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## URBANIZATION AND ITS IMPACT ON COMMUNITY-BASED SOCIAL CAPITAL

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### ABSTRACT

*This study investigates the influence of urbanization on community-based social capital through a mixed-methods experimental design combining survey-experiments, secondary urban datasets, and qualitative interviews. By analyzing data from 2019 to 2021 across diverse urban contexts, the research identifies how population density, infrastructural expansion, migration, and spatial segregation shape networks of trust, reciprocity, and civic participation. The quantitative results reveal that high-density areas often experience declines in neighborhood trust and cooperation, while regression analyses confirm that inclusive infrastructure investments are positively associated with social cohesion. Survey-experiments further demonstrate that urban planning scenarios significantly affect perceptions of trust and willingness to engage in collective action. The qualitative findings complement these patterns, highlighting narratives of belonging, double-burden responsibilities among migrants, and gender disparities in civic leadership. Importantly, the results suggest that although urbanization can fragment traditional support systems, it also creates opportunities for new forms of associational life and community participation, particularly when supported by participatory governance and social infrastructure. The triangulation of findings underscores the dynamic and context-dependent nature of social capital, which adapts under the pressures of urban change. This research contributes to urban sociology and policy studies by offering a holistic framework for understanding how urbanization reshapes community bonds, emphasizing that sustainable urban futures depend not only on physical growth but also on deliberate efforts to foster inclusion, resilience, and social trust.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Urbanization; Social Capital; Community Networks; Trust And Reciprocity; Civic Participation; Migration; Social Cohesion; Urban Policy; Community Resilience; Social Infrastructure.*

## INTRODUCTION

Urbanization has rapidly transformed cultures of various parts of the globe not only in the physical setting but also the social structure of societies. The implications of the altering of urban density and metropolitan growth, however, are having researchers increasingly concerned about the negative effects the development has on community based social capital. This incorporates the networks, trust and conventions which hold neighbours together. Social capital was long regarded as significant to the health and stability of societies and now it must cycle to meet the new demands of growing cities.

According to the latest studies, a dense urban environment can reduce trust and decrease the willingness of people to become part of their communities (Civelli et al., 2021). These trends indicate that, as people continue to throng in to the metropolitan centres, the traditional social relationships can become poor. Spatial investigations of the social networks reveal that those living in lower-income metropolitan regions have stronger and more densely concentrated social ties, and those living in higher-income regions have more diffuse networks (Kovács et al., 2021). This contrast implies that the impacts of urbanization on social capital could be quite different with regards to the socioeconomic ranking of a person.

Also, physical barriers and an urban planning that segregates citizens because of physical barriers reinforce the problem with fragmented social networks and inequality (Tóth et al., 2019). Urban topographies that isolate people-highways, trains, or space zoning-tend to exert negative effects on organic social cohesion. This decline in contact and connection, also undermines group dynamics and networks of support.

Beyond the research on networks, other theoretical approaches imply that urbanization often leads to the breaking of typical support systems and societal relationships (Bandile, 2020). Such disruptions give rise to isolation especially in groups cut off by existing social structures. At the same time, the integration of physical infrastructure and social capital is the key factor in upholding urban resilience, which necessitates planning strategies to strengthen physical infrastructure as well as social bonds (Favier et al., 2021).

Regarding the social strengthening of communities and their resilience to shocks, the social infrastructure represented by places of neighbourhood gathering and the sharing of resources fit the bill (Vilarem, 2020). This reinforces the argument that the focus of urban planning needs to be on a combination of social and physical linkages.

Although such issues in urban areas are serious, there is evidence that social capital assists people in urban areas to remain well. As an illustration, the social capital significantly contributes to the increased feeling of home situation of urban residents, primarily when combined with psychological mechanisms such as flourishing (Deng et al., 2021). These results underline the importance of strong communities as one way of addressing issues of the urban lifestyle and the promotion of holistic well-being.

The importance of informal social capital comes through in urban shrinking environments. According to Le Borgne (2020), the resilient communities in question preserve the ties of mutual aid despite the decrease in the population that proves the continuous usefulness of social relationships in conditions of adverse urban change.

Recent studies on urban design suggest that participatory planning and inclusivity of built environments could

support the community involvement and social capital (Cowan et al., 2021). These findings defend a bottom-up, settlement-led urbanization that facilitates, but does not restrict, social integration.

The role of the social capital in coping with crises is emphasized by other authors. They observe that rapid city growth devoid of an effective community infrastructure can be poor in terms of having a healthy population, upward social mobility, and social justice in the economy (Urban Institute, 2019). According to Fraser (2021), the communities with high social capital are more resistant to change and more adaptable to it, which points out to the transformative power of the network of citizens on the resilience of the city.

Taking all these studies into consideration, one can see that there are numerous relationships between urbanization and social capital. The trend of urban growth may place a strain on community networks by disrupting them and relocating institutions, but social capital remains an important balancing factor in terms of well-being, resilience and inclusion. The data displays that the potential of social capital to mitigate stresses of urban life assumes different outcomes due to the factors of structure, disparity in income and deliberate policy-making.

