Migration, Multiculturalism and Democracy

A Resource Guide

Migration, Multiculturalism and Democracy

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This Resource Guide is part of a series designed for readers, including students and practitioners, interested in exploring further some of the themes and issues raised in *The Global State of Democracy 2017: Exploring Democracy's Resilience* (International IDEA 2017). The contents of the series reflect the topics of each chapter in the larger report, presenting current and past debates and key concepts related to each topic. This Guide complements Chapter 7, 'Migration, social polarization, citizenship and multiculturalism' (Ebead and McDonough 2017).

Societies are now much more multicultural and democracy may therefore manifest itself differently in response to the imperative of inclusivity that such cultural diversity can bring. Countries have struggled with the social polarization that migration policy has invoked, and governments have faced political and practical difficulties in making economic, social, cultural and political policy choices on migration.

This Guide explores the literature on migration and democracy. It begins with an historical overview of migration, illustrating how migration has shaped demographic and social realities historically, and how patterns of migration have contributed to the creation and construction of national identities over time. It examines the democratic principles, institutions and approaches available to give 'voice' to often voiceless migrants and their communities. It also provides a list of online resources and references to related scholarly literature.

The Global State of Democracy aims to provide policymakers with an evidence-based analysis of the state of global democracy, supported by the Global State of Democracy (GSoD) indices, in order to inform policy interventions and identify problem-solving approaches to trends affecting the quality of democracy around the world. The first edition, published in 2017, explores the conditions under which democracy can be resilient and how to strengthen its capacity as a system to overcome challenges and threats.

The full report can be accessed online: <http://www.idea.int/gsod>.

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1. Introduction

In the first two decades of the 21st century, the world has witnessed a significant wave of global migration. Migration can occur as people respond to 'push factors' linked to conflict, poverty, climate change, state fragility and civil war, and these have generated unprecedented refugee flows. At the same time, migrants can in some ways be 'pulled' towards host countries, drawn by the relative safety, hopes for employment and prosperity, and opportunities for development that neighbouring or distant lands appear to offer.

The year 2016 saw the greatest number of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the world since the end of World War II, as some 60 million people globally fled their homes due to violence and conflict (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees 2016). A poignant example is the dangerous trans-Mediterranean migration, which has seen thousands of people attempt to make the difficult passage. In fact, nearly 363,000 people migrated using this route in 2016 and the rate of flows increased in 2017 (UNHCR 2017). Research on this particular crisis shows that the people on the move are from a wide variety of countries in the Middle East and Iran, the Horn of Africa and sub-Saharan Africa, fleeing conflict, violence and poverty (Wittenberg 2017).

Host societies at the receiving end have consequently become increasingly multicultural as new demographics call into question the long-standing national identities of relatively homogenous nations. Migration flows can introduce new tensions into society and new political dynamics. Recent trends in Western countries have highlighted the challenge of Islamophobia and conflict around a range of social issues, such as those surrounding the wearing of face-covering veils in public (Kiliç, Saharo and Sauer 2008; Geddes 2003).

Debates over acceptable levels of migration and the principles of the approach to migration policy have resulted in strong polarizations in many contexts. In societies were migrants face political, economic or social exclusion, for example in India, Russia or South Africa (OECD 2013; see also Calavita 2005 on southern Europe), they may also face threats to their security from xenophobic discrimination and even violence. The transit countries for undocumented migrants in Latin America and the Caribbean—such Mexico, through which Central American migrants travel on their way to the USA—have also struggled with migration policy (for an in-depth analysis of such migration routes, including Mexico, see Mainwaring and Brigden 2016). In these instances, migrants are often pushed by their vulnerability into armed criminal violence or poverty, as well as food insecurity and social exclusion.

Amid rapid social change, migrants find themselves in new countries and societies where they may become long-term or permanent residents, but remain cultural 'outsiders' and—typically—be excluded politically as non-citizens. A first issue to address is the importance of immigrants having the legal status to be enable them to participate in political life. Innovative approaches to such status articulate the rights and responsibilities of migrants and mechanisms for consultation and communication on policy issues. Migrants may face discrimination in employment, housing, access to education, and freedom of religion and belief. For migrant children, this discrimination can have lifelong psychological and social effects (Brown 2015).

When the United Nations Secretary-General, António Guterres, took office in early 2017, having previously been the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), he urged countries to embrace the reality of multiculturalism in the wake of current increased migration flows. At the time, he noted that multicultural countries are the engines of global growth and development, and that longstanding, exclusionist views of 'the nation' are at odds with current realities. Secretary-General Guterres observed that

Nearly 363,000 people migrated using the trans-Mediterranean route in 2016, and the rate of flows increased in 2017

recent elections have featured sharp polarization over migration issues in public debates, and urged a response to the tensions generated by migration that is consistent with the democratic values of tolerance, inclusivity and respect for human rights. He noted that:

> In the current atmosphere of rising xenophobia, it is essential to have a clearheaded understanding of the facts. Most of today's 244 million international migrants travel in a safe and orderly fashion with the requisite documents. Migrants often perform critical jobs and send remittances to their families in what amounts to a major contribution to development. Many risk their lives in dangerous journeys only to suffer discrimination and even abuse in new lands. States have a right to control their borders and a duty to protect their citizens—both their physical safety and their ability to earn a decent living. States must also protect and assist migrants in vulnerable situations, ensure basic rights for all, and provide a safe haven for refugees.
>
> (UN 2017)

This Guide describes the historical context for migration in the 21st century. It explores the effects of migration on the politics of host countries and considers ways to respond to the Secretary-General's admonition to states to address migration responsibly in a way that is consistent with human rights—not least the right to participate in political processes that directly affect people's lives.

2. Historical context: migration up to the 21st century

Migration is not a new phenomenon: successive waves of migration have shaped countries and societies. Just like today, the drivers of prior waves of migration were rising populations and changing population dynamics. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has compared the dimensions and patterns of the current migration crisis in Europe with historical periods. Its 2015 study offers a wider perspective on the scale of the current crisis, which nonetheless is in many ways unprecedented (OECD 2015). The unprecedented nature of the current crisis was underscored by a report by the UNHCR, Global Trends 2016, which found that 65.6 million people had been forcibly displaced from their homes in 2016, up from 33.9 million in 1997 (UNHCR 2016: 2). Migrants fled war and conflict in Burundi, Central African Republic, Iraq, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria and Yemen (UNHCR 2016). The migration crisis has strongly affected many of the consolidated, Western democracies. The OECD reported that there were 4.8 million migrants in 2015, of which 1.65 million sought asylum in OECD member countries (OECD 2016: 10).

It is important to be aware of historical patterns of migration. Today's often polarized discourse on migration in democracies fails to acknowledge that most contemporary states are, in their way, the product of earlier waves of migration. After the colonization of North America and Latin America and the Caribbean, migration from Europe increased in the post-Columbian period, as approximately 11.3 million Europeans migrated to the 'New World' by 1820 and some 8.7 million African slaves were transported there. The transition to free migration increased the share of free migrants as a proportion of the total population of the Americas from 20 per cent in the 1820s to 80 per cent by the 1840s (Williamson 2006).

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The USA, for example, demonstrates how many countries with strong anti-migrant sentiments among a large proportion of their population are suffering from a selective historical memory. The 2016 presidential election campaign of the populist Donald J. Trump featured strong anti-migrant rhetoric, for instance, but in the USA the number of immigrants increased markedly in the decades up to 1913 and again after 1950. It is also important to note that, before World War I, mass migration was largely unrestricted, without visas, quotas or security barriers. This historical detail stands in stark contrast to Trump's campaign pledges to implement a blanket ban on Muslim migrants and build a wall between the USA and Mexico. Since Trump's election, incidents of hate speech, xenophobia and racism have shown a marked increase in the USA (Okeowo 2016). Frances Fukuyama has explored the evolution of these contemporary dynamics in the USA, reflecting on the ways in which migration affects national identity and democracy, and requires societies to ask the fundamental question: 'Who are we?' (2006: 19).

