 2001 and 2011 despite the violent 2008 xenophobic violence [22]. Wotela and Letsiri [11] have discussed why immigrants make South Africa the country of choice. They point out that the long historical four migration streams as well as official amnesties that have created a blended society within this region—resulting in strong migration networks—account for immigration into South Africa.

Boyd [23] has summarised determinants and consequences of personal networks in the migration of industrialised countries. One key determinant is that families make migration decisions as a unit to send family members to a foreign country with established social capital networks. These networks are based on kinship residing in both the receiving and sending countries provide for coping strategies and perpetuate a migration stream even amidst several disincentives. It is these strong social capital networks that facilitate the survival of both internal and international migrants. Past research, for example see [4, 24, 25], has found that the stronger the social links one has to the particular community, the better the chances of finding employment and earning a higher wage.

Another factor contributing to immigration into South Africa and strengthening social capital networks is policy shifts in dealing with foreign nationals as detailed in [11]. An organisation called The People Against Suffering, Oppression and Poverty [26] has pointed out that the dispensation the South African government provided Zimbabweans to regularise their employed in 2009 is a contributing factor to the stable immigration. They argue that such dispensation facilitates for other family members of foreign nationals to also migrate to South Africa in spite of several deportations.

In sum, as Wotela and Letsiri [11] have argued, ‘... we can attribute the initiation of South African immigration to the pull and largely the push factors’ but its perpetuation is attributable to well-established social capital networks. This is called cumulative causation effect, that is, initial migration establishes migration networks that provide for survival strategies for new migrants. A study by Kwanuka and Monson [27] traced Zimbabwean nationals into four neighbouring countries including South Africa. They confirm that Zimbabweans use migration as a survival strategy by pooling resources to expatriate a family member who they expect to remit money back to them. They conclude that networks in the receiving countries and immigration policies can deter or encourage in-migration.

Immigration has economic and social consequences in developing countries. Cities in developed countries provide access to shelter, employment, and other social facilities which is not the case in developing countries. Lourenço-Lindell [24] points out that people in African cities face challenges ranging from absent or ineffective provision of basic services,

poor housing, few secure employment opportunities, and insufficient income. Competition for limited resources, especially employment opportunities, between locals and foreign nationals breeds conflict [28, 29].

However, the presence of foreign nationals in a country has implications beyond accessing employment. The hosting state is expected to provide and look out for them including an effort to integrate them into society. This includes and implies developing and implementing interventions meant for immigrant social welfare. In South Africa, more than 15 million people receive social grants among other forms of social support for the poor such as subsidised housing, free access to health and education from the state. However, this is not the case with poor and vulnerable immigrants. The Consortium for Refugees and Migrants in South Africa [30] have pointed out that by systematic design and practice, foreign nationals are excluded from such social support. This means their cost of basic necessities is higher than average leaving poor foreign nationals vulnerable.

This of course does not include instances where foreign nationals have accessed state social support legally or illegally. Some foreign nationals have managed to access the state grants which they expatriate to their country of origin [31]. Reports of the 'immigrants' accessing state social support especially housing in poor South African urban townships including Diepsloot are cited by locals to be the reasons for the xenophobic attacks [30]. However, removing such foreign nationals from the beneficiary list may leave them poor and vulnerable.

In sum, the foreign nationals in Diepsloot probably chose to live there because it is within few kilometres of possible employment. Newbold and Garcia [32, 33] have argued that migrants settle close to where they can access economic opportunities and close to their kind. However, given the relatively insufficient basic services and quality housing in Diepsloot, we would argue that this is only good enough in the absence of alternatives. Further, foreign national are excluded from accessing state social support despite the constitution guaranteeing social, physical, and economic rights to those that 'live in the Republic' of South Africa. This is unlike democratic and socialist states that strive for universal access to social goods and services despite one's migration status [34, 35].

## **5. Methods, data, findings and conclusions of studies on survival strategies among foreign nationals**

With a contextual understanding of social capital, state social support, and survival strategies among foreign nationals in Diepsloot, we now review selected similar studies on this subject. In doing so, we point out research approaches, designs, procedures and methods that such studies have applied as well as the findings and conclusions they have realised. The ultimate objective is to uncover the knowledge gap on this subject in general and specifically in the South African urban townships. We also use this knowledge to establish some methodological options that we can employ for the empirical part of this research which we certainly present as part of our conceptual framework. Needless to state that studies



on survival strategies that foreign nationals employ span through decades and across the global. Therefore, we interrogate some studies on social capital networks in the United States of America (USA) before focusing on the African continent and more specifically Southern Africa.

Some studies, for example, see [36] have applied the theory of social networks and social enclaves to interrogate if a member of a particular social capital network transmits information and facilitates employment in the sector where this member is employed to other members of the network. The assumption is that having social network members employed in the dominant industries within a migrant's location increases their chances of finding employment in similar industries. Boal [36] uses state records on location and earnings of migrants, duration of stay, and local labour market outcomes. The results show that recent migrants who are members of established networks in labour markets have relatively higher (5%) employment rates and get higher (0.7%) regardless of sex and level of education. This shows that social capital networks facilitate continued immigration into South Africa. The research did not consider cultural and social dynamics of ethnic societies.

