

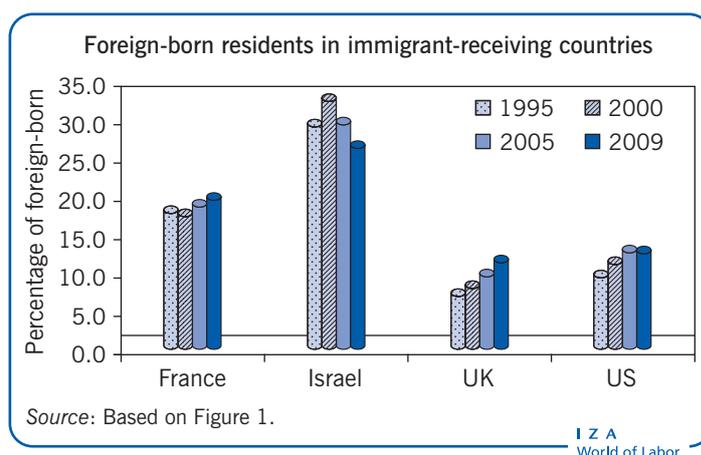
Superdiversity, social cohesion, and economic benefits

Superdiversity can result in real economic benefits—but it also raises concerns about social cohesion

Keywords: ethnic diversity, social cohesion, innovation

ELEVATOR PITCH

Empirical studies have found that achieving superdiversity—a substantial increase in the scale and scope of minority ethnic and immigrant groups in a region—can provide certain economic benefits, such as higher levels of worker productivity and innovation. Superdiversity can also provide a boost to local demand for goods and services. Other studies have found that these benefits can be compromised by political and populist anxieties about ethnic, religious, and linguistic diversity.



KEY FINDINGS

Pros

- ⊕ Studies find a diversity dividend of higher productivity and innovation for regions and cities with large immigrant populations.
- ⊕ Diversity creates an environment for the cross-fertilization of ideas that contributes to creativity and innovation.
- ⊕ Investments and increased local aggregate demand created by diversity encourage product and process innovation.
- ⊕ Superdiversity reflects and contributes to new global connections and a local or international cosmopolitanism.

Cons

- ⊖ Superdiversity challenges the assumptions and practices of a shared civic culture and citizenship, and raises concerns about social cohesion.
- ⊖ Anxieties about the growing diversity of labor markets and communities have been associated with discrimination and anti-immigrant politics.

AUTHOR'S MAIN MESSAGE

Superdiversity can lead to positive social and economic benefits for welcoming communities and economies. However, the benefits can be compromised by the anxieties and hostility of some community members. The scale and growth of cultural diversity have implications for social cohesion, economic performance, and social mobility. Policy is critical in addressing these dimensions to realize the potential of superdiversity. Governments can support intercultural dialogue, adopt anti-discrimination laws, improve credentials recognition, promote language training and job search techniques, and ameliorate disadvantage that impedes social mobility.