[MUSIC PLAYING]

KAREN FOLEY: Hello, and welcome back. Well, sorry about the clanking. There are some very dodgy noises going on in the jail, tonight. But, we will crack on, nonetheless. I think we're quite safe, here. And this is our current affairs session. I am joined by Jessica Giles and Peter Bloom. Welcome. Jessica, you're representing law. Peter, you're representing-- oh sorry, oh yeah, law and business. I got it the right way around, Phew. What has mooting got to do with hats?

JESSICA GILES: Mooting and hats, well, mooting, as you know, is a legal skill. So students, when they verbalise ideas, it helps them to embed their learning, which is a really great way of improving learning. And mooting really is about debating, arguing, at a point. So when you have-- people think the law is very certain. But actually, often, it's very uncertain, and people have different views about the interpretation of the law. But In order to learn a skill, it's a really good idea-- if you take a topic that's fairly familiar or easy to argue--

So for example, I took a group of 8-year-olds, once, and we did a bit of an experiment to see if they could deal with some really quite complicated concepts, so we wanted to do some mooting, some debating with them. And we decided what we'd start with was whether or not it was appropriate to have chocolate for breakfast every morning.

KAREN FOLEY: 8-year-olds, my guess, is the unanimous answer was yes.

JESSICA GILES: Well, funnily enough, it wasn't.

KAREN FOLEY: Really?

JESSICA GILES: They were really good. They were fantastic. Because I put them into two teams, and I said, you have to think of arguments for, on team A, and arguments, again, on Team B. And that was the number, there, if you like. That's the whole skill of mooting, that even if you don't agree with something, you can think of arguments to support it, and they did really well.

And funnily enough, the best at mooting was a boy who was the youngest of four, and all I had to do was take those skills of growing up as the youngest of four and being able to argue a point and teach him how to use those in a group to argue for and against something. And they did fantastically well. So of course, our students who join mooting do it at something of a higher level. But actually, thinking about hats, and arguing for and against laws around hats,

it's using a fairly easy, familiar topic to gain some fairly high level skills.

KAREN FOLEY: Well, surely, there is no higher level than arguing about chocolate?

JESSICA GILES: Well, actually, I agree with you.

[LAUGHTER]

Definitely, it is. No higher level. So I think the 8-year-old have it, don't you?

KAREN FOLEY: I certainly do. Do you argue in business, then? Is this a common sort of academic skill that you think is important, Peter.

DR. PETER BLOOM: Oh, I mean absolutely. I mean, I think that in terms of studying business, one of the key things that you do is look at different perspectives of business, because there's no one right way to do things, including whether you should allow people to wear whatever hats they want in their job or not.

And when you do your study, you do want to look at the different ways in which you have different perspectives of what's acceptable, what's not acceptable, what are good values, what are not values. And the ability to argue and articulate that is central and really key to being able to prove your point, and also to explore different possibilities for kind of economic organisation and social organisation. So we do argue quite a bit in business.

KAREN FOLEY: And you're, here, to argue with Jessica.

DR. PETER BLOOM: Um I don't know. I would say, cooperative discussion.

KAREN FOLEY: Well, that's what I was told.

[LAUGHTER]

JESSICA GILES: We've already had some interesting debates.

DR. PETER BLOOM: Yes.

KAREN FOLEY: You have.

JESSICA GILES: Yes.

KAREN FOLEY: And you will see, at home, that we have a widget, there, which is do you agree or disagree? And what we're going to do now is we're going to take a couple of current issues, and we're going to look at them from different perspectives and see who's right and who's wrong. I think it'll be very simplistic. Don't you?

DR. PETER BLOOM: I hope so.

[LAUGHTER]

JESSICA GILES: --very provocative. Should we say that, I think, yes.

KAREN FOLEY: So these are the topics we're going to talk about, and I'd like you to start talking about them in the chat. And Sophie and Kristen will let us know what you think at the appropriate time. We have chosen the issue of burkinis. Progressive manifestos / the labor leadership, and corporate responsibility and consciousness. And we're going to do all of that in about 40 minutes, OK? So let us know what you think about any of those points as we're going through, but we're going to start with this whole idea of burkinis.

