

# Bibliometric Analysis of Studies on Social Welfare in Multicultural Societies

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## ABSTRACT

This study conducts a bibliometric analysis of research on social welfare in multicultural societies, examining publication trends, key themes, and collaborative networks. Using data from Scopus and analyzed through VOSviewer, the study identifies major research clusters centered on migration, cultural diversity, government policies, and socioeconomic factors. Findings indicate a shift in scholarly focus from economic disparities and human rights to emerging concerns around digital transformation, social integration, and inclusive welfare policies. The study also highlights regional disparities in research contributions, with Western scholars dominating the discourse while emerging research networks develop in Asia and other regions. Additionally, gaps in comparative welfare studies, the role of non-state actors, and the impact of digital technologies on welfare provision are identified as future research priorities. These findings offer valuable insights for policymakers, researchers, and practitioners seeking to enhance welfare policies in diverse and evolving social contexts.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Social welfare is a fundamental aspect of human development, encompassing policies and programs designed to enhance the well-being of individuals and communities. It covers various domains, including healthcare, education, employment, and social security, which collectively contribute to economic and social stability. In multicultural societies, where individuals from diverse ethnic, religious, and cultural backgrounds coexist, social welfare policies must be inclusive and responsive to the needs

of different groups. The complexity of social welfare provision in such societies requires an understanding of various socio-economic factors, policy frameworks, and the effectiveness of welfare interventions. Over the past few decades, there has been a growing body of literature exploring the intersection of social welfare and multiculturalism, reflecting the increasing recognition of diversity in policy design and implementation [1].

Multicultural societies present unique challenges and opportunities in the realm of social welfare. On the one hand, diversity can

enrich social cohesion and economic productivity by fostering creativity and innovation. On the other hand, disparities in access to social services, discrimination, and cultural barriers may exacerbate social inequalities. Welfare policies that fail to account for cultural diversity risk marginalizing minority groups, leading to social fragmentation and reduced social trust. Researchers have examined various models of social welfare in multicultural contexts, comparing universal versus targeted approaches to welfare provision [2], [3]. The debate over whether social welfare should be designed to accommodate cultural pluralism or adhere to universal principles remains central to policy discussions in many countries.

The role of bibliometric analysis in assessing research trends on social welfare in multicultural societies has gained prominence in recent years. Bibliometric methods allow scholars to systematically analyze large volumes of academic literature, identifying key themes, influential authors, and emerging research trends. By mapping the intellectual structure of this field, bibliometric analysis provides valuable insights into how social welfare scholarship has evolved, the dominant theoretical frameworks employed, and the gaps that remain unaddressed. Previous studies have applied bibliometric techniques to various social science disciplines, but there remains a need for a comprehensive bibliometric review specifically focused on social welfare in multicultural societies [3]–[5].

Given the increasing migration flows, globalization, and demographic shifts in many countries, understanding the state of research on social welfare in multicultural societies is more important than ever. Policies must be evidence-based and informed by scholarly work that captures the complexities of welfare provision in diverse social contexts. A bibliometric approach offers a systematic and quantitative way to assess the extent to which social welfare research has addressed multicultural challenges, highlighting influential studies and gaps that require further exploration. As governments and

policymakers seek to create more inclusive and effective welfare systems, the insights derived from a bibliometric study can serve as a valuable resource for shaping future research and policy directions.

Despite the growing body of research on social welfare and multiculturalism, there is a lack of systematic analysis that synthesizes and evaluates the development of this field. While various scholars have examined welfare policies in multicultural settings, no comprehensive bibliometric study has mapped the intellectual structure and research trends of this domain. This gap in the literature limits our understanding of how knowledge on social welfare in multicultural societies has evolved, which theories have been most influential, and which areas remain underexplored. Without such an analysis, researchers and policymakers may struggle to identify the most impactful studies, key debates, and future directions for research. Addressing this gap is essential for ensuring that social welfare policies are informed by a robust and well-organized body of academic literature.

