



Scot Wortley
Associate Professor of Criminology
Graduate Coordinator

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FROM: Dr. Scot Wortley
Associate Professor
Centre for Criminology and Sociolegal Studies
14 Queen's Park Crescent West
Toronto, ON
L1Z-1L2
416-978-7124
Scot.wortley@utoronto.ca

TO: Board of Police Commissioners **TO:** Concerned Community Members
Halifax Regional Police Service

CC: Kymberly Franklin
Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission

RE: Update of Research Activities -- Street Check Investigation

This document is intended to provide a brief update of activities related to the investigation into the Halifax Regional Police Service's use of street checks and the impact such checks may have on the Black community. This investigation was officially launched on September 18th, 2017. There are plans to table the final report in the Fall of 2018. This update describes what has been accomplished to date and research plans for the upcoming months.

- On September 18th and 19th, 2017, I met with officials from both the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission and the Halifax Regional Police Service to discuss research needs, the research strategy and the parameters of the final report. During that period, I received several preliminary HRP datasets from which the final analysis could be planned;
- September to November 5th, 2017. Commenced literature review. This stage of the process includes a review of the historical literature on race relations within Nova Scotia and the relationship that has existed between the police and the Halifax region's Black community. It has also involved the compilation of more contemporary publications – including government reports – that have explored issues of race, racial bias and the operation of Nova Scotia's criminal justice system. Finally, the literature review also involves an extensive examination of recent Canadian, American and British research on racial profiling and how it relates to issues of carding, street checks and police stop, question and frisk (SQF) activities. This examination will also review studies that have tried to document the crime prevention potential of police street checks. This broader examination will help guide subsequent analyses of the HRP street check data and enable comparisons between Halifax and other jurisdictions;
- November 5th to November 10th, 2017. Research trip to Halifax. Conducted four community meetings with members of Halifax's Black community. During these meetings we heard about personal encounters with the police and how street checks have negatively impacted many members of the Black community. We also received feedback with respect to how research into street checks should be conducted. Finally, we heard recommendations for improving police-community relations and increasing public confidence in the broader criminal justice system;
- During my November visit I also met with NSHRC officials to plan future community meetings (meetings that will specifically target youth populations) and discuss alternative community outreach activities. Plans were put into place to conduct an internet survey that will be designed to capture the experiences, attitudes and opinions of a larger sample of Halifax residents. This survey will compliment data derived from police statistics. We are currently designing the survey questions and sample recruitment strategy. We hope to enter the field with this survey early in the new year;
- During my November visit I also met on several occasions with Chris Giacomantonio -- a crime analyst with the HRP. Dr. Giacomantonio began by tutoring me on the HRP Versadex data management system. A decision was made to conduct the final analysis on all data collected up to the end of 2017. We discussed the need to merge the street check dataset with other sources of police information including general occurrence data, criminal conviction data (from the Department of Justice) and neighbourhood-level crime data. We also noted the recent release of data from the 2016 Canadian Census. We have thus made plans to obtain updated race-based Halifax-region population data from Statistics Canada. This data will improve the accuracy of any Census or adjusted Census benchmarking used during this investigation. Finally, Dr. Giacomantonio have started to design a sub-study that will investigate how frequently HRP crime analysts use street check data and whether the use of this data helps solve crimes and/or reduce regional crime rates;

- Dr. Giacoantonio and I also discussed the HRP/Public Safety Canada online survey pilot panel will that will go into the field in early 2018. This survey includes a wide variety of questions measuring citizen experiences with and attitudes towards the police. To better meet the needs of the current investigation, there are now tentative plans to enhance this survey by adding an additional sample of 200 Black Halifax residents to original sample of 500 respondents (total sample=700). Results from the HRP/Public Safety Canada Survey will further compliment the analysis of official police records.

NEXT STEPS (TENTATIVE)

JANUARY 2018

- Plan to travel back to Halifax for three or four days. Will work with Dr. Giacomantonio and other HRP crime analysts to build the final street check dataset. This process will involve pulling the data from Versadex, anonymizing it, and merging information from a variety of different datasets (i.e., street checks, general occurrences, etc.). This process may also include merging HRP data with data on criminal convictions from the Department of Justice;
- Conduct focus group with HRP crime analysts. Will also meet with HRP crime analysts to refine and finalize the sub-study measuring their use of street checks. Data collection for this phase of the project slated to run from February to April 2017;
- Finalize NSHRC online survey and begin data collection. Tentative data collection period for this phase of the project: February to April.