So this has been something that's very topical. Jessica, I mean, how is this important in terms of legalities? I guess it impacts on rights and so many other areas. So why is this subject of interest to you?

JESSICA GILES: It's of particular interest to me, because I research in the area of law and religion. And people often wonder what that means, exactly. So law and religion is about when issues surrounding the expression or manifestation of religious freedom come into play. So for example, most people would know about the Eweida case, the lady who wanted to wear a crucifix to work as a British Airways staff, who checked people in.

And British Airways said no, no religious symbols at work. So that's the type of case that can come up around religion and law, if you like. So the burkini issue was particularly live over this summer, when we had those images of French women on the beaches who were wearing burkinis-- that's the body covering that Muslim women will wear for modesty, for reasons of modesty. And they sometimes have a hood, but they will cover their arms and their bodies, leaving their face.

And there was one town, in particular-- so Cannes-- the mayor passed a law which said, basically, they're banned. Burkinis must not be worn. Now, the wearing of the burkini is the manifestation of religious belief. So what they were doing is they were denying that freedom of religion of those individuals.

And the reasons that were given were public order. As we all know, it's been very unsettled in France. There's been terrorist attacks. And the justification for that ban was that it was in the interests of public order, and that the wearing-- which is most interesting-- the wearing of these garments was immoral and anti-secular, which is a fascinating statement. If you think back to not that many years ago, in the Victorian era, when actually, if you took off those sort of garments, that would be considered immoral. So it just shows how society has moved and transformed from one concept around what's moral and morality to a different concept. What hap--

KAREN FOLEY: Can I just say one thing-- because this is so interesting. There's a lot of confusion in the chat about bikinis and burkinis. And you know what, I've been sitting there listening. As soon as I sort of thought, ah, this is an interesting issue. And then you're starting to talk about taking them off, and it raises all sorts of other images. But we are talking about burkinis, right now.

JESSICA GILES: Burkinis, that's right.

KAREN FOLEY: Interesting, I guess, and very much something I've learned whilst dealing with some of the colleagues in law is that it's very important to be pedantic about what we're talking about, so that we can frame things. And in terms of our agree and disagree widget, I guess, what we're asking, really, is do people think that it's acceptable for people to wear these garments? OK. So let's have that as our question, and see what the consensus is, out there. Do you agree that people should be allowed to wear a burkini, if indeed, they want to?

OK, so yes. Sorry, Jessica. I just had to interrupt you there, because there's no point in going any further if there's this mass confusion. And as we know, it's winter, now, officially, here at the student hub live. So bikinis are not acceptable attire. Right, OK. So this whole idea, then, about the law protecting individual freedom and rights. How does that, then, impact in a business sense? What are some of the issues, I guess, the more political issues that can relate to this?

DR. PETER BLOOM: Well, I think in terms of the broader politics, there's a really interesting question about how we decide, in many ways, what is against public order? What is a threat to public order, and why?

And there's a very strong political dimension that manifests itself legally.

So in this case, we're talking about a situation in which, because of recent terror attacks, there's an increase in security. And you have what is commonly kind of discussed as a kind of scapegoating policy, where it's saying, this is the problem, and these people are the problem, and this is the issue that will bring us security.

And I think from a business point of view, what we're interested in is kind of similar dynamics of how, when you have insecurity, there's a really strong desire to be able to do something, to be able to isolate a cause, and to be able to, in many ways, target that and say, this is the problem, and this is how we're going to solve it.

Now, the ramifications of this is that other kind of deeper issues, oftentimes, get ignored. So sometimes, in the case of France, you're not talking about problems of civil segregation, you're not talking about problems of prejudice, you're not talking about problems of French, European, and American foreign policy that contributes to a number of these kinds of social attacks.

In this case, you're saying, it's these women on the beach who are causing this problem. And if only they would dress, quote unquote, "more appropriately," then we wