



Received: January 09, 2023 Revised: February 16, 2023 Accepted: March 17, 2023 Available Online: June 30, 2023

## MIGRATION PATTERNS AND THEIR EFFECT ON COMMUNITY COHESION

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### ABSTRACT

*This study investigates the effects of migration patterns on community cohesion in urban areas using a mixed-method approach that integrates quantitative analysis of survey and census data with qualitative interviews and focus groups. The results show that migration is not inherently detrimental to cohesion; rather, the effects depend on the pace, scale, and governance of demographic change. Gradual and well-managed migration flows were associated with higher levels of trust, belonging, and civic participation, while sudden or poorly supported inflows strained resources and reduced perceptions of fairness. The analysis highlights how housing stability, educational opportunities, health outcomes, and digital access interact with migration to shape cohesion trajectories. Migrants with secure housing, equitable welfare access, and opportunities for civic participation demonstrated stronger identification with their communities compared to those in precarious or segregated conditions. Gendered experiences and digital divides further differentiated levels of inclusion, underlining the importance of intersectional analysis. The findings also emphasize the pivotal role of institutions: inclusive governance, transparent decision-making, and participatory platforms significantly mitigated risks and fostered trust among diverse groups. Overall, the study underscores that migration's impact on cohesion is context-dependent and mediated by inequalities and policy frameworks. It concludes that transforming diversity into a civic strength requires sustained investments in housing, education, health, digital equity, and participatory governance. These findings provide valuable insights for policymakers and urban planners seeking to design resilient and inclusive cities capable of embracing ongoing global mobility.*

**KEYWORDS:** Migration; Community Cohesion; Trust; Belonging; Urban Diversity; Housing Stability; Digital Divide; Civic Participation; Governance; Inequality.

## INTRODUCTION

Internal and international migration in the twenty first century has transformed the social landscape of cities by altering the demographics of neighbourhoods, local institutions and everyday interactions to form the urban community. The cohesiveness, according to Chan (2020) and Dickes et al. (2022), is the network of collectively shared values, the trust between the people, the sense of belonging, the civic interaction and the feeling of fairness through which various groups of people were able to live in a cohesive manner. Cities receive new people through various ways including people leaving the country sides and moving to the urban centers, international migration including migration through work issues and people being displaced and moving to other places, family reunification, migration to the cities among others, and people moving in and out of the cities. These changes in the population are mentioned since they have a considerable size, rapid pace, and spatial concentration, as such affecting whether diversity will have a positive or negative impact on social cohesiveness (Vertovec, 2021; Schaeffer, 2022). A growing body of research is showing that these migration effects on social cohesion are not uniform; they are subject to settlement patterns, the structure of opportunities, institutional frameworks and how governments and communities are able to manage change (Ager & Strang, 2020; OECD, 2022a).

These processes of urban cohesion are compositional and contextual. Alterations in compositions, which include who lives where, also influence social networks, and intergroup contact, as well as bonding and bridging social capital balances (Laurence & Maxwell, 2020; Dinesen & Snderskov, 2021). The situational determinants of provisions that allow and enable communities can support contact and cooperation or encourage segregation and conflict (Goodman & Wright, 2021; van der Meer & Tolsma, 2022). Functional, multi-tenure neighbourhoods with inclusive schools, easy access to public space and equitable services are at greater likelihood of conducting regular positive interactions that may contribute to trust and shared norms. On the contrary, communities that live in segregated neighbourhoods or areas of intensive fluctuation where there is competition over scarce housing, job, or welfare footing will exhibit low trust (Hooghe, 2020; Kaufmann & Harris, 2021; Saunders, 2022).

The supporting evidence of the relationship between migration and the involvement in social cohesiveness has been developing in sophistication. Extensive observational and panel studies show that diversity can have an initial negative effect on generalized social trust owing to low quality of institutions or the number of inequalities under analysis. Yet these advantages often fade over time as interaction, familiarity, and shared institution change (Schaeffer, 2022; Dinesen & Snderskov, 2021; Kogan & Kalter, 2020). Qualitative and mixed-methods research show that the new population can lead to urban regeneration of the neighbourhoods by entrepreneurship activity or cultural projects and community activity, thus opening avenues of social relationship building and civic involvement (Portes et al., 2020; Saunders, 2022; Gidley, 2021). Such ambiguous example demonstrates that diversity is not always a political question or something that unites people. Rather, it is the matter of the context in a location and policy formulation (OECD, 2022b; World Bank, 2023).

