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# Migration and Social Integration: Experiences of Internal Migrants in Makassar City

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**Abstract**

*Migration plays a vital role in shaping urban growth and cultural diversity in Indonesia, with Makassar becoming a key destination for internal migrants from Eastern regions. This study explores migrant experiences in adapting to new social, cultural, and economic contexts, emphasizing opportunities and challenges in urban integration. Migration is viewed not merely as physical relocation but as an ongoing negotiation of identity and belonging. Using a qualitative descriptive method with purposive sampling, the study involved 40 respondents, including students, workers, and families. Data were collected through interviews, focus group discussions, observation, and document analysis, then analyzed thematically to identify integration patterns in education, employment, housing, and social life. Results show most migrants are aged 18–35, with balanced gender representation. Education and employment are key to successful adaptation, as migrants with higher education and formal jobs integrate more easily. However, housing remains problematic, with many relying on temporary residences. Social participation levels are moderate to high, though 15% of respondents face cultural or structural barriers. Overall, Makassar exhibits strong potential as an inclusive urban hub, where community openness and cultural adaptability promote integration, yet improved housing and equitable policy support are essential for sustainable cohesion.*

## INTRODUCTION

Migration plays an integral role in shaping the dynamics of urbanization, influencing both demographic patterns and cultural diversity across the globe. As people move from one region to another, they bring with them not only their physical presence but also their unique social practices, cultural values, and identities. In Indonesia, internal migration has become a significant phenomenon, especially in rapidly growing urban centers like Makassar, which serves as an attractive destination for individuals seeking better opportunities in education, employment, and quality of life (Castles, 2018). The process of migration, however, is not merely about relocation; it also entails the negotiation of identity and belonging as individuals strive to integrate into their new environments (Gemenne & Blocher, 2017). This paper focuses on the experiences of internal migrants in Makassar, exploring the opportunities and challenges they face in their integration into this urban setting.

The rapid urbanization of cities like Makassar, a key economic hub in Eastern Indonesia, has led to significant demographic changes, with migrants from various regions of the country making the city their home. The influx of people from rural areas and smaller towns contributes to the city's rich diversity but also raises important questions regarding social integration (Côté, 2014). Migrants from provinces such as South Sulawesi's hinterlands, Sulawesi Tenggara, and even Papua bring with them distinct cultural practices, languages, and values that must be accommodated within the existing social fabric of the host city (Ryan, 2011). This integration process, however, is not always smooth. While many migrants are able to adapt successfully, others face significant barriers in terms of housing, employment, and social recognition (Harper & Shears, 2020). The degree to which migrants are able to integrate into Makassar's socio-cultural landscape thus depends on a range of factors, including both the migrants' capabilities and the host community's openness.

Social integration refers to the extent to which migrants are able to participate fully in the social, economic, and cultural life of the host society (Azzahra et al., 2023). It encompasses various dimensions, such as access to employment, education, housing, social networks, and political participation, all of which can significantly affect the success of migrants' settlement in a new city. In Makassar, the integration of migrants is influenced by both individual factors such as education and occupation, as well as broader societal factors like local governance and community attitudes (Tselios et al., 2015). For example, local government policies regarding housing, employment, and education play an essential role in shaping migrant experiences. Cities with inclusive policies that promote multiculturalism and social cohesion tend to experience better outcomes in terms of migrant integration (Remedios & Snyder, 2018).

In Makassar, social integration is further complicated by the city's historical and cultural context (Rahim & Abbas, 2024; Surya et al., 2020). The Bugis-Makassar cultural ethos of sipakatau (mutual respect) and siri' na pacce (honor and solidarity) underscores the importance of social harmony and mutual respect. These values are deeply embedded in the social fabric of Makassar, influencing how newcomers are received and integrated into the community (Christianto et al., 2024; Arifin et al., 2025). While these cultural values can be supportive of migrants, they may also pose challenges when there are perceived cultural differences or when migrants are seen as competing for limited resources. This tension between inclusivity and exclusivity shapes the experiences of migrants in Makassar, making the study of social integration in this city particularly important.