This study aims to conduct a bibliometric analysis of research on social welfare in multicultural societies to identify key themes, influential publications, and research trends. By analyzing a comprehensive dataset of academic literature, this study seeks to map the intellectual landscape of this field, highlighting the contributions of scholars, institutions, and countries. The findings will provide insights into the evolution of social welfare research, the dominant theoretical frameworks, and the gaps that warrant further investigation. Ultimately, this study aims to contribute to a more systematic understanding of social welfare scholarship in multicultural contexts, offering valuable implications for researchers, policymakers, and practitioners interested in designing inclusive and effective welfare policies.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 *Conceptual Framework of Social Welfare in Multicultural Societies*

Social welfare, as a concept, encompasses a broad range of policies and programs aimed at promoting social well-being, reducing poverty, and ensuring equitable access to essential services such as healthcare, education, and employment. Scholars have long debated the role of welfare states in addressing social disparities, particularly in societies characterized by ethnic, cultural, and linguistic diversity [6]. Theories of social welfare, including the liberal, conservative, and social-democratic models, provide different perspectives on how welfare policies should be structured and implemented in multicultural settings [7]. Multicultural societies pose unique challenges for welfare provision due to the varying needs and expectations of diverse communities. The integrationist approach, which advocates for universal social policies that apply to all citizens regardless of background, contrasts with the multiculturalist approach, which supports targeted interventions to address the specific needs of minority groups [8]. Researchers have explored how these approaches affect social cohesion, economic productivity, and the well-being of marginalized populations [9]. The ongoing debate underscores the importance of balancing inclusivity with equity in welfare policies.

### 2.2 *Trends in Social Welfare Research in Multicultural Contexts*

The literature on social welfare in multicultural societies has expanded significantly over the past few decades, reflecting the growing recognition of diversity in policy design. Bibliometric studies have identified key trends in this research domain, including the increasing emphasis on intersectionality, migration, and the role of non-state actors in welfare provision. Studies have also examined how globalization

influences welfare policies, particularly in countries experiencing significant demographic shifts due to migration [10]. One major trend in the literature is the analysis of welfare state typologies and their adaptability to multicultural realities. Scholars have compared welfare regimes across different countries, assessing their effectiveness in addressing social inequalities among diverse populations [11], [12]. Comparative studies highlight variations in welfare approaches between European, North American, and Asian countries, illustrating how historical, political, and economic factors shape social welfare policies. Another key area of research is the role of social capital in welfare provision. Scholars argue that strong social networks, trust, and community engagement enhance the effectiveness of welfare programs in multicultural societies [13]. However, others caution that excessive reliance on informal support networks can exacerbate inequalities if marginalized groups lack access to broader social resources. This debate underscores the need for a nuanced understanding of social welfare mechanisms that account for both institutional and community-based support systems.

### 2.3 *The Role of Migration and Social Welfare*

Migration has become a central theme in social welfare research, given its impact on labor markets, public services, and social cohesion. Studies have examined how welfare states respond to migration, particularly in terms of access to social benefits, integration policies, and anti-discrimination measures [14]. While some countries implement inclusive welfare policies that extend benefits to migrants, others adopt restrictive measures that limit access to social services based on citizenship or residency status [15]. The literature highlights the tension between economic contributions and welfare dependency in migrant populations. Some scholars

argue that migrants significantly contribute to the economy and social welfare systems through taxation and labor force participation [16]. Others point to concerns over the potential strain on public resources, particularly in welfare states with generous benefits. Empirical studies suggest that the impact of migration on welfare systems is highly context-dependent, influenced by factors such as labor market policies, demographic trends, and the political climate. A growing body of research focuses on the intersectionality of migration, race, and social welfare. Scholars have explored how systemic discrimination affects migrants' access to welfare services, emphasizing the need for culturally competent social policies [17]. Additionally, studies highlight the role of transnationalism in shaping welfare experiences, as migrants often navigate between multiple social protection systems across different countries [17]. This perspective challenges traditional notions of welfare that assume static, nation-state-based systems.

