

MELISSA

Welcome to today's MIT forum on policing in America and beyond. I'm Melissa

NOBLES:

Nobles, the Dean of the School of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences and Professor of Political Science here at MIT. I would like to begin by thanking the MIT Center for International Studies, the sponsor of today's events. I'd also like to thank our speakers. And of course, I thank you all for attending this webinar.

There are two parts to this event. The first part will focus on policing in America, the second on policing around the world. Each section will be about 45 minutes in length, and we will end at 1:30. The final 15 minutes of each talk will be reserved for Q&A from you.

If you haven't already, please find the Q&A feature on the bottom of your toolbar. This is where you can type in your questions. In addition, please pay attention to the chat feature, also on the bottom toolbar, where we will be sending out resource links such as bios, upcoming events, and other information that may be of interest to you.

So what brings us here today? The state of killings by police of unarmed black men and women, revealed most graphically and horrifically on video in the death of George Floyd, has ignited-- or more accurately, reignited-- debate about police abuse dating back most recently to the killing of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri in 2014. From Ferguson, the Black Lives Matter movement emerged.

Now, six years later, it feels as if we are in a different moment of possibility. George Floyd's death has started a long-overdue national conversation about policing and how policing practices and norms can better match the needs and requirements of a democratic society. Importantly, the current conversation about policing is international, as societies around the world grapple with many of the same issues that we are grappling with today-- police brutality, lack of accountability, and the need for better training, to name just a few.

We'll discuss the experiences of our neighbors in Latin America, Brazil, and Mexico in the webinar's second part. But first, we begin here at home. It is my great honor to introduce our featured guest speaker for our first panel, Rachel Rollins, Suffolk

County District Attorney. DA Rachel Rollings is the chief law enforcement official in Boston, Chelsea, Revere, and Winthrop, Massachusetts and oversees an office of approximately 300 people, handling approximately 35,000 new cases each year.

She took office on January 2, 2019 as Suffolk County's 16th district attorney, the first woman to be elected to that position in Suffolk County history and the first woman of color ever to serve as a Massachusetts district attorney. Please join me in welcoming DA Rollings.

**RACHEL
ROLLINS:** How are you?

**MELISSA
NOBLES:** Fine. Good to see you, DA Rollins.

**RACHEL
ROLLINS:** Ditto.

**MELISSA
NOBLES:** So I've got some questions for you that I'm sure will be of interest to our folks here today. And the first begins with your election. So your election in 2018 signaled public support for changes in the criminal justice system. You campaigned on a platform of reform, most significantly a policy of no longer pursuing prosecutions of lower-level, nonviolent crimes and instead discussed resolving those kinds of issues through community service, restitution, and et cetera. And your platform in certain ways is very much in keeping with today's calls for reforms. So with that, I wonder how you would judge your success so far in pushing reform.

**RACHEL
ROLLINS:** So first of all, thank you for letting me come and talk with you wonderful people. I think we are doing well, but there's still much more work to be done. So as a candidate, I was very different than many other candidates. I was older. So I was 47 at the time. I'm 49. I feel like I'm 149, but--

**MELISSA
NOBLES:** I bet.

**RACHEL
ROLLINS:** I'm, like, aging in dog years right now with all the work we're doing. But what happened was, Dean, I wanted-- I didn't want to trick anyone to get my job. I was very open and honest about exactly who I was going to be. I put my list of 15 on my

website six weeks before my primary. And I said, let's reimagine a criminal legal system where, with limited resources, we focus on violent, serious crimes rather than the nonviolent, non-serious crimes.

Now, I'm not saying that means commit nonviolent, non-serious crimes, and we won't respond. But I'm simply saying, rather than putting 80% of our effort into the nonviolent, non-serious crimes and having 1,367 unsolved homicides in Boston, let's reimagine how my office deploys its very limited resources regarding keeping us safe and healthy. And when we think about what really keeps us safe and healthy, it's usually not the police for people that actually understand that.

We don't get to choose who we're born to. We don't get to choose where we live, what school we go to. And all of those things are indicators in our success. And none of them we control as infants when we come into this world. So I chose to be bold and thoughtful. And then once I joined-- once I won, I put it in writing and issued my memo.

And what I want the listeners and viewers to understand is poor communities and black and brown communities have too many interactions with the police. We just do. And many of them are low-level, nonviolent, non-serious interactions that can escalate in a minute and result in harm to either law enforcement or, unfortunately, what we're seeing-- and that would be unfortunate-- but obviously, also, law harm to us. Because most-- there is only one party that has the legal, lethal authority to kill. It's the police. It's not the community.

And so when we think about a George Floyd, even if that \$20 bill was counterfeit, Derek Chauvin-- and I will not call him an officer because it dishonors the word "officer." And there are many men and women that do that job with dignity and respect and cultural competence. But Derek Chauvin in 8 minutes and 47 seconds tried, convicted, sentenced, and executed George Floyd over a counterfeit \$20 bill. It was not a violent crime. It was not even a felony. And George Floyd is dead, was murdered, executed as a result of it.

And the police, Dean, are getting a lot of bad rap right now. There is an absolute failure of district attorneys around the country as well because we saw that DA who watched that video of George Floyd and took much longer than many other district

attorneys would have to charge Derek Chauvin with third-degree murder. Then the attorney general came in and upped it to second. And now that we know that Derek Chauvin knew George Floyd, it could even be increased to first-degree.

When we think about an Ahmaud Arbery-- a hunting, a stalking, of a lynching of a man that we witnessed-- three different DAs, Dean-- three separate DAs watched that video and said, no, looks fine. Georgia has a citizen's arrest statute. We think the McMichaels were completely within their right-- until the Georgia Bureau of investigations came in, like the state version of the FBI for Georgia, and immediately, within 24 hours, charge the McMichaels with felony murder and subsequently charged the other co-conspirator that boxed Ahmaud in when he was trying to run and videotape the whole thing with felony murder as well.

So I know that's a long answer, but we are trying to educate people. This isn't a dictatorship. I don't just want to say, do it because I said so. Even though I do have the authority to do that as an autonomous elected, I don't want to do that. I want them to understand that this is actually the right thing to do. It is fiscally responsible to do, and it is the humane thing to do to not penalize people for poverty, for mental health issues and crises and trauma that they've experienced based on systemic failures, food and housing insecurity.

Environmental racism, which is very real, people, in Suffolk county is Chelsea. Chelsea has the Tobin Bridge going through it, Logan Airport flying over it, and the largest private food distribution center in the United States. And some people might say, oh, that's great. They can travel as much as they want and get great food. Yeah. But you know what Winthrop doesn't have, or Winchester or Waban or Wellesley or whatever the W towns are around here that have wealthy people living in them?

Bridges going through them, planes flying down Main Street, and 18-wheelers driving all over the place. Those are toxins and emissions. And that's why there are higher rates of COPD and asthma, which of course are tied to the 30 underlying CDC comorbidity factors or other ailments that make you more susceptible to COVID-19. And it is not a coincidence that Chelsea has the highest rating of COVID-19 positives in the 351 towns in Massachusetts. So Dean, I know that's a long answer, but everything is connected, and we need to start talking of it.

MELISSA NOBLES: Great. Thank you so much. So there's so many threads that I'd like to draw out just a bit, and the first would be you mentioned that the Arbery case. And what's interesting about that, just to put a fine point on it and to maybe amplify the question, is the only reason even that the Georgia investigation was brought in, state investigators, was after protest.

So I guess the question is, at some point, I would think prosecutors are reluctant to prosecute the police. We can talk a bit about that because seems to be at the bottom of this. But some part of it is also an assumption that this is what the public wants the police to do. So it's not entirely that the police are here being unresponsive to public sentiment, but rather, a defense that is often made is that they are, in fact, reflecting public sentiment, in whole or in part.

Now, there's certainly-- the public has a lot of different views. And certainly, the black public has a very different view of what proper policing is. But it sounds to me part of the challenge in Georgia, in particular what it pointed out, was that they were perfectly prepared, and too, the Arbery family was able to get attention--

RACHEL Exposure.

ROLLINS:

MELISSA NOBLES: Exposure. That was going nowhere. So that kind of gets at the frustration, and I suppose the limits of the conversation, is that Americans-- we are all concerned about policing, but an important part of that is thinking how, as citizens, we register, how we think police should properly behave. So it sounded as if, with your election, that at least the Boston electorate, or some segment of them, was willing to say, let's rethink policing. Because you-- you presented-- or at least let's think about how we think about the criminal justice system. Because you were upfront with what it is that you were proposing.

RACHEL ROLLINS: Right. And what I did was as a person who-- I'm a black woman. I'm a product of a biracial relationship. I grew up my entire life talking about race. We are too uncomfortable discussing race in the United States of America. We have never atoned.

And let's not even talk about black people. I'm talking about indigenous people. We

have never atoned or reckoned with the genesis of our country and the harms, unlike a South Africa, unlike a Germany, unlike a Guatemala or other places that have had truth, justice, and reconciliation work done. So that's number one.

Number two-- I also spoke a lot about-- there are different communities that have very different interactions with police. And I think the first time-- I'm 49 years old now. Rodney King happened on my 20th birthday. So March 3, 1991, the Rodney King video came out. And for those of you old enough to remember, obviously, that happened in California, but it was the first time many communities actually witnessed police brutality, which is, of course, what black, brown, and poor communities have been talking about forever, but nobody believed us until a video appeared.

And then, of course, what happened? All of the officers were pretty much acquitted of any criminal charges. There was public outcry. The next time we had a completely 180, race-based response to anything was, of course, the OJ Simpson verdict, where there are black people who were saying-- I won't speak for all black people because I can't-- like, no, no, we're not talking about Nicole or the other individual that was murdered. We're talking about finally, an exposure in a system of racist police, planted evidence. And there was one time that a community felt like, wow. The jury actually listened to what it is that happened.

There is significant harm there because two people lost their lives. And that is lost in the fray of communities jumping up and saying, finally we feel heard. That's a different panel for a different day. But what I will say to you is I think Rodney King, I think OJ Simpson, and I think now when we see people witnessing things that we have seen day in and day out-- and this is-- George Floyd is nothing new. It is just the latest iteration or package of black people murdered. And recently I said as I watched a video-- I tweeted this-- I watched a video of a woman outraged at a Trader Joe's that she would be asked to put a mask on.

And you could see her hand is like this, and she screams, and she throws down her empty basket. And she's yelling and swearing at people and leaves. And I said something along the lines of, this is her level of outrage at being asked to put on a mask. And our society believes that this level of outrage is appropriate for such behavior. What is the level-- what is the requisite or commensurate level of outrage

when you watch your people slaughtered, brutalized, and harmed for centuries?
Asking for a friend, right?

Because what I get upset about is when we look at policing right now, we have witnessed executions. And there are people in the streets that are demanding justice. And some of them are vandalizing property, and I'm not condoning that at all. But I'm always fascinated with people that care more about buildings than humans and forget that there is insurance for glass, and we will get those people made whole again. That's in no way to disparage store owners. But I'm simply saying, that glass will be fixed. That store will be restored, I hope. George Floyd is never coming back.

And no, you didn't kill him, but all of our things are connected. And we need to start looking at that. So I look at it and say, the Glynn County Police Department with respect to Ahmaud Arbery-- do you know that when they first complained or petitioned the Georgia Bureau of Investigations, it wasn't to say, help us investigate this homicide. It was to say, who leaked the video? We want an investigation into who leaked the video to the rest of the nation. That's what the Glynn County Police Department was asking about, not help us solve this homicide or figure out who slaughtered this black man.

And by the way, all of you have seen the video of the white couple walking into the abandoned property. They're still alive, by the way. Or the two small white children that walked in to look at the open property that the McMichaels thought Ahmaud was trespassing in-- those children are still alive. But what is it about Ahmaud that got him hunted, slaughtered, and killed? And we now know that Travis McMichael uttered a racial slur over his body.

So we-- I'll be honest, Dean. I'm happy we're in this moment, but I'm really disgusted and exhausted that it takes us being slaughtered in order for people to pay attention and say, jeez, I guess things really aren't that great for black people. They aren't. And when you get uncomfortable when somebody talks to you about racism, rather than being mad at them, go back to whatever independent school league or private school or public school you went to, speak to your principal or superintendent or headmaster, and complain to them about their failure of teaching you about the origins of this country and the harm that has been inflicted

upon black people in general.

And I will remind you all-- we are the most culturally appropriated group of individuals on the planet Earth. Ask your children and the music they listen to and the culture that they appropriate and all these other things. And we are also the only group of people that gets blamed for their murder. So it's a lot to unpack. But I think Ahmaud is a really good reflector of where we are with respect to certain communities and police, and we need to be far better about talking about it.

**MELISSA
NOBLES:**

One thing in your remarks, Rachel, is that it sounds as if, then, you are thinking about what defunding of the police actually means. So that term, as you know, has been-- it's now getting quite a lot of attention. And it means different things to different people. So I was wondering, when you hear "defund the police," what does it mean to you? And what do you think are the merits of the idea once you've told us what you think about it, and then what do you think some of the challenges are?

**RACHEL
ROLLINS:**

So let me say there are many people that I care deeply about that are abolitionists and believe that there should be no prisons and no DAs and no police. And if we one day get to that point, that's fine. Until we get there, I want progressive DAs in the DA's office, not conservative, let's-arrest-our-way-to-our-solution DAs in this role.

I would rather use wording like "reimagining" what policing is. And so why are we deploying police, many of whom are veterans-- and I'm the daughter of a veteran-- but who we send off to war? They get PTSD. They come back, and they're being told to community police, but they're given militarized weapons. And they are overwhelmingly-- not all-- but not reflective of the communities where they serve.

There's not cultural competency requirements. Just recently, we're now talking about de-escalation. But when we think about the fact that the Boston Police Department has a budget of \$414 million-- and that does not include the \$60 million they get for overtime, which, remember, overtime by definition should not be everlasting. It's just for emergencies. But it's built into this system whereby it's part of your overall compensation package, and year after year after year, you get it.

Why aren't they making better decisions to just hire more full-time employees so they don't need as much overtime? When we look at the Boston Police Department,

and they get four times the funding of the Boston Public Health Commission, when we look at the Boston Police Department and say, 530 of their employees made more than the mayor in the last year, or that when they are looking at themselves to regulate themselves, which I never suggest, but they cut their anti-corruption division, which includes internal affairs, and their Bureau of Professional Development respectively by 24% and 65%, which is basically the two programs that ensure professionalism and accountability-- they're slashing those but asking for more money.