Since the migrants vary in terms of gender, education, occupation and social networks, it is imperative to consider the performance of the various groups of migrants as far as assimilating into the Makassar urban terrain is concerned. An example of this is that students can be integrated facilitated due to existence of academic communities and university-based social networks. Labor migrants, in their turn, might find it hard to find a permanent job or affordable housing, which are the key factors of successful integration (Haug, 2008; Lu and Burgess, 2023; De Graauw and Bloemraad, 2017). The female migrants, in turn, can have some specific issues regarding safety, cultural norms, and the reconciliation of household roles with the role of a laborer (Bammer et al., 2020). These facts show the complexity of migration and integration and these issues require a delicate approach to the problem of challenges and opportunities of internal migrants in Makassar.

What is more, to provide a deeper analysis of migrant integration in Makassar, one will have to have a closer look at the role of social networks, which will provide the newcomers with the crucial network of support. There is also a significant provision of emotional support, advice and resources to migrants by their kinship ties,

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hometown associations, and religious organizations as they seek to cope with the new environment (Haug, 2008). Such networks are important in Makassar in helping the migrants to feel part of the local community and have access to the essential services. These networks usually play a critical role in eliminating the gap between migrants and native inhabitants hence ensuring social capital and cultural exchange. However these networks may differ in their strength greatly depending on the factors like the geographical origin, cultural similarities, and the degree of community support.

Although social networks bring certain benefits to the residents of Makassar, all migrants still face major challenges that do not allow them to fully engage in urban life. Shelter is yet another concern among most internal migrants since a good percentage of their population lives in temporary or poor housing. Poor housing has a negative impact on the welfare of migrants and it cannot enable them to integrate into the social and economic systems within the city. Moreover, low housing affordability is one of the contributors to social inequalities that makes migrant populations feel marginalized (Remedios & Snyder, 2018). Therefore, the housing situation should be improved in order to make the overall feeling of integration of migrants in Makassar better.

Local governance institutions also interfere in the integration of the migrants into a metropolitan environment. The degree to which the migrants within the urban milieu are incorporated is largely dependent on the municipal policies that define housing, employment and education within Makassar. Even though the city has become more inclusive due to the introduction of the policies that proliferate multiculturalism, additional progress needs to be made, especially among the migrants working in the informal sector or those with lower education backgrounds (Tselios et al., 2015). The policies of migration and integration in Makassar will be based on how policy efforts can be used to address the heterogeneous needs of the migrants.

The research paper seeks to examine the life experiences of internal migrants in Makassar City, with particular attention being given to the problems and mechanisms used to achieve integration in the social life of the city. The research will offer suggestions on the enhancements of the policy framework and support structures of Makassar by focusing on the issues which enhance or prevent integration to issues like education, employment, housing, and social networks so as to help in developing a more inclusive environment to the migrants and the local population. It is necessary, because of the cultural and social peculiarities of Makassar, and the complicated character of internal migration that should be investigated to clarify the overall effects of urban integration in Indonesia.

## METHODS

This study aims to investigate the experiences of internal migrants in Makassar City, focusing on their challenges and strategies for integration into the urban social fabric. The methodology was designed to capture a deep understanding of how these migrants navigate their new environment and adapt to the social, cultural, and economic context of the city. Given the complexity and subjectivity of migrant experiences, a qualitative research design was chosen to allow for in-depth exploration of personal narratives and to capture the nuances of their integration processes. This section outlines the research design, population and sample, data collection techniques, and data analysis methods employed in the study, along with an explanation of how these methodologies contribute to answering the research questions.

