



Suburban Nation: Canada's Post-1945 Suburbs

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ABSTRACT

We routinely hear that Canada is one of the most urbanized nations (80 %+), but all that tells us is that less than 20 % of Canadians live in rural areas. Most Canadians live in post-1945 suburbs. This research project estimates the size and growth rate of Canada's suburban population and considers the policy implications associated with these historic trends. Of course, the size of the suburban population will depend upon the definition of a suburb, and there is currently no standard definition. Suburbia is a loosely defined concept.

The method for this paper involved analysis of census information from 1946 to 2006 for a pilot study in Ottawa-Hull. Multiple definitions of suburbia were tested with a Geographical Information System (GIS) and Google Earth, guided by different suburban policy interests (i.e. housing, transportation, density). Two suburban definitions with some potential were then tested for eight other metropolitan areas. The results from the proposed definitions indicate that a surprisingly large proportion of Canadians live in post-1945 suburban environments.

KEY WORDS: Suburbs, Canada.