In many countries, including the USA, industrialization, the rise of new technologies and the search for better livelihoods induced people to migrate. Similar forces may be at work today, with the addition of the strong push factor of environmentally induced migration (for a bibliography of research on climate change and migration see International Organization for Migration 2012). Improved health and nutrition and falling child mortality rates increased demographic pressures in European countries during the industrial age, leading to the 'first wave of globalization' between 1870 and 1913. This took place during a period of free trade, capital mobility and the gold standard, known as the 'age of mass migration' (Hatton and Williamson 1998). In this period, around 60 million people migrated from Europe to countries such as Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, New Zealand and the USA. Migrants came from 'core and peripheral Europe', or from France, Germany and the United Kingdom, as well as Italy, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, the Scandinavian countries, Spain and the former nations of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. In Latin America, the main destination country for European migrants was Argentina, which received almost seven million immigrants. A relatively large number of European migrants also moved to Chile, Cuba, Mexico and Uruguay (Solimano 2004: 1–2).

Since the end of World War II, mass migration has taken place under what are known as restricted entry regimes (Williamson 2006). In the post-war period, migration increased

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RESOURCES

Online reporting on migration

For annual reporting and updated data on the scope of and issues in around international migration, these annual publications provide authoritative data and deeply informed analysis:

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), *State of the World's Refugees* (2000; 2012; forthcoming), ‹https://global.oup.com/academic/product/state-of-the-worlds-refugees-2016-9780198786467?cc=no&lang=en&›

International Organization for Migration (IOM), *World Migration Report* (every three years since 2000), ‹https://www.iom.int/world-migration-report›

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), *World Migration Outlook 2016* (Paris: OECD, 2016), ‹http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/social-issues-migration-health/international-migration-outlook-2016_migr_outlook-2016-en›

drastically due to the existence of armed conflicts and large-scale natural disasters, growing global inequalities and new international agreements liberalizing personal movement (Castles and Miller 2009). Even so, annual immigration rose only gradually after World War II, The share of the population born abroad increased by about one-third in Oceania between 1965 and 2000 (from 14.4 to 19.1 per cent), more than doubling in North America (from 6 to 13 per cent) and more than tripling in Europe (from 2.2 to 7.7 per cent) (Williamson 2006). Since the 1980s, Europe has become a destination for immigrants from Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and the Middle East and Iran. After the fall of the Berlin Wall, Western Europe absorbed increasing numbers of immigrants from the countries of the former Eastern bloc. Immigration from Eastern Europe to Western Europe increased fivefold between 1985 and 1989, and first exceeded one million a year in 1993; older patterns of migration within Europe returned after the end of the Cold War (Williamson 2006).

The current migration wave is characterized by unprecedented numbers of undocumented, informal or 'illegal' (see Dauvergne 2008) immigrants; religious identities different from those of mainstream society; and a tendency of emigrants to maintain closer ties with their countries of origin. In the 21st century, migrants originate from ever more diverse economic, social and cultural backgrounds, and receiving countries often see different patterns than has historically been the case. Contemporary migration flows feature all types: voluntary and involuntary migration, temporary and permanent labour migration, as well as refugee and family reunion migration (Abel and Sander 2014).

3. The global governance of migration

Migration is a contemporary global governance challenge that cannot be adequately managed by states acting alone. While international migration still lacks a coherent global institutional framework in terms of a comprehensive global charter or agreement to manage the challenges, there is a network of international organizations within and outside the United Nations working with governments to tackle different aspects of migration and refugee issues. Among these are the IOM, the UNHCR, the International Labour Organization (ILO), the World Bank (including its Global Knowledge Partnership on Migration and Development project, KNOMAD), the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Trade Organization (WTO), all of which have various programmes and projects on migration challenges.

