


<p>Should I stay or should I go? The impact of gentrification on St-Raymond’s elderly population</p> <p>Researchers : Jean-Pierre Lavoie, Damaris Rose, Victoria Burns, Véronique Covanti</p> <p>Supervisor : Jean-Pierre Lavoie, Damaris Rose</p> <p>Date : March 18, 2010</p>	 <p>CURA Research Highlights 2010</p>
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Research aims:

According to several scholars the neighbourhood is more important to the elderly population than it is for younger generations. Older peoples’ social networks and daily routines are increasingly centralized around their immediate environment. As such, changes to an older person’s neighbourhood and/or the loss of neighbours could lead to severing important social ties, identity confusion and an increased risk of social isolation.

This qualitative study seeks to understand how residents aged 70 years and older in St-Raymond experience changes in their neighbourhood (if any) caused by the process of gentrification. We are exploring whether the process of gentrification has led seniors to move from St-Raymond. For current residents, we are interested in looking at how seniors’ perceptions of their neighbourhood may have changed, and whether the identified changes have influenced their experiences of social exclusion.

Research questions:

- (1) How does gentrification change seniors’ presence and involvement in the community (e.g., use of services, funding priorities, etc.).
- (2) How does it change their social networks?
- (3) What are financial repercussions? How does it affect their sense of identity?
- (4) What strategies do seniors adopt to combat the negative repercussions of gentrification, or do they take advantage of the changes and view them in a positive light?

Key results to date:

- 5 interviews have been conducted with seniors in St-Raymond (4 Italian home owners, 1 Anglophone woman living in an HLM; age range, 70-90 years).
- 4 interviews have been conducted with key informants (mainly from community organizations).
- The participants anticipate significant changes will occur once the Mega-hospital is built. Gentrification is seen as something that *could* happen rather than something that is currently occurring.
- Recognized changes: An influx of new immigrants to the neighbourhood (e.g., Caribbean, Inuit); the new community center was unanimously viewed positively, whereas the new condos on Upper Lachine Road were viewed as a negative addition to the neighbourhood.
- Contrary to the literature, St-Raymond seniors’ lives are less centered on their neighbourhood; they often leave St-Raymond for their shopping, services and various leisure activities.
- HLM residents appear to be less affected by changes than private-market renters and owners.

To come:

We plan to interview 10 current residents and 10 residents who have recently left St-Raymond.

Note: St-Raymond is 1 of 4 targeted neighbourhoods for this research project. Interviews are also currently underway in La Petite Patrie and two gentrifying neighbourhoods in Toulouse, France. The project is expected to terminate by the end of 2011.

<p><i>What population does the St-Raymond Community Center activities prioritize?</i></p>  <p><i>Who are the patrons of this new trendy restaurant?</i></p> 	<p><i>How much is being invested for St-Raymond’s seniors?</i></p>  <p><i>Who are buying these new condos?</i></p> 
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