Others such as [37] have interrogated the role of social structure in labour markets among the Hispanics in the USA to uncover the link between social capital networks, employment, and wages. The study employs a quantitative research strategy and the positive causality theory of migration that argues that migration volumes are propelled by the positive experiences of the initial migrants and that having good contacts increases the chances of finding employment among foreign nationals. Further, using the Lin's [38] description, Mouw [37] describes social capital as labour market connections that increase the chances of knowing about job vacancies. The results show that, among other things, Mexicans with more relatives in the USA have a higher chance of finding employment and earning higher wages. This implies that those with a broad social network have several avenues of looking for employment and, therefore, the use of social capital reduces the duration that one is unemployed. Once one is employed then they focus on maximising wages again through social networks. Again, the strength of their networks determines the level of their wages with new and less socially connected migrants taking lower paying jobs and the highly connected migrants earning higher wages. Further, proficiency in the local language and the time spent in the United States by both the immigrants looking for a job and their contacts determines the duration of finding employment. The study concludes that using social capital networks to search for employment results in foreign nationals doing 'segregated' jobs 'reserved' for immigrants and dependency on social networks reduces with time.

Building on Mouw's [37] work, Anderson and colleagues [39] show that the quantity and quality of social capital networks as well as location determines the employment search outcomes of foreign nationals in the United States of America (USA). They describe social capital networks as 'a web of interconnected people who directly or indirectly interact with each other' [39]. They employed a quantitative research strategy using census data and information collected by the Longitudinal Employer Household Dynamics Programme that captures individual's employment status and location. The study compared employment outcomes of 17,1000 foreign nationals in the metropolitan areas of the USA. The results show that foreign

nationals are more likely to belong to an enclave to harness employment opportunities and higher wages. Foreign nationals within the same enclave are likely to work in the same firm. This suggests that social networks act as labour market intermediary. The study concludes that education and employment status among members of the network determines its quality and thus the chances of accessing the labour market.

Closer to the context of our research, De Jong and colleagues [40] have explored the determinants of migration within Southern African context. They employed a mixed research strategy and cross-sectional research design targeting households from which they interviewed 4000 internal, cross-border, and international migrants. The cross-border migrants comprised undocumented migrants, farm workers, and contract workers in Gauteng, Limpopo, and the North West provinces. They also interviewed government officials, academics and non-governmental organisations in Mozambique, South Africa, and Zimbabwe. The study found that social capital is a major contributing factor to migration decision-making because it provides for the initial survival of migrants from within South Africa and among foreign nationals. Through socialisation, foreign nationals utilise capital networks and survival strategies to find shelter and employment in South Africa. Foreign nationals have also created employment enclaves because they refer others to employment opportunities within industries in which are employed.

More recently and in more detail, Madhwar and Landau [41] have also explored the extent to which foreign nationals in Johannesburg, Mozambique, and Nairobi use social networks as a survival strategy. Further and more importantly, they interrogate 'trust' as a determinant of social capital among locals and foreign nationals. They employed a mixed research strategy and the social network framework. They interviewed 2211 local in-migrants and foreign immigrants in 2006 through 2007. They argue that trust, as a determinant of social capital, is just as important as ethnicity, nationality, and residential history because it facilitates accessing opportunities, coping, and survival. Then they differentiate between 'bonding trust' and 'bridging trust' – the former is based on ethnicity and nationality whereas the latter transcends ethnicity and nationality. Their findings show that both local in-migrants and foreign immigrants use both bonding and bridging trust to settle in new environment through accessing shelter, employment, and documentation. More specifically, they are more likely to trust their relatives but avoid participating in ethnic cultural activities. The latter is more notable among foreign nationals because they wish to avoid monotonic group behaviour which might signal unwillingness to claim a stake in the regions of residence. Further, erosion of bonding trust has consequently been replaced by religious capital networks.

These results and findings have found support from Freemantle [42] who found a degree of mistrust among people the same ethnicity and nationality. Similarly, Peter's [43] findings that suggest that forging strong ties based on ethnicity and nationality in Johannesburg can dwarf individual aspirations. Earlier Massey and Aysa [44] had demonstrated that Mozambican foreign nationals utilise both use both bonding and bridging trust. They also marry across nationalities thus adapting to the new environment while maintaining ties with their fellow nationals.

