

Title Neighbourhood Houses and Bridging Social Ties  
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Research Question: Does the participation of newcomers in Neighbourhood Houses contribute to the formation of bridging social ties?

Importance: Bridging social ties – ties with those from different ethnic communities – can provide access to diverse social resources that can help the settlement process. Bridging ties may also contribute to a sense of belonging in a new place. Understanding the role of voluntary associations, and Neighbourhood Houses specifically, in the formation of bridging ties can help improve the settlement experience of newcomers to Vancouver and Canada.

Research Findings: We find that Neighbourhood Houses play an important role in integration and settlement by bringing diverse groups of people into contact. We find that targeted, instrumental types of participation can lead to more diverse tie formation and that general, expressive types of participation can lead to homogeneous tie formation.

Implications: Through further research on association participation and bridging ties, we can help direct policy and practice towards the important task of integrating newcomers through the formation of diverse social ties. We recommend expanding the scope of existing settlement policy and programs to assist newcomers at the neighbourhood level where they confront opportunities and obstacles in their everyday life.