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8th Advisory Board Meeting of NIOC Pakistan held on June 05, 2020

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Former Director General Federal
Investigation Agency

Fiaz Khan Toru

Member NIOC AB:
Former Inspector General of Police

Zahid Hussain

Member NIOC AB:
Eminent journalist particularly
specializing in countering terrorism

Samina Ahmed

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Zubair Habib

Chairman CPLC Karachi, Member
NIOC AB:
For community outreach.

Fasi Zaka

Member NIOC AB:
Communications expert. To steer the
advocacy campaign.

Tariq Khosa

Director

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Muhammad Ali Nekokara

Deputy Director

Hassan Sardar

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NIOC DIRECTORATE

Director's Message

THE National Initiative against Organized Crime (NIOC) has completed its pilot project phase of 8 months since inception from November 2019. During this initial phase, it has gained due recognition both at national and international levels.

This achievement would not have been possible without invaluable advice and guidance of NIOC Advisory Board led by Mr Tariq Parvez, former Director General Federal Investigation Agency and first Head of National Counter Terrorism Authority. The other advisory board members played an active role in helping NIOC achieve its objectives according to the mandate. My heartfelt gratitude to Fiaz Khan Toru, Zahid Hussain, Samina Ahmed, Zubair Habib and Fasi Zaka.

I must acknowledge the quality work by Kashif Noon, Consultants/ Lead Researcher who was associated with the project since inception.

Ammar Jaffri joined as Consultant/Communication Strategist in May 2020. He is driving NIOC's Community Outreach Strategy. Three webinars held in June 2020 owe their success to his technical expertise and assistance.

A small NIOC Directorate is all about excellent team work. Amir Rana, Secretary, has provided platform of Pak Institute of Peace Studies Islamabad. He continues to be the moving spirit coordinating the activities of NIOC. His most significant contribution is to come up with Corona Crime Watch Weekly Review since start of April 2020. NIOC is closely monitoring the Organized Crime during Coronavirus Pandemic in Pakistan and sharing our review with the Global Initiative Resilience Fund in Vienna.

Deputy Director NIOC Ali Nekokara is a professional to the core. His contribution has been excellent.

Hassan Sardar, Manager Administration and Finance is spearheading all administrative and financial matters with utmost integrity and professionalism.

In short, NIOC has taken off and the Project enters the second half of 2020 with great confidence to make a difference against organized crime in Pakistan.

Tariq Khosa
Director

Minutes of NIOC's 8th Advisory Board Meeting

THE 8th Advisory Board Meeting of National Initiative against Organized Crime (NIOC) was held on Friday, 5th of June 2020, virtually through Zoom platform. Mr Tariq Parvez, President AB, chaired the meeting. The AB members including Zahid Hussain, Samina Ahmed, Zubair Habib and Fasi Zaka participated. Mr Fiaz Toru could not attend due to some personal commitments. Director Tariq Khosa, Deputy Director Ali Nekokara, Secretary Amir Rana and Manager Administration Hassan Sardar participated. Both NIOC Consultants as well as Lead Researcher Kashif Noon and Communication Strategist Ammar Jaffri also attended.

Minutes of the 7th AB Meeting, held on 15th of May, were approved.

Highlights of the meeting including decisions made are listed below:

- Secretary Amir Rana presented outline of a policy brief on “Terrorism and Covid-19.” After a discussion about some latest developments in the context of resurgence of militancy, the outline was accordingly approved. Amir Rana will finalize the policy brief in the 3rd week of June.
- Policy briefs on “Drug Trafficking in Karachi,” “Drug Situation in Pakistan” and “Human Smuggling and Trafficking in Pakistan” were approved for further dissemination and publication; these have already been edited. Policy briefs on “Terror Financing” and “Cyber Crimes” would be edited soon and finalized by mid-June.
- Consultant Kashif Noon presented an outline of a draft “National Strategy against Organized Crime.” He was asked to submit the first draft by 15th of June.
- Consultant Ammar Jaffri presented an outline of “Community Outreach Strategy” that would be put in place in the second half of 2020. He was asked to finalize the same by 15th of June.
- [The meeting was apprised that] in accordance with the decision taken in the 7th AB Meeting on 15 May, NIOC organized first Roundtable on Terrorism and Covid-19 on 4 June. Director NIOC Tariq Khosa moderated the discussion. Three eminent panelists Zahid Hussain Samina Ahmed and Amir Rana carried out a very professional discussion. Director

NIOC presented a six-point national agenda at the end of the discussion by recommending the way forward for Pakistan.