The unprecedented increase in flows of migrants since 2005 and the migration crisis triggered by the conflicts in Libya, Syria, South Sudan and Yemen since 2011 led in September 2016 to a United Nations General Assembly high-level summit to address contemporary migrant and refugee movements. Migration-related objectives and targets were included in the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, recognizing the multidimensional nature of migration, and stressing the need for resilience in host communities, the importance of international cooperation and the vulnerabilities of migrants and refugees. According to the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, at least 10 of the 169 targets in the Agenda refer to 'issues directly pertaining to international migration, migrants, and mobility'. In addition, the July 2015 Addis Ababa Action Agenda calls on UN member states to combat xenophobia and to facilitate migrant integration through education and social communication (UN 2015).

The UN General Assembly summit meeting resulted in the long-proposed integration of the IOM into the UN system in 2016, creating a new UN Migration Agency. It also led to a pledge by UN member states to start negotiations leading to an international

Migration-related objectives and targets were included in the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda

conference and the adoption in 2018 of a global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration. Such an agreement would represent a significant step forward in that migration will be guided by a set of common principles and approaches. It was also agreed that guidelines on the treatment of migrants in vulnerable situations should be developed, which would be of critical importance to the protection of migrant and refugee children. Finally, it was agreed that UN member states would work towards a more equitable sharing of the burden of and responsibility for hosting and supporting the world's refugees to be adopted in the global compact on refugees in 2018. The implementation of these key objectives will need to be the focus of national and local government efforts in close cooperation with international organizations, civil society and the media.

Regional consultative processes now function in many parts of the world. These bring together representatives from states, international organizations and sometimes NGOs for non-binding, informal dialogue around migration issues, providing governments with an opportunity to discuss and increase understanding of migration issues, build trust and harmonize regional positions. Regional and subregional organizations such as the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States, the Southern African Development Community, the Organization of American States and the European Union have made increasing efforts to tackle the challenges posed by migration by developing comprehensive policy frameworks on migration, including forced migration.

Regional consultative processes now function in many parts of the world

These comprehensive policy frameworks have served to set important human rights standards for governments on managing migration in the regions, even though they often lack implementation mechanisms. These instruments could be further developed to include objectives to strengthen research and data collection on the links between democracy and migration, and to formulate concrete measures to foster integration, including migrants' political participation and involvement in decision-making processes—particularly at the local level—with a view to strengthening democracy. At least, however, there is clarity on global norms on the rights of migrants and the responsibilities of countries to protect migrants' fundamental human rights. If people leave their countries, their basic rights are protected under international law. Countries have obligations to ensure the protection of these rights, which are part of and consistent with a broader set of protections for minorities (UNHCR 2010).

4. Politics and policies: challenges and opportunities

The literature on the comparative politics of migration focuses on the myriad and complex ways in which migration has become a deeply polarizing issue in, for example, contemporary Western European countries and the USA (Schain 2012). Other democracies have also seen social polarization around the question of migration, including episodes of xenophobic violence—a type of political violence in which the basis for the targeting is citizenship status and 'belonging' in the nation based on negative attitudes or political cultures of exclusion or within-group bonding at a highly individual psychological level (Yakushko 2009). South Africa, for example, has seen episodes of xenophobic violence, primarily against other Africans such as Somalis, Nigerians and Congolese (Tella 2016). In India, too, violence against Nigerians escalated in 2017, as have discrimination against and intimidation of African immigrants in Russia. Migrants are often wrongly accused en masse of participation in terrorism, culpability for violent crime, taking jobs from locals or in some cases—such as more recently in the case of the approximately one million Chinese merchants in some African countries—engaging in exploitative economic practices (see Park 2016).

To tackle the challenges of migration to democracy at the global and regional levels, governments and policymakers should move away from promoting the norms of non-intervention and take a long-term approach to cooperation and assistance by international and regional organizations. The absence of objectives and measures to promote and strengthen democracy in the key international migration and protection regimes exposes the need for a global dialogue and consensus on what democracy means as a shared common value and principle of the global community. This would help to provide a basis for the political will to tackle many of the challenges that migration poses to democracy, and to effectively foster the social integration of migrants into their communities. Social integration is about increasing feelings of belonging by reducing exclusion, preventing and reacting to discrimination, and ensuring the key rights of migrants to livelihoods, education and health care (Rudiger and Spencer 2003).

