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Recent years have seen an increasing gap between the cost of housing and lower/middle class incomes in Canada. Housing affordability was rated “seriously unaffordable” in Canada's major metropolitan areas. Likewise, there has been sharp increase in housing prices in Israel spiking at a real rate of 43%.

Government plays a key role in the housing market, thus this issue is high on the policy agenda. Moreover since the 1990s, construction of small housing in Israel has decelerated (only 5% of new construction) while average size has increased 12%. This is not confined to Israel. In 1975, the average size of a house in Canada was 1,050 square feet, but by 2010, average new house size had almost doubled to 1,950 square feet.

Small residences are supposed to be more affordable, suitable for small households, promoting social and cultural diversity. So one would actually expect *increased* availability.

Is there a gap between the need for small dwellings and its supply in Israel? In Canada? My proposed research goals include:

- Identifying, investigating and analyzing:
 - Local authority databases to quantify the need/supply gap.
 - Environmental and social benefits (can the built environment encourage behavioral change? For example do small dwelling residents have more sustainable consumption habits? Do smaller dwellings actually strengthen a sense of community?).
 - Market for small dwellings: even though demographic trends imply an increase in demand, there's no evidence to support this hypothesis. There has been little research on the factors influencing single-person households despite their growing proportion.
 - Appropriate policies and actions to promote small residences (e.g. economic incentives, regulatory intervention).
 - Correlations between living in smaller spaces and physical activity patterns.

Concluding that small dwelling residences encourage more sustainable behavior will further bolster urban environmental and public health objectives. A better understanding of small household housing options will provide useful insights applicable beyond Israel and Canada to regions characterized by shrinking households and growing residence sizes.