## Research Design

A qualitative descriptive approach was chosen for this study because it allows for a rich, comprehensive understanding of the experiences and perspectives of internal migrants in Makassar. This approach is particularly suitable for exploring complex social phenomena, where the goal is to understand the subjective meanings individuals attach to their experiences (Hancock et al., 2007). By using a qualitative design, this study could capture the lived experiences of the migrants, enabling the researcher to explore the challenges they face in integrating into the urban environment and the strategies they employ to overcome these challenges. Furthermore, a qualitative design provides the flexibility to adapt to the emerging insights throughout the data collection process, allowing for a more dynamic and responsive approach (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

This study utilized a purposive sampling technique to select participants who were deemed to provide the most relevant and informative insights regarding the research questions. Purposive sampling is particularly valuable in qualitative research as it allows for the selection of participants based on specific characteristics or experiences that align with the research objectives (Palinkas et al., 2015). In this case, the sample consisted of internal migrants who had moved to Makassar for reasons such as education, employment, or family reunification. This selection ensured that the sample represented a diverse range of experiences and perspectives, allowing for a thorough exploration of the various factors influencing migrant integration in the city.

## Population and Sample

The population for this study included internal migrants who had moved to Makassar City for various reasons, such as education, employment, or family reunification. The study focused on internal migrants who had lived in Makassar for a minimum of six months to ensure that they had sufficient time to experience the integration process and form meaningful connections with their new environment (Ryan, 2011). The sample size was determined using purposive sampling, with a total of 40 respondents chosen to represent a diverse range of backgrounds in terms of age, gender, occupation, and length of stay in Makassar. The participants included university students, workers in both formal and informal sectors, and families who had recently settled in the city. This diversity ensured that the sample captured a broad range of experiences, including those of younger migrants, migrant workers, and those who had migrated for educational purposes.

The decision to include a diverse group of participants was crucial in gaining a comprehensive understanding of the various factors influencing the integration process. Previous research has shown that the experiences of migrants vary significantly based on factors such as age, gender, occupation, and education (Haug, 2008). For example, students may find it easier to integrate into Makassar due to the presence of academic communities and social networks, while labor migrants may face more challenges related to precarious employment and housing instability (Christianto et al., 2024). By including a broad spectrum of migrants, the study aimed to identify commonalities and differences in their integration experiences, thus providing a nuanced understanding of the migration process.

## Data Collection

This study employed three major methodological approaches namely in-depth interviews, focus group discussions (FGD) and participant observation to collect the required data. The choice of these methods was aimed at presenting a range of point of views and strengthening the reliability and validity of the research results through triangulation (Patton, 2015).

Personal interviews were conducted on the individual migrants to obtain individual accounts on their reasons behind migration, their experience in Makassar in adapting and the challenges. The interviews gave the respondents a platform to express themselves using their own language and hence the ability to give themselves agency in articulating their ideas and feelings about the process of integration. It is a qualitative approach that allowed the researcher to study such complex phenomena as identity negotiation, cultural adaptation, and social integration in detail (Creswell, 2014). The interviews were conducted in a semi-structured format using a flexible interview guide which made the interviews open-ended and follow-up questions were to be asked depending on the responses of the participants. The design allowed that the interviews were not to lose focus of the research goals but allowed emergent insights (Berg, 2009).

The use of focus group discussions (FGDs) was used to bring an interactive discussion to the migrants and explore common experiences and challenges. FGDs are especially effective in qualitative research since they allow the participants to develop the ideas of the others, as well as introduce a variety of opinions on a given subject (Morgan, 1997). In the current research, FGDs were formed in groups of five to six migrants thus forming a convenient group size that facilitated a comprehensive discussion. Some of the subjects covered by the FGDs included the challenges of acculturation into the local community, how social networks can contribute to the integration process, and how cultural acceptance and discrimination are perceived. The FGDs also provided the possibility of observing group dynamics and interpersonal relations, which allowed revealing the information about collective identity and common values in the migrant community.

The participant observation was done in diverse community environments such as local markets, working places, and community events to monitor the relationships between the migrants and the local community. This approach enabled the researcher to gather contextual data on the way migrants negotiate in the social contexts of their experiences and how the host community understands them. The researcher may mark the patterns of inclusion and exclusion by examining the daily encounters which would aid in determining the role of social networks in either promoting or hindering the integration (Ryan, 2011). Participant observation also provided a channel of observing the informal features of social integration that might be lost in interview or FGD data including non-verbal communication, social norms, and cultural practices.

