

Exploring Sense of Belonging in Toronto: A Multigenerational Perspective and Social Sustainability

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Abstract : In the dynamic urban landscape of Toronto, the concept of belonging assumes paramount importance. As global challenges—such as the pandemic, financial instability, and geopolitical shifts—reshape our world, understanding how different generations of immigrants establish connections within this multicultural metropolis becomes increasingly vital. Our research delves into forming a sense of belonging in urban spaces, specifically focusing on the experiences of Iranian immigrants residing in Toronto. By examining their perceptions of public places, attachment to residential neighborhoods, and the impact of the urban environment, we contribute to a more holistic understanding of social sustainability and community well-being. We unravel the intricate interplay between individual characteristics, housing context, and neighborhood dynamics through qualitative interviews and a quantitative survey. This research presents a study of the perception of public places and sense of belonging in residential neighbourhoods by younger and older Iranian immigrants living in the Toronto metropolitan area. Few works in the existing literature have investigated the relationship immigrants develop with the shared spaces of the city and their residential environment and how that relationship can impact the development of a 'sense of belonging' in the city. Ultimately, our findings pave the way for inclusive and cohesive urban environments, fostering connections across generations and enhancing Toronto's resilience and harmony. As Toronto continues to evolve, nurturing a sense of belonging becomes paramount. Our research emphasizes the importance of social cohesion and community well-being. By fostering connections across generations, we pave the way for a more resilient and harmonious city.

Keywords : sense of belonging, multigenerational, urban spaces, social sustainability

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