

## Suburban Dreams

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Immigrants arrive in Canada's metropolitan centres and naturally gravitate to their cores. A poor-quality, low-income rental property quickly becomes known as home. With time comes opportunity, and the dream of moving to the suburbs, neighbourhoods that are painted with better schools, green spaces and dream homes. According to urban social geographer Carlos Teixeira, this has been a common experience of the immigrant populations he studies.

A Portuguese immigrant himself, Teixeira's research interests encompass a wide variety of ethnic immigrant groups and migration processes. Housing is a key factor in the integration of new immigrants in Canada and is, accordingly, at the core of Teixeira's research.

"You need to have access to affordable, decent, quality housing, to really help you integrate and become part of the tapestry or the mosaic of this country," says Teixeira.

Teixeira's research explores the impacts of immigrants in shaping Canadian cities and neighbourhoods. Ethnic neighbourhoods evolve as immigrant concentrations in urban and suburban neighbourhoods redefine the physical, cultural and economic landscapes, in conjunction with the establishment of institutions, such as churches, social clubs, ethnic media and ethnic businesses. These important elements of Canadian urban life have led Teixeira to study the forces facilitating, as well as the barriers impeding, Canadian ethnic community building, ethnic entrepreneurship and residential mobility.

Teixeira's expertise in immigration and housing is reflected in his role as the Priority Leader of the Research Domain "Housing and Neighbourhoods" for Metropolis Canada, an organization with a mandate to promote comparative research and public policy development on migration, diversity and immigrant integration in urban areas in Canada and around the world.

While much of Teixeira's work has been centred in Toronto and Montreal, he has recently added the Okanagan Valley to his social laboratory, studying ethnic entrepreneurship and housing experiences of immigrants in the valley. Urbanization, with its characteristic rapid development and population growth, is redefining the landscape of the Central Okanagan today, with the City of Kelowna ranking as the third most expensive real estate market in Canada.

According to Teixeira, the impact of immigration on Canada's smaller urban areas and rural regions has largely been off the radar for scholars and public policy debate. "Given that immigration has been identified as an engine of economic growth, the fact that newcomers, including immigrants and refugees, may face significant barriers in securing affordable housing in the region has policy implications of interest to politicians, planners and community workers."