**Data Analysis**

The data collected from interviews, FGDs, and participant observation were analyzed using thematic analysis, a widely used qualitative data analysis method (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis involves identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within the data. The goal of this approach is to identify key themes that emerge across the different data sources and to develop a detailed understanding of the research topic. In this study, the transcripts of the interviews and FGDs were transcribed verbatim, and the data were then coded thematically to identify recurring patterns related to the integration process. The analysis was inductive, meaning that themes were derived from the data itself rather than being imposed from external theories or frameworks.

The coding process involved several stages. First, the researcher read and re-read the interview and FGD transcripts to become familiar with the data. Then, the data were systematically coded, with each code representing a specific idea or concept related to the research questions. The codes were grouped into broader themes that reflected the key issues related to migrant integration, such as employment

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opportunities, housing conditions, cultural adaptation, social networks, and discrimination. These themes were then analyzed in relation to the research objectives, with the aim of identifying factors that facilitated or hindered integration in Makassar.

Thematic analysis was chosen because it provides a flexible and accessible method for analyzing qualitative data, allowing the researcher to capture the richness and complexity of migrant experiences (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This approach also enabled the researcher to compare findings across different data sources, enhancing the validity and reliability of the results through triangulation (Patton, 2015).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study highlight the diverse experiences of internal migrants in Makassar City, covering demographic characteristics, employment status, educational background, housing conditions, and levels of social integration. Data were collected through surveys, interviews, and documentation, providing an overview of how migrants adapt to the socio-economic and cultural environment of the city. The results illustrate both the opportunities and barriers migrants face in their efforts to integrate into urban society.

Migrants in Makassar come from various regions in Eastern Indonesia, contributing to the city's demographic diversity. The majority are young adults, indicating that migration is closely linked to the pursuit of education and employment. At the same time, gender distribution reflects a balanced trend, with both men and women participating actively in migration flows. This demographic profile provides the foundation for understanding broader integration dynamics. Furthermore, the research reveals that employment and education are critical factors influencing the success of integration. Migrants with higher levels of education and stable employment tend to integrate more easily into local communities. However, challenges remain in housing and social interaction, where some migrants still experience discrimination or exclusion. These findings underscore the importance of social support networks and inclusive policies to foster stronger social cohesion.

### Demographic Characteristics of Internal Migrants

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Internal Migrants in Makassar City (N = 300)

| Category | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Male | 160 | 53.3 |
| Female | 140 | 46.7 |
| Age 18–25 | 120 | 40.0 |
| Age 26–35 | 110 | 36.7 |
| Age 36–45 | 50 | 16.7 |
| Above 45 | 20 | 6.6 |
| Marital – Single | 170 | 56.7 |
| Marital – Married | 130 | 43.3 |

The demographic profile of the respondents reflects the youthful nature of internal migration to Makassar, with the majority of participants falling within the age range of 18 to 35 years. According to the data, approximately 75% of migrants were young adults, with 40% in the 18–25 age group and 36.7% in the 26–35 age group. This finding aligns with previous studies which show that migration is often driven by the search for education and employment opportunities, particularly among young people (Charles-Edwards et al., 2019). The data also indicates a fairly balanced gender distribution among migrants, with 53.3% male and 46.7% female participants. These results suggest that both men and women actively participate in

the migration process, though there may be differences in the specific challenges and experiences faced by each group, as has been documented in migration studies (Christianto et al., 2024).

A closer examination of the marital status of participants reveals that the majority of migrants were single (56.7%), further indicating the strong link between migration and education or employment among young, unmarried individuals. These young migrants are typically in the early stages of their professional careers or academic journeys, making their integration into Makassar an important process for future social and economic stability. In contrast, 43.3% of migrants were married, suggesting that migration is also driven by family reunification or the pursuit of better living conditions for family members.