Collectively these studies demonstrate that social capital networks do exist in the United States of America or Southern Africa. They could be based on ethnicity, nationality, and religious. However, as Madhwar and Landau [41] have cautioned, we should apply discretion when applying the concept of social capital networks. It is beyond doubt that in-migrants and immigrants employ social capital networks as a survival strategy by providing for employment and other economic opportunities—even in Greater Johannesburg area [4]. True as this maybe, this study seeks to establish if social capital networking is a notable determinant in accessing employment and other economic opportunities for foreign nationals in Diepsloot. Of importance is the link between ‘who you know’ and chances of getting employment with a higher wage. Obviously, understanding social capital networks will allow us to interrogate the link between the quantity and quality of such networks [37] with survival strategies among foreign nationals in Diepsloot. There is a data and information challenge that we need to overcome. Unlike Anderson and colleagues [39] who used a reliable and larger dataset United States of America National Census Bureau, we do not have such a source. The equivalent, Statistics South Africa, has acknowledged the need to coordinate and collate migration data and information between the various agencies of government [21]. There will also be a need to interview both legal and illegal immigrants implying that we need data and information beyond official sources. In sum, the methods employed by Madhwar and Landau [41], though they focused on trust as an aspect of social capital, seem more suitable for Diepsloot—that is, a mixed research strategy and a case study. The qualitative research strategy is an important recommendation for contextual research studies of groups and networks, social cohesion and inclusion, collective action and cooperation within the frame of social capital network [45].

## **6. Establishing a framework for interpreting anticipated empirical results on the roles of social capital as a survival strategy for immigrants in South Africa**

Wotela [9] has argued that to establish a framework, theoretical or otherwise, for interpreting anticipated empirical results one needs to first of all establish and discuss the academic context of the study, its key components, and the key attributes or variables. Through an iterative process we settled for migration, and not sociology, as the academic home of this research. Therefore, in the next sub-Section (5.1) we discuss migration and its important components in the context of social capital networks before interrogating the determinants of migration, again, in the context of social capital networks in sub-Section 5.2. Finally, sub-Section 5.3 provides for a framework for interpreting anticipated empirical results from a study on the roles of social capital as a survival strategy for immigrants in South Africa.

### **6.1. An introduction to migration and its important components in the context of social capital networks**

Lundquist and colleagues [46] as well as Wotela and Letsiri [11] describe migration as one of the three components of demography (the others being fertility and mortality) that describes

the movements of people between clearly distinguishable geographic units and in so doing subtracting from the population of origin and adding to the population of destination. The various reasons why people move include cultural, political, economic, social, and environmental either deplorable at the region of origin or conducive at the region of destination. The move can be voluntarily or involuntary. Further, an individual can be born once and die once but migrate several times in their life time. It is factor that provides for complexity in the study of migration. Migration can be intra country, that is, out-migration and in-migration as well as inter country, that is, emigration and immigration.

Several authors, for example, see [46–48] point out that the study of migration, like the other demographic components, requires data and information on movements from administrative data, registrations at border crossing, as well as through retrospective questions during census and surveys. Some countries have applied various techniques including demographic techniques to estimate migration. We cannot over emphasise that compared to fertility and mortality, migration data and information has several challenges. Retrospective questions during census and surveys, which are the main sources of such data and information in developing countries, suffer from deliberate concealment from respondents as well as failure to capture movement that occurred five years prior to a census or a survey.

Arising from the concept of migration is the term migrant or migrants—that is, residents or individual who belong to a particular region who are living in or migrated to another place other than theirs [49]. Others including [50] describe migrants as foreign-born or foreign-nationals who have moved into a new country for more than year for various reasons. Time dimension differentiates between those that in a host country temporarily and those who have established a life in the host country. The focus of this paper is international migration and more specifically immigrants or foreign nationals. We use of the term foreign nationals for two reasons to distinguish between them from local migrants and temporary international migrants. These are the ones who enact survival strategies and including social cohesion within the host communities even if they intend to move on.

Simply defined, survival strategies refer to having some kind of a successful implementation of a strategy for survival [51]. Dercon [52] describes them as the ‘ability to withstand risks and implement successful coping strategies which could be income based, capital and opportunities among others’. These include employment, formal and informal trading, social support, savings and credits as well as remittances. The four survival strategies of foreign nationals in South Africa include physical, human, economic, and social capital [4].

Physical survival strategies include the ability of individuals and households to find adequate water, food, shelter, and sanitation. Focus on physical capital is important as it is the initial strategy employed by migrants to support their physical needs during the initial transition migration period. Human survival strategies include the level of education that foreign nationals have to improve their chances of employability within the formal sector of the economy. For example, foreign nationals migrating to Canada who have attained a higher level of education have a higher chance of accessing employment [32]. Language is another human capital survival strategy. In Johannesburg, English proficiency increases the chances of employment while knowledge of isiZulu increases the chances of social



integration [3]. Economic survival strategies—that are well covered in social capital literature focused on foreign nationals—include access to employment, informal trading, and entrepreneurship. These studies include Amisi [53] who has interrogated sector participation of foreign nationals in informal trade among the Congolese in Durban and [4] who have interrogated sector participation by Johannesburg-based foreign nationals in informal trading and entrepreneurship. Effectively, social survival strategies are premised on relations anchored around sex or gender, ethnicity, culture, kinship, beliefs, nationality, and language as well as religion, friendship, social class, and common interest. A related concept is social capital—that is, the links that allow people residing in different communities to discover and access opportunities based on social relationships with previous migrants [1, 49].