And so I think there are people, honestly, Dean, that feel like you waited until George Floyd was slaughtered to finally now react to what the community is demanding. We don't want you involved in the decision anymore. Why did it take this level of slaughter and lynching and murder for you to react to anything? We tried to silently tell you this. Like I said on June 1 in front of the mayor of the city of Boston, this is what Colin Kaepernick took a knee about.

And now that Goodell is trying to say, black lives matter-- well, where's Colin Kaepernick? Stop it. All of these companies that are saying black lives matter, and we stand with George Floyd-- what does your board look like? How much money do you invest in these communities? How many of your employees are actually real, bona-fide black people? We need to start holding people accountable to this lip service stuff.

So with the Boston Police Department, look, they're going to have to have some really tough conversations with the community and understand and explain why they need all this funding. There's \$200,000 towards militarized weapons. They have the most diverse Boston City Council we've ever seen in the history of Boston, and they aren't taking it any longer. And what I don't want to hear, and what the community doesn't want to hear, is, OK, OK, no, no, no, we understand now. What can we do to help?

No, no. You're no longer involved in the process because you had decades to do it right. And it took slaughtering and execution of our people for you to finally listen. Now we're doing it this way. And that's why there's discussions, Dean, about qualified immunity. That's why the governor is now signing or proposing legislation that police officers are licensed. And I'll remind you, Dean-- I'm licensed.

As a lawyer, I have to-- I have a bar license. Barbers are licensed. Electricians are licensed. And you know what we can't do? Kill you. Barbers can give you terrible bangs and awful highlights, but they aren't given weapons and told that they can kill you. And the police are the only sector of our government that, without any authority-- they don't have to stop in the minute and call and get permission-- they have the legal and lethal authority to kill.

So you bet I think they should be licensed. You bet I think there should be a database with respect to any excessive force complaints or internal affairs investigations or disciplines or findings or rulings or settlements, that that should follow them all across the country. Because when we look at a Derrick Chauvin, 17 infractions. When we look at some other police officers, they had gone to nine different police departments and were able to get new jobs everywhere.

I can't do that. You can't do that. I have to fill out my bar application every year. Electricians can't even do that. So I think this is why we're seeing the pendulum swing so far in the other direction.

**MELISSA
NOBLES:**

So I have two questions before I turn to our viewers. So the first is this, DA. Do you support an independent prosecutor when the police are the killers or the alleged perpetrators of the murder, of the death? And second-- it sounds to me as if you're also in support of greater oversight-- greater standardization at the federal level. So as you know, under President Obama, they began, through the Justice Department, the kind of practices of policing and helping police departments internally be formed through consent decrees that they entered into with the Department of Justice.

So I wonder if you, A, would think-- was Boston ever considered for one of those reviews? And so I have two questions. One was the first, which is, what do you think of an independent district attorney when it comes to prosecuting police cases? And second--

**RACHEL
ROLLINS:**

The federal oversight, yeah. So for me, one of the things, Dean, I ran on, was-- and this is one of the biggest mistrust between community and law enforcement. And law enforcement includes my office DAs. In 95% of our cases, Dean, we are walking

hand in hand, skipping into court, holding hands with the police. Right?

So we are friendly with them. They are our witnesses. We have strong ties and relationships. And the community knows that. The police arrest, and they bring it to us. And we have to look and see, is there probable cause to sustain these charges? We stand up with our bar license and say, Your Honor, I'm charging Dean Nobles with the following eight crimes. And then we have to prove beyond a reasonable doubt whether or not you've done it in the municipal, district, or superior courts. OK?

So then, after 95% of the time, if-- let's say Elizabeth Glee-- I'm just looking at names up here-- if Officer Elizabeth Glee shoots someone in the community and kills them, is the community really going to believe that I'm going to now take my hat off as the friend of the police to say, oh, I know that Elizabeth and I know each other, and we've had several cases together. I've been to her-- I don't know-- children's bar mitzvahs. We've traveled together. I promise I'm not biased. Let me look into whether or not the shooting was justified and reasonable.

Nobody buys it at all. So I am an outsider, Dean. I have never worked in the Suffolk County DA's office. I am the first woman in the over 200-year history of the Suffolk DA's office to ever be elected, and I'm the first woman of color in the history of Massachusetts to ever be a DA. I don't have any ties to this office. I don't have any ties to local law enforcement.

When I came in, one of the first things I did-- and you said I was sworn in January 2, 2019. My first officer-involved shootings happened February 22, 2019. I created the first-in-the-nation Discharge Integrity Team. We don't even meet in my office. We meet at a law firm in Boston, and there is a community member that runs a community health center and is a survivor of homicide. There is a criminal defense lawyer. There is a retired judge, and there is a member of law enforcement.

And I am the fifth member. We are completely walled off from my office. We direct and control that investigation. They come to us, present information, whether it's the Boston police, whoever the investigator is on that case. And ultimately, it's my decision as to whether or not we find it is justified and reasonable or whether we say, no, I want this to go to a grand jury, or I have enough on my own to approve an

arrest.

And the first thing we did, Dean, was present to a grand jury a case involving a state trooper that they returned an indictment. He had discharged his weapon twice. The man lived that he hit. But we believe he lied in the police report, and we believe it was not justified and reasonable. So the first thing I did was hold the police officer accountable.

I need to be clear. There are going to be times where what the police do is justified and reasonable. It's still a tragedy. I need the people to hear me say that when that officer-involved shooting happened on February 22, I issued a statement to say, unfortunately, an officer was injured in this encounter. We wish him a speedy and full recovery. And we send our deepest condolences to the family of the young man that lost his life in this encounter. And I was barraged with, you are anti-police. How dare you acknowledge this person.

And I pushed back so hard to say, whoa, whoa, whoa. A man lost his life. Irrespective of whether he was a criminal, whether he was a saint, whoever he was, he was loved, and he is now gone. And we will acknowledge that harm. And that's the type of bold leadership we need.

So I already have an independent investigation. I love pushing back. Once women and people of color start getting into positions of power, I love it how people are always like, no, no, no, now let's take that away. Right. But let's actually focus on the conservative 90% white men that have been in this role and done virtually nothing across the country. And instead of taking away the ability that I now have to say I have community involvement-- of my four, two are people of color, black people. One is a veteran, and as I said, one is a survivor of homicide. So we are very deliberate on who we put in these. So community involvement must happen. I think independent investigation is real. I've already done that. I think it's called my Discharge Integrity Team.

Second question, federal oversight-- 100%. The first thing Jeff sessions did when he was the attorney general of the United States was disbanded everything the Obama administration did. I think there were something, Dean, like 25 pattern and practice investigations or consent decrees or monitorships or oversight that these rogue

police departments had.

And for the non-lawyers on this call, right now, I am sitting like this over Suffolk County. I know what's happening in Boston, Chelsea, Winthrop, and Revere. I'm one of 11 DAs in Massachusetts. I'm also a member of the Massachusetts District Attorneys' Association. But I only know what my other DAs tell me, and they might not tell me everything.