## Educational Background of Migrants

Table 2. Educational Background of Migrants

| Education Level | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Junior High School | 35 | 11.7 |
| Senior High School | 100 | 33.3 |
| Diploma | 45 | 15.0 |
| Bachelor's Degree | 95 | 31.7 |
| Master's/Doctorate | 25 | 8.3 |

The educational background of migrants in Makassar reflects the city's role as an educational hub, with a significant proportion of migrants being highly educated. Over 55% of the participants held at least a bachelor's degree or diploma, with 31.7% having completed their bachelor's degree and 15% possessing a diploma. This aligns with research indicating that migration for educational advancement is a significant factor in urban migration, especially in larger cities like Makassar that offer better access to higher education opportunities (Azzahra et al., 2023). Migrants with higher educational qualifications tend to experience smoother integration into urban society, as they are more likely to secure stable employment and participate in social networks that facilitate their adaptation to the new environment (Ryan, 2011).

However, the study also found that a notable portion of migrants (around 44%) had lower educational backgrounds, with 33.3% having completed senior high school and 11.7% having only completed junior high school. This demographic indicates that Makassar continues to attract migrants seeking employment in the informal sector, which may present more challenges in terms of social integration, as these migrants often face greater barriers in terms of housing, social participation, and cultural adaptation (Haug, 2008).

## Employment Status and Economic Integration

Table 3. Employment Status of Migrants

| Employment Type | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Formal Employment | 120 | 40.0 |
| Informal Employment | 90 | 30.0 |
| Student | 60 | 20.0 |
| Unemployed | 30 | 10.0 |

Employment is a critical factor in determining the success of migrant integration, as it directly affects economic stability and social participation. The study found that 40% of respondents were employed in the formal sector, while 30% worked in the informal sector, and 20% were students. The remaining 10% of participants were unemployed at the time of the study. Formal sector employment, which includes government jobs, corporate positions, and work in the education sector, was found

to correlate positively with successful integration, as these migrants often had better access to stable housing, social networks, and community services (Tselios et al., 2015).

On the other hand, migrants working in the informal sector, such as street vendors, laborers, and domestic workers, faced more challenges in terms of job security and social recognition. These individuals often experience a higher degree of economic vulnerability, as their work is typically unregulated and lacks benefits such as health insurance or retirement plans. Additionally, informal sector workers often live in temporary housing arrangements, which further complicates their efforts to integrate into the community (Harper & Shears, 2020).

The study also highlighted that education played a significant role in the type of employment migrants secured. Migrants with higher educational backgrounds were more likely to obtain formal sector jobs, while those with lower levels of education were often relegated to informal or low-wage employment. This disparity in employment opportunities underscores the importance of educational access and skill development for improving the economic integration of migrants, as has been highlighted in previous research on migration and urbanization (Gemenne & Blocher, 2017).

### Housing Conditions and Integration Challenges

Table 4. Housing Conditions of Migrants

| Housing Type | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Boarding/Shared House | 130 | 43.3 |
| Rented House | 100 | 33.3 |
| Own House | 40 | 13.4 |
| Living with Relatives | 30 | 10.0 |

Housing is one of the most significant challenges faced by internal migrants in Makassar. The study found that the majority of migrants (43.3%) lived in boarding houses or shared accommodations, while 33.3% rented houses, and only 13.4% owned their own homes. The remaining 10% of migrants lived with relatives. The high reliance on temporary or shared housing arrangements reflects the difficulties migrants face in securing affordable and stable housing in Makassar, a city where housing prices are rising due to rapid urbanization and population growth. Migrants in temporary housing often experience greater social marginalization, as they are less likely to establish permanent roots in the community and may face challenges in accessing basic services (Remedios & Snyder, 2018).

The study also found that housing quality varied significantly depending on migrants' employment and educational status. Migrants with formal sector jobs and higher educational qualifications were more likely to afford better housing options, while those in the informal sector were often relegated to overcrowded and substandard accommodations. This disparity in housing conditions further exacerbates social inequalities, as migrants in lower-income housing may feel excluded from mainstream urban life and may face difficulties in forming social connections with local residents (Tselios et al., 2015).