Adler and Kwon [54] have attempted to provide a comprehensive history and description of ‘social capital’. They point out that Bourdieu [55] was the first to describe this concept as the ‘aggregate of actual or potential resources which are linked to possessions of a network based on institutionalised relationships of acquaintances’. This description focuses on the relationship that actors have with the network with a view to access (the means) resources without developing the bond that ties the network outside its sole purpose. Alternatively, Putnam [56] provides an *internally* focused description stating that social capital as ‘features of social organisation such as networks norms and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit’. This description emphasises the structure of relations among actors in a network and thus giving rise to the bonding social capital network anchored on kinship, ethnicity, and common cause. Further, there is a neutral (neither internal nor external focus) definition of social capital networks—that is, ‘the web of social relationships that influences individual behaviour and thereby affects economic growth’ [57]. To distinguish between internal and external focus, Putnam and Goss [58] describe bonding capital as ‘social networks that brings together people who are like one another in important respects’ bridging capital as social networks that brings people who are unlike one another together. Therefore, as Geys and Murdoch [59] have argued, in a bonding social capital network, the members are homogeneous and the shared norms compel members to provide safety nets that act as a survival strategy. In a bridging social capital network members are heterogeneous groups but still exchange of information and ideas on diverse interests. Regardless, social capital networks are central to understanding the survival of the foreign nationals in Diepsloot. Social capital networks assist foreign nationals at the initial and transition stages of migration to discover and access survival strategies described above excluding education which is usually acquired prior to migrating in this context.

## 6.2. Determinants of migration in the context of social capital networks

Understanding the determinants of migration (pull and push) provides for a context in which migration takes place. **Table 1** shows some of the cultural, political, economic, social, and environmental push and pull factors. Other factors include diversity of the places of origin and destination, presence and absence of obstacles to migration such as distance, legal barriers, and level of development, stability of the economy as well as threats to survival.



Migration motivators	Push factors	Pull factors
Cultural	Gender discrimination	Family reunification
	Ethnic discrimination	Freedom from discrimination
	Religious discrimination	
Political	Conflict	Safety and security
	Poor governance	Political freedom
	Human rights abuses	
Economic	Poverty	Prospects of higher wages
	Unemployment	Personal and professional development
	Low wages	
Social	Lack of access to health	Improved standard of living
	Lack of access to education	
Environmental	Degradation	Sustainable livelihood

Adapted from Harris and Todaro [60].

**Table 1.** Migration ‘push’ and ‘pull’ factors.

However, for this research, it is more useful to examine the use of social capital as a survival strategy to bring out factors that determine migration as a result of participating in a bonding or bridging social network. First off any demographer, for example, see [46], will refer to Ravenstein’s law of migration as the number of migrants over any given distance is proportional to the envisaged opportunities offered at destination but inversely related to opportunities in nearer distance. Therefore, migration will only occur if there are more opportunities at the place of destination compared with the place of origin. The first question is, ‘what are these opportunities?’ First, actual wage or labour markets differentials between sending and receiving countries shapes the type and extent of migration experienced between countries [60]. Arguably people move from high-unemployment low-wage regions to low-unemployment high-wage regions. Second, rather than wage differentials only, the prospects of finding employment in the receiving country are another determinant of migration [61]. The focus on the prospects of employment in the receiving countries through social capital networks is what our research intends to uncover. The second question is, ‘who provides information on these opportunities?’ Put differently, ‘what are the social capital determinants of migration?’ Literature points to three groupings—that is, social relations, market relations, and hierarchical relations determinants of migration.

Greenwood and McDowell [62] point out that social relations, as social capital determinants of migration, implies among others the extent of one’s social capital network based on family, ethnic, historical, cultural, and friendship in the receiving country. This is extended to affiliations to established institutions and professional affiliations. The social relations, as social capital determinants of migration, find support with the network theory—that stipulates that

the more people one knows in the receiving country, the greater their probability to migrate. Initial family members become pioneer migrants and pave the migration path for successive family members who leverage on them for shelter, money, and social intelligence. Upon interrogating trust and social networks in Johannesburg, Madhavan and Landau [41] argue that trust among immigrants and in-migrant is considerable compared with trust between immigrants and locals. Similar to family ties, people of a particular ethnicity provide support to their kin migrants during transition although this network has proven to be weaker than one based on family ties.

Sixty percent of Zimbabwean foreign nationals found in Johannesburg had to rely on relatives for accommodation and access to employment when transiting [4]. This implies that in the absence of social relations, their migration transition would be costly. Obviously, social capital networks with more employed members and have strong ties among them—that is, bonding capital—attract more members and thus expanding the size of the network [63]. Further, belonging to a social capital networks with more employed members reduces the time one remains unemployed upon migrating [25]. Therefore, migrants opt to join and participate in a social capital network because it increases the chances of getting employment. Further, sometimes foreign national use weak social ties or bridging capital which crosses the ethnic and cultural boundaries, that is, recruitment agencies to access employment opportunities [63].

Moving on, Greenwood and McDowell [62] point out that market relations<sup>1</sup>, as social capital determinants of migration, are actually an extension of social relations. They include age, education, and employment as well as wage differentials between the sending and receiving countries, cost of living, and domestic economic policies. The study [40] which we described in Section 5 found that migration in Southern African region is influenced by the sending countries' poor economic conditions which lead to unemployment, devaluation of local currencies, low wages, and increased cost of living. However, as the authors also confirmed empirically using the Mozambican and Zimbabwean emigration, poor political conditions result in poor or adverse economic policies and climate conditions. Further, market relations should be understood within the context of existing social capital ties in the receiving countries [62]. No matter how strong the push and pull factors, migration decision-making is eventually a function of social capital ties. This is why historic social ties played a pivotal role in the Mozambican and Zimbabwean emigration [40]. As a result, when these ties are absent, the employment outcomes of immigrants are lower and, therefore, reducing cumulative migration facilitated by strong social capital ties.

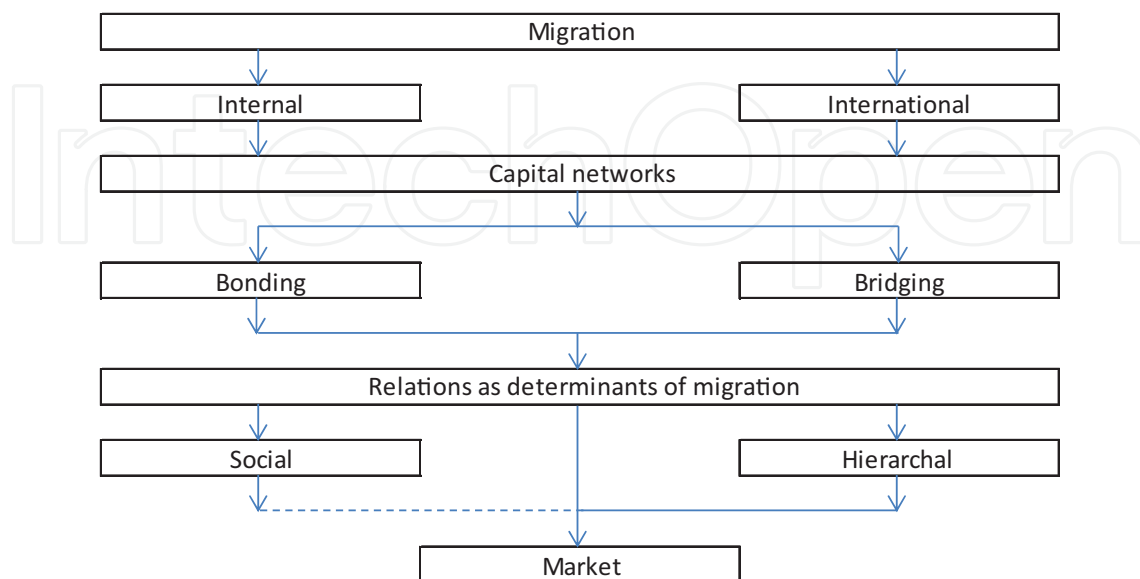
Lastly, according Adler and Kwon [54], hierarchical relations, as social capital determinants of migration, include institutional arrangements or institutionalised networks. These include access to government services and support of non-governmental organisations established to facilitate internal and international migration and, therefore, create social capital networks. These relations do influence migration decision-making and provide for, alas indirectly, the survival of foreign nationals in the receiving countries. Effectively, the hierarchical

<sup>1</sup>Frankly, from the interrogations in [64], we think social relations are more of cultural relations and market relations are the social relations. We not pursue this argument because it is not the focus of this paper.

determinants of migration are proximity to the social capital and its networks. They are ‘the gatekeepers and opportunity brokers’ that hinder or facilitate migration and access to the social networks that provide for survival among foreign nationals [54].

For an example, Amisi [53] found that hierarchical determinants among the Durban foreign nationals in South Africa include migration documentation issued by the Department of Home Affairs and other law enforcement agencies as well as support and assistance offered by non-profit organisations including cross-border religious organisations. Amisi [53] also found that social networks among Congolese nationals who broker relations for other foreign nationals to access these hierarchical institutions for them to survive in Durban facilitate rent-seeking practices of officials. Such practices should deter migration to South Africa by those who are still in the receiving country. Instead, they facilitate continued migration when social capital provides for by-passing institutional impediments in place. Further, religious institutions that support migration and provide social networks were found to be efficient in assisting aspirant immigrants at the point of entering South Africa.

In sum, as **Figure 3**, which shows the determinants of migration in the context of social capital networks, points out that both internal and international migration is facilitated by social capital networks. These could be either bonding or bridging. The former also referred to as internal exists even in the absence of migration and is based on ethnicity and nationality. The latter whose sole purpose is to facilitate migration is external or transcends ethnicity and nationality. The literature we have just reviewed also links bonding networks to social capital networks in the receiving country while it links bridging networks to the hierarchal format. The market networks seems to have a blend of both but more so with hierarchal and, therefore, bridging social networks. This is these characteristics that we should operationalise and explicitly distinguish when constructing a research data or information collection instrument.



**Figure 3.** Determinants of migration in the context of social capital networks.

### 6.3. Documented frameworks for interpreting empirical findings on utilisation of social capital as a survival strategy for immigrants in South Africa

Although we settled for demography or more specifically migration as the academic context of this study, there are frameworks in sociology that we can use to interpret findings on social capital as a survival strategy for immigrants in South Africa. Therefore, apart from migration theories, we also interrogate these theories before choosing those that are applicable to this study. We are hoping to get a combination of frameworks that can explain interactions and migration decision-making by foreign nationals and the use of social capital as a survival strategy.

To contextualise frameworks in migration or at least those accepted by demographers on this subject, we first but briefly reflect on four theories, that is, neoclassical economic theories, segmented labour market theories and the world systems theories. We, however, limit this interrogation to the link between migration and the use of social networks. King [65] points out that *neoclassical economics* and *new economics of migration* theories are based on the push and pull factors of migration and, therefore, differentials between regions and countries as well as the principles of utility maximisation, rational choice, and labour mobility. They focus on how households maximise income through providing for remittance from household emigrants. Further, according to Piore [66] and King [65], the *segment labour market theory* complements the two economics theories and pays attention to the demanded process of migration, which compels or pulls certain skills to the receiving countries. Migration results when demand for cheap and flexible labour available in sending countries is compelled to receiving countries promising or providing secure and well paid employment. Obviously such migration breeds inequality, dependency, and under development of the sending countries. Lastly, Froebel and colleagues [67] as well as Morawska [68] have emphasised that the *world systems* theories of migration focus on globalisation as the facilitator of migration because it provides for the global market economy and division of labour. These theories have their roots in the expansion of global capitalist systems. Their proponents argue that the socio-economic links between the dominant capitalist powers and their former colonies provide migration routes and facilitate international division of labour and hence migration.

We now turn to frameworks in sociology. First off, this is a field that examines how private experiences and personal difficulties are entwined with the structural arrangements of society [69]. Being an established field of study, it has a number of frameworks that interpret interactions between individuals within global social processes [70]. The first of these is the *structural functionalism theory*, which according to Jary and Jary [71], propounds that individual behaviour and decisions are premised on socialisation as children within a family unit. Earlier, Parsons [72] had argued that society has a defined role for each member into which they are socialised at family level—with males performing more instrumental roles and females performing expressive roles. If individuals deviate from the predetermined roles, it is symptomatic of a dysfunctional family and community structure. The theory fails to recognise family forms that do not fit into the structural and expressive roles.

The second is *symbolic interactionism theory* which, according to Lal [73] and Jacobsen [74], propounds that individual behaviour determines societal behaviour as well as social interactions of individuals within a society. Unlike structural functionalism that propounds that structure determines behaviour, symbolic interactionism emphasises the ability of individuals to actively and constructively interpret symbols in their actions. This theory, therefore, refutes Boyd's [23] argument that migration is a family decision but emphasises individual satisfaction over familial benefit. Unfortunately, it cannot explain the remittances that foreign nationals send to their respective families back home.

The third is a group collectively called *conflict theories* that have their roots in the Marxist theories. These theories see the family as primary in producing class through property relations and family structures. Building on these theories, Engels [75] and Foucault [76] have argued that the patriarchal roles assigned to males in nuclear family formation and monogamous marital arrangements intend to concentrate power and maximise means of production placed in the hands of the males. In support, the Marxist feminists have argued that the subdued role of a woman is meant to allow for a functional capitalist system and assist in the reproduction of labour at no or little cost to capitalism. These frameworks unfortunately cannot explain the migration of females in search for employment and the change in gender roles as far as family support is concerned.

Though all the frameworks above are indeed relevant to migration or social capital networks or migration in the context of social capital networks three of them—the network theory, institutional theory, and the cumulative causation theory—stand out to be the most relevant to study context. Granovetter [77] pioneered the *network theory* having examined social ties and social networks between communities in the sending and receiving countries that facilitate migration and access employment opportunities. He found that the stronger the ties between two people, the greater the chance that their worlds will overlap. This means that networks create either bonding or bridging social capital networks that provides members with information circulating within the network. Some members use this information to access to employment opportunities and higher wages [78]. Therefore, the probability of one migrating increases when they have a relative or an acquaintance in the receiving location/country. Further, some receiving countries have policies that promote social networks among immigrants. For example, at one point the United States of America (USA) allocated most immigrant visas to those with a family member already in the USA thus reinforcing and formalising social networks. Obviously having a social tie increases the possibility of an immigrant finding a high wage employment [79].