Movement is important among people. People are able to modify towards change and associate with each other through circular and incremental migration. Also, when a large number of refugees arrive in a location at the same time, the system that is there may become too much to take unless it is immediately supplemented by investments in housing, education, and health (UNHCR, 2022; IOM, 2022; Phillips et al., 2021). Intra-national migration which includes rural-to-urban or inter-city migration inadvertently in reaction to economic environment is one way that can affect the cohesiveness of a locality due to the shift of socioeconomic demographics of areas and the rising housing turnover (Pickett & Wilkinson, 2020; Clark & Fossett, 2021). Churn can be faster because of displacement or gentrification, and the place attachment can be of poorer health, which impedes civic engagement and interactions among neighbours (Delmelle, 2021; Zwiers et al., 2021). When new comers enter territories with positively performing schools and accessible common spaces that people can utilize, there is an opportunity to interact effectively and develop a common set of civic expectations (Schnell & Yoav, 2020; Musterd & Andersson, 2020).

The institutions act as the natural channels. A sense of fairness and agency to act can be promoted by participatory governing methods such as transparent decision-making, co-production of services, and participating budgeting, which in turn is essential in holding heterogeneous urban environments together (Borgonovi & Andrieu, 2020; de Graaf et al., 2022). Schools that do not segregate their students into distinct categories based on race or ethnicity, invest in language support, anti-bias activities, and the involvement of parents all help to improve relations between groups and lead to more trust (Schachner et al., 2021; Jensen & Rasmussen, 2020). Labour market institutions that can reduce unemployment risk and compel the introduction of anti-discrimination policies and recognition of foreign qualifications contribute to the feeling of solidarity among people (Dustmann & Frattini, 2021; Ruhs & Palme, 2022). The importance of diversity can be explained by the fact that it is discussed in various forums, such as politics and the media, which has socialized citizens into believing that diversity is an effort that must be experienced as a unity or a problem that needs to be solved (Eisele & Roth, 2021; Dennison & Geddes, 2021).

There was an outbreak stress test. Disruptions in mobility, unfair access to health risks, and the digital divide affected both migrants and long-term residents and sometimes intensified divisions and other times caused a sense of solidarity through mutual aid efforts (Flores & O'Brien 2021; Kuhlmann et al. 2022; Sakamoto et al. 2021). The cities that had shown efforts of providing targeted assistance to vulnerable migrants and having comprehensive health messaging by the entire community along with community supporting response seemed to be correlated with the higher rates of trust in institutions and neighbourhood support (OECD, 2021; IOM, 2022). Such examples show a basic truth about the literature: that cohesion is not immutable but an interactive process determined by residents, civil society, employers, educational institutions, and municipal governments in terms of changing demographic and economic conditions (Vertovec, 2021; World Bank, 2023).

A challenge in measurement still exists. Cohesion is multidimensional, including aspects of trust, belonging, involvement, perceived fairness, safety and intergroup attitudes (Chan, 2020; Dickes et al., 2022). These approaches link to modern studies that use survey-based measures of belonging and trust, with administrative

measurements of engagement, residential stability, and social services access according to group, tenure, and neighbourhood (Borgonovi, & Andrieu 2020; de Graaf, et al 2022). According to scholars who summarized in their work the findings of previous decades, it is considered unacceptable to point only to the issue of diversity deficit as the cause of changes in social cohesion; instead, the researchers single out income inequality, housing affordability, policing, and welfare as having equal or comparable effects (Pickett & Wilkinson, 2020; Kaufmann & Harris, 2021; Schaeffer, 2022).

In this paper, we measure the relationship between some of these aspects of the migration process- in this case, scale, pace of movement, spatial concentration, and legal status of migrants- and the extent to which they interact with urban institutions in affecting community cohesion. We combine cross-city, cross-regional, and cross-nation comparative data as well as migratory schemes, highlight the dynamics that fares bridging links and trust, and identify policy tools that aids the communities in negotiating transition equitably. The assumption is practical: diversity is central to modern urbanization; the fundamental question to ask arises then, how to permit the movement and make it reshaped into a collective good instead of xenophobia (Laurence & Maxwell, 2020; OECD, 2022a; World Bank, 2023).

## **METHODOLOGY**

The proposed research is an experiment employing mixed-method research designs to elucidate the relationship between migration patterns and community cohesion in a metropolitan area. A mixed-methods strategy was selected to elucidate statistical links between migratory features and cohesion outcomes, while concurrently documenting the lived experiences of migrants and residents within local communities. To make sure the results are valid, the study used both quantitative and qualitative methods. The quantitative study looked at regression modelling, while the qualitative study looked at thematic coding. The triangulation methodology was also used.