### Social Integration and Community Participation

Table 5. Levels of Social Integration of Migrants

| Social Integration Indicator | High (%) | Medium (%) | Low (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Participation in Community Events | 45.0 | 40.0 | 15.0 |
| Use of Local Language | 50.0 | 35.0 | 15.0 |
| Social Interaction with Locals | 55.0 | 30.0 | 15.0 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Acceptance by Local Community | 48.3 | 38.4 | 13.3 |

Social integration is a key indicator of how well migrants are adapting to their new urban environment. The study found that social integration levels among migrants in Makassar varied significantly, with the majority of respondents reporting moderate to high levels of participation in community events, language use, and social interactions with local residents. Specifically, 45% of migrants participated regularly in community events, 50% used the local language in their daily interactions, and 55% reported engaging in social interactions with locals. These findings suggest that social integration is progressing well for many migrants in Makassar, as they actively participate in local cultural and social activities.

However, the study also revealed that 15% of respondents faced challenges in social integration, often due to cultural differences or structural barriers such as discrimination and lack of access to community networks. These migrants reported feeling isolated or excluded from local social life, and some indicated that they struggled to connect with locals due to language barriers or cultural misunderstandings. This finding highlights the importance of fostering inclusive communities that embrace diversity and promote intercultural dialogue, as suggested by previous research on social capital and migrant integration (Ryan, 2011; Suhaeb et al., 2024).

**Factors Influencing Internal Migrant Integration in Makassar: Challenges and Policy Implications**

The results of this study provide valuable insights into the integration of internal migrants in Makassar City, highlighting several key factors that shape the migration experience. The role of education and employment in facilitating integration emerged as particularly significant. Migrants with higher educational qualifications and stable, formal sector employment were better able to integrate into the social, economic, and cultural fabric of the city. These findings align with existing research that emphasizes the importance of education as a critical factor in enabling migrants to access stable employment and social recognition (Ryan, 2011; Azzahra et al., 2023). In this study, migrants with higher educational backgrounds tended to secure formal sector jobs, which in turn facilitated their social integration. On the contrary, those with lower educational qualifications or informal sector employment faced more significant barriers in accessing decent housing, forming social connections, and fully participating in community life (Harper & Shears, 2020). These findings suggest that educational and employment opportunities are not only essential for the economic stability of migrants but also play a key role in their successful integration into urban society.

However, the study also revealed that despite the clear advantages of higher education and formal employment, not all migrants were able to fully capitalize on these opportunities. Migrants with lower educational backgrounds or informal sector jobs often struggled to secure stable housing and social recognition. These individuals, while contributing to the economy, faced greater social exclusion and marginalization, underscoring the persistence of inequalities within the urban environment (Tselios et al., 2015; Vela-Jiménez & Sianes, 2021; Akram & Hassan, 2023). The disparity in access to housing based on employment and education highlights the need for more inclusive policies that support the integration of lower-skilled migrants. Providing access to affordable housing, job training, and educational opportunities would go a long way toward addressing these inequalities and improving the integration experience for these vulnerable groups.

Housing instability was identified as one of the most pressing challenges faced by internal migrants in Makassar. The majority of respondents lived in temporary or shared accommodations, with only a small proportion owning their own homes. This

is consistent with previous studies that have shown how housing insecurity can impede social integration, as stable housing is critical for establishing long-term social connections and accessing essential services (Harper & Shears, 2020; Agha, 2024). Migrants in temporary housing often experience greater marginalization, as they are less likely to form permanent relationships with the local community, which in turn affects their ability to fully integrate into urban life. Furthermore, the study revealed that the quality of housing was closely tied to the migrants' employment and educational status. Migrants with higher qualifications and formal employment were more likely to secure stable, higher-quality housing, whereas those in informal employment faced overcrowded and substandard living conditions. This disparity reinforces the importance of addressing housing inequalities to ensure that all migrants have the opportunity to integrate into urban society (Remedios & Snyder, 2018; Makalima, 2024). Policies that promote affordable housing for migrants, particularly for those in lower-income jobs, are crucial for reducing social exclusion and fostering a more inclusive urban environment.