- Next NIOC webinar will be hosted by AB Member Fasi Zaka on 18 June on the topic of Cyber Harassment during Covid-19.
- NIOC's Plan of Activities for July-December 2020 were discussed. It was agreed to expand the scope of NIOC mandate to include the full spectrum of terrorism as it poses a main threat to Pakistan through Organized Criminal Networks. Emphasis will be placed on CT and CVE strategies.
- Another area of focus was criminal justice reforms in the context of OC. Director NIOC informed that Justice Asif Saeed Khosa, former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Pakistan, will join NIOC as Criminal Justice Advisor. He will be associated in an honorary capacity.
- As AB Member Fiaz Toru is very committed in his personal ventures, he asked not to be included in the Advisory Board from July 2020. Director NIOC informed that Jawaid Akhtar, former deputy chief constable of the West Yorkshire Police UK had agreed to be a Member of NIOC AB. He has vast experience in dealing with organized crime in the UK.
- Director NIOC also sought proposals from AB Members about the performance of NIOC since its inception on 01 November 2019. While some suggestions were made, the Members undertook to convey those through email to the Director.
- President AB Tariq Parvez informed the members about a USIP Initiative on Police Reforms Follow-up in Pakistan. He wanted collaboration from NIOC for this initiative. Since justice sector reforms would be part of the expanded mandate of NIOC from July, the members assured him of support.
- OC National Strategy will be released in the last week of June before completion of NIOC Pilot Project phase.

Blundering into Disaster

By Zahid Hussain
Member NIOC AB

IT was a surreal moment listening to the prime minister as he warned the nation of more coronavirus deaths while removing restrictions that could contain the spread of the deadly infection. His latest words highlight the recklessness that defines the federal government's approach while dealing with an existential crisis.

With almost all restrictions on movement gone, it has now been left to the people to save themselves from the fast-spreading disease. The state has virtually abdicated its responsibility of protecting the people. The prime minister's latest remarks that he never favoured a lockdown are consistent with his original view that Covid-19 is just another form of the flu.

Not so much in a state of denial, the current leadership seems to be pursuing 'voodoo' methods. It's hard to believe that it would not have seen the alarming report on the large-scale prevalence of the disease presented by Punjab's health department almost two weeks ago, before going for an almost complete reopening.

The report had estimated that 670,800 people in Lahore alone might have been infected by the infection. "No workplace and residential area of any town is disease-free," the report based on both random and targeted testing had warned. In most communities, the infection rate is 5.18 per cent. The Lahore situation is just the tip of the iceberg. The situation may be even worse in Karachi with its much larger population.

In order to contain the further spread of the infection, the report presented to the provincial government on May 15 had asked for the imposition of a stricter lockdown for at least four weeks before Eid. Doctors and epidemiologists too have long been warning about the impending public health disaster and had desperately been calling for tougher measures.

Instead, the government further loosened restrictions on businesses, sweeping aside all precautions. Shoppers thronging markets and traffic clogging the roads in all the big cities presented a lawless sight. The clusters thus formed created a favourable environment for the virus to spread. The Supreme Court ruling days before Eid, ordering even malls to open appeared to give further impunity to the disorder. In the absence of law enforcement, the so-called SOPs were never taken seriously.

It was not just the shopping centres; even congregational prayers in mosques were allowed and shrines were opened for visitors. One wonders what that had to do with the economy and well-being of the 'poor people' that has become a common refrain in government circles as they remove restrictions.

Given this lax behaviour, it is not surprising that there has been an astronomical rise in the number of registered coronavirus cases and the death toll since the government set aside even a pretence of lockdown. The number is likely to multiply further as the effects of a complete reopening takes time to crystallise. Going by the Punjab health department's report, the situation appears extremely alarming.

Two days before the prime minister announced a virtual lifting of the lockdown, Pakistan experienced its deadliest day (92 deaths, doctors' among them) and the highest single-day rise in Covid-19 cases at 3,039. There was no mention of that in the prime minister's speech as he once again blasted his own government's decision to impose the lockdown.

Indeed, the chaos is more pronounced with a policy based on the leadership's whims rather than prudence. Now the prime minister wants to restart tourism despite the reservations by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Gilgit-Baltistan governments. It seems that our leaders are making it clear that human lives and public health matter little.

Pakistan is perhaps the only country that has prematurely reopened most spheres of life when the disease is far from reaching its peak. The latest data on Covid-19 prevalence in South Asian countries released by the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention belies the prime minister's claim that lockdowns have not worked in containing the pandemic.

India and Bangladesh having imposed stricter lockdowns have now a lesser percentage of cases in terms of population than in Pakistan where it has seen a rapid increase in the past two weeks. The prevalence rate in Pakistan is almost double that in India. Sri Lanka with its timely actions has flattened the curve thanks to measures taken earlier.

These countries may be in a much better position to gradually start reopening. They have more or less the same proportion of younger population as Pakistan making them relatively less vulnerable to the disease. But that has not stopped them from taking preventive measures unlike us.