So what we need is-- the federal government is all the way up here looking down and saying, all right, Chicago, you're crazy. Your police department is awful, or Baltimore. But they are also seeing patterns across the country of rogue police departments are doing this. Let's have a national requirement that police can-- like a federal either legislature or best practices or 21st-century policing or whatever we're going to do. Let's mandate across the country that these things are happening.

And the Trump administration, of course, claims, oh, we don't want federal oversight, except then jumps into something in Maryland, Baltimore, and files an opposition to what the city of Baltimore wanted to do on its own with respect to its police department. So the hypocrisy is very real. We do need federal oversight, but we also need leadership in the federal government that actually is going to care about the Constitution, is going to care about the fact that we can't harm people. And we as the government have to be held to a higher standard in this.

But I think-- I'm proud of the fact that I actually was just on the phone earlier this morning with Attorney General Maura Healey, who is, of course, the state's attorney general. And remember, guys, there's only one attorney general for each state, but each state can have multiple US attorneys. Massachusetts, we only have one, but New York has a couple. California has a couple. And then, of course, there's only one attorney general of the United States.

And each state has multiple district attorneys. So we can do a Venn diagram of all this later. But just understand Attorney General Healey is now, with her counterparts across the country, thinking about being an almost-- like a Department of Justice for the state, an office of civil rights for the state to see if-- it looks like some of the progressive DAs in Massachusetts are doing right, but there will be mandated

reporting requirements, which I am all for. I don't want to hear about a voluntary reporting of officer-involved shooting, and then we're surprised that less than 40% of the police departments reported.

And then, well, what's a shooting? Is it a death? Is it a harm? Just report everything and stop it. But Attorney General Healey is going to start, I think, leading the nation in requiring DAs to report up to her, and I am all for it.

**MELISSA
NOBLES:**

So I know you're really short on time. This has been terrific. I do have one final question. It kind of relates to much of what you've been saying, and it's come up in the chat quite a bit. And it largely has to do with the power of police unions. So it was observed by one of our viewers that recently, the Boston police have come out against certain of your remarks. And we've noticed-- well, it's been reported around the country-- the strength of police unions in stopping certain of the forms that are being contemplated. So I wonder what you think what your relationship is not necessarily with the police, which is one thing, but also the leadership of police that is through unions?

**RACHEL
ROLLINS:**

Absolutely. And great distinction, Dean. A lot of people forget-- when I spoke on June 1 with Mayor Walsh, I commended Commissioner Gross because he immediately-- that's the commissioner of the Boston Police Department-- immediately came out and denounced Derek Chauvin, denounced the murder of George Floyd. I am in a group called NOBLE, the National Association of Black Law Enforcement Officers, with Commissioner Gross. We issued a statement immediately denouncing what it is that happened-- not just about police, but also about DAs, because it wasn't just George Floyd. It's Ahmaud Arbery. It's Breonna Taylor. It's Tony McDade. It's David McAtee. It's black and trans women being murdered all the time, or black trans women, and nobody talking about it. We don't have enough time to go through all the categories.

But what I said was, Commissioner Gross is management. You know what he isn't doing? I live in Roxbury. He's not at B2 on the midnight, overnight shift kicking down doors and harassing people of color. And neither is everyone at B2. But sometimes things like that happen, and it's never the commissioner that's doing it. It's the rank-and-file police officers.

The deafening silence of the four unions of the Boston police is what I was talking about. I want the Boston Police Patrolmen's Association to say, we denounce what happened. We stand with you, community. That's not anti-police. In fact, they need to recognize that their silence is why it's harder for me to get guilty verdicts, because the community is watching them. And this same community that is my grand jury, that is my trial jury, that are witnesses to crimes and victims of crimes, aren't coming forward anymore because they don't believe in the police, because the police-- and the president of the Boston Police Patrolmen's Association has said outright, I don't feel like I need to say anything about that.

Wow. You know who said something about it? Ben & Jerry's has said something about it, and they make ice cream. You know who else has? Zappos. When I'm online at 3:00 in the morning buying fabulous shoes, they're telling me that black lives matter, and we don't agree with what happened to George Floyd. McDonald's-- when I'm ordering fries and fries and fries, they are telling me black lives matter. None of those people are the police. They get it.

And if our police unions don't, I have a lot of questions about it. They believe that my statements were anti-police. I corrected them. No, no, no. It's anti-police brutality. And if you aren't willing to root out the badness in your own organization, then I don't stand with you. And I will end, Dean, with-- they wrote a letter to me, and then every black, brown, or progressive organization in the history of Massachusetts wrote a letter back saying, we support DA Rollins-- the NAACP, the Mass Black Lawyers, members of the Black and Latino Caucus, the Mass Association of Hispanic Attorneys, the ACLU, the Black Ministerial Alliance and clergy members. I'd put my squad up against that at any day.

But at the end of the day, we still all have to work together. And what I've done is I'm one of the only DAs in the country, possibly the only one, that commanded that every one of my leaders in police in Suffolk County-- Colonel Mason of the state police, Commissioner Gross of the Boston Police, Chief Green of the transit police, Chief Delahanty in Winthrop, Chief Kyes in Chelsea, and Chief Guido in Revere-- I said, we will all meet together. We are going to have a confidential and very long and real discussion about race, policing in the black community. I will listen to you, but you will listen to me.

That happened recently, and it was so powerful. It was supposed to be an hour long. It ended up being over two hours long. And we are committed to doing this hard work because we are in this fight together. And either the unions are going to get onboard-- and I do have to make sure I say the Boston Police Detectives Union did issue a statement to its membership, so I want to make sure you hear me credit them and appreciate them. I will also note that they happen to have-- the president is a black man. So again, it's like, yes, thank you, Donald, and you did a great job, but speak to your colleagues and peers.

So that's what I'm saying, and I hold myself to the same high standard that I hold the unions. I don't have any animus. I'm the daughter of union members. I think police unions do need to fight hard for their membership. Being a police officer is an incredibly difficult job. They put their life on the line. But I do think where we are right now, Dean, is people have been silent for too long. The gravy train has been moving for too long. And now they're going to see massive changes in reform at the legislative level, on the state, on the municipal with the Boston City Council, and also on the federal level with qualified immunity and other positions there.

But what an exciting time for us to be alive. And I believe this is our civil rights movement. I want to tell you just how honored and and humbled I am that I'm in this position right now.

MELISSA NOBLES: Well, thank you so much. This has been a really informative and engaging conversation. You've given us a lot to think about. It is certainly true. Your remarks reflect the unique moment that we're in in our country's history. I do agree that this is the civil rights movement of the 21st century. And this conversation today, I think, has given us a lot of things to think about as we move forward. So thank you so much, DA Rollings.

RACHEL ROLLINS: Finish all your research on the database of white and black racially motivated killings. I'm watching from afar, and I appreciate you documenting this, like Bryan Stevenson and others.

MELISSA NOBLES: Exactly right.

RACHEL We need to atone and reckon, but we also need to acknowledge. And tomorrow, I'll

ROLLINS: be announcing some things publicly that I think will get some funding to help us do that. But I am a fan. Continue the work. And if I can be helpful in any way possible-- but keep on. Thank you, everybody.

MELISSA Thank you so much. Thank you so much. Bye bye.

NOBLES:

RACHEL Bye.