Governments can contribute to the adoption of international standards on migration through their participation in global and regional organizations. In so doing, they should ensure that democratic principles—particularly the need for inclusive measures to enable migrants' political participation, promote social integration and enhance cultural understanding—as well as better data collection on the benefits of migration to democracy are included in the objectives, targets and goals of international instruments, action plans and frameworks.

This is particularly true in relation to meeting the migration-related goals and targets in the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, described above, which will require the input, cooperation and commitment of national and local governments. In addition, governments are the key actors in making monitoring mechanisms for the implementation of regional and international migration instruments effective, and in the follow-up of set objectives with national implementation policies. Governments can also use international and regional forums to engage in dialogue and exchanges of good practices, in order to learn about effective solutions to managing migration.

> Governments can contribute to the adoption of international standards on migration by participating in global and regional organizations

RESOURCES

Relevant International IDEA publications

T. Sisk (ed.), *Democracy at the Local Level: The International IDEA Handbook on Participation, Representation, Conflict Management and Governance* (Stockholm: International IDEA, 2001), ‹http://www.idea.int/publications/catalogue/democracy-local-level›

Reynolds, A., Reilly, B. and Ellis, A., *Electoral System Design: The New International IDEA Handbook* (Stockholm: International IDEA, 2005), ‹http://www.idea.int/publications/catalogue/electoral-system-design-new-international-idea-handbook›

Ellis, A. et. al, *Voting from Abroad: The International IDEA Handbook* (Stockholm: International IDEA, 2007), ‹http://www.idea.int/publications/catalogue/voting-abroad-international-idea-handbook›

Kemp, B. et. al, *Political Party Dialogue: A Facilitator's Guide* (Stockholm: International IDEA, 2013), ‹http://www.idea.int/publications/catalogue/political-party-dialogue-facilitators-guide›

International IDEA, Voting from Abroad Database, ‹http://www.idea.int/data-tools/data/voting-abroad›

The principles of accountability, rights and responsibilities form the basis for democratic management of migration within countries. The arenas at the national level in which democracy and a principled approach to migration interact are found in citizenship laws, pathways to citizenship, voting behaviour and minority rights, as well as local level governance and spatial or settlement policies. These arenas require a multi-level perspective and their complexity has spawned scholarly interest in a new research agenda to untangle the complex relationships between migration policy at various levels (Piper and Rother 2015).

Finally, migration should be recognized not only as a challenge, but also as an opportunity. Migration, as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has emphasized and documented, is an engine of economic development and can have strongly beneficial effects for technology transfer and innovation, and for redressing imbalances in local labour markets. In addition, migrants remit money to their country of origin, which is important for local development and poverty alleviation (UNDP 2009).

However, the benefits of migration are not only economic. Research has investigated the complex and, at times, vexatious ways in which diaspora communities engage in the economic, cultural and political affairs of their homeland. Diasporas typically remain deeply involved in their countries of origin (Brinkerhoff 2011). As explored in the chapter in The Global State of Democracy on which this Guide is based, a new body of literature suggests that migrants do more than remit money. They can return home or seek to influence politics there with ideas and a mentality that claims the right to democracy (Batista and Vicente 2011; Chauvet and Mercier 2014; Lodigiani and Salamone 2015). Research on Mexico has assessed the ways in which democratic ideas travel across borders with returned migrants—so-called democratic diffusion (Pérez-Armendáriz and Crow 2010). Similarly, research on Nepal underscores how returning migrants have been at the forefront of mobilizing for access to justice back home (Paoletti et al. 2014).

The benefits of migration are not only economic

5. Responsiveness: local-level democracy in multicultural cities

Beyond the politics of and policies on migration in receiving countries at the national level, the reality of the permanence of migrants means that countries are becoming increasingly multicultural. This is most evident in today's growing cities, to which most migrants gravitate (Schiller and Çaglar 2010). While national-level dynamics such as pathways to citizenship, amnesties for undocumented migrants or those who crossed borders illegally, and deportation policies can be highly charged, there is space for finding ways to reconcile immigrants' non-citizenship status with democracy at the local level.