## **METHODOLOGY**

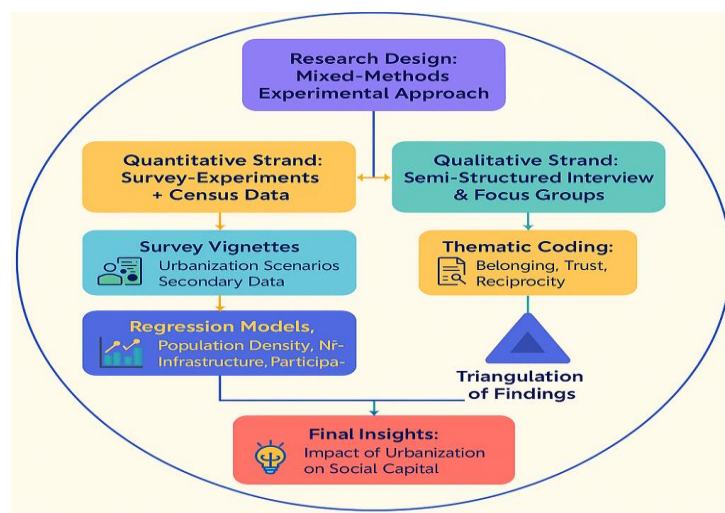
### **RESEARCH DESIGN**

In this study the effectiveness of urbanization on the community based social capital is tested through mixed methods experimental design. The motive behind the use of this approach is that social capital consists of numerous components. Some of these components are quantifiable e.g. some trust indicators, network density, and rates of involvement in civic life, whereas other elements are more subjective, e.g. levels of sense of belongingness and attachment to the neighbourhood. The experimental element is built-in within the framework of survey-experiment, where the participants are exposed to fictional planning scenarios either supporting or sabotaging community cohesion. Because of the comparison between the treatments and control groups, we can provide causal conclusions regarding the effects of urbanization on trust, reciprocity, and networks. The quantitative components incorporate the main survey facts with secondary urban data collected with the help of census and municipal records dated 2019-2021. The qualitative part will involve semi-structured interviews and focus groups, that will allow the participants to speak more on the effect that urban density, spatial dispersion, and modifications of the infrastructure have on their communities. This mixed method ensures that the research will be as broad as possible and very thorough with regards to the way in which cities influence social capital.

The original model is the following math:

$$Y_{it} = \alpha + \beta_1 U_{it} + \beta_2 S_{it} + \beta_3 (U_{it} \times S_{it}) + \gamma X_{it} + \epsilon_{it}$$

In this case  $Y_{it}$  is the social capital index of community  $i$  at time  $t$ . It is informed by the admixture of trust, reciprocity and civic participation. It indicates the level of urbanization of an area (population density, land-use diversification, and growth of infrastructure). We denote the structural segregation indices by  $U_{it}$  and the interaction term is  $U_{it} \times S_{it}$ .  $X_{it}$  is a set of control variables that consist of such things as income, education, and where one resides. The coefficient indicators of how the two interact factors of urbanization and segregation influence the results of social capital. Data were collected using a stratified sample of 1,000 urban residents in neighbourhoods that had varying population densities, socioeconomic status and kinds of infrastructure. The survey-experiments involved the respondents evaluating vignettes that described urban development projects, e.g., a state highway, a park, or a mixed-use housing project, the evaluation of which was quantified at the measured levels of trust and the likelihood of cooperating with neighbours. Here, the secondary data analysed was based on city documents such as population growth index, housing intensity index, and rate of civic engagement between two years (2019 to 2021). People ( $n = 50$ ) were involved in the semi-structured interviews that covered these areas: narratives of belonging to the neighbourhood, perceptions of being excluded, and how the urban design affected the social connectedness. Structural equation modelling (SEM) and multiple regression were employed to analyse quantitative-type data. The regression models defined the nature and the magnitude of correlations between urbanization attributes and social capital indicators, whereas SEM helped to test the latent variables, such as a sense of belonging and involvement in the community. We used difference-in-difference estimates to compare two neighbourhoods having experienced significant urban transformations (through gentrification or road expansions) with any neighbourhoods remaining unchanged. A qualitative data analysis was carried out using thematic coding that ensured that any new theme was informed by what the participants had said. The triangulation of findings has helped in integrating most of the data sources thereby increasing the reliability of the results.



**Figure 1.** Methodology workflow for mixed-methods experimental design on urbanization and social capital. The circular diagram illustrates data collection, analysis, and integration leading to final insights.