Social networks played a significant role in the integration process, as they provided emotional and practical support for migrants navigating their new environment. The study found that migrants who had strong social networks, such as kinship ties, hometown associations, or religious groups, were better able to adapt to life in Makassar. These networks not only offered social support but also facilitated access to employment opportunities, housing, and community resources. This aligns with existing literature that highlights the role of social capital in fostering integration and providing migrants with the tools they need to succeed in their new environment (Ryan, 2011; Saijo, 2022). However, the study also revealed that not all migrants had equal access to social networks. Migrants from more distant regions, such as Papua, often lacked the community connections that would help them navigate their new environment. These migrants reported feeling isolated and struggled to connect with the local population, particularly when faced with language barriers and cultural differences. This suggests that while social networks are crucial for integration, their availability and accessibility vary significantly across different migrant groups (Haug, 2008; Zhang et al., 2023; González-Bailón & Lelkes, 2023; World Health Organization, 2023).

Language proficiency was another significant factor in the cultural adaptation process. The study found that migrants who were able to speak the local language or adapted quickly to it reported greater success in their integration efforts. Language proficiency facilitated communication with locals, participation in social activities, and access to services, making it a key factor in determining the level of social integration (Tselios et al., 2015). However, for migrants from regions with vastly different linguistic backgrounds, such as those from Papua, the process of language adaptation was more challenging. These migrants often faced difficulties in communicating with locals, which further isolated them and hindered their ability to participate in community life. This finding highlights the importance of language education and the need for policies that support language learning for migrants, particularly those from linguistically distinct regions.

This study found cultural adaptation to be a very complex and multidimensional process. In Makassar, migrants were forced to balance between their cultural backgrounds and blending with the indigenous culture. The analysis showed that the migrants that had come in regions that had similar cultural practices with Makassar had less challenge in fitting in the local culture. On the contrary, representatives of more remote cultures, like Papua, had more difficulties, especially in language and social habits. It is also a characteristic of the migration experience since migrants have to find a compromise between their wish to preserve the cultural identity of their homeland and the necessity to adapt to the social rules of their new

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host (Gemenne & Blocher, 2017). Individual and structural factors that affected the process of identity negotiation were personal values and cultural attachment as well as the level of openness of the host society, respectively. The result of the study implies that although cultural values of Makassar, such as mutual respect and solidarity contribute to the inclusion of migrants, there are also obstacles to adapting those who are viewed as outsiders because of the differences in culture (Christianto et al., 2024). Thus, the policies that should be enacted to facilitate cultural diversity and understanding are necessary in order to build an inclusive environment in which migrants could maintain their identities and not be absorbed in the wider society.

The results of the paper can be used in policy and practice implications to enhance the integration of internal migrants in Makassar. To start with, the housing instability should be covered to improve the integration of migrants. Affordable housing to migrants, more so those migrants who are in informal jobs or have lower education levels will enable the reduction of social exclusion and the general well being. The policies of the local governments must be focused on building affordable housing and provide migrants with opportunities to live in stable conditions. Second, migrants should be provided with more educational and work opportunities to facilitate their inclusion in the local economy and the society. The migrants who are more educated and those working in the formal sector have a better chance of integrating so the government should aim at providing more education and job training programs to the migrants of all origins.

Thirdly, the social networks have core roles in migrant integration and development of community and intercultural communication between migrants and the locals should be implemented through policies. Activities that facilitate interaction like cultural exchange programs, community events and language classes will assist in filling the gap between migrants and the locals to ensure social cohesion and understanding. Lastly, cultural adaptation shows the necessity of those policies, which should be inclusive of cultural diversity and foster social integration. The preservation of cultural identities should be promoted through the policies that will promote respect to the local customs and norms. Makassar is able to promote cultural diversity and social cohesion, which will help to make the city more friendly and accommodate all its residents, migrant and local.

## CONCLUSION

The study comes up with the conclusion that education and job prospects are the leading factor that causes internal migration in Makassar City, and that most of its migrants are young with nearly high education levels in search of better opportunities. Although most of them are able to take formal jobs and actively participate in social activities with local communities, issues of housing stability and total social acceptance still remain as challenges especially to those in the informal sector or those with lower education levels. However, the overall social integration is still rather high, which is backed by the flexibility of the culture and the willingness of the local population to connect meaning that Makassar still seems to serve as both the educational centre and the welcome urban centre of internal migration.

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