Such opportunities are either formal, in terms of the extension of local voting rights to permanent-resident immigrant non-citizens or the establishment of immigrant consultative bodies, or informal, such as through dialogue processes or initiatives to build social cohesion and promote the social, economic and cultural integration of migrants and their communities. Sarah Song has made a compelling case for the enfranchisement of immigrant resident non-citizens from a democratic theory perspective, for both local democracy and expatriate participation (Song 2009). Such approaches are consistent with an overall sense that residency without citizenship should not mean forfeiting fundamental democratic rights (Beckman 2012). Such rights imply that, practically, policy should be focused on easing pathways to citizenship for immigrant non-citizens over time.

There is a growing recognition among governments of the key role that local and urban authorities play in migration governance, as enablers to promote the potential contributions of migrants for the benefit of their societies. Cities address many of the

immediate, day-to-day challenges of migration, such as housing, service provision, employment access and the facilitation of migrant integration at the local level. Local and urban authorities can make important contributions to the resettlement, reintegration and engagement of returning migrants and diaspora communities.

One example of an innovative approach to sharing such contributions is the International Metropolis Project, an international network of researchers, policymakers and community groups engaged in issues of migration and diversity. Another, the Cities of Migration project (n.d.), seeks to improve local integration in major immigrant receiving cities around the world through learning exchange and information sharing. The Mayoral Forum on Mobility, Migration and Development (UNITAR n.d.) aims to advance migration- and development-related dialogue and cooperation among the world's municipal leaders, regional authorities and mayors.

Public policies to address common problems such as the spatial aspects of settlement— or preventing 'ghettoization'—and ensuring access to health care and education, preventing radical extremism among disaffected migrant groups and organizing community policing are critical to long-term approaches to the successful social inclusion of migrant communities at the local level. A 2012 report for UN-Habitat provides an extensive overview of urban public policy on migrant communities, while other scholars have reaffirmed the importance of migrant inclusion in local-level governance (Price and Chacko 2012; Beckman 2013).

6. Multiculturalism, civil society and social cohesion

To function effectively, democracy requires a certain degree of social cohesion. Failures to address multiculturalism and polarized politics in country and city-level contexts affected by migration and rearranging social dynamics undermine democracy, in terms of both the quality of democracy for those enfranchised and the rights of migrants. In Western European countries, South Africa and the USA—all affected by recent waves of migration—there is an increasing emphasis on fostering social cohesion or trust in society. This has included efforts to clearly define the concept and to measure the degree of trust and feeling of common belonging and destiny (Jenson 2010). In the long term,

RESOURCES

International IDEA resources on democracy in multicultural settings

International IDEA's State of Local Democracy (SoLD) Assessment Framework is a practical resource that enables citizens to conduct self-assessments of the democratic life of their locality, identify democratic strengths and weaknesses, and translate these into reform agendas for further broadening and deepening their local democracies.

More generally, *Democracy at the Local Level: The International IDEA Handbook on Participation, Representation, Conflict Management and Governance* (2001) explores the meaning, practice and policy options for complex, contemporary governance at the local level. It reviews a wide range of participatory approaches and methods of consensus building, and discusses inclusive governance through civil society and stakeholder engagement.

Both are available for download on the International IDEA website: ‹http://www.idea.int/data-tools/tools/state-democracy-assessments/state-local-democracy-framework›.

overcoming the polarization that migration can evoke will involve both formal policies and programmes by the state and efforts to bridge the gaps in multicultural societies in order to promote social cohesion.

In multicultural settings, social cohesion can be fostered when civil society cuts across lines of division in society. Civil society can build bridges across divides by articulating shared values of a common destiny or an inclusive vision of communities; promoting parity of esteem (or mutual respect and tolerance, and working against perceptions of second-class citizenship); and creating networks of influential local leaders able to communicate and interact with others across lines of social difference (Varshney 2001; Cox and Sisk 2017).

