INTRODUCTION

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Over the past two decades, issues of racial profiling as part of police practices in Canada have come into the public spotlight. Complaints about racial profiling and racial bias are increasingly being brought to Canadian courts and human rights tribunals. Allegations of "driving while black" and "flying while brown" have become common place. Public controversy currently surrounds issues regarding practices such as "carding," "stop-and-search" procedures and "policing at borders" have raised serious questions about the scope of police powers. Significantly, racial profiling is also an issue in other public institutions such as health care and education. These complaints involve allegations that racialized and First Nations peoples are being treated unfairly in the context of Emergency Departments, school disciplinary processes, and customs searches. These concerns have been driving the need for new policies that address racial profiling. Yet, unlike for example the United States or the United Kingdom, a relative lack of scholarly research has prevented a detailed portrait of the extent to which racial profiling is a systemic problem in Canada, and has inhibited the development of sound public policy solutions.

In February 2016, the Ontario Human Rights Commission in partnership with the York University Centre for Human Rights, the York University School of Public Policy and Administration, and the York University Institute for Social Research hosted *The Racial Profiling Policy Dialogue* which sought to learn more about people's experiences of racial profiling, and effective measures to address and prevent it. The policy dialogue event engaged a diverse audience of community members, academics, human rights lawyers and practitioners, and organizational representatives from a wide range of sectors – including affected Indigenous, racialized and Muslim individuals and communities, as well as organizations like police, school boards and child welfare agencies among others.

The dialogue event was designed to produce the first compre-

hensive and collective examination of racial profiling triangulated from multiple lenses on racial disparities in treatment undertaken for enforcement of ostensibly legal purposes in different social environments including, education, the workplace, and the service sectors, not just police. The vision for the policy dialogue was to provide a measured approach to the understanding of racial profiling, by bringing a diverse range of leading stakeholders together for rational dialogue and meaningful engagement, while helping to inform the development of new OHRC policy guidance on racial profiling. To these ends, the policy dialogue consisted of of series of sessions organized around five major themes, including *1)* the social and historical context and experience of racial profiling, *2)* definitions of racial profiling, *3)* types of racial profiling, *4)* new, emerging or contested forms of racial profiling, and *5)* preventing and responding to issues of racial profiling.

The essays in this special issue of Canadian Diversity are the product of *The Racial Profiling Policy Dialogue*. All of the contributors were participants in the policy dialogue and offered substantial insights into the nature and consequences of racial profiling, and how to move the discussion forward in the framing of a policy in Ontario and elsewhere in Canada for the elimination of racial profiling.

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