### 3. METHOD

This study employs a bibliometric analysis to systematically examine research trends on social welfare in multicultural societies. Data for the analysis is collected exclusively from the Scopus database using relevant keywords such as "social welfare," "multicultural societies," and "welfare policy." The study applies quantitative bibliometric techniques, including citation analysis, co-occurrence analysis, and co-authorship network analysis, to identify influential publications, leading authors, and key thematic clusters within the field. The data is processed solely using bibliometric software VOSviewer, enabling visualization of research trends and knowledge structures. Inclusion criteria for the dataset focus on peer-reviewed journal articles published in English over the past two decades, ensuring a comprehensive and up-to-date assessment of the field. Additionally, thematic content analysis is conducted to interpret emerging research patterns and policy implications.

### 4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

#### 4.1 Results

##### a. Keyword Co-Occurrence Network Visualization

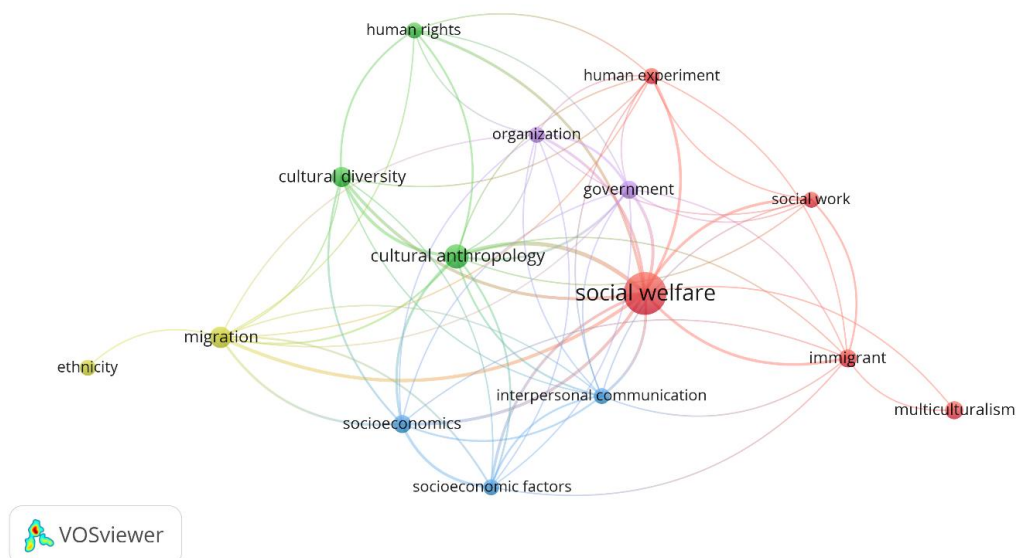


Figure 1. Network Visualization

Source: Data Analysis, 2025

The visualization presents a bibliometric network analysis of research on social welfare in multicultural societies. The network consists of multiple nodes, each representing a keyword or concept, with edges (connections) indicating co-occurrence relationships in the analyzed literature. The size of the nodes reflects the frequency of keyword usage, while the thickness of the edges represents the strength of the association between terms. The color-coded clusters signify thematic groupings, which provide insights into the primary research areas related to social welfare. At the core of the network, "social welfare" appears as the most prominent node, signifying its central role in the research domain. It connects extensively with several key topics such as government, social work, cultural anthropology, and migration. This indicates that social welfare research frequently intersects with policy-making, professional interventions, and sociocultural dimensions. The broad range of connections highlights that social welfare is studied from multidisciplinary perspectives, integrating policy studies, social sciences, and economic frameworks.

One of the notable clusters (yellow and red) focuses on migration, ethnicity, and multiculturalism, suggesting that a significant portion of social welfare research examines the impact of immigration and cultural diversity on welfare policies. The linkages between immigrants, multiculturalism, and social work emphasize how welfare systems adapt to diverse populations. Moreover, the connection with ethnicity and migration suggests ongoing discussions on inclusion, access to welfare benefits, and the role of social services in addressing

disparities among immigrant communities. Another important cluster (blue and green) highlights socioeconomic factors, socioeconomics, and human rights. This suggests that researchers often explore economic disparities, employment, and poverty in relation to social welfare. The presence of human rights as a closely connected term indicates that welfare policies are frequently analyzed in the context of equity, justice, and legal protections. The strong relationship between cultural diversity and human rights suggests that ensuring fair treatment for all individuals—regardless of their background—remains a major concern in welfare research.