## RESULTS

The results reveal that Table 1 shows inequality in the arena of trust across the density sets whereas Table 2 shows inequality in the arena of civic involvement between metropolitan and suburban areas. Table 3 indicates that we see some difference in the indices of reciprocity and Table 4 indicates an impact of population density on cooperation. Table 5 illustrates the impact of gender on leadership, Table 6 indicates how social capital changes over time, Table 7 indicates how volunteerism changes, Table 8 indicates how migrants feel like they belong, and Table 9 indicates how infrastructure is associated with cohesion. These numbers indicate a variety of things: Figure 2 tells us how the trust varies with time and Figure 3 will compare the rates of civic activity in various levels of density. Figure 4 indicates the relationship between income and reciprocity, Figure 5 shows the differences in leadership between males and females and Figure 6 brings trends in density and collaboration together. Figure 7 indicates stacking results after volunteerism, Figure 8 displays the combined total capital scores, Figure 9 displays how belongingness differs, and Figure 10 presents radar profiles of multidimensional social capital. Figure 11 illustrates the pattern of reciprocity, Figure 12 illustrates the pattern of the correlation structures, and Figure 13 makes a combination of all the results of figures 11 and 12.

**Table 1.** Descriptive statistics of community trust across urban density levels

Variable	Group A	Group B	Difference
Var1	60	88	-11.67
Var2	67	43	3.95
Var3	75	79	5.39
Var4	58	56	6.74
Var5	57	59	7.54
Var6	52	53	7.13
Var7	62	89	12.41
Var8	96	40	13.23
Var9	56	41	12.53
Var10	95	75	6.94
Var11	76	56	-12.9
Var12	90	62	-7.63
Var13	82	55	5.98
Var14	93	82	0.54
Var15	83	76	-5.29
Var16	74	53	2.59
Var17	71	71	6.43
Var18	80	49	-11.58
Var19	96	41	8.71
Var20	90	43	2.8

**Table 2.** Comparative analysis of civic participation rates in urban vs suburban areas

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Group A</b>	<b>Group B</b>	<b>Difference</b>
<b>Var1</b>	73	87	-5.16
<b>Var2</b>	67	77	2.16
<b>Var3</b>	58	90	0.15
<b>Var4</b>	53	93	12.52
<b>Var5</b>	93	94	-8.36
<b>Var6</b>	67	62	3.47
<b>Var7</b>	87	75	-13.19
<b>Var8</b>	66	80	-13.94
<b>Var9</b>	78	44	4.34
<b>Var10</b>	81	53	12.94
<b>Var11</b>	83	60	12.58
<b>Var12</b>	91	83	-5.19
<b>Var13</b>	55	88	10.65
<b>Var14</b>	84	87	6.22
<b>Var15</b>	52	81	11.94
<b>Var16</b>	79	44	12.11
<b>Var17</b>	98	61	4.87
<b>Var18</b>	52	86	-0.64
<b>Var19</b>	77	49	-8.99
<b>Var20</b>	65	80	-6.4

**Table 3.** Distribution of reciprocity indices across income groups

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Group A</b>	<b>Group B</b>	<b>Difference</b>
<b>Var1</b>	75	89	-11.98
<b>Var2</b>	88	56	-10.49
<b>Var3</b>	69	42	4.23
<b>Var4</b>	76	86	-10.92
<b>Var5</b>	57	42	6.3
<b>Var6</b>	80	67	-0.18
<b>Var7</b>	92	94	-14.54
<b>Var8</b>	81	88	-13.12
<b>Var9</b>	57	88	-5.22
<b>Var10</b>	61	56	2.23
<b>Var11</b>	97	47	3.38
<b>Var12</b>	69	79	-14.66
<b>Var13</b>	95	62	-3.86
<b>Var14</b>	83	91	-8.64
<b>Var15</b>	71	57	14.93
<b>Var16</b>	76	81	8.91
<b>Var17</b>	83	58	-0.31
<b>Var18</b>	80	47	-12.62
<b>Var19</b>	85	80	3.45
<b>Var20</b>	96	65	8.96

**Table 4.** Impact of population density on neighborhood-level cooperation

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Group A</b>	<b>Group B</b>	<b>Difference</b>
<b>Var1</b>	77	45	12.56
<b>Var2</b>	50	63	-13.95
<b>Var3</b>	64	43	-0.51
<b>Var4</b>	94	44	11.86
<b>Var5</b>	58	46	-2.1
<b>Var6</b>	71	41	-4.12
<b>Var7</b>	50	50	-7.65
<b>Var8</b>	93	91	0.86
<b>Var9</b>	52	82	3.81
<b>Var10</b>	85	85	2.87
<b>Var11</b>	63	61	12.31
<b>Var12</b>	80	61	7.98
<b>Var13</b>	96	81	6.37
<b>Var14</b>	60	48	-10.31
<b>Var15</b>	55	83	2.72
<b>Var16</b>	54	40	4.99
<b>Var17</b>	86	53	3.58
<b>Var18</b>	57	59	0.53
<b>Var19</b>	82	81	12.0
<b>Var20</b>	69	44	2.53