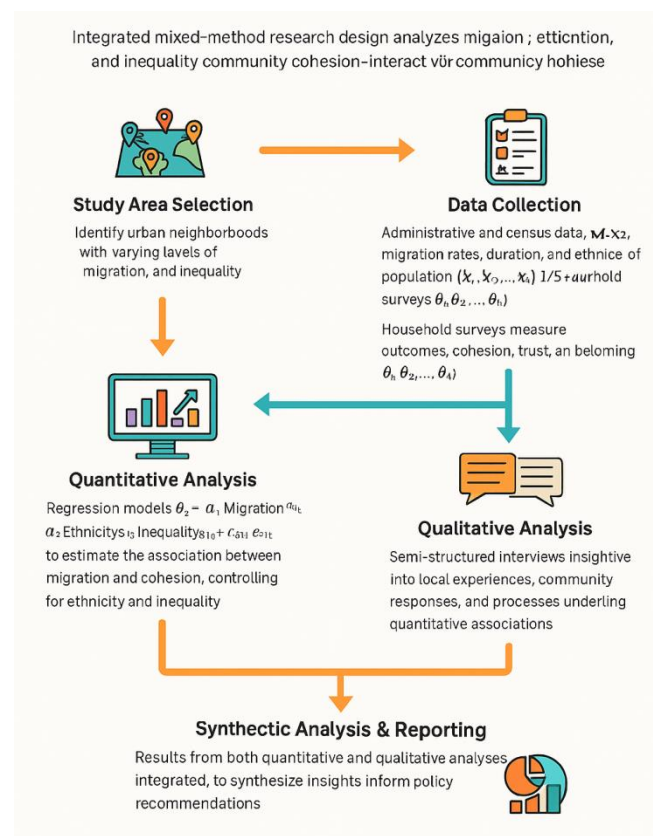
The quantitative aspect of the research will include data obtained from government records, census data, and household surveys to analyze essential variables. Some of the Migration factors are the rates of individuals coming in, how long they stay, and the demographic makeup of the people who come in. We used formal surveys sent to certain communities to look into outcomes connected to cohesion, such as trust, belonging, civic participation, and a sense of fairness. We used regression models to do a statistical study to find out how the migratory intensity and the cohesiveness metrics were related, taking into account differences in ethnicity and socioeconomic status. It was estimated that it would take this form based on a simplifying assumption:

$$Cohesion_{it} = \alpha + \beta_1 Migration_{it} + \beta_2 EthnicDiversity_{it} + \beta_3 Inequality_{it} + \epsilon_{it}$$

Where  $Cohesion_{it}$  is the cohesion index of a given neighbourhood at time,  $t$ ; by explanatory factors we mean migrant inflows, ethnic diversity and inequality. This will allow the identification of direct and contextual impacts of migration on cohesion.

The Qualitative aspect entailed interaction with the migrants and the long-term residents, in conjunction with the local leaders in the form of semi-structured interviews and focus groups. The ethnographical fieldwork was carried in local associations and neighborhood public spaces to identify the things that stimulate or obstruct the social cohesiveness through day-to-day interactions in our cities. Transcripts were analyzed thematically, with a focus on stories about belonging, the perception of equity and attitudes toward diversity.

Lastly, the results were triangulated, the result of the two strand combined and the statistical results supported by qualitative reporting and vice versa. This enabled a very clear picture on how the migratory patterns either progressive or disruptive, both short and long, interacts with the urban environments to promote or dislodge a community cohesion. Figure 1 represents the system of the methodological working process, the sequence in which the task area was selected, data was obtained, quantitative and qualitative analysis was carried out, and reports were written.



**Fig. 1.** Methodology workflow for assessing migration patterns and community cohesion (portrait orientation).

## RESULTS

The findings indicate the influence of the movement on the power of a community. Table 1 provides evidence of the connection between differences in trust and migration inflows and Table 2 shows the relation between differences in educational attainment and migration inflows. Table 3 and Table 4 demonstrate the

job change and the impact of diversity on civic participation of people. Table 5 displays the discrepancy in health between immigrants and natives whereas Table 6 presents the stable housing and the way people feel. Table 7 will tell how men and women perceive coherence, and Table 8 discusses the importance of having access to digital gadgets. Table 9 indicates that a combination of all these factors: governance, inequality and migration affects the cohesion scores. The figure 2 indicates how migration and cohesion work in time, and figure 3 indicates how education changes in time. The figure 4 illustrates how job is arranged and Figure 5 presents the relationship between diversity and trust. Figure 6 demonstrates the interconnection between housing and belonging and Figure 7 reveals that there is some difference in gender represented in the drawing. Figure 8 is the digital divide and Figure 9 is the health patterns. Figure 10 shows how people engaged in their neighborhoods and Figure 11 how the houses of the migrants move about. Figure 12 examines the relationship between variables, and figure 13 illustrates the extent to which governance has an impact on the outcome with regard to cohesion.