The government node, linked to organization and policy frameworks, demonstrates that a significant area of social welfare research involves governance structures, legislative frameworks, and institutional roles in welfare provision. Studies in this domain likely assess how different government policies influence welfare distribution and accessibility, particularly in multicultural societies. The network's structure suggests that welfare research often includes analyses of policy efficiency, welfare reforms, and public administration strategies in managing diverse populations. The bibliometric visualization highlights interdisciplinary connections, suggesting that future research should focus on intersections between welfare policies, migration patterns, and economic inequalities. The presence of interpersonal communication within the network indicates a growing interest in how social service delivery and community engagement influence welfare outcomes. Additionally, emerging topics like human

experiments suggest potential discussions on experimental social policies, pilot welfare programs, or

ethical considerations in welfare research.

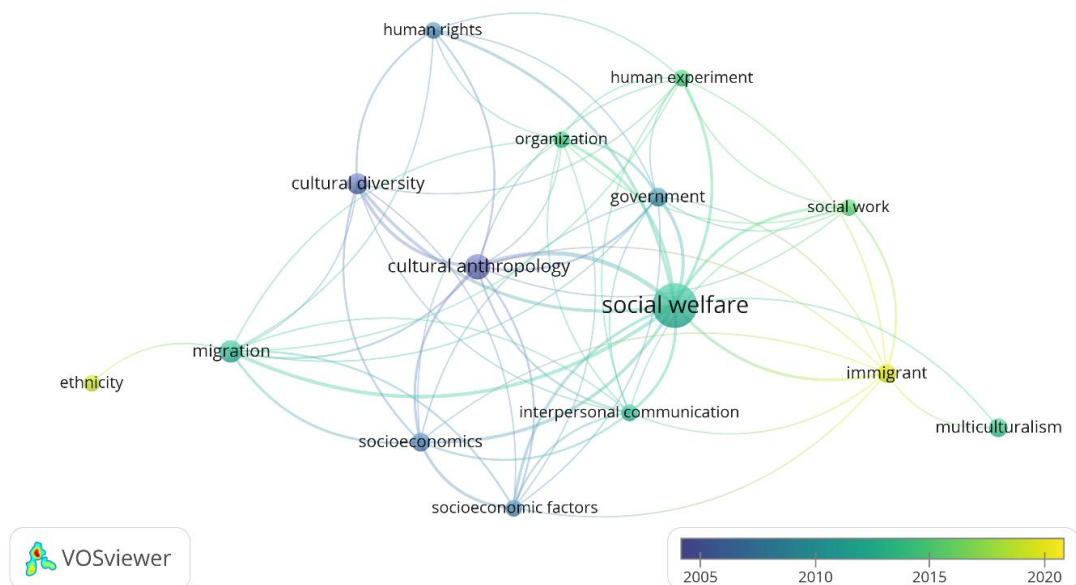


Figure 2. Overlay

Source: Data Analysis, 2025

The VOSviewer visualization presents a temporal bibliometric analysis of research on social welfare in multicultural societies, mapping keyword relationships over time. The color gradient from blue to yellow represents the average publication year of studies containing the corresponding keywords, where blue indicates older research (pre-2010), and yellow represents more recent developments (post-2015). The size of the nodes indicates the frequency of keyword occurrences, while the thickness of the connecting lines reflects the strength of co-occurrence relationships.

The central role of "social welfare" remains evident, as it connects with multiple research areas such as government, social work, cultural anthropology, and migration. Notably, older research (blue nodes) focused more on cultural diversity, socioeconomics, and human rights, indicating early

discussions on structural inequalities, economic conditions, and legal frameworks related to welfare. Meanwhile, newer research (green to yellow nodes) emphasizes migration, immigrants, and multiculturalism, suggesting a growing interest in how global mobility, demographic shifts, and inclusion policies impact welfare structures in diverse societies. The connection between multiculturalism and social work highlights emerging discourse on tailoring welfare programs to culturally diverse populations.