Massey and colleagues [80] coined the *institutional theory* to provide a framework within which to understand legal and illegal migration facilitated by institutions—for profit and not for profit; legal and illegal—involved in international migration. They argue that migration results from an institutionalised process or system that provides '... services such as transportation, labour contracts, counterfeit documents, dwellings and legal advice ...' [81]. By lowering actual and psychological cost of migration, these institutions provide for increased migration volumes. The question is, 'how do formal institutions such as financial institutions



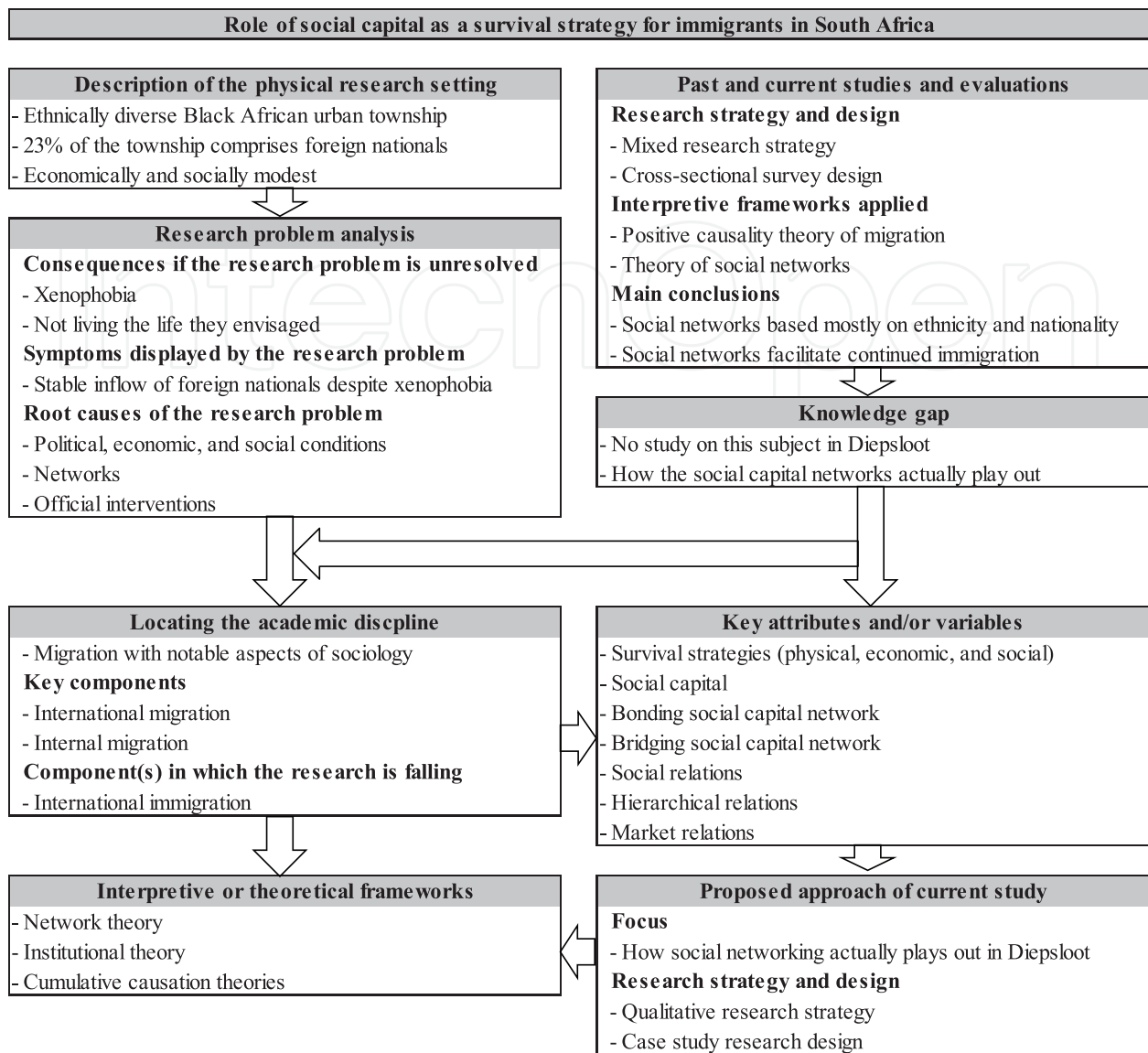
and government support services provide for a survival strategy among foreign nationals?' According to Massey and colleagues [82], *cumulative causation* theories explain how economic and social changes in a particular context facilitate migration. Migration is cumulative when it '... alters the social context within which subsequent migration decisions are made' in a way that makes subsequent migration likely [82]. Factors affecting migration include distribution of income, land, agricultural arrangements, culture, distribution of human capital and social nuances associated with the meaning of work [83].

The foregoing is an indication that there are several general and specific frameworks relevant to migration or social capital networks or migration in the context of social capital networks three of them. Collectively, they cater for the academic context (migration and sociology) and the research problem at hand (social capital networks). Their relevance is certainly determined by the context—in this case, Southern Africa and South Africa in general but more specifically Gauteng Province, City of Johannesburg, Diepsloot Township. The value of these frameworks is that they look beyond the economic push and pull factors of migration to loop in networks that provide for survival strategies and, therefore, propelling migration volumes. As Budnik [84, 85] points out, the network and institutional theories provide a framework for interrogating 'support to migration via acceleration of information flows and indirectly reduction of migration cost'. Further, the cumulative causation framework provides for examining perpetuation of migration due to socio-economic changes including wealth distribution resulting from remittances, structural changes in labour arrangement to contain costs as well as social value attached to mobility.

We should, however, note some deficiencies of these theories pointed out by Kurekova [86]. First, migration theories cannot explain immobility and, therefore, in certain societies that meet conditions that propel high migration volumes. Second, the theories presented here do not explicitly point out the role of interventions that deter or perpetuate migration in both the receiving and sending countries. Lastly, the theories fail to explain the initiation of migration and the degree to which this perpetuates or deters current levels and trends. However, with regards to South Africa, Wotela and Letsiri [11] have detailed the genesis of Southern African migration into South Africa.

## 7. Social capital as a survival strategy for immigrants in South Africa—a conceptual framework

The aim of this research is to detail how foreign nationals employ social capital networks as a survival strategy in Diepsloot, an urban township in Johannesburg. However, this paper is limited to conceptualising 'how' we intend to pursue this research. This implies reviewing literature to derive its conceptual framework that we envisage will effectively guide the empirical part of this research. Effectively, a conceptual framework is systematic summarising of and decision-making based on literature reviewed in Sections 3 through 7. Therefore, this section also doubles as a summary and conclusion. **Figure 4** is a visual representation that



**Figure 4.** A proposed conceptual framework for interrogating the role of social capital as a survival strategy for immigrants in South Africa.

summarises the literature reviewed in this paper and proposes how the empirical part of this research should be executed based on the literature reviewed. First of all, besides Diepsloot, the physical research context exhibiting expect characteristics of an African urban township, it is the notable proportion of foreign nationals makes it an interesting case study on survival strategies and social capital.

Second, though not a problem per se, immigration into South Africa has continued despite the incidences of xenophobia and xenophobic violence. The literature we have reviewed in Section 3 points to several reasons why this is the case but three resonate with our physical research setting. First, the political, economic, and social conditions of the sending countries push out its citizens to immigrate. Second, though these citizens could migrate to anywhere

else in Southern Africa other than South Africa they settle for this country because of networks that have been created since forced labour migrant stream in labour in 1897 [11]. Lastly, it is the official interventions and amnesties for those who entered or lived in South Africa illegally and, therefore, creating a vacuum for the next immigrant. Obviously, most immigrants come to work in South Africa and the rising unemployment and shortage of public services such as housing, South African feel like foreign nationals are taking what is theirs. This has led to xenophobia and xenophobic incidences and violence. Besides, most foreign nationals are not exactly living the life they envisaged.

Third, most similar studies have employed a mixed research strategy but with a bias towards the quantitative approach and a cross-section research design using the survey format. There is no doubt this has helped establish the relationship between social capital networks and survival strategies and employment and higher wage. Not all studies make mention of the frameworks employed to interpret the research findings but two studies use the positive causality theory of migration [37] and the theory of social networks [37]. Almost all the studies conclude the obvious, that is, (i.) most social networks are based on ethnicity and nationality and (ii) social networks facilitate continued immigration.

True as this maybe, none of the studies actually target Diepsloot and, therefore, providing for what we call a 'physical setting' knowledge gap. Therefore, we would like to know if in Diepsloot (i.) most social networks are based on ethnicity and nationality and (ii) if these social networks facilitate continued immigration. The latter implies establishing if foreign nationals in Diepsloot use social capital networks to access employment and other economic opportunities. Is there a link between 'who you know' and chances of getting employment with a higher wage in Diepsloot? We focus on social capital because it is a propeller—at least at initial and transition stages of migration—to access other forms of survival strategies. Unlike most studies reviewed, we intend to employ a qualitative research strategy and a case study research design. This implies that our research procedure and methods will allow for a semi-structured interview schedule and purposive sampling to harness in-depth information on how social networking actually plays out in the context (Diepsloot). This approach is justified by Dudwick and colleagues [45] who recommend using qualitative strategy, procedure and methods when studying groups and networks, social cohesion and inclusion, collective action and cooperation within the frame of social capital network.

Lastly, as part of pre-determining a framework that will be used to interpret anticipated empirical results of this research, we opted to situate it within migration. However, we could not avoid discussing the sociological connotations of social networking and capital. The focus is international migration, more specifically, immigration rather than emigration. During this interrogation, we picked important attributes that we need empirical information to understand the roles of social capital as a survival strategy among immigrants in South Africa. These include, survival strategies (physical, economic, and social), social capital (bonding social capital networks and bridging social capital network), social relations, hierarchical relations, and market relations. Finally, we anticipate interpreting our empirical results using the network theory, the institutional theory, and the cumulative causation theories.

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## Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no financial or personal relationships which have inappropriately influenced them in this research or writing this article.

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