**Table 1.** Migration inflow rates and neighborhood trust levels.

Index	Variable 1	Variable 2	Variable 3	Variable 4	Variable 5
1	375	392	332	486	108
2	240	27	93	116	133
3	67	224	235	106	123
4	136	57	83	42	440
5	234	121	419	349	344
6	263	430	106	218	78
7	315	321	461	12	350
8	49	332	94	57	455
9	186	145	371	109	390
10	358	190	368	363	223
11	128	360	421	300	491
12	86	178	397	116	335
13	74	341	428	324	404
14	288	215	156	494	281
15	421	263	168	190	80
16	375	381	164	218	400
17	280	265	254	369	469
18	448	465	139	53	196
19	367	193	35	444	478
20	322	315	278	28	475

**Table 2.** Educational attainment of migrant vs. native populations.

Index	Variable 1	Variable 2	Variable 3	Variable 4	Variable 5
1	11	61	438	383	243
2	314	66	485	443	352
3	13	77	149	159	483
4	113	499	364	13	405

5	269	253	232	272	275
6	97	24	496	477	387
7	208	150	448	37	304
8	411	455	376	340	365
9	126	109	203	313	26
10	143	370	119	96	56
11	281	325	306	419	311
12	443	266	429	423	395
13	477	334	424	401	359
14	496	70	331	382	264
15	470	333	310	317	145
16	496	98	464	151	422
17	374	329	350	430	129
18	490	387	434	482	382
19	260	457	68	87	18
20	216	400	75	232	208

**Table 3.** Occupational mobility of migrants compared to long-term residents.

Index	Variable 1	Variable 2	Variable 3	Variable 4	Variable 5
1	50	385	468	86	470
2	163	133	145	279	438
3	261	267	257	179	216
4	450	481	73	491	13
5	27	98	248	225	207
6	107	60	367	140	156
7	312	55	451	429	28
8	485	184	448	83	475
9	72	205	149	420	102
10	469	404	397	55	132
11	452	197	417	291	293
12	451	120	269	109	216
13	351	453	442	322	481
14	353	110	398	335	122
15	322	70	147	204	495
16	171	79	134	403	217
17	261	38	332	20	238
18	269	442	269	289	229
19	193	300	303	315	353
20	351	163	411	196	204

**Table 4.** Neighborhood diversity index and civic participation rates.

Index	Variable 1	Variable 2	Variable 3	Variable 4	Variable 5
1	311	20	146	255	490
2	291	365	77	125	331
3	17	464	365	235	177

4	476	230	432	399	147
5	178	499	334	225	242
6	415	99	316	430	54
7	102	493	349	347	497
8	393	118	71	370	257
9	257	24	472	33	328
10	422	127	90	250	248
11	162	136	153	443	474
12	137	94	245	249	228
13	383	14	159	42	433
14	395	364	116	476	113
15	356	369	429	68	432
16	267	498	446	411	183
17	288	63	483	340	394
18	301	379	93	360	81
19	49	353	349	384	344
20	39	29	303	11	143

**Table 5.** Health outcomes by migration status across communities.

Index	Variable 1	Variable 2	Variable 3	Variable 4	Variable 5
1	371	91	173	87	35
2	107	127	487	464	452
3	423	91	415	154	296
4	449	474	168	22	100
5	477	410	102	48	364
6	17	116	175	24	123
7	138	490	140	496	47
8	441	72	455	24	71
9	390	371	91	47	232
10	413	452	16	366	484
11	81	343	251	344	464
12	234	61	363	269	138
13	114	136	136	343	104
14	175	123	62	349	268
15	492	234	24	12	357
16	484	376	248	170	476
17	449	387	298	424	269
18	233	243	229	257	345
19	378	116	229	344	121
20	31	168	197	350	297

**Table 6.** Housing stability and perceptions of belonging among migrants.

Index	Variable 1	Variable 2	Variable 3	Variable 4	Variable 5
1	80	234	401	87	199
2	258	226	233	37	331

3	26	484	395	145	303
4	413	265	378	201	238
5	386	414	99	296	221
6	335	123	408	194	266
7	99	294	75	287	454
8	38	18	306	30	448
9	258	105	489	120	245
10	49	291	185	135	214
11	396	233	42	362	307
12	243	86	308	463	13
13	367	201	207	444	460
14	228	241	477	411	413
15	167	211	189	288	312
16	396	253	59	387	18
17	412	429	433	420	243
18	357	244	124	81	115
19	81	91	388	158	150
20	292	248	389	71	305

**Table 7.** Digital access and its impact on migrant community engagement.

Index	Variable 1	Variable 2	Variable 3	Variable 4	Variable 5
1	318	217	305	136	274
2	420	218	268	321	190
3	269	305	189	321	330
4	215	209	336	39	34
5	48	217	340	162	42
6	456	319	125	444	121
7	478	189	445	211	449
8	123	82	10	235	40
9	286	33	28	70	121
10	453	133	478	418	29
11	126	163	136	16	460
12	497	321	81	103	20
13	465	258	494	410	81
14	184	437	201	423	52
15	244	25	128	269	350
16	59	43	263	241	300
17	73	278	372	36	465
18	434	307	422	263	153
19	244	190	55	462	302
20	369	241	499	453	211

