

Consultation publique sur la le racisme et la discrimination systémiques
Opinions sur le Logement et le Profilage racial

Étudiants/tes de 1ere année en Techniques de travail social
Document soumis par Marie-Eve Dufour, T.S., Enseignante
dans le cadre du cours Addressing Social Problems 1
Collège Dawson

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Racial and Cultural Profiling

How we see the problem:

We have all seen instances of police or STM security discriminating or harassing visible minorities in Montreal, specifically black, Indigenous and Muslim people. This racial profiling can be seen both on the news and in our daily lives as we go about the city. While privileged white majority residents of the city are treated one way by police and other officials, we feel that racialized residents who do not have this privilege are subject to much more negative treatment when they interact with police.

All too many times, we have witnessed abuse of power (derogatory comments, unnecessary use of force) in police interactions with racialized groups.

What should be done:

To start, the City should implement all 31 recommendations made by the previous public consultation to begin addressing the issue of racial profiling in Montreal. Further, we believe that in light of ongoing cases of racial profiling and discrimination by police and other officials, there should be a full judicial inquiry with the power to call witnesses and investigate the overall problem in the city. Investigations of officers who have been accused of racial profiling and other abuses should be made open to the public. This would increase accountability and help restore the public's faith in the fairness with which the police deal with the population.

Changes to hiring practices to drastically increase the proportion of visible minorities working for the SPVM and STM to better reflect the diversity of the city. There should also be education

and training for cultural sensitivity and about how to serve racialized communities in a non-discriminatory fashion.

Random street checks should be banned as this practice reflects inherent biases and primarily targets people of colour. Police and STM security should also be trained in techniques for de-escalating conflicts, as currently we perceive that police frequently escalate situations where there has either been a very minor infraction or no infraction at all.

To ensure that changes are made in the overall culture of these organizations, we also recommend that serious efforts are made to promote visible minorities in policing organizations, so that their perspectives and voices are heard when creating and implementing policies that affect minority groups.

Housing

How we see the problem:

Housing is a human right. Unfortunately, racialized persons face discrimination when trying to access rental housing in Montreal. Too often, the best housing is reserved for the privileged white majority. Gentrification in multiple neighbourhoods in Montreal is a good example of this. It is not only pushing underprivileged residents outside of their communities, but preventing racial and cultural diversity from flourishing in our city.

Measures supporting home ownership and funding for renovations also appear to be targeting mainly the white privileged majority.

With related issues of systemic discrimination in Employment opportunities (Bill 21 being a good example of this), racialized groups struggle to earn a stable, sufficient income, leaving them exposed to insecure housing. When Low-Cost Housing becomes available, it is often in run-down, poorly insulated, vermin infested buildings.

What should be done

Greater involvement from city leaders in ensuring that all boroughs in the city are inclusive is a global goal. This would mean more funding for Social Housing across the city (not only in disadvantaged areas of Montreal, which quickly become “ghettoized” and labelled as unsafe), supporting and providing incentives for businesses that offer quality, affordable food in all boroughs of Montreal (how many pet grooming salons does Pointe-St-Charles need?), implementing policies for rent control in the city to prevent owners from hiking the cost of rental housing, and financing subsidized apartments in healthy, clean buildings.

It seems there would be a need for a more streamlined system for complaints regarding housing rights violations relating to racial discrimination.

In order to be inclusive of Indigenous persons leaving reserves to study or work in Montreal, the City should offer support services to facilitate access to adequate, affordable housing.

Thank you for this opportunity.