ROLLINS:

MELISSA Terrific. So we're going to now move to our second part of our seminar this
NOBLES: morning-- and now this afternoon, actually. So for those of you who are joining us now, I'm Melissa Nobles. I'm the dean of the School of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences, and I'm also a professor of political science here at MIT. And in our last section, which just ended, with the Suffolk County DA, Rachel Rollings, we had a very spirited discussion about the nature of policing in the US. And so we now we'll turn our attention to thinking about policing around the world.

Before I get started introducing our guest, just a bit of the housekeeping for people who are just joining us. There is a Q&A feature on the bottom of your toolbar. And this is where you can type in questions that we will answer during the question and answer period at the end of the second part. And in addition, I ask that you pay attention to the chat feature, also at the bottom on the toolbar, because we'll be sending all kinds of resource links and the like.

So we have two speakers now for this section of our discussion on policing around the world, and I will share the bios with you briefly. But of course, you can find the link to their full bios in the chat feature. So we have Liz Leeds. She has a PhD in political science from MIT. She's a senior fellow at the Washington Office for Latin America, WOLA, and the founder and honorary president of the Brazilian Forum for Public Safety. She's also a research affiliate at the Center for International Studies here at MIT.

Our second speaker is Rodrigo Canales. He has a PhD from the MIT School-- Sloan School in Behavioral and Policy Sciences. He's an associate professor of organizational behavior at the Yale School of Management. He has many research

interests, including how to build effective, resilient, and trusted police organizations in Mexico.

So welcome to both of our panelists. I'll start with Liz. So the first question is thinking about Brazil. What roles do the police play in state society relationships in Brazil?

**ELIZABETH
LEEDS:**

Thank you, Melissa. First of all, I'd like to thank CIS for organizing this most crucial panel at this moment and to make the connections between what's happening in the US and the rest of the world, Mexico and Brazil in particular. I think the best way to answer this question is to note that since the democratic constitution of Brazil, which was implanted in 1988 following the transition to democracy from the military regime, the sector that has made the least progress is criminal justice, and especially the police. The democratic constitution, which on paper, at least, changed virtually all aspects of government, left the police institutions unchanged. I think it's very important to note that.

One only need read the reports of Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, UN reports on extrajudicial killings, the international and national press to know that police violence and corruption continue to plague Brazilian society, and low-income and black populations in particular. And it is for these segments of society that the democratic advances had been most elusive. So that, I think, is the general picture of the relationship between police.

**MELISSA
NOBLES:**

So we see here kind of a weak-- I mean, the Constitution looks great on paper, but it looks nothing like the lived reality. What is the relationship of the police to any political party? Are they politicized, or are they largely agnostic and a force onto themselves?

**ELIZABETH
LEEDS:**

They have become increasingly politicized, I would say, in the last 10 or 15 years. And that politicization, I think, is seen in a number of ways. First of all, the numbers of police who run for elective office at the local, state, and national level has increased enormously. Today in Congress, in the federal Congress, there is a term, the bancada da bala, which is the Bullet Caucus, which is the informal name given to the Parliamentary Front for Public Safety. It is comprised of almost 305 congressional representatives who come either from the police or from the military, and very strong supporters of Bolsonaro, as you can imagine.

At the state level, the trend is similar. In Sao Paulo, the state, which is the largest in the country, in 2012 there were 34 police or elected city councils or mayors. And in 2016, that number had increased to 114. And the expectation in 2021 is that there will be 250 such people. So why is this important?

It's important because in Congress, at least, the police or congressional representatives vote on issues of gun control. They vote on issues of the term [PORTUGUESE], which people have labeled the license to kill. And it's parallel to qualified immunity in the United States. So these are very important issues in terms of public safety which can be voted on by police who become formally representatives of government.

And it happens through other ways as well. Police unions or associations-- we talked about the unions here-- are increasingly vocal regarding salaries, working conditions, and especially within the military police, the right to dissent. And I'm saying-- I mention this because I think this is an important issue for unions because working conditions for the police in general at the rank-and-file level are really quite poor. So-- yes.

**MELISSA
NOBLES:**

So what you described is kind of scary, which is that you've got police who are now actually in the national legislature and are effectively legislating in ways that will obviously protect their interests. So one of the things we know is that here in the States, the George Floyd case of-- it's been kind of a spectacular case, if you will, of police brutality. There have been similar cases in Brazil? Has that been the spark in Brazil, or has it been more looking at what's happening around the world and the conversation starting that way?

**ELIZABETH
LEEDS:**

There are many cases of [INAUDIBLE] in Brazil. Usually those who are killed are young people. They're adolescents or even young children who are killed in crossfire. Brazil is considered one of the most violent countries in the world in terms of the violence. I'm not saying that police did all these killings.

In 2017, 57,000 people were killed. And this is a rate of 27.5 per 100,000, which is the usual ratio that's given. Of those deaths, the age cohort, 15 to 29, 35,000 people were killed, representing a rate of 69.9 homicides per 100,000. And that is an excruciatingly high number of deaths of youth. And most of those are black youth

in the country.

MELISSA Is there any equivalent to thinking about-- and these two questions are kind of tied
NOBLES: up in a way. Is there any equivalent to there being a Black Lives Matter movement
in Brazil or just a people-based, non-violent resistance to the police? Or is it
individual efforts that people make? Is there the beginnings of a movement?

ELIZABETH I would say that in the last 10 years, that the organization of especially young
LEEDS: people in the favelas-- and it usually means that they're Afro-descendant-- have
been increasingly organized and vocal in terms of calling out the high levels of
police violence. And one organization or one group of organizations I'd like to call
attention to is-- and I listed it on the resources--

MELISSA Yes. It's showing now.

NOBLES:

ELIZABETH Yeah. Is a network of observatories of police which is in five cities in the country who
LEEDS: are made up of local-level organizations who are on the ground reporting violence
in real time. And the importance of this kind of organization is there is a case in the
Brazilian Supreme Court at the moment against the Rio police for the extraordinary
numbers of killings, especially during the last three months during COVID. And the
Supreme Court has leveled an injunction against the police. And it's this kind of on-
the-ground organization and data that hopefully will bring some response from the
federal government, from the Supreme Court. So I think this is-- it's been a slow
movement, but it's becoming much more effective.

MELISSA Right. Back in the '80s, I remember-- or '90s when I was in Brazil doing research,
NOBLES: there was the issue of the [PORTUGUESE], the street children who were being
slaughtered, really, by the police. And their only crime was being poor. I mean,
that's really all it was. And so we're now 30 years on.

ELIZABETH I would say that's still the crime. There is a-- officially, Brazil does not have capital
LEEDS: punishment. But you can look at any number of these deaths, the hundreds of
deaths that have happened. And in fact, the capital punishment does exist. It's
extrajudicial killing.

MELISSA Right, precisely. So I wonder if there are-- given this state of affairs and what you

NOBLES: describe as the beginnings, at least, of a social movement-- slowly, but happening, and growing awareness-- are there any ideas that are being discussed about how to deal with police misconduct? And if those conversations are happening, who is instigating them? Where are they coming from?

ELIZABETH LEEDS: Right. Well, officially, there are-- the way-- police oversight happens officially in a number of ways. One is the internal affairs departments within police and the prosecutor's office. Those have been largely ineffective. There are the police ombudsman in many states now that have more or less been effective.

And I want to point out that I think when the police are most effective is usually when there is a progressive governor who then appoints progressive police officials. And it's been very clear over my watching police reform efforts of the last 20 years or so is when you have a governor who has a recognition of what needs to be done in terms of public safety policy and is able to appoint the police officials who also have a similar recognition, then you have some real movement.

Unfortunately, it's four years or eight years when that governor is in power. And similar to this country, when you have a new mayor coming who wants to redo everything, a lot of the advances that have been made are lost. So it's very clear that the right elected officials can make a real difference in a number of ways, whether it's police training or police oversight or innovative community policing projects. But without continuity, these projects and this kind of attitude gets lost in the next administration.

I do want to make one-- call attention to one very interesting organization which I have hope that can make a difference. It was established in 2016, and it is a group of progressive police who have created a movement called the Antifascist Police Movement. I think the name is perhaps a little unfortunate because it may keep some people away. But they have grown enormously, and especially this year. They're now over 1,000 police who have come out quite publicly with a manifesto.

And clearly, they are talking more about, in addition to police reform, all the injustices that are being perpetrated by the Bolsonaro regime. But I think it's very interesting that this organization is willing to make itself very public and very frank about what needs to be done in terms of democratic policing in the country.

MELISSA Great. Thank you. I have one tiny follow-up question before I move on to Rodrigo.

NOBLES: And this is-- so this group, are they police from different states across the country, or is it regionally, one or the other?

ELIZABETH They're from all over the country, and they're from the various-- there are a number

LEEDS: of different police institutions. There's the military police, the civil police, the federal police, the highway police. They run the gamut from all of these organizations and from around the country. So I think that's what's hopefully encouraging.

MELISSA Great. Thank you so much, Liz. So now we turn to Rodrigo Canales, and he's going to

NOBLES: talk to us a bit about Mexico. So I'm going to ask you a similar set of questions, and we can see how Brazil and Mexico stack up. So the first is, what role does the police play in state society relations?

RODRIGO Thank you, Dean Nobles. And first, Dr. Leeds, Dean Nobles, thank you so much for

CANALES: having me as part of this panel. Thank you so much for having a chance to participate in this conversation.

There's an abstract and a concrete answer. In the abstract, what we see in Mexico, which we see in many other countries-- I think in many cases, including the US, and particularly in underprivileged communities-- is that the police very often are the first and very often are the only point of contact between government and people, for better and for worse.

It's partly because we have a lack of state capacity, and so people don't experience the presence of government in their lives. And it's also because of the way the police, in fact, are the eyes and the feet and the hands of the government on the streets. And so for many, many reasons, the contact with the police is the first experience of government or the first window into government that citizens have.

And so what ends up happening, I think, everywhere is that the police end up becoming the image of government for many people because it's the first and often the only path to government, because that's who you see as a representative of government. And so the police end up playing a disproportionate role in state society relationships because from the perspective of citizens, they are the representatives of the state that they see and that they hang out with-- not hang out with, but that they encounter. And so they play a crucial role, I would say.

And so it plays in both directions. When police officers behave well, then that improves not just the sense of safety and security, but it also improves the perception that people have not just of safety in the police, but of government in general. And the opposite happens too. When the police behave in ways that delegitimize them, then that immediately and directly and quickly delegitimizes the entire government structure. And so it's a pretty intense and pretty complex relationship that the police play in state-society relations.

MELISSA NOBLES: So is there any connection between the police and political parties? Are they politicized, or as I asked with Liz, are they kind of a body unto themselves?

RODRIGO CANALES: So that's a really interesting question on a number of levels, I think, and it connects with some of the things that Dr. Leeds was mentioning. But I would say that by design, police organizations are politicized in the sense that chiefs of police tend to be political appointees. And the structure of the police, because it's a chain of command, is designed where whoever the chief is is going to call the shots, and then the chain of command is going to more or less follow directives. And because the chief, and let's say the top three or four superintendents or lieutenants, are also political appointees, then that means that it's a structure that by nature is going to be politicized.

And it tends not-- I think at least in Mexico, it tends not to be politicized in the way that you are asking, meaning it's not like the police are supporting a particular party or a particular set of government officials. It's more like it's a structure that is designed to be political because of how the top appointees are made. And so it changes with the tides.

If you have a new mayor and the mayor appoints a non-technical chief and appoints a chief who is more political, then the whole structure is going to become more politicized. If you have a mayor or a governor who is more progressive and is more attuned to technical issues, then they're going to appoint a more technical chief, and then the police are going to be de-politicized, actually. Does that make sense?

MELISSA NOBLES: Yes, it makes perfect sense. I mean, one big difference, it sounds, is that Liz was describing police officers and other law enforcement people who are actually

running for office and sitting in national legislature. But it sounds here that's not the case, that you're not seeing in Mexico that kind of involvement in partisan politics.

**RODRIGO
CANALES:**

No. We are we not seeing a lot of involvement in partisan politics, no.

**MELISSA
NOBLES:**

So I asked-- as I mentioned, here in the US, as you know, these spectacular police killings of late have garnered so much attention. Have there been similar instances in Mexico, and what-- has it resulted in any kind of changes?

**RODRIGO
CANALES:**

Let me start with the last part. The answer is no. There hasn't been major changes. We see a little bit more attention being paid to police violence, police brutality. It's also true that-- I like to separate police violence into two-- let's say levels or types. In general, when the police are doing street cop-type policing, there is more corruption and more misbehavior of a type that is not very violent than in the US. But there tends to be less violence of the type that you're asking like there tends to be-- and like we see in Brazil.

There are fewer instances of the police killing citizens in arrests, for example, or hurting citizens in arrest. Now, that is true for, quote unquote, regular policing. Now, we when we get into the type of crime which is more related to organized crime and where the federal police or the army is involved, then the rate of lethality there is actually astronomically high. And it's on both sides.

The criminal organizations that are confronting the police are using extremely high levels of lethality. And partly as a justification and for a number of reasons, the federal police and the army, sometimes in response, but sometimes not in response, are also using astronomically high levels of fatality.

**MELISSA
NOBLES:**

Right. Because I think most-- when we think about what's happening in Mexico, we typically think about organized crime and the relationship of police and the lethality of interactions between those two. But it's not entirely that. I hope you're still here. It looks like you may have frozen, Rodrigo.

Is there a people-based, noncriminal resistance to police? Can you hear me at least? It looks like we've run-- hi, Liz. You may have to come back.

So I'm going to come to you until we can figure out what's happening with Rodrigo's

internet connection. It looks like he's frozen. So I'm going to ask you some questions, Liz, and we can talk about Brazil. OK.

So one thing that Rubio mentioned-- I wonder-- your remarks also seem to hit upon this, which is the corrosive effect that excessive policing has for notions of democracy. So he mentioned in Mexico-- and I imagine the same in Brazil, and we also-- certainly it's true in the US where there is the concern about neighborhoods of people being over-policed, too much policing. And the contacts that citizens have with the state is only through coercion, and it's not ever through the delivery of services and such.

And so how can you have an engaged citizenry when their only view of government is of coercion and of subjugation? And in Brazil, as you mentioned, the democratization-- oh, Rodrigo's back.

RODRIGO

I'm so sorry. I got cut off, so I had to dial in from my phone.

