



## Socio-economic coping and adaptation mechanisms employed by African migrant women in South Africa

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## INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION: HISTORY, TRENDS AND CURRENT MIGRATION DYNAMICS

The process of migration and the coping and adaptation of migrants in host environments have been a part of human history for centuries. Migration has always played an important part in sustaining and widening people's livelihoods (de Haan, 2002). The movement of people also involved accessing untapped natural resources such as land, minerals, water, fauna and flora (Bakewell, 2009). Migration also provided accessibility of untapped sources of labour and markets which is clearly shown by the European colonial expansion and its reliance on cheap labour, firstly of slaves and then of contract/apprentice workers prior to the 21st century (Castles and Miller, 2009). According to Yaro (2008), migration has also involved invading other people's spaces which has resulted in conflicts, political turmoil and war due to competition of resources. International migration will continue for a long time to come because of demographic, politics, wars and economic inequalities prevailing in the world today (Martin, 2013).

## Research Statement

South Africa is one of the few developing countries that are targeted by African migrants as an attractive international migration destination. It is seen to be filled with promises and is a successful country offering opportunities for advancement (Gebre, Maharaj and Pillay, 2011). David , Zinyama , Gay, de Vletter and Mattes (2000), further added that foreigners in South Africa are attracted by the its advanced social, economic, and political environment that is not available in other African countries. The pace of arrivals increased soon after the country's independence in 1994, when the progressive constitution allowed more people to look for better opportunities in South Africa. The all-round positive picture that is painted to the outside world about South Africa is the main reason of the huge inflow of the migrants into the country. South Africa, though perceived by many foreigners as a land of milk and honey, is faced by a plethora of socio-economic challenges including unemployment which stands at 25% according to Stats SA (2015).

## Categories of Sub Saharan African migrants in South Africa

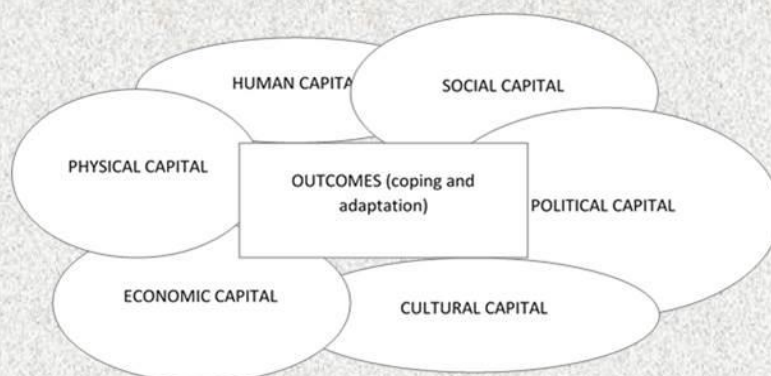
- High skilled/ semi skilled
- Accompanying spouses/ parents
- Student migrants
- Business migrants
- Refugees/asylum seekers
- Visiting migrants/ occasional migrants
- Illegal migrants (fake passports/ border jumpers)
- Others (claiming birth rights, non disclosure)

## South Africa

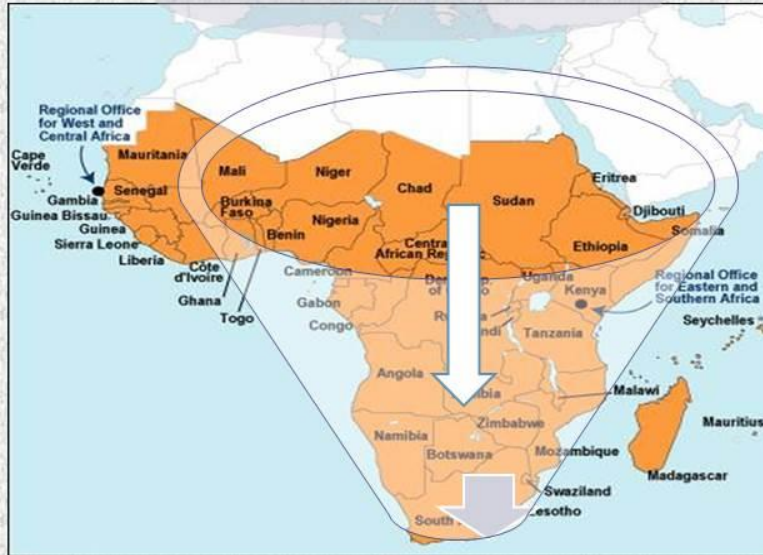
- Young democracy compared to other Sub Saharan African countries
- Progressive constitution- post independence
- Strong social security system comparable to the developed world
- Strong fiscal control mechanisms with good fiscal regulations and banking system
- Developed infrastructure and industrial base including agricultural sector
- Perceived to be the developed world of Africa

## Theoretical framework

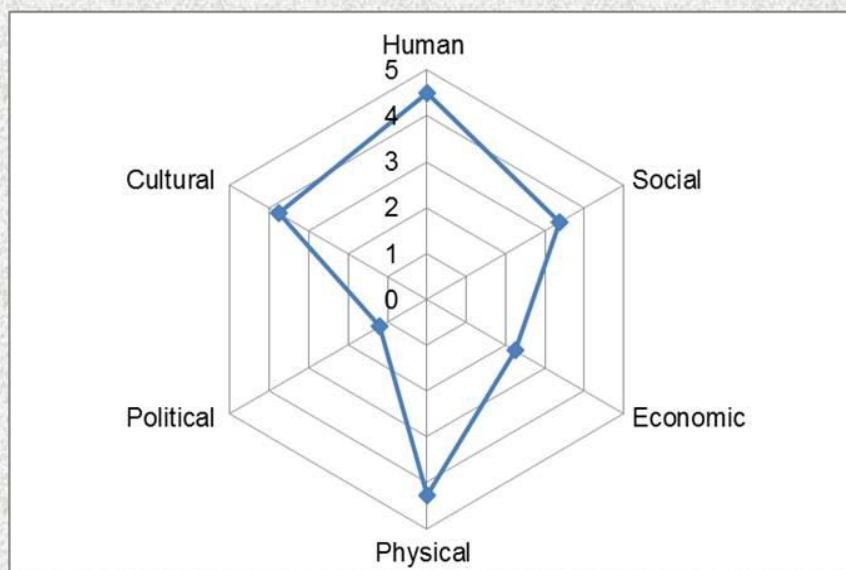
Social capital theory; sustainable livelihoods framework & community capitals framework



➔ **Sub Saharan African** countries  
destination **SOUTH AFRICA**



### Livelihood capital mechanisms of coping and adaptation



## Coping Mechanisms

- Age of migrant women < productive age
- Strong networks and connections in South Africa
- Human capital from home countries- education and innate skills
- Strong entrepreneurial skills , innovation and social resilience
- Livelihood capitals and multiple capitals factors
  - ❖ Human capital 1<sup>st</sup>
  - ❖ Physical capital 2<sup>nd</sup>
  - ❖ Cultural capital 3<sup>rd</sup>
  - ❖ Social capital 4<sup>th</sup>
  - ❖ Economic capital 5<sup>th</sup>
  - ❖ Political capital 6<sup>th</sup>

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