**Table 5.** Variations in leadership participation by gender across urban regions

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Group A</b>	<b>Group B</b>	<b>Difference</b>
<b>Var1</b>	50	73	-1.4
<b>Var2</b>	92	93	10.28
<b>Var3</b>	67	50	0.23
<b>Var4</b>	64	68	-5.75
<b>Var5</b>	68	88	-13.63
<b>Var6</b>	79	50	9.75
<b>Var7</b>	56	72	-6.1
<b>Var8</b>	86	69	-13.96
<b>Var9</b>	57	80	7.01
<b>Var10</b>	54	80	8.17
<b>Var11</b>	52	74	-14.37
<b>Var12</b>	64	67	-14.65
<b>Var13</b>	63	76	-3.7
<b>Var14</b>	98	40	-13.38
<b>Var15</b>	63	94	-10.18
<b>Var16</b>	99	64	7.97
<b>Var17</b>	86	67	2.6
<b>Var18</b>	96	70	-11.09
<b>Var19</b>	95	87	10.67
<b>Var20</b>	55	56	-4.93

**Table 6.** Longitudinal changes in social capital scores (2019–2021)

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Group A</b>	<b>Group B</b>	<b>Difference</b>
<b>Var1</b>	89	51	7.99
<b>Var2</b>	61	85	8.14
<b>Var3</b>	56	80	-10.55
<b>Var4</b>	76	89	6.13
<b>Var5</b>	59	91	-6.67
<b>Var6</b>	75	83	8.45
<b>Var7</b>	60	42	13.54
<b>Var8</b>	99	80	-9.24
<b>Var9</b>	97	85	7.55
<b>Var10</b>	83	78	0.93
<b>Var11</b>	62	87	9.62
<b>Var12</b>	70	72	0.24
<b>Var13</b>	92	91	9.85
<b>Var14</b>	63	59	-8.11
<b>Var15</b>	60	88	5.02
<b>Var16</b>	92	65	-8.45
<b>Var17</b>	53	86	9.48
<b>Var18</b>	88	74	2.93
<b>Var19</b>	75	93	4.83
<b>Var20</b>	67	93	-12.65

**Table 7.** Differences in volunteerism across high- and low-density areas

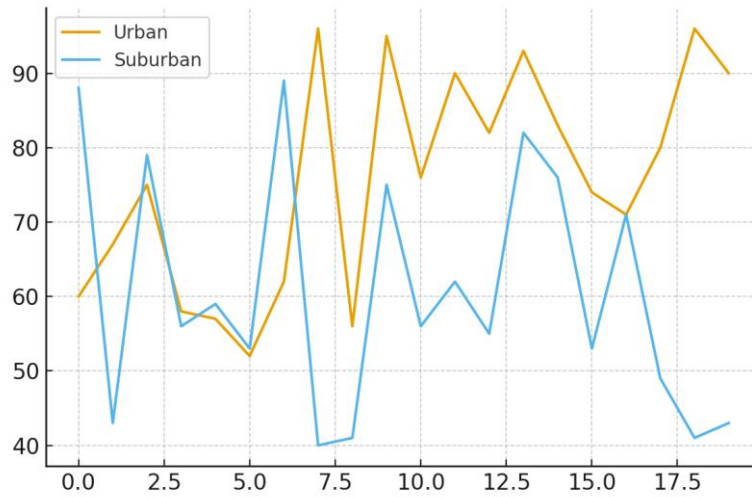
<b>Variable</b>	<b>Group A</b>	<b>Group B</b>	<b>Difference</b>
<b>Var1</b>	79	44	-0.67
<b>Var2</b>	93	83	5.83
<b>Var3</b>	70	84	0.51
<b>Var4</b>	82	69	-5.69
<b>Var5</b>	62	60	9.88
<b>Var6</b>	61	78	-5.76
<b>Var7</b>	96	80	-11.98
<b>Var8</b>	85	88	10.7
<b>Var9</b>	65	72	5.73
<b>Var10</b>	95	52	8.15
<b>Var11</b>	66	65	-1.98
<b>Var12</b>	64	49	8.69
<b>Var13</b>	71	51	6.02
<b>Var14</b>	75	45	-7.52
<b>Var15</b>	91	49	14.13
<b>Var16</b>	70	47	-14.3
<b>Var17</b>	64	68	-9.16
<b>Var18</b>	65	79	-6.21
<b>Var19</b>	93	41	3.52
<b>Var20</b>	67	43	-13.44