Because of the confusion in policy, we could neither contain the disease nor create conditions for the quick revival of the economy. Most amusing is the claims of some federal ministers that the entire world is now following the 'vision' of their great leader. What they don't want to understand is that the spread of the disease will not only have serious consequences for public health but also for quicker economic recovery.

The top leadership's constant refrain is that it is the poorest section of the population that gets affected by the restrictions and the closure of economy. One cannot deny that fact, but what is not being realised by our leaders is that the uncontrollable spread of the disease would have far more serious consequences for the working classes. The Punjab health department's report clearly shows that the infection is much more rampant among the lower-class neighborhoods and congested localities.

This situation could have easily been contained with timely action. Had the government been more serious about the lockdown in the first two months, things would have been much better now for people to go back to work sooner. This unregulated and premature reopening has created far more problems for the country. There is still time to review this controversial approach to the crisis before the situation gets completely out of control.

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Coronavirus Pandemic Puts Police in the Spotlight in Pakistan

Health crisis reveals challenges and offers an opportunity for police reform.

BY: Zoha Waseem and Adnan Rafiq

POLICE in Pakistan have found themselves in an unprecedented situation since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic earlier this year. Under-resourced and poorly trained, they have struggled to ensure compliance with public health restrictions – such as lockdowns and social distancing – against a backdrop of Pakistan’s overarching governance challenges. With only outdated legal frameworks and conventional training and education to rely on, the police have largely responded to violations with corporal punishment, detentions, and arrests – actions that have been reported by the media and widely condemned.



A police officer searches a voter during a repeat of the parliamentary election in Karachi, Pakistan, May 19, 2013. (Diego Ibarra Sanchez/The New York Times)

This situation is not unique to Pakistan. Police have been thrust into the spotlight around the world as they assume the role of first responders to the pandemic. This role has increasingly brought police officers into contact with citizens in politically charged environments that are supercharged by the twin public health and economic crises. In this atmosphere, a “soft policing” approach that prioritizes community engagement, empathy and compassion, rather than the traditional “militarized” approach typically adopted by police departments, is needed. Traditionally, public health emergency (PHE) preparedness plans have excluded law enforcement agencies and the security sector despite the fact that the police are first responders during such emergencies. This is partly due to valid concerns about securitizing public health. As a consequence of such exclusion and the disconnect between law enforcement and the public health sector, police have little guidance to rely on when responding to a pandemic.

Police officers also face personal health risks due to their proximity to infected persons and spaces and the fact that much of the constabulary lives in congested areas that lack proper health and sanitation facilities. At the time of writing, at least 17 Pakistani police officers had died of COVID-19 and at least 935 police officers and officials had tested positive for the novel coronavirus, which causes the disease, across the country’s four provinces – Sindh, Balochistan, Punjab, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa – according to data provided by provincial police departments.

Challenges

Standard operating procedures. One of the primary challenges facing the police in Pakistan is a lack of standard operating procedures (SOPs) designed for officers in the field, especially those on patrol and in police stations who have received substandard education and training.

Traditionally, in South Asia, restrictions on public assembly – such as those seen during the pandemic – have been enforced through legal frameworks that criminalize violations (such as Section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code, a colonial-era law inherited by Pakistan from the British). Such violations have been policed through corporal punishment that employs a disproportionate use of force, batons and stun guns. Although police departments have issued guidance on how to maintain public order and ensure citizens’ well-being during the current pandemic, reports of malpractice on the part of the police reveal a lack of preparedness for PHEs, in general, and the manifestation of a militarized, zero-tolerance policing approach, in particular, instead of empathy and compassion – or a “soft policing” approach.

Police-community relations. Influential groups have on several occasions successfully challenged the authority of the police. Some clerics, for example, have opposed the state’s containment measures, especially the restrictions initially imposed on religious congregations. The police have struggled to prevent worshipers from gathering at mosques. Similarly, the

police had to shut crowded markets in Karachi when shopkeepers failed to enforce safety measures suggested by the government after gradually reopening the economy in May.

The police have an important role to play in public health messaging. However, because of a lack of resources being invested in communication, especially social media, police departments have yet to design appropriate strategies to address public concerns during PHEs when civilians are more likely to turn to the police for information and assistance. This has further diminished the public's trust in the police.

Interagency coordination. There has traditionally been interagency conflict among the Police Services of Pakistan (PSP), the civil bureaucracy (Public Administrative Service [PAS]), and elected parliamentarians. The police have routinely demanded operational autonomy and lamented "political interference" in police work and practice. The PAS and parliamentarians, on the other hand, use police excesses to justify their involvement and oversight of the PSP. This institutional conflict exists across all three tiers of government: district, provincial, and federal. The struggle for control over the PSP impedes various initiatives toward police reform.