In other words, enduring and effective democratic responses to migration are very much a matter of building, developing and fostering a civil society that bridges the social and economic divides that separate migrant communities. In so doing, civil society can help redefine and renew the meaning of a democracy rooted in the concepts of human rights and the dignity of all, regardless of their nationality or place of origin.
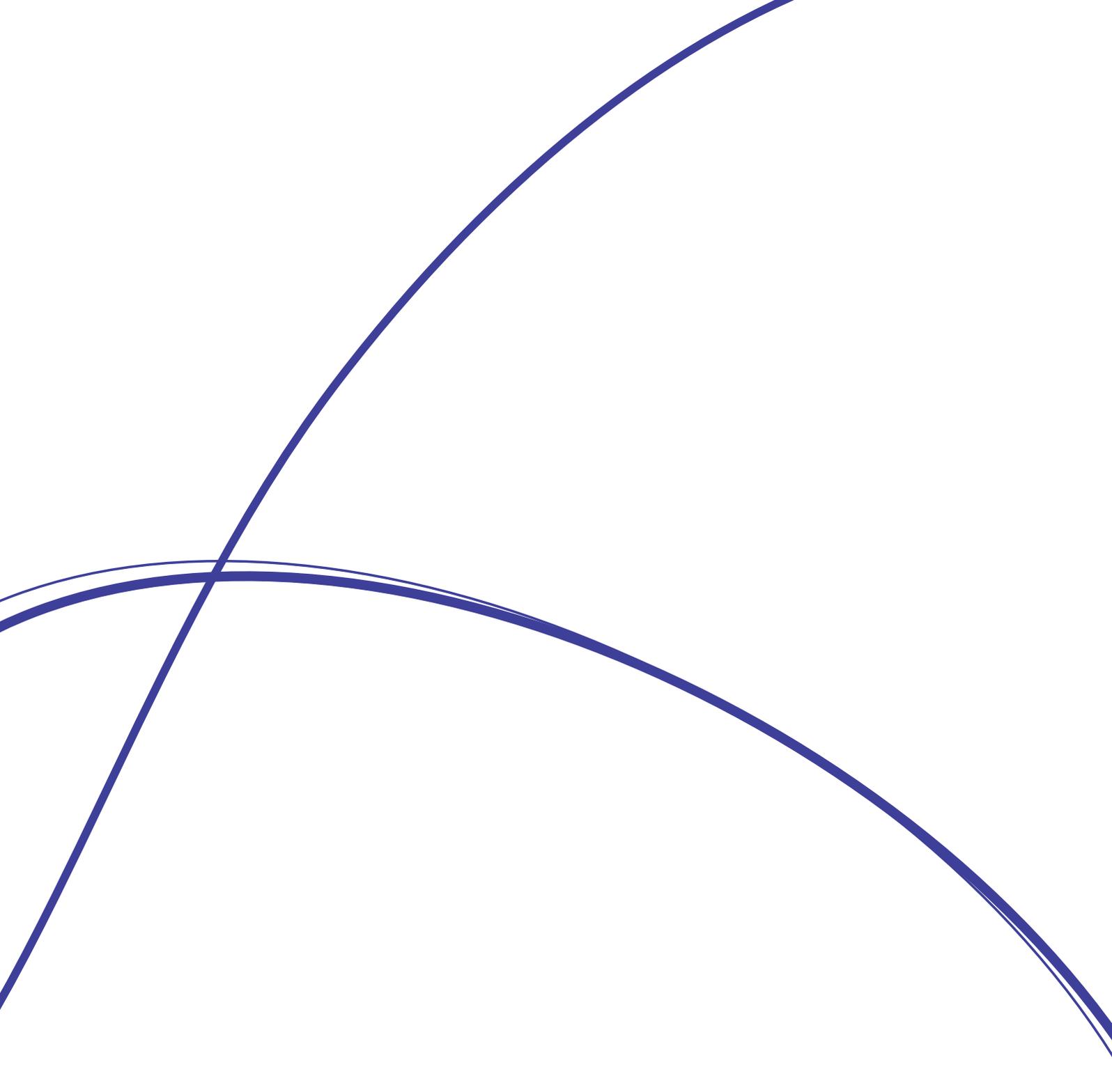
In multicultural settings, social cohesion can be fostered when civil society cuts across lines of division in society

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