Additionally, the emergence of "human experiment" and "government" in recent years (green nodes) suggests a growing trend in policy experimentation and evidence-based governance approaches in welfare studies. This implies a shift toward data-driven, impact-assessment methodologies in designing welfare policies for multicultural societies. The map

underscores a transition from broad theoretical debates on socioeconomics and cultural anthropology toward practical, policy-oriented research on

migration, governance, and inclusive welfare policies. This indicates an evolving research focus that aligns with contemporary global challenges.

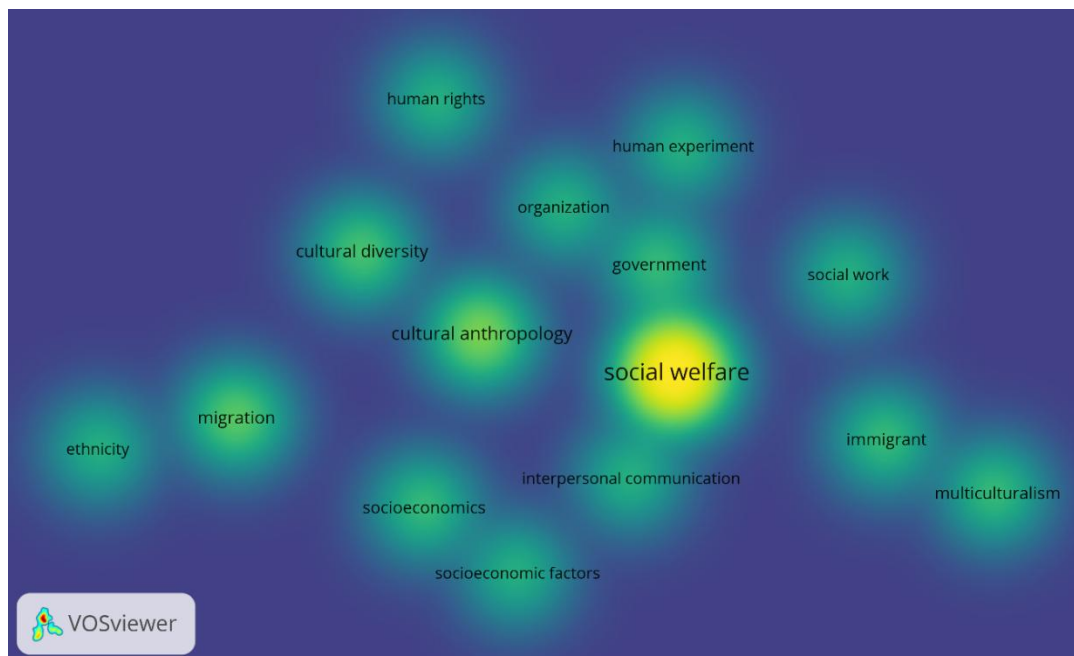


Figure 3. Density

Source: Data Analysis, 2025

The heatmap visualization generated by VOSviewer provides insights into the density and concentration of research topics related to social welfare in multicultural societies. The color gradient, ranging from dark blue (low density) to bright yellow (high density), indicates the frequency of keyword occurrences and their prominence in the literature. The central keyword, "social welfare," appears in bright yellow, signifying that it is the most frequently occurring term in the dataset. Surrounding this core theme, other keywords such as "government," "cultural anthropology," "cultural diversity," and "migration" exhibit moderate density (green areas), indicating their significant but comparatively lower occurrence in the literature.

Peripheral terms such as "ethnicity," "multiculturalism," and "socioeconomic factors" appear in blue-green, suggesting that while they are relevant, they are discussed less frequently. The presence of "human rights" and "social work" indicates growing research interest in equity and welfare provision mechanisms in diverse societies. The heatmap highlights key thematic clusters in welfare research, with the highest density around policy-making, governance, and cultural diversity. This suggests that future studies may focus on the intersection of social welfare policies, migration, and inclusivity measures to address the evolving needs of multicultural populations.

