



Sociological Briefing

Friendship and cross-ethnic relations: make the difference!

Research shows the importance of interactions and friendships to support social cohesion and wellbeing, and the increase of multicultural societies creates the challenge of building cross-ethnic friendship. The works in this arena are being incorporated into research related to the sociology of migrations or cultural studies, among others. Sociologists around the world address this research topic in very diverse regions and societies.

The author of “Cosmopolitan social infrastructure and immigrant cross-ethnic friendship” published in *Current Sociology* investigates the role of associations as a location for making cross-ethnic friendships, paying special attention to the cosmopolitan associations. The article focuses on the Canadian context and it uses data from the Ethnic Diversity Survey. The results show that “cosmopolitan social infrastructure contributes to participants’ having cross-ethnic friendship groups”.

Immigrant friendship, cosmopolitan perspectives, and cosmopolitan social infrastructure

This work includes the cosmopolitan perspectives and the cosmopolitan social infrastructure in the study of immigrant friendship. The referenced authors in the theoretical sections address aspects such as sociability, encounters in diverse contexts, or the shared sense of

humanity among newcomers. The debates related to assimilation are also incorporated in the analysis, but more recently, it also includes the relevance of friendship with migrants from diverse national backgrounds. Moreover, voluntary associations and participation play a very relevant role in this research topic. Depending on the diversity of participants, the author uses the distinction between sorting or cosmopolitan associations. The sorting and cosmopolitan associations include hypotheses: while the participants in sorting ones are less likely to have cross-ethnic friendship groups than those who do not participate in associations, the participants in cosmopolitan ones are more likely to have cross-ethnic friendship than those who do not participate in associations.

Advancing knowledge in cross-ethnic friendship

The author uses quantitative data from the Ethnic Diversity Survey in Canada, explaining the steps developed to obtain and analyze the data. The results are detailed according to the suggested models and hypotheses and test the robustness of the findings. Some of the results demonstrate that “participation in a cosmopolitan association is associated with newcomers having more cross-ethnic groups” and that “participation in sorting organizations is associated with co-ethnic friendship outcomes”. Therefore, the association

types are relevant for the understanding of the impact of participation on the creation of cross-ethnic friendship. In this vein, participation in cosmopolitan associations shows a comparative increase in cross-ethnic friendship groups, which also becomes vital for newcomers.

The analysis of friendship and interactions in the framework of associations is socially relevant, in particular when different cultures participate in cosmopolitan associations. The sociological knowledge supports the evidence discussed in other fields about the role of friendship as a crucial dimension of social life.