

Title: **The Housing Situation and Needs of Recent Immigrants in the Vancouver Metropolitan Area**

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Research Question: Census data are brought together with the Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada to investigate several issues: the type and quality of housing associated with immigrants in metropolitan Vancouver; the affordability of housing for immigrants; and the impact of immigrants on the housing market.

Importance: Increasingly, population growth is led by immigration, especially in the larger cities of Canada such as Vancouver. Housing is a “bottom line” element in successful integration; without adequate and affordable housing, immigrants will not be able to participate in Canadian society effectively. At the same time, it is vital to understand how immigrants are transforming the housing market.

Research Findings: Compared with other large cities in Canada, immigrants in Vancouver are more likely to own their homes and to reside in single-detached houses. In general, therefore, immigrants experience a *progressive housing career*. These tendencies are apparent within six months of landing in Canada and appear to intensify over time. This high level of ownership is disproportional to the level of household income received by immigrants and indicates that they are strongly motivated to purchase property, and are willing to under-consume in other areas in order to do so. Immigrants also have a higher level of crowding than the Canadian-born, which is related to their efforts to purchase housing (i.e., by assembling more income-earners in a household). However, while the trajectory of upward mobility in the housing market is true for many, it is not universal. A significant proportion of immigrant households cannot afford to purchase housing and are instead in relatively precarious circumstances in the rental market and some are at high risk of homelessness. There are important variations in the quality and affordability of housing across different admission classes of immigrants, and between those who are of European vs. visible minority background.

Implications: Immigrants have a major impact on the housing market, given their high demand for rental housing (apartments and flats) upon arrival and tendency to purchase housing over time (single-family, detached houses). The fact that many immigrants experience acute affordability problems is a significant concern, and speaks to the need for greater emphasis on the provision of affordable housing in Canada.