**b. Co-Authorship Network**



Figure 4. Authorship Network  
Source: Data Analysis, 2025

The author collaboration network visualized in VOSviewer illustrates the co-authorship relationships among scholars in the field of social welfare in multicultural societies. The network is structured into distinct clusters, each represented by a different color, indicating groups of authors who frequently collaborate. The leftmost cluster (red) highlights Will Kymlicka, a well-known scholar in multiculturalism, who is closely connected with other researchers like Balibar E. and Portera A. (green cluster), suggesting their work is thematically linked. Moving toward

the right, Napier A.D. (blue cluster) and Ekblad S. (yellow cluster) form another collaborative network. The interconnections between these clusters signify cross-disciplinary or inter-institutional collaboration, with scholars bridging different schools of thought. The varying thickness of the edges indicates the strength of collaboration, where thicker connections suggest more frequent co-authored works. This visualization underscores the intellectual structure of research in social welfare and multiculturalism, highlighting key contributors and potential collaboration trends.



Figure 5. Country Visualization  
Source: Data Analysis, 2025



The country collaboration network visualized in VOSviewer highlights research connections between different geographic locations in studies on social welfare. The United States (red cluster) appears as the most central and influential node, indicating that it is a key contributor to research in this field. It shares strong connections with Argentina, Detroit, and Long Beach, suggesting collaboration between institutions or researchers in these regions. On the opposite side, Australia (green cluster) is linked to

China, signifying a separate yet interconnected research network. The long, thin connection between the United States and Australia suggests some level of transnational collaboration, though it might not be as extensive as intra-country research links. This visualization underscores regional research hubs and international partnerships, revealing the dominant role of the United States while also showcasing emerging collaborations between Australia and China.

**c. Citation Analysis**

Table 1. Most Cited Article

Citations	Author and Year	Title
51909	[18]	Self-Efficacy: The Exercise of Control
18449	[19]	The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism
16637	[20]	An evolutionary theory of economic change
12861	[21]	The Problem of Social Cost
12491	[22]	Development as Freedom
4866	[23]	Strategy and society: the link between competitive advantage and corporate social responsibility.
4470	[24]	The structural transformation of the public sphere: an inquiry into a category of bourgeois society
4320	[25]	Systematic Reviews in the Social Sciences: A Practical Guide
4208	[26]	Social Foundations of Postindustrial Economies
4115	[27]	Meaningful differences in the everyday experience of young American children

Source: Output Publish or Perish, 2025

**4.2 Discussion**

The bibliometric analysis of studies on social welfare in multicultural societies provides significant insights into the evolution, major themes, and collaborative networks within the field. The network visualizations illustrate the central role of "social welfare" as a research focus, surrounded by interconnected themes such as migration, cultural diversity, government policies, and socioeconomic factors. The findings suggest that research on social welfare in multicultural societies is interdisciplinary, drawing on insights from sociology, anthropology, political science, and economics. The presence of strong linkages between key terms, such as "social work" and "government,"

highlights the policy-driven nature of welfare research, indicating that much of the scholarship is concerned with governance, public policy interventions, and welfare state adaptations in response to demographic diversity.

The temporal analysis reveals that earlier research (pre-2010) focused heavily on economic disparities, socioeconomic, and human rights, while more recent studies (post-2015) emphasize migration, immigrant integration, and multiculturalism. This shift suggests that contemporary social welfare discussions increasingly consider the challenges posed by global migration and demographic shifts, requiring more nuanced welfare policies that accommodate diverse populations.

Furthermore, the bibliometric analysis shows that keywords like "interpersonal communication" and "human experiment" are emerging trends, suggesting that researchers are exploring new methodologies and intervention strategies in welfare provision.