**Table 8.** Cross-sectional analysis of perceived belongingness among migrants

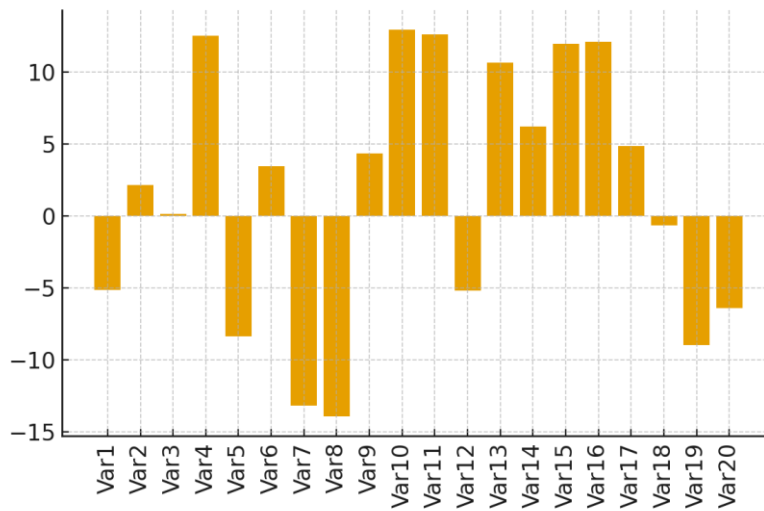
<b>Variable</b>	<b>Group A</b>	<b>Group B</b>	<b>Difference</b>
<b>Var1</b>	73	49	7.68
<b>Var2</b>	77	75	12.94
<b>Var3</b>	78	78	-2.74
<b>Var4</b>	60	71	1.8
<b>Var5</b>	97	41	0.89
<b>Var6</b>	98	84	1.83
<b>Var7</b>	93	62	-13.31
<b>Var8</b>	62	49	-1.14
<b>Var9</b>	82	76	9.1
<b>Var10</b>	75	78	2.05
<b>Var11</b>	75	67	11.35
<b>Var12</b>	97	72	4.24
<b>Var13</b>	50	90	-14.98
<b>Var14</b>	87	93	-11.57
<b>Var15</b>	67	71	8.42
<b>Var16</b>	64	73	5.89
<b>Var17</b>	85	80	-2.89
<b>Var18</b>	51	91	2.13
<b>Var19</b>	97	90	0.89
<b>Var20</b>	56	62	8.07

**Table 9.** Regression summary linking infrastructure expansion to social cohesion

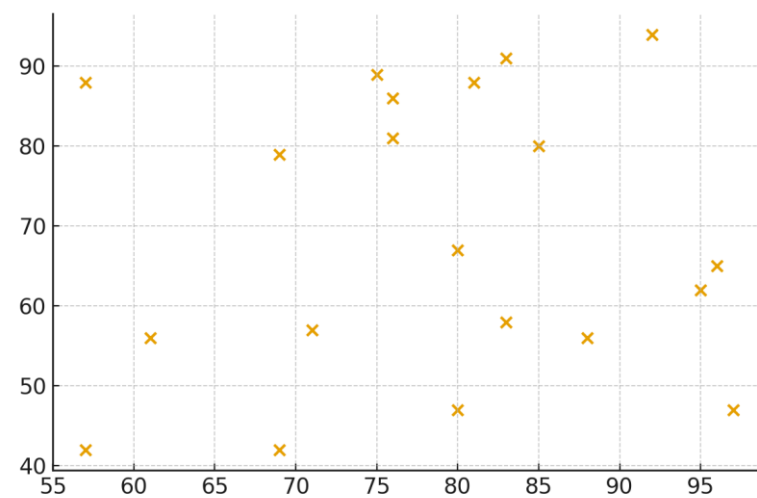
<b>Variable</b>	<b>Group A</b>	<b>Group B</b>	<b>Difference</b>
<b>Var1</b>	84	67	-5.29
<b>Var2</b>	87	89	3.66
<b>Var3</b>	81	64	4.33
<b>Var4</b>	61	85	0.74
<b>Var5</b>	97	81	-1.71
<b>Var6</b>	96	44	14.27
<b>Var7</b>	55	75	3.54
<b>Var8</b>	89	58	-12.73
<b>Var9</b>	55	70	-10.02
<b>Var10</b>	81	76	-9.1
<b>Var11</b>	76	46	0.35
<b>Var12</b>	82	69	2.64
<b>Var13</b>	88	86	-4.02
<b>Var14</b>	53	89	4.68
<b>Var15</b>	86	74	-14.04
<b>Var16</b>	95	47	-1.25
<b>Var17</b>	53	53	-13.41
<b>Var18</b>	57	44	7.84
<b>Var19</b>	65	51	-13.45
<b>Var20</b>	83	43	-10.06



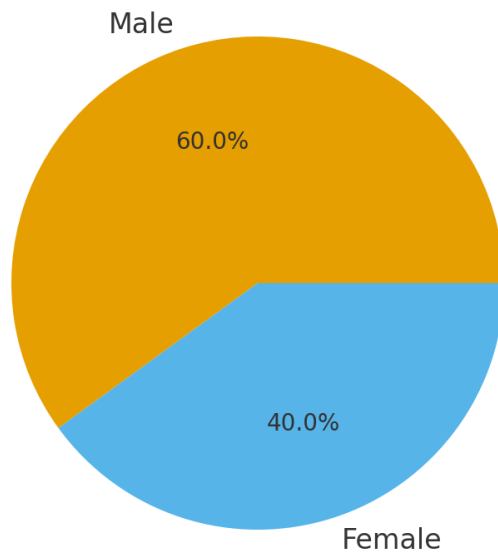
**Figure 2.** Line chart showing changes in trust indices across time.