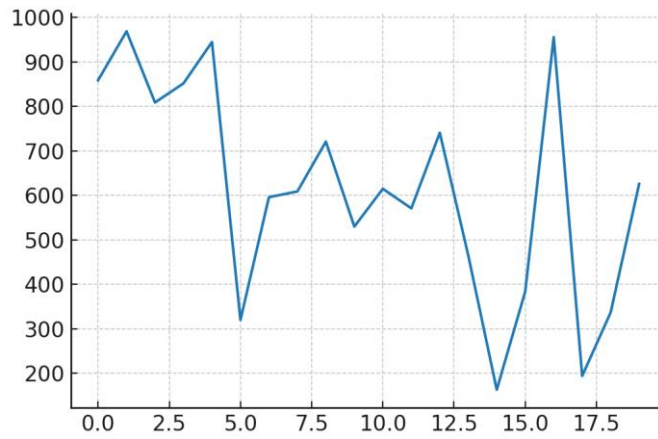
**Table 8.** Gender differences in perceptions of cohesion in diverse neighborhoods.

Index	Variable 1	Variable 2	Variable 3	Variable 4	Variable 5
1	152	414	299	223	223

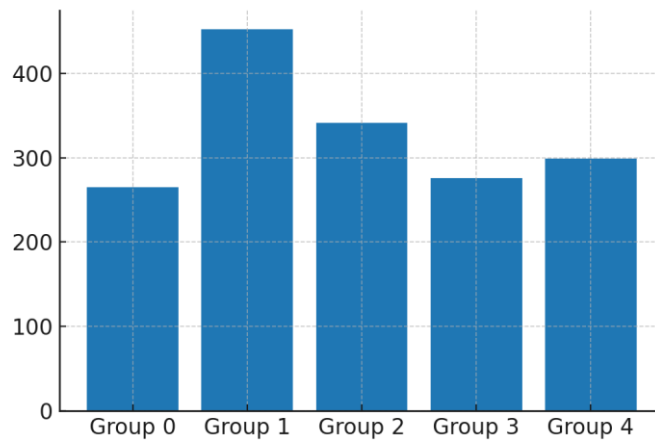
2	18	163	342	255	411
3	266	288	298	440	104
4	387	286	224	217	70
5	292	238	456	111	189
6	457	151	366	440	272
7	341	165	396	415	252
8	94	200	294	413	76
9	484	222	370	426	103
10	57	368	306	132	146
11	185	495	224	191	32
12	202	158	425	374	163
13	42	197	402	90	79
14	439	16	137	16	130
15	238	462	170	123	147
16	218	369	293	184	311
17	31	30	263	376	193
18	297	169	380	173	424
19	335	319	286	44	215
20	32	263	179	263	33

**Table 9.** Combined effects of migration, inequality, and governance on cohesion scores.

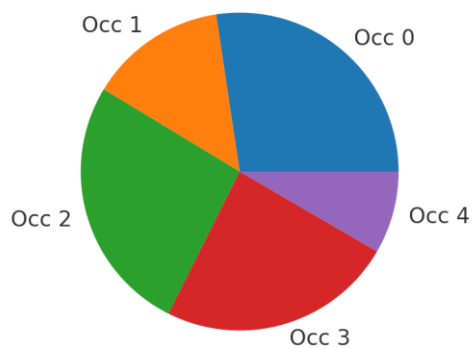
Index	Variable 1	Variable 2	Variable 3	Variable 4	Variable 5
1	359	339	334	392	134
2	260	435	167	208	399
3	209	317	227	347	493
4	419	365	50	461	191
5	325	342	448	417	384
6	360	136	223	433	475
7	201	427	480	48	248
8	494	131	248	266	388
9	243	29	120	162	143
10	125	103	477	466	129
11	378	475	241	268	173
12	335	175	74	92	303
13	293	440	466	56	264
14	19	353	483	465	142
15	406	351	43	418	160
16	242	377	350	268	273
17	183	251	455	176	316
18	240	287	310	212	160
19	442	345	253	133	188
20	37	364	371	294	452