The current pandemic, however, has compelled the PSP, PAS and politicians to work together to stem the spread of the outbreak. Besides enforcing containment measures and raising awareness about the pandemic, the police are now also providing security to health care workers and assisting other agencies with the collection of data, testing, tracing, and quarantining of infected persons.

Police welfare and well-being. Despite some improvements in interagency coordination, police leadership has struggled to get funds from the federal government for police welfare during the pandemic. Although some provincial governments have agreed to provide financial support, a concerted effort to support the police is missing at the national level. This risks depletion of police resources and can exacerbate feelings of job insecurity, delay the provision of personal protective equipment to police officers, and possibly result in malpractice on the part of the police. In the event that COVID-19 infections continue to spread, the police will find themselves physically, mentally, and financially strained.

Opportunities

The challenges described above provide an overview of how the police are being tested by the pandemic in Pakistan. They also reveal opportunities for organizational learning.

Although official SOPs and guidelines were absent at the onset of the pandemic, the structures upon which the police could engage with the public health sector were already in place. Law enforcement and the public health sector have had a working relationship since 2012 when police teams were assigned to protect health workers during the polio vaccination campaign in

the wake of attacks by militants. (Pakistan has cancelled the polio immunization campaign as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.) Unfortunately, there is no evidence-based documentation of the experiential learning by police officers deployed with these teams.

The pandemic provides an opportunity for law enforcement agencies to build a knowledge base that draws upon both the experiential learning of officers in the field and public perceptions of the police during a PHE. This data can help design evidence-based policies for the police to enhance their public health function and response to future PHEs.

Learning from the pandemic also provides an opportunity for the police to bridge the gap between institutions and strengthen interagency coordination. For example, as discussed above, coordination among district administrations, health authorities, and the security sector is necessary for a holistic response to a PHE. However, a lack of trust, competition, and scapegoating impede the implementation of such a response. Strengthening police partnerships with the bureaucracy and elected representatives will be essential for responding to any post-pandemic socioeconomic crisis.

Furthermore, the police must seize this opportunity to improve their communication strategies and practices to ensure compliance with government guidelines and better police-community relations. This requires not just allocating resources for responding to public complaints, but also moving beyond counterterrorism policing—a style of policing that has dominated police policy and practice over the last few decades—toward community policing. Community policing demands a “soft policing” approach that is a shift from current militarized practices.

It is too early to tell whether policing styles in Pakistan will change as a result of this pandemic, but strong public condemnations of police excesses over the past few years have intensified calls for reforms. The pandemic provides an opportunity for police organizations to move in the direction of “serving the public” instead of defending it through the use of force. Such a shift could improve public perceptions of the police.

Recommendations

Based on the analysis above, police leadership should consider the following recommendations to improve their response to the ongoing pandemic and better prepare for future PHEs.

Training courses and modules should be designed to prepare officers for future PHEs. Compassion, empathy and service-oriented goals and concepts should be woven into these modules and lesson plans.

Investments must be made in transparent, accountable and flexible communication strategies. These strategies should prioritize improvements in online communication whereby the police

inform affected communities about how to respond during a PHE and in its aftermath, rather than “calling out” or publicly shaming violators on social media.

Furthermore, the police should start a conversation on the well-being and welfare of its officers and employees that not only includes financial compensation and job security, but also prioritizes mental health.

Interagency cooperation, which is necessary for a holistic response to a PHE, also needs to be improved. Such cooperation and collaboration should allow the participation of both government and nongovernmental agencies that respond to the socioeconomic consequences of a PHE, such as an increase in the number of cases of domestic violence.

Last, but not least, this is an excellent opportunity for the police to create an evidence base of their response to the current pandemic. This should be consulted, reviewed and evaluated once the pandemic is over to improve police practice, training, and policies. This evidence base should be accessible to academics and policymakers.

While the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the challenges facing the police in Pakistan, it can also serve as an opportunity for the police to evaluate their role during a health crisis and develop strategies to respond better to future PHEs. This is also an opportunity for introspection on the overall policing approach and for paying attention to areas that require improvement.

Leadership Matters

By Zahid Hussain: Member AB NIOC

So we are back to a 'smart lockdown' after a month of mayhem that has seen a relentless rise in the number of confirmed coronavirus cases in the country. There may be some signs of panic in the corridors of power with the latest projection crossing one million cases in the next few weeks, and yet there is no coherent strategy to deal with the crisis.

While the pandemic stares us in the face, the leadership continues to sow confusion with its flip-flops. There is still no sense of seriousness though the daily death toll is now over 100. Pakistan is now among the top 10 countries reporting the highest number of new daily cases of Covid-19. At this rate, the death toll could be in the thousands by the time the disease reaches its peak in mid-August.

With large numbers of medical staff down with the virus, the country's health system has already collapsed with hospitals turning away an ever-increasing number of patients. The federal government's reckless decision to reopen during the month of Ramazan, ignoring the warning by local and international health experts, has created a catastrophic situation.

While no section of society is safe from the rampaging virus, it is the poor and working classes that have been most affected by the infection. In a rare move, the World Health Organisation has urged Pakistan to return to lockdown. But the federal government has dismissed the warning saying the country could not afford a total shutdown. The prime minister continues to harp on his old anti-lockdown mantra.

Intriguingly, two days after he had rejected any move to reimpose the lockdown the National Coordination and Operation Centre (NCOC) ordered what it describes as a 'smart lockdown', sealing areas in 20 major cities and towns across the country. One wonders who made the decision.

It seems to be a repeat of the unilateral decisions taken by the provincial governments to shut down all business, ignoring the prime minister's advice against it in March. He has repeatedly denounced the move and even tried to undermine the efforts of the Sindh government to restrict movement and congregations. He was finally able to prevail and ordered the removal of all restrictions and reopened the economy prematurely. That wiped out success in mitigating the spread of the disease during the brief lockdown.

We are now in a much worse situation than we were a month ago as provincial administrations now move to impose restrictions in major hotspots. It may not be as effective as a complete lockdown for some period of time that health experts and the WHO has been asking for. But it's still better than the free-for-all approach witnessed for the past one month.

Given Imran Khan's scepticism regarding the issue of lockdown, one is not sure how effective even the few restrictions will be. The problem is that he and his followers genuinely believe that his government's handling of the pandemic was an example for the world to emulate. Sadly, the government's chaotic policy could neither save lives nor the economy.

Such a Trumpian style of self-glorification gives little hope for rectifying mistakes. The prime minister has his own ingenious idea of fighting the disease with his 'Tiger Force'. The elusive million-strong volunteer force is yet to be seen in action though there has been a claim of its being very effective in parts of the country. Such gimmickry cannot be a substitute for a comprehensive policy to deal with a serious public health and economic crisis.

Dealing with the global pandemic has produced stories of international success as well failures. Leaders who have taken timely and tough decisions have been able to mitigate the damage and have pulled out their countries from the crisis much faster. It is nothing to do with the size, population, and wealth of a nation; it is leadership and one's capability to think clearly in times of crisis that matter.

Surely decisions are not easy to make but that is what leadership is all about. Women have proved to be tougher and more decisive leaders. Most of the success stories are of countries ruled by leaders who have been able to unite the country and mobilise the masses.

Unfortunately, our leadership has failed on all counts. Mixed messaging and downplaying the problem have confused the public. As a result, people have never taken the infection seriously. The government was completely absent when it came to the enforcement of restrictions. It is unfair now to put all the blame for the spread of the infection on the people for not observing SOPs, which have never been properly defined. No state can leave the enforcement of the law to the discretion of the general public.

Instead of uniting the country in such challenging times, the PTI government has done everything to divide and polarise it. The selective application of anti-corruption laws has exposed the government to the allegation of a political witch-hunt. The government's so-called drive against graft is, in fact, a cover for its incompetence.

The pandemic is also being used by the PTI to cover up its failure to improve governance. The economy is in a shambles, and for the first time in 68 years, it has shown negative growth. It's

convenient for the government to entirely blame the pandemic and the less than two-month-long partial lockdown for the contraction, but it is not based on facts.

There is still time for the government to salvage the situation and take the battle against the pandemic more seriously. The prime minister has to change his flawed approach and show some leadership and clarity in policy. The government has to impose a strict lockdown for at least several weeks in order to reduce the number of infected people to a small fraction of the current numbers.

Saving lives is more important; that would also help a faster revival of the economy. The prime minister must not make it a matter of ego. He needs to follow the examples of leaders with success stories to tell rather than live in a state of self-deception.