One of the dominant themes in the literature is the relationship between social welfare and cultural diversity. The bibliometric mapping highlights key discussions surrounding the balance between universal welfare policies and targeted interventions for minority and immigrant populations. Scholars have debated whether welfare policies should be designed based on universal principles—applying equally to all citizens—or whether they should be differentiated based on cultural and socio-economic needs. The presence of terms like "multiculturalism," "cultural anthropology," and "human rights" suggests that many studies examine how cultural factors influence access to and the effectiveness of welfare programs. Another important research trend is the role of migration in shaping welfare policies. The network analysis demonstrates strong connections between "migration," "ethnicity," "immigrants," and "government policies." This reflects a growing interest in how immigration affects welfare demand and policy responses. Scholars have investigated questions such as: To what extent should immigrants have access to social welfare benefits? What policies best promote integration while maintaining social cohesion? These questions are particularly relevant in light of increasing globalization and international migration patterns, which are transforming welfare landscapes in many countries.

The author collaboration network suggests that research on social welfare in multicultural societies is highly specialized, with distinct research clusters forming around leading scholars. Key figures such as Will Kymlicka and Alain Portera appear prominently, reflecting

their contributions to discussions on multiculturalism and welfare. Interestingly, the geographic collaboration network shows that while the United States plays a central role in welfare research, other regions, such as Australia and China, are developing independent but interconnected research streams. The link between Australia and China suggests that welfare policy research is gaining traction in Asia-Pacific contexts, where multicultural policies are becoming increasingly relevant. These findings indicate that while social welfare research is largely driven by Western academic institutions, there is a growing body of scholarship in other parts of the world, particularly in response to regional migration and cultural shifts. This underscores the need for more transnational research collaborations to develop globally relevant welfare policies that account for diverse socio-political contexts.

The findings of this bibliometric study have significant policy implications for governments, policymakers, and welfare organizations. The dominance of migration-related research suggests that policymakers must increasingly consider the impact of migration on social welfare systems and design policies that facilitate the integration of diverse populations while maintaining economic sustainability. Policies that enhance social cohesion, provide equitable access to services, and address socio-economic disparities should be prioritized. Moreover, the growing intersection between digital transformation and welfare provision presents opportunities for policymakers to leverage technology in welfare administration. The emergence of terms such as "interpersonal communication" and "human experiment" suggests that scholars are beginning to explore new, innovative approaches to welfare service delivery, including digital platforms for social support, AI-driven policy analysis, and experimental welfare interventions.

Future research should examine how digitalization can improve accessibility, efficiency, and inclusivity in welfare provision.

Despite the wealth of literature on social welfare in multicultural societies, the bibliometric analysis highlights several gaps and areas for further exploration. First, while migration and cultural diversity are well-studied, comparative research on welfare models across different countries remains limited. Future studies should examine how different welfare regimes respond to multiculturalism and whether universal or differentiated approaches are more effective in promoting social inclusion. Second, the bibliometric data suggests that research on social capital and welfare outcomes is underdeveloped. While some studies have explored the role of community networks and interpersonal communication in welfare provision, more research is needed to understand how social capital influences welfare accessibility, policy effectiveness, and long-term well-being. Third, the role of non-state actors, such as NGOs, community organizations, and private sector welfare initiatives, remains an emerging but underexplored field. Given the increasing involvement of these actors in social welfare, further research should examine how public-private partnerships can enhance welfare service delivery and how alternative welfare models can complement state-driven policies. Finally, the impact of digital technologies on social welfare research and practice

represents an exciting avenue for future studies. As welfare systems become increasingly digitized, scholars should investigate how artificial intelligence, big data analytics, and digital platforms shape social welfare accessibility, personalization, and effectiveness. Understanding these dynamics will be crucial for developing adaptive and forward-thinking welfare policies in the digital age.

## 5. CONCLUSION

This bibliometric analysis provides a comprehensive overview of the evolving research landscape on social welfare in multicultural societies, highlighting key thematic trends, author collaborations, and policy implications. The findings reveal that migration, cultural diversity, and government policies are central themes shaping the discourse on social welfare, with an increasing emphasis on digital transformation and innovative welfare delivery models. The dominance of Western scholarship underscores the need for broader transnational research collaborations to develop globally relevant welfare policies. Additionally, gaps in comparative welfare studies, the role of non-state actors, and the impact of digitalization on welfare accessibility present critical areas for future research. Addressing these gaps will be essential for fostering inclusive, sustainable, and effective welfare policies that adapt to the changing needs of diverse populations in an increasingly interconnected world.

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