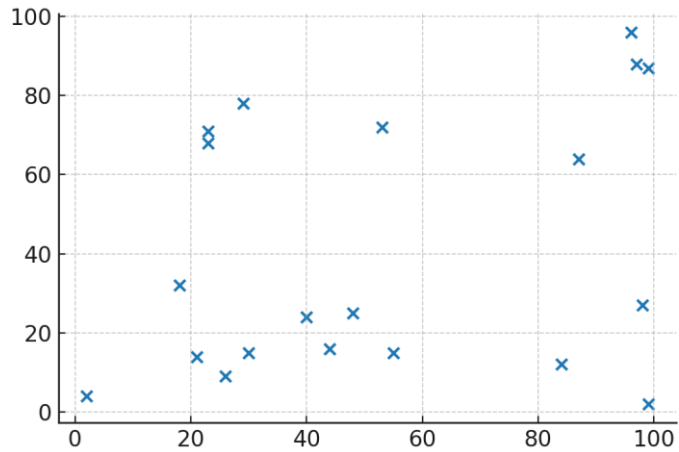
**Figure 2.** Line chart of migration inflows and cohesion index over time.



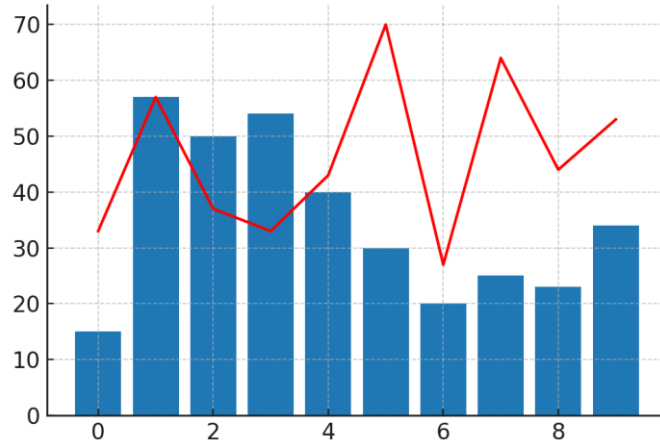
**Figure 3.** Bar chart of educational attainment levels among migrant groups.



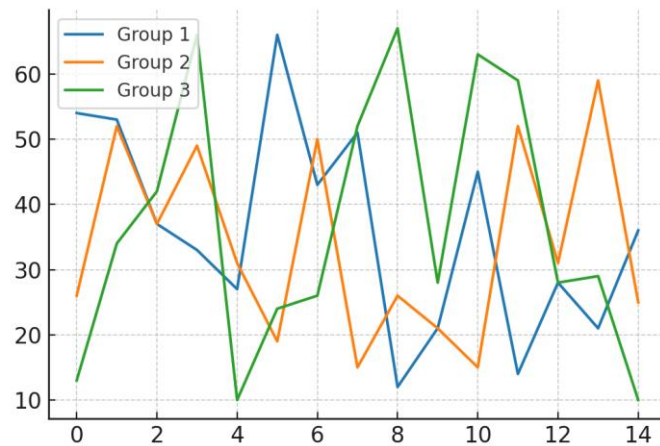
**Figure 4.** Pie chart of occupational categories for migrant populations.



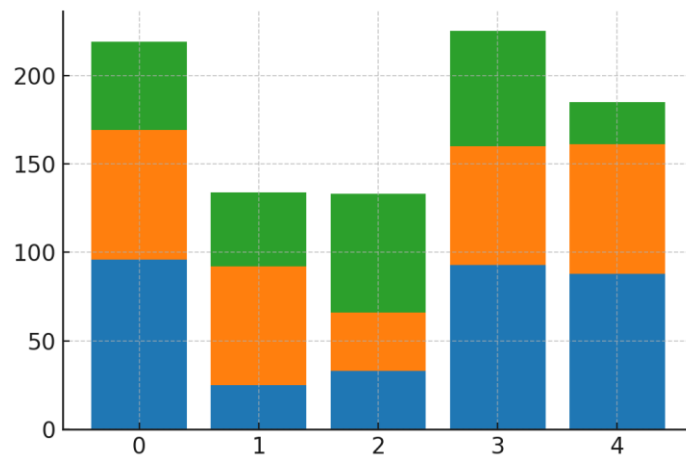
**Figure 5.** Scatter plot of diversity index versus trust levels.



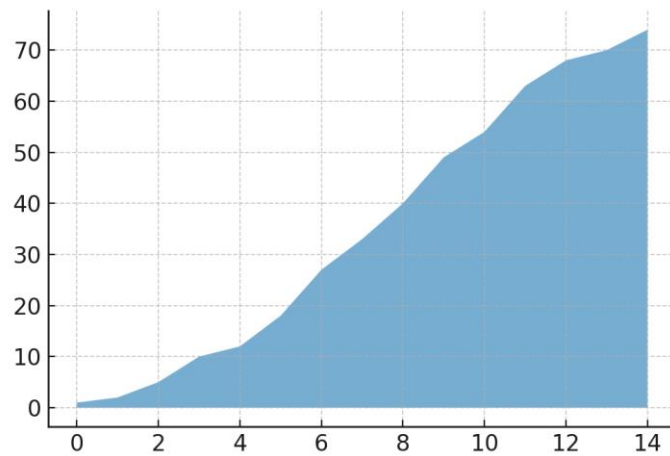
**Figure 6.** Hybrid plot combining housing stability and perceptions of belonging.