CANALES:

MELISSA

No worries. OK, good. All right. I was talking to Liz. We'll get back to that. OK. I was asking, is there a-- a people-based non-violent resistance to policing? Is there a people's movement?

NOBLES:

RODRIGO

The short answer is no. There isn't an organized movement the way we see it in the US. We have seen no protests. There are some civil society organizations and think tanks, which I think is kind of related to some of what Dr. Leeds was mentioning is happening in Brazil. And we see a few of them beginning to emerge in Mexico.

CANALES:

For example, the research project that we are trying to lead, which is about studying what kinds of organizational practices, organizational structures, organizational design help police forces be more effective, more resilient, and more trusted-- we are trying to help provide some evidence to make some evidence-informed decisions. But we're not seeing the type of citizen mobilization that we're seeing in the US or in other countries. And I think that's true-- in Mexico, that's true for a lot of core issues, and it's certainly true of policing.

Historically, citizens have not been very good about demanding more professional police. It's just something that-- it's only now beginning to be the case that citizens

are realizing that we need professional police. We need good police forces. And therefore, we need to call for it. But historically and up to now, it hasn't been-- there hasn't been any organized effort.

**MELISSA
NOBLES:**

So maybe this is the time to do this. I'm going to save my question until we get to the question answer period because I'd be curious to know, just as a way of foregrounding that, how you can do the work, your research, if there isn't a social mobilization which will make police think that this is something that they need to do. So they don't see research as being disconnected from an actual desire by citizens to want this to happen.

When you're doing research, oftentimes people think, this is a research project? I mean, what does this matter for citizens? And it would seem if you don't have-- I would think it would be difficult to do your research if there's the absence of a social mobilization which you can easily point to and say, we're doing this because of that. As we see here in the US, the only way that we've had movement with the police is when there appears to be some public outcry.

**RODRIGO
CANALES:**

Right. I mean, we do have in Mexico a lot of awareness around violence.

**MELISSA
NOBLES:**

I see.

**RODRIGO
CANALES:**

And we have a lot of violent crime. And for a number of years now, decades, we've seen a lot of different efforts to try and address that violent crime, and for example, homicide rates. And nothing has worked. And so now, what people are now beginning to turn into is demand for policing as one of their political demands. And because there's an awareness that we have a big problem-- when you have spikes in violence, that does generate a sense of urgency for especially appointed officials and elected officials. And the tool that we have in order to address violence and violent crime is the police.

And what's created an opening for our work is the realization that everything we've tried hasn't worked. And we need a different approach. And the one that we're trying to provide, again, is to say-- most of the people who have studied policing so far tend to focus on the individuals, and that kind of makes sense. And what I mean

by that is we tend to focus on, who are the police officers? Where are we recruiting them? How are we equipping them? How are we deploying them?

But actually, when we look at police organizations-- and this echoes some of the conversation you were having with DA Rollins earlier-- when you look at most police behavior, most of what happens is actually dictated by their structure, by their organization, by the culture in their police force, by who their boss is, how they're being evaluated and rewarded. If police officers are only being evaluated on number of arrests, which is the case in most cities, then guess what? They're going to be arresting a lot of people. And in many cases, they're going to be arresting people who don't need to be arrested.

And so again, a lot of the organizational factors, including how they're evaluated, how they're promoted, who gets promoted, who gets to stay in the organization or leave-- these are organizational factors, and that's what we're trying to study in our research. And I'm not going to say that there's unanimous support among elected officials and police chiefs for our research, but that's not what we need, especially at this stage. What we need is a number of cities who are willing to take a different approach. And we work with them in trying to promote a different approach to policing and a different way to engage in police reform. And as we document success cases, we build up more evidence that then helps nudge the next set of cities to a different approach to policing, if that makes sense.

MELISSA NOBLES: No, it makes perfect sense. So I have one last question before turning it over to our viewers. Is there an ethnic or racial component to what's happening in Mexico?

RODRIGO CANALES: Not in the way that it happens in Brazil, certainly not to the extent that it happens in Brazil, and certainly not to the extent that it happens in the US. In Mexico, we have-- class plays a much bigger role in relationships between citizens and the police. And there tends to be a correlation between class and different kind of racial categories, but it's not outright race that is happening. It's more structural racism. It's the way racism has been embedded into certain structures, and that means that class is extremely highly correlated with race. And therefore, there's a race component to the relationships. But it's more driven by the class structure than by race itself.

MELISSA Right. Well, to the degree, though, that they're so kind of over-determined, right?

NOBLES:

RODRIGO

CANALES:

No, they are, but what I think is different is that in Mexico, if you have markers of higher class, but you look a certain race, you can expect to have a much better interaction, whereas in these other places, it's the color of your skin that's going to be the first determinant of what kind of experience you can expect.

MELISSA

NOBLES:

Yeah, and I understand your point. I mean, it's certainly the case here in the US where-- in fact, if you are-- there are plenty of cases of African-Americans, for example, driving a fancy car. It makes you more suspect to police interrogation, not less, because they want to know what you're doing driving that car.

So I think we can move on to our questions from my audience. And one I saw has to do with Mexico if I can find it. Right. So it says here, there is a discussion of over-policing here in the US, but what percent of homicides result in successful prosecution or clearance of any kind in Brazil and Mexico? This person writes, the data I last saw in Mexico suggested it was between 1% and 2%. That seems at least as serious a problem in Mexico, at least, as excessive coercion. So there isn't necessarily-- I guess the person is asking, how effective are police in actually doing their job?

So it's one thing where we've been talking about police being over-effective here in the States. And this person seems to be asking that in Mexico, they don't appear to be able to actually successfully prosecute homicides. That is, people commit crimes, and they aren't ever punished. And they are saying, is that as much of a problem as excessive policing, as ineffective policing?

RODRIGO

CANALES:

So two things. First, I would dispute that there is excessive policing in the US. I would say that there's misdirected policing in the US in the sense that actually, when you look at clearance of homicide rates in the US-- sorry-- rates of homicide clearance in the US-- they are not great. They're actually spectacularly low, much lower than one would imagine. And so while it's true that in certain places, crime rates have dropped significantly in the past few decades-- by the way, the causality in that is mixed. The police have had some role in that, but communities have also played an enormous role in that lowering of crime.

The clearance of homicide rates, especially in minority communities, is shockingly

low. And so again, I just want to-- if the premise is, look, in the US, we're over-policed, I don't think that's the case. I think that there's over-policing in many things, but it's under-policing in other things-- for example, clearance rates of homicide.

MELISSA

Right.

NOBLES:

RODRIGO

CANALES:

And I think it's absolutely true in Mexico that clearance rates for homicides are shockingly low. And it's not appropriate and not helpful to generalize what the reality of policing is in Mexico because similar to the US, policing in Mexico is determined at the municipality level. And so we have close to 2,000 different police forces. And that's, for example, the kind of work that we do, is we unpack and see which are the police forces that are effective and what makes them so effective compared to the ones that are less effective. And we find that in some cities, they're actually able to be much more effective in attending to homicides.

And again, one of the premises of effective policing is making sure that we're properly vocalizing our efforts and really focusing on the crimes that most affect the communities that we're trying to serve and then using all the-- focusing all the state resources to that-- not just the police, but also the district attorneys and also the investigators and also the courts so that every link in the chain of justice actually is more effective at dealing with these crimes that are-- that most affect citizens, and homicide is one of them.