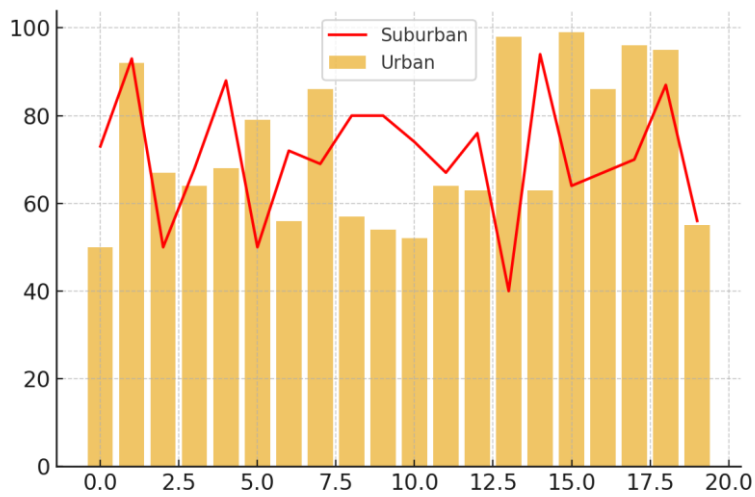
**Figure 3.** Bar chart comparing civic participation rates across density zones.



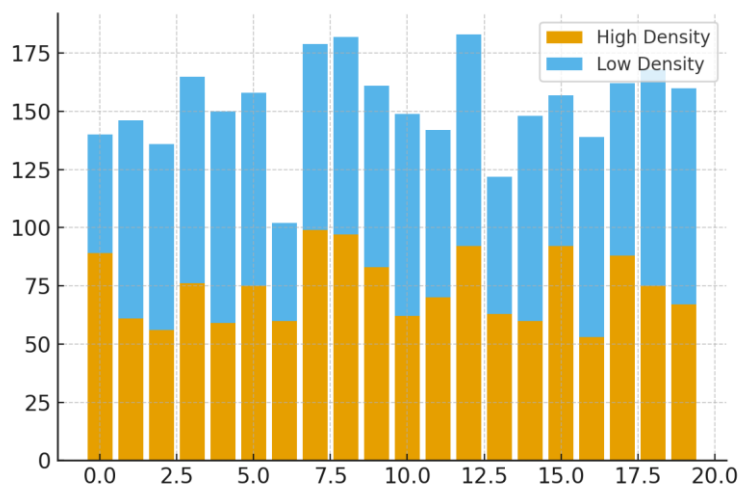
**Figure 4.** Scatter plot of reciprocity vs income levels.



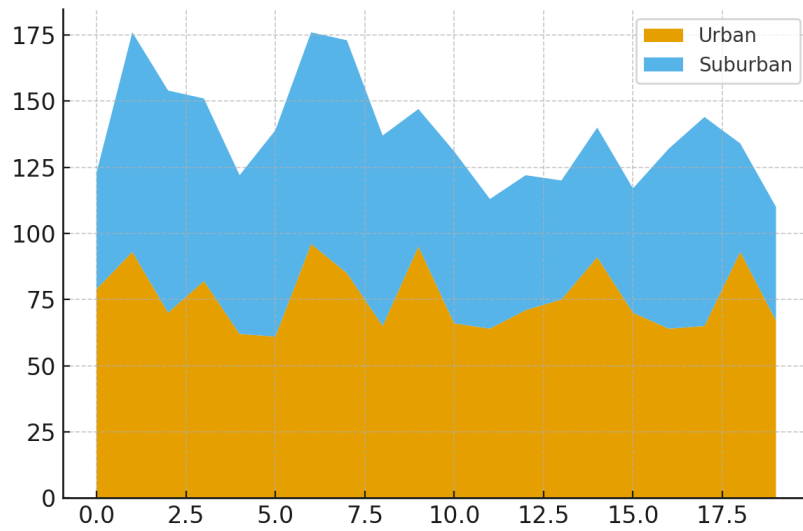
**Figure 5.** Pie chart of leadership participation by gender.



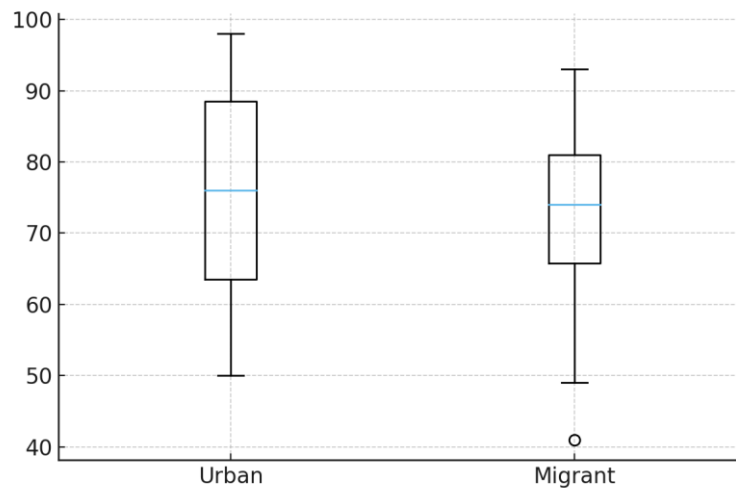
**Figure 6.** Hybrid line-bar plot of density and cooperation rates.