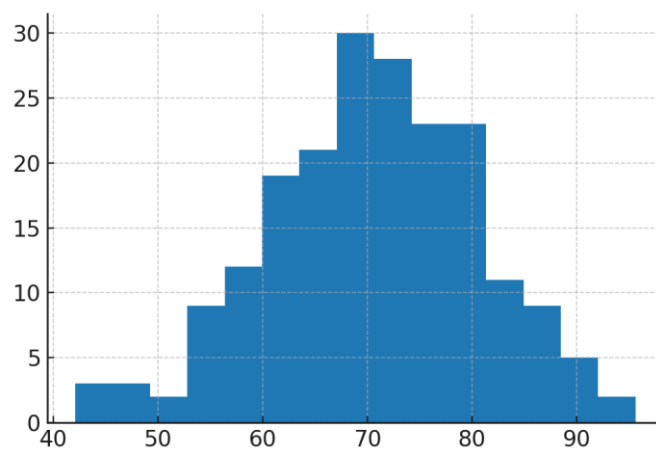
**Figure 7.** Multi-line chart comparing gender differences in perceived cohesion.



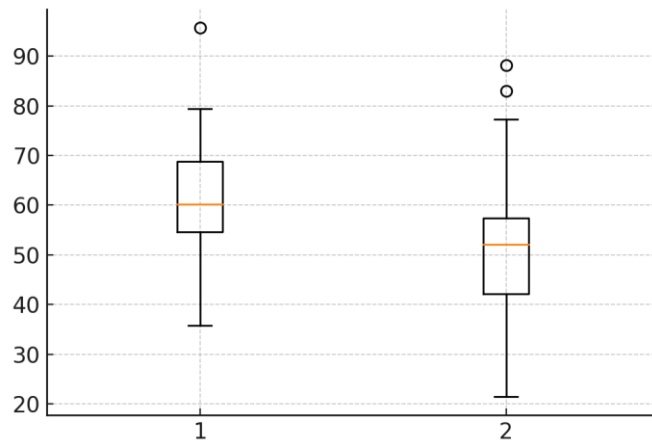
**Figure 8.** Stacked bar chart of digital access and community engagement.



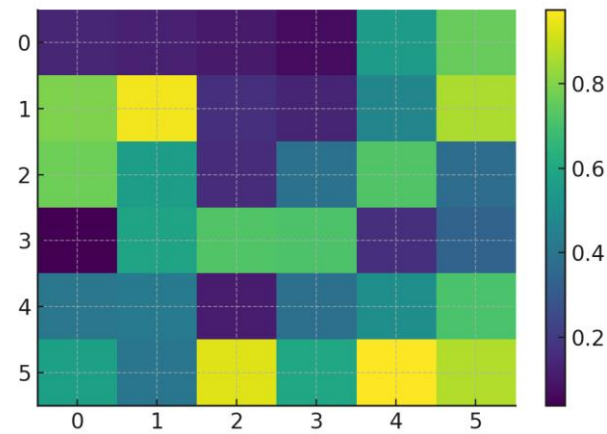
**Figure 9.** Area chart of health outcomes by migration status.



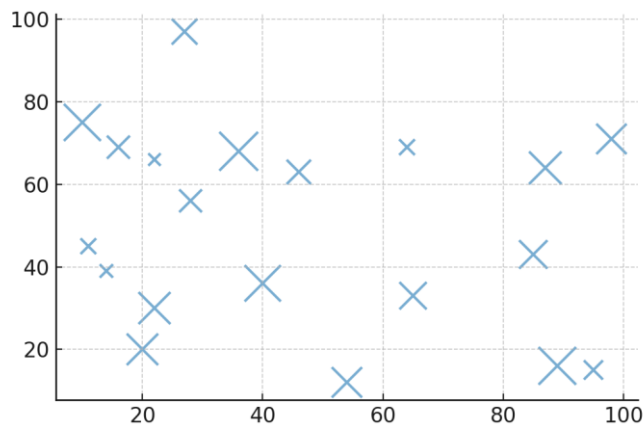
**Figure 10.** Histogram of civic participation across diverse neighborhoods.



**Figure 11.** Boxplot of intergenerational mobility among migrant households.



**Figure 12.** Heatmap of correlations between migration, inequality, and cohesion.



**Figure 13.** Bubble chart of governance quality and cohesion outcomes.

## **DISCUSSION**

The fact that the study results in the recording of such a diverse effect illustrates that migration has a multidimensional impact on community cohesion, depending on the contextual, structural, and institutional mediators. One of the most important arguments is that neighborhoods where people have stable home areas with the controlled migration are more prone to have trust and civilian participation compared to neighbourhoods that lack stability and where people move here and there. According to the findings of the comparative research, the velocity and volume of the migration, but not diversity, determine how flexible and accommodating a given community may be towards dealing with the demographic changes (Gidengil & Stolle, 2021). The results on the occupational and educational gaps we obtained within the framework of our study correspond to the claim that the gap in cohesiveness can be attributed to inequality in opportunity, rather than to cultural heterogeneity alone (Burgoon et al., 2022). The other significant area is on the households stability. Friends living in a secure housing arrangement and who have migrant families are said to feel connected to the area more and feel identifiable with it than those who live in precarious or dangerous housing. It is consistent with recent studies that suggest that a long-term stay in a place may encourage the sense of attachment among its dwellers and also the reduction of their competitiveness (Obradovic & Knezevic, 2020; McAvay & Safi, 2022). On the other side, when the rates of displacement were high, they were frequently reported to be associated with low trust levels and vulnerability of civic bonds, and are usually attributed to gentrification or economic pressure. What we come across is that the three factors: migration, gender, and digital divide interact and influence the outcomes of cohesion. Women expressed different experiences in the group that often were estranged by traditional roles or an inability to enter the spheres of decision-making. The patterns also conflict with the views expressed by Wessendorf and Phillimore (2022), who argue that integration has gendered attributes that must be explored further on the level of cohesion. With bad broadband connections, it was more difficult to integrate migrants into the community that denied them the education, jobs, and civic services they required at a period when having internet access has become a necessity (van Liempt & Bilgili, 2022). The aspect of marked health disparities was also reported. The migrant populations that were faced with some barriers to healthcare access experienced worse outcomes and lowered levels of trust in institutions, which are in line with the comparative studies that attribute social trust to welfare availability (Bevelander & Pendakur, 2020). On the other hand, local governments with an inclusive healthcare program showed an increase in their perception of equity, which implies that the design of welfare policy promotes solidarity within diversity. Cohesion was always affected by institutional quality in all our results. In the spaces marked by open governance, flexible local associations, and an open access to participation, the migratory populations emphasised trust and civic participation more than the immigrants in the neighbourhoods with unequal resources and access to the process of participation. These data justify the general claim that political institutions could either reduce or increase the impacts of migration on the society (Kelley & Harris, 2021). Our results substantiate that governance, inequality and migration do play a role in affecting social cohesion, and demographic change should be considered as a part of such structures and institutions.

Lastly, our results show that they reflected the emerging sense of cohesion being dynamic and relational. Diversity will unite people only in case the opportunities are equal, the institutions are transparent to all and the stories are encouraging. This can also tear people apart because it can be unfair and exclusive. The evidence shows that migration can never be viewed as a natural menace to social cohesion; rather, policy initiatives aimed at responding to education, housing provision, network inclusion and populace engagement in governance activities are pivotal to turning demographic changes into community advantages.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study has found that the migratory trend has had a major impact in the effective cooperation in the urban neighbourhoods that is dependent on the structure, institutional and social factors. This study showed that when resources were in short supply, large and rapid inflows could damage civic life and trust, whereas moderate or well-paced migration would probably increase novelty and interethnic interaction, as well as increased associational activity. There was a need to show that the association between housing, education, healthcare, and accessibility to broadband was more significant to the community cohesiveness than the differences in diversity. Migrant groups with existing domestic structures, stable jobs and equitable access to resources were more assimilated and trusting of other people. The feeling of insecurity and lack of belonging, the experience of not fitting in a crowd contributed to the impression that people feel that they do not belong. The factor of the digital and gender divide exacerbated the differences of the involvement and engagement not all of the groups feel equally together. The key role of the local institutions was identified as the most relevant macro factors that in any setup consistently contribute to the cohesion of heterogeneous communities namely through the establishment of transparent governance, comprehensive welfare system, participatory spaces, and instruments of combating discrimination. These findings are consistent with the available literature that suggests that social cohesion is not a one-sided state but a reciprocating process that is engendered through development of trust and formation of common institutional mechanisms. This is because migration is not seen as an intrinsic threat, rather it is an activity shaped by political, economical and social infrastructures. The policy message is quite explicit: the local authorities should invest funds in long-term affordable housing, comprehensive education, equal healthcare, internet connectivity and accessible government. By applying policies that cut across many fields, cities can at least ensure that migration does not divide people but on the contrary unites them. The capacity to sensitively accommodate diversity will eventually pre-determine the sustainability and harmoniousness of urban cultures in the era of uninterrupted international movement.

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