

Social cohesion and attitudinal changes toward migration: A longitudinal perspective amid the COVID-19 pandemic

- Castillo, Juan Carlos^a;
- Bonhomme, Macarena^b [Send mail to Bonhomme M.](#);
- Miranda, Daniel^c;
- Iturra, Julio

Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted social interactions and coexistence around the globe in dimensions that go far beyond health issues. In the case of the Global South, the pandemic has developed along with growing South-South migratory movements, becoming another key factor that might reinforce social conflict in increasingly multicultural areas as migrants have historically served as “scapegoats” for unexpected crises as a way to control and manage diversity. Chile is one of the main destination countries for migrants from the Latin American and Caribbean region, and COVID-19 outbreaks in migrant housing have intensified discrimination. In such a context, there is a need for understanding how the pandemic has potentially changed the way non-migrants perceive and interact with migrant neighbors. Drawing on the national social cohesion panel survey study ELSOC (2016–2021, N = 2,927) the aim is to analyze the changes in non-migrants' attitudes toward migrants—related to dimensions of social cohesion—over the last years and their relation with individual status and territorial factors. We argue that social cohesion in increasingly multicultural societies is partially threatened in times of crisis. The results indicate that after the pandemic, convivial attitudes toward Latin American migrants decreased. Chileans started perceiving them more negatively, particularly those respondents with lower educational levels and who live in increasingly multicultural neighborhoods with higher rates of migrant residents. Copyright © 2023 Castillo, Bonhomme, Miranda and Iturra.

Author keywords

Chile; conviviality; COVID-19; identity; migration; social cohesion; South-South migration; threat