And one of the-- when we talk about either defunding or abolishing the police, one of the things that worries me the most is the evidence that actually, when we under-police or when we don't pay enough attention to violent crime-- and there's a unique and I think unsubstitutable role that the police have to play for violent crime. When we don't tend to violent crime, it creates these negative spirals where one of the reasons why there is more violence in minority communities or in underprivileged communities in Mexico, for example, is that people are convinced that they don't have a mechanism to resolve their disputes other than violence.

And when that is confirmed because there's a homicide, and the police don't come in, and there's not an investigation, and there's not a prosecution, then I am, in fact, convinced that the only way in which I'm going to see justice is if I engage in

retaliation. And that's what creates these spirals of violence. And so we do need the mechanism of government-- including the police, but not only the police-- to really be able to focus their efforts on these places.

And when we see in Mexico that there are police forces that do that, then we actually see much better clearance rates. And you can see that in Mexico City. You can see that in other cities that have managed to really improve the clearance rates for homicides. And I think that that's the kind of lessons that we have to unpack and understand what is it that these good forces are doing.

**MELISSA
NOBLES:**

Right. Terrific. That's an important distinction to make that sometimes gets lost in the discussion. But of course, at the moment, there's so much of interest in police excessive force that we're not necessarily thinking about these other dimensions of policing which are equally as important when we think about community safety and what is a proper kind of public safety protocol for the 21st century.

One question-- this is for both you and Liz, which is, I haven't heard a lot about trust. I mean, it's implied, I think, in a lot of what has been said today, even early with Dave Rollings, which is from your view, do your publics trust the police? And in which way do they trust the police, and which ways do they don't? As we would expect, that's a very complicated question because different people in different segments will have different views about the police. But I wonder, what role does trust play in this, and how can it be strengthened?

**ELIZABETH
LEEDS:**

Could I--

**MELISSA
NOBLES:**

Sure.

**ELIZABETH
LEEDS:**

I would say that the trust-- the trust levels are very low. And this also has to do with issues such as the clearance rates of all sorts of crimes, including most particularly, killings and assassinations. But I think the trust level in police is very high. National surveys have shown that actually, the trust in the institution of the military is much higher.

And this also gets to something that both Rodrigo and DA Rollins said about the fact

that the police are the most, and probably the most negative, interactions with the state that young people experience in their communities. DA Rollins said that there are too many interactions with the police, and Rodrigo said also something similar. And I would absolutely agree with this. And I would say that this plants the seeds of distrust from a very early age.

There was an experiment-- I would call it an experiment-- in Rio a number of years ago we had international attention called to it. It was the police pacification units which were established in perhaps 50 favelas in Rio, allegedly to try to provide a new model of policing in low-income areas. It ultimately was a failure. But one of the issues was to try to create a different kind of image, especially for young people, vis-a-vis the police.

As I said, it ultimately failed, and there are-- it's an industry of evaluations if anybody is interested in looking at this. But the trust issue is a tremendous problem, and with good reason, because the police do nothing to get the trust, especially of the young people.

MELISSA

Rodrigo, trust in Mexico?

NOBLES:

RODRIGO

Thank you. Thank you. I'm going to obviously agree with Dr. Leeds, which seems like a smart thing to do always. And I'll say that we have similar issues. The trust in the police in general is systematically low. Mexicans tend to have higher trust of the military.

CANALES:

And you were asking, how important is trust? And when we are working with the police, one of the things that we say is that it's natural for police officers to think that trust comes from operational effectiveness, meaning if we catch a lot of bad guys, then people are going to trust us. And what we tried to explain to them, which is what research has shown over and over and over again, is that actually, trust is kind of a precondition for police effectiveness.

If citizens do not trust you, the police cannot do their jobs. And you heard DA Rollins say something about this. Listen, if the community doesn't tell me what's going on, if the community doesn't want to be part of-- doesn't want to act as a witness, if the community doesn't give me information about exactly what happened, then I

cannot prosecute crimes. And it's the same with the police.

If the citizens do not trust the police, then police officers don't really know where they need to patrol, what kinds of crimes or what kinds of problems they're trying to address. And so trust is a precondition for operational effectiveness. And that's one of the things that we tried to work on with our police partners.

So you were asking, what can we do, and what do we learn from places where the police are trusted? There are cities in Mexico and cities in the US where actually, people do trust the police. And so when you actually take a look at what exactly they have done, I would say that there are two big lessons that are very tightly related to each other. The first is this big question of who is the police serving.

When you unpack the organization of the police and how it's set up and what its evaluation metrics are and what its structure looks like and how police officers are rewarded or promoted, all these things, who, in fact, is, quote unquote, the customer of that organization and that police force? And what you find is that there are places where the police has realized that they need to reframe what they're doing, and they need to put the citizen at the center of everything that they do. And they need to put trust as the key indicator of effectiveness.

And when police forces do that-- when they say, wait, trust is not an outcome-- trust is the outcome. Trust is the thing that we need to do. Because if we do that well, then everything else we're going to do better. And when they think about citizens are the only thing that we should be worried about-- and that means that sometimes, we're going to need to catch bad guys, but that's not what we do. What we do is we help protect citizens and build a good relationship with them. When police forces do that, they start changing everything that they do. They start changing, for example-- it's not that they change the number of interactions that they have with citizens, but they certainly change the type of interactions that they have with citizens.

Now it's not just about arresting or giving tickets. Now it's also mostly about helping, about supporting, about having a positive interaction. Because trust is the main thing that we need to care about. And very related to that-- the principles of procedural justice, meaning what are the ways in which police forces need to

behave in everything that they do, from the simplest interactions to the most violent arrests? When police forces weave procedural justice into every process that they do, we systematically see that trust improves.

And so as an example, one of the things that we did in Mexico-- we did a randomized controlled trial of a procedural justice training for police officers in Mexico City, which systematically mistrusts the police force. And we saw very clear and very dramatic improvements in police behavior and subsequent in citizen perception of those police officers.

And so when you combine this idea of procedural justice as a framework that every police officer knows needs to dictate their actions and this notion of reframing who we're working for-- we're not here to chase bad people. We are here to protect and build the trust of citizens. Then you see that you start moving the processes and the evaluations and everything to a path that helps you build a much more productive relationship with citizens.

**MELISSA
NOBLES:**

Well, thank you. That was terrific. And the way you described, that will be the concluding remarks. And I think it ends on a quite an important note. Because as both you and Dr. Leeds have described, in the end, there needs to be a culture change, it seems, a vast-- that's what we're describing here in the US-- thinking differently, organizing our organizations differently, and putting citizens at the center of the conversations.

This has been really terrific, and I think it's given all of us a great view of the complexities of the issues, the similarities across nation states in our hemisphere as well as the very important differences. I want to thank both of you very much for coming and participating in our forum today. Thank you.

**RODRIGO
CANALES:**

It's been a pleasure, Dean Nobles. Thank you, Dr. Leeds. Thank you.

**MELISSA
NOBLES:**

Thank you. Thank you, everyone, for watching. Please stay up on what the MIT Starr Forum has in mind. We have tons of different activities going forward. And so stay tuned. As always, quite interesting things happening here at MIT. And with that, have a good afternoon. Thank you.

[MUSIC PLAYING]