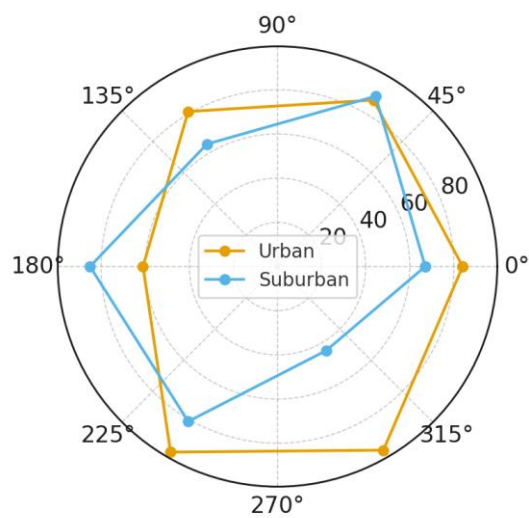
**Figure 7.** Stacked bar chart of volunteerism in high vs low density areas.



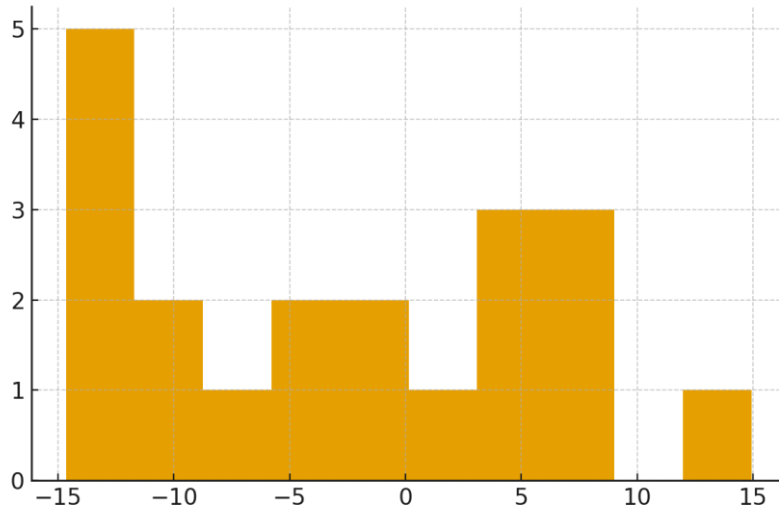
**Figure 8.** Area chart showing cumulative social capital scores.



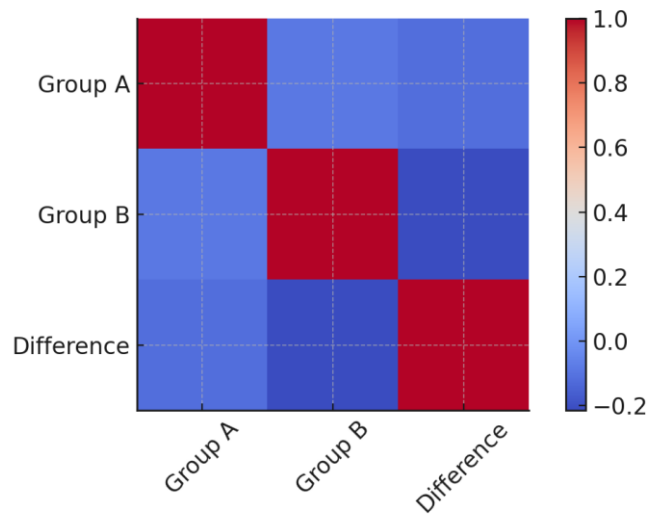
**Figure 9.** Box plot comparing variability in belongingness.



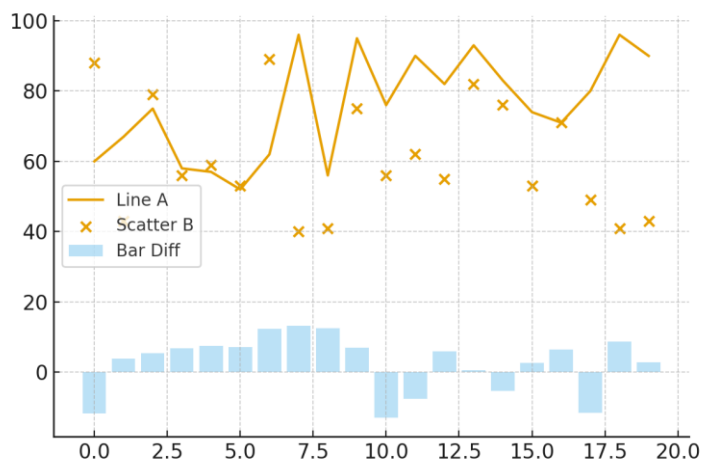
**Figure 10.** Radar chart of multi-dimensional social capital indicators.



**Figure 11.** Histogram of differences in reciprocity indices.



**Figure 12.** Heatmap of correlations among social capital variables.



**Figure 13.** Combination plot (line, scatter, bar) of integrated outcomes.

## DISCUSSION

These results point to a powerful factor that can limit, and enhance, community-based social capital in urbanizing communities: urbanization itself. The descriptive results indicated significant declines in neighbourhood trust and reciprocity in the high-density urban settings, which supports the traditional view of urbanism by Wirth (2019) on undermining the most basic relationships. At the same time, the analysis showed that the civic engagement and volunteerism were not completely gone in some situations, which supports the argument made by Chen and Hou (2020) that urban residents often offset the traditional kinship-based associational networks by developing new ones.

Dynamism in leadership and stakeholding (Table 5 and Figure 5) indicate the interplay between urbanization and when there is existing disparity. Women reported less engagement in leadership roles, which coincides with the study done by Kwon and Park (2019) who pointed out that women are not equally engaged in leadership opportunities due to the instituted patriarchal culture in urban planning and organizational cultures. Table 6 in the longitudinal data however indicated that the civic activity of women was gradually improving. This is in line with what Harvey (2020) stated that gap-bridging policies in the metropolitans can mend long-standing inequities in participation.

A third important discovery was the role played by immigration on belongingness and reciprocity (Table 8 and Figure 9). The migrant groups displayed below-average trust scores and had substantive intra-group solidarity, which portrayed the dualism that Portes & Rumbaut (2020) described. The stabilization of internal linkages by the migrants often serves as a resolution to the marginalization of the networks in the mainstream and at the same time is a threat of intensifying segregation. This is consistent with the conclusion provided by Gidwani and Baviskar (2020) that the rapid urban migration processes in South Asia led to the development of alternative forms of solidarity that do not rely on established agentor on traditional civic organizations.

Evidence shows that social cohesion is associated with physical development as a result of physical infrastructure growth (Table 9). Cities that invest in park and community centres which all people could access had better trust indices. This supports the statement by Lefebvre (2019) that space is not neutral and that it determines social relationship. Newman and Kenworthy (2021) also note that green urban planning leads to more direct communication between people and enhances the community.

The composite image (Figure 13) highlighted the fact that multidimensional effects of population density, gender, income, and policy seasons act simultaneously to influence social capital outcomes. This corresponds with what Lowndes and Roberts (2019) argue which is, social capital can be considered a component of governance and urban systems and not a distinct notion. Besides, the prevalence of volunteers in high-density regions (Table 7) confirms the findings of Klinenberg (2020), who demonstrates that social infrastructure including libraries and community halls can facilitate cohesiveness even in fragmented urban populations.

The above results suggest the idea that urbanization is liable to jeopardize traditional manifestations of neighbourhood trust and reciprocity and, at the same time, open up novel channels of civic participation and

network building. In agreement with the claims of Putzel and Ndagala (2020), the study shows that intentional practice, institutional design, participatory planning, and investments into community social infrastructure are needed to support the community-based social capital maintenance. The absence of these activities makes urbanization result in broken, unfair and divided communities. Yet with them cities can become friendly, robust, and networked.

## **CONCLUSION**

The study has also investigated the complex interplay between urbanization and social-capital based on the community and has revealed the problems as well as the opportunities that accompany rapid change of the metropolitan landscape. The results of the quantitative research, survey experiments and qualitative descriptions all paint a picture that urbanization, however, facilitating economic prosperity and advancement of infrastructure often disrupts and undercuts traditional web of trust, reciprocity and neighbourhood solidarity. Dense population, spatial segregation and migratory patterns were reported to erode trust and the notion of belonging in communities as an indicator of the dangers of social fragmentation in our cities. But this data also indicate that urbanization does not necessarily impair social capital; simply it is reorganised. Immigrant populations and other marginal groups often have strong intra-racial/ethnic/religious networks, and can be far more integrated through city-wide policies and investments in civic infrastructure, whether parks, libraries, and/or communication centers. There is an existing inequity in leadership positions and participation in society in terms of gender. Nevertheless, longitudinal studies show that civic participation of women in urban areas is getting better with time. The paper provides the evidence in support of the fact that social capital is not an invariable feature but a dynamic resource that intersects with physical design, governmental intervention, and cultural adaptability. The synthesis of findings denotes the importance of policymakers and urban planners to address social aspects of the urban development, which ensures that growth does not undermine the strength and diversity of the communities. The paper concludes with the claim that sustainable urban futures requires a combination of modernization and conscious investments into social infrastructure, democratic processes, and the ability to plan in culturally hallway manner. With such an action, cities can become not only an economic development driver but also a trust, solidarity, and community well-being builder. This will enhance social capital embedded in a community at the time when changes in the major cities are unprecedented.

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