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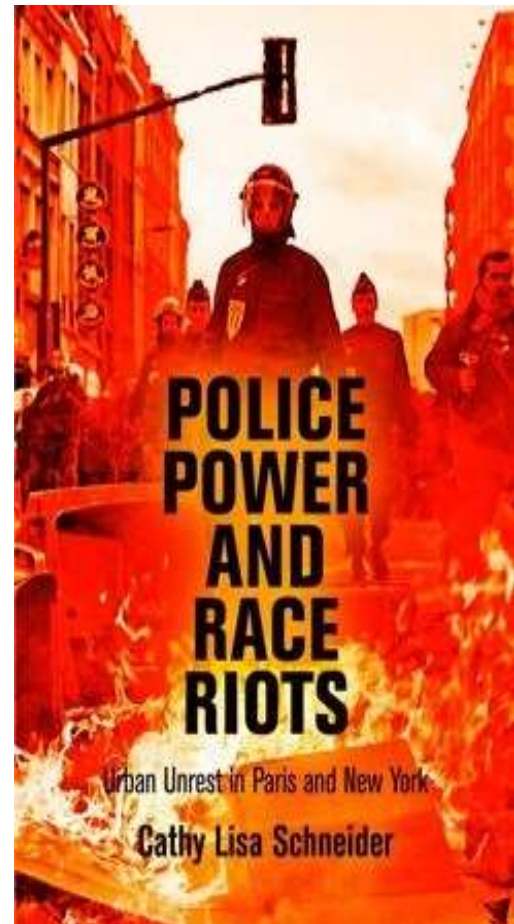
On Protests and Policing: A Conversation with Cathy Lisa Schneider

By Zoha Waseem: UVRN London

QUESTIONS about protests and policing are front and centre of current academic and policy debates. Since the killing of George Floyd – an unarmed black man – by a police officer in Minneapolis, protests and riots across American cities, and heated debates on police reform, abolition, defunding, racism, and brutality have left academics, policymakers, and practitioners divided. Floyd’s cry, ‘I can’t breathe’, has echoed across borders, leading to violent confrontations between protestors and police globally. Since the Black Lives Matter movement began in 2013, academic attention to systemic racism within American policing has increased across disciplines – from sociology to political science and economics.

In a special interview, UVRN spoke to Professor Cathy Lisa Schneider, who is based at the School of International Service, American University, in Washington D.C. Professor Schneider’s interest in protests and political violence began in Chile in the 1970s, under Pinochet’s regime. Her doctoral dissertation led to her first book, *Shantytown Protest in Pinochet’s Chile* (1995). After Pinochet fell, she worked on community organizing around drugs and AIDS in New York City. Her experiences with the police, and working with families affected by police brutality, led her to study policing, protests, and racial profiling in New York and Paris. In 2014, she published her second book *Police Power and Race Riots: Urban Unrest in Paris and New York*.

Your second book was published shortly before the Ferguson riots and shortly after the Black Lives Matter movement began. What do you think has changed in the last six years and what are your thoughts on BLM?



My book came out three months before [the unrest in] Ferguson. When BLM first appeared, I had been working with families and organizations dedicated to fighting police brutality for over 20 years [in New York City]. The Young Lords (the Puerto Rican partner to the Black Panthers) had created the Justice Committee 20 years before that – an organization helping families of unarmed people killed by the police and with whom I had worked during the 1990s in NYC. I viewed BLM as more of an internet phenomenon. Even when I interviewed Ferguson-based activists, they complained to me that no one in the media talked to them. They only talked to BLM, or asked them if they belonged to BLM. The activists also complained that when BLM activists were interviewed, they never gave credit to those on the ground in Ferguson. That said, I did like the name of the movement. In fact, in my 2008 article on riots in Paris I said the riots erupted because young people felt like their lives did not matter in France. I understand why the name of the movement has so much resonance.

I do not really know who began the call for police abolition, it was not initially on BLM's agenda. The Justice Committee has adopted the term 'defunding.' By that they mean reversing the bloating of the NYPD during the past four decades. They are asking that one billion of the NYPD's 5.9 billion-dollar budget be shifted to schools, after school programs, day care programs, mental health services and other community-based groups and that the police be removed from schools and mental health provisions. That is a position I whole-heartedly agree with. I'm not sure if 'defund the police' captures it appropriately. I am concerned that too many people hear 'defund the police' to mean abolish the police. We do want to dissolve police departments that are ridden with violence, corruption and racism, but then rebuild them from the bottom up, with a different relationship with the community.

In the last few years, there has been some discussion on bridging the gaps between policing and public health. What do you make of this?

I love the idea. Police reformers have tried to do that. But in politics, anything can get rolled back if you're not active and vigilant. John Lindsey [former mayor of NYC] did amazing reforms in the 60s, with one of the most corrupt police departments in the world. But he did it by bringing in more new officers. He created tactical units of highly disciplined, highly-trained (in de-escalation techniques) officers. He increased the number of police officers in the street and insisted that police supervisors be out with the rank and file. Lindsay also restricted the use of lethal force to those cases where another citizen's life was in imminent danger. He felt that if a police officer feels that their life is in danger they should stand back and call for reinforcements. Having more police on the ground reduces officer anxiety and makes officers less likely to overreact; as does having more supervisors. Lindsay wanted more police but more restrictions on what the police do.

Lindsay also empowered communities. He designated youth from these communities as peacekeepers, and hired them. He created communication task forces in the neighbourhoods as liaisons with the Mayor's office, to keep him abreast of problems before they exploded. He also funded an array of community-based organisations and summer programmes for youth. And then, one summer, he tried to cut the programmes for budgetary reasons. The kids organized a rebellion. They took over a highway and set barriers on fire. Lindsay surrendered and the programmes stayed. The kids who partook in those programmes had become really skilled at community organising. From there they created the NYC branch of the Young Lords, and the NYC Young Lords created the Justice Committee. So, a lot of the activists I worked with had been peacekeepers under Lindsay.



Protestors in Miami, June 7, 2020. Credit: Mike Shaheen

Some advocates for 'defund the police' are suggesting, however, that there is no role for the police in public health. But what you are saying counters that argument.

Yes, because the two have been combined successfully in the past; the police have helped facilitate a public health approach to public safety. Nick Pastore (former police chief of New Haven Police Department, 1990-1997), for example, took that kind of approach. He said that in any poor neighbourhood every family has someone, a son or a cousin, who they are tearing their hair out over – maybe drugs, maybe gangs, maybe just truancy. If the families think that,

by calling the police, their child will be sentenced for 25 years and the family will lose their public housing, they will see the police as their enemy. Pastore sought to turn that relationship on its head. He stopped giving merit raises and promotion for arrests and started giving them for working with the community to solve problems and to help families access public health services. There have also been cities – such as Vancouver – where police were involved in harm reduction reducing the spread of HIV and other diseases, overdose deaths, crime, street violence, jobs loss and personal unravelling that may be the unintended consequence of punitive approaches to drug addiction. Pastore's reforms were not permanent, but during his time as police chief, New Haven had larger drops in crime than New York did under [former mayor] Rudy Giuliani and [former NYPD police commission] William Bratton who were running around the world saying zero tolerance policing works.

When it comes to the ongoing debate on police reforms vs. abolition, it seems that you're perhaps open to the idea of reforms. Would that be correct to say?

What I would say is that the police have to be radically reformed, and the relationship between the police, public services and the communities needs to radically change. I think that there is a lot that's happening on the state and local levels. There's only so much the federal government can do. [California Senator] Kamala Harris (through the proposed legislation the Justice in Policing Act 2020) is advocating for a much larger role for the federal government, which I agree with. It's been very hard to do that, because you get so much resistance from localities that don't want the federal government involved. But we're at a moment where this has changed. It's the first time in American history where the majority of white people think that police have to be held accountable and that police do violate the rights of and use violence against Blacks and other people of color. We are at a remarkable moment. So, in terms of reforms, I don't want to lose that momentum.

Given how important this time is for policing in the US, and around the world, do you think reforms could lead towards de-militarized policing?

It should head in that direction. Trump's recent executive order (that calls for creating a federal database of complaints made against police officers for excessive force or other abuses of power) doesn't say anything about the militarisation of policing. Rather, Trump promised that there would be no funding cuts. He said that examples of police abuse are very rare (he has often encouraged them to be more violent) and that police should not use chokeholds unless the officers feel their life was in danger. Well, that is what they always say! There is no justification for giving police weapons of war, and encouraging them to act like an occupying army. They are supposed to be protecting and serving these communities. Some states have already passed or submitted strong reform bills, others have done nothing. Policing is local in the US, and that makes it very hard to have a coherent, nation-wide policy.



Minnesota National Guard Soldiers stand in front of the state capitol building in St. Paul, Minnesota, May 31, 2020. Credit: Sgt. Sebastian Nemeć

I imagine de-militarization efforts would require that the structure of the police be changed significantly. Do you think that these proposed reforms might lead to such structural, institutional changes?

I don't think it is hard to demilitarize. Police have been militarized since the 1990s, the combined result of the war on drugs and the growth in violent crime (which itself was partly the result of the gutting of gun control), on the one hand, and the Afghanistan and Iraq wars, on the other, which left the federal government with disposable military equipment. Even so, it was not uniform. I never saw tanks in NYC, although I saw them in Ferguson. The bigger problem is figuring out how to change the culture of police forces that have inculcated and reinforced racist attitudes and contempt for the citizenry. Minneapolis is an example. It elected a progressive mayor, who hired a reformist police chief, and the rank and file ignored both. They only respected and followed the policies advocated by the head of the police union, Bob Kroll, a white nationalist and a Trump supporter. What do you do when the police commissioner does not have control over his officers, or the mayor doesn't have control over the police? In these cases, it probably is necessary to dissolve the departments and rebuild from the bottom up, with a new mission statement and a new kind of recruit. Minneapolis was right

to dissolve its police department. But in other cities the problem is the political leadership, the mayor, the police chief, the voters and the governor.

There are police who want a very different relationship with the communities they patrol. It's not easy for police to work in communities where everybody hates them. It causes even those not predisposed against the community to feel more solidarity with the other officers. When that happens, they're more likely to refuse to break the blue wall of silence and inform on other police who abuse the rights of citizens. Their internal solidarity is based on the idea that 'we're the only ones who support each other, everyone else hates us.'



Protesters surround the Minneapolis Police precinct, May 27, 2020.

Are police unions responsible for creating roadblocks to police and criminal justice reforms?

Yes, they are a major obstacle. The Los Angeles police commissioner placed four police officers on desk duty after a string of excess force complaints against them. The police union sued the city. Those officers ended up back on the streets, with a \$2 million dollar settlement that the city had to pay. If the police commissioner can't take violent police off the streets because the union will sue, it is a very big problem. I understand that unions are needed to help negotiate for better wages and to protect officers from unjust layoffs, as unions do in other areas of work, but unions should not be defending police officers who kill unarmed and innocent members of the community. The police should not operate like a mafia.

How do you foresee the ongoing events and debates impacting the election campaigns in the US this year, with Trump calling himself the 'law and order' president?

To some extent, Trump is echoing Nixon. But Nixon was not the incumbent. Nation-wide riots erupted under his rival, so Nixon could say that the Democratic candidate, and the Democratic Party, were at fault. Nixon could say that he represented the “silent majority” that wants law and order. That is why it worked for Nixon. But unrest is happening during Trump’s presidency, so it’s not credible for him to talk about ‘law and order.’ It is Trump that is inciting unrest and demanding that the military attack Americans with rubber bullets, pepper spray, teargas to clear space for his photo-op. Add that to the worst pandemic and economic crisis in 90 years. His poll numbers have been tanking. I don’t think he’ll be able to rescue his campaign. His administration doesn’t think they can win the election democratically. That is why they are becoming more and more authoritarian. Our democracy is at risk.



Trump walks from the White House to St. John’s Episcopal Church, June 1, 2020. Credit: Shealah Craighead

What do you think is the key issue behind the tense relationship between the police and communities?

A policeman’s job is to protect and serve. We need to ask who are they protecting and who are they serving? The police tend to draw a boundary, and say that ‘this is the community I am protecting and serving, this is also the community that has power and influence. If I violate the rights of someone in this community, they are going to put pressure on the mayor, and he will put pressure on the police commissioner and I will get a call from my chief. I have to be respectful of this community’. And then there’s the community that is poor, or that the country has stigmatised, or both. These communities are defenceless, and the police know that. They also know that the public views members of these communities as dangerous, and the mayor and police commissioner will praise the officer’s ability to make mass arrests here. In other

words, these are the communities that society itself has dehumanised and made disposable. That is the problem. And that's why Ron Hampton – founder and former director of National Black Police Association – says that all black communities are asking is that the police behave in their communities in the way they behave in wealthy, white communities. “They know their job is to protect the civil rights of citizens in those communities. Why don't they know that in black communities?”

Human trafficking

THIS week, a seminar in the capital city highlighted that a disproportionate number of Pakistani women and girls were trapped in the human trafficking trade. Speakers informed participants that the ages of the victims ranged between two and 50 years old, and underscored the need for greater, nationwide efforts to create awareness of the presence of human trafficking rings, while providing survivors the help and tools they needed to reintegrate back into society. The illegal trade of people through the use of deception, coercion or force remains one of the most pressing issues of our time, but it is by no means a new phenomenon in human history. It may be talked about more now, but not enough, when keeping in mind the scale of this evil practice. While boys and men typically get entangled in vicious rackets for the purpose of forced labour, young girls and women in particular are susceptible to sex trafficking, lured by promises of employment and new wealth awaiting them in other lands, or through the use of brute violence and kidnapping. The shocking revelation of Pakistani brides being tricked into sexual slavery in China was perhaps just the tip of the iceberg. Mostly from poor Christian families in Punjab, the women married Chinese men in the hopes of a better life, only to find themselves sold into sexual slavery once they reached their new home.

While it is difficult to collect accurate data on such undercover activity – a fact acknowledged by all organisations working to end the practice – the UN released a report on global human trafficking trends in 2018, noting that a growing number of girls were the victims of this illicit trade. According to their findings, girls accounted for 23pc of all trafficking victims in 2016, while women made up 49pc. Many of the victims hail from conflict zones, and as they try to escape oppressive conditions of violence, discrimination and poverty, they become vulnerable to predators lurking in their midst. Eradicating human trafficking is on the list of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals for 2030. While Pakistan has made some progress when it comes to legislature – most notably, passing the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act last year – implementing the law on ground remains a challenge. According to estimates, thousands of Pakistanis become prey to traffickers each year, and with rising poverty and income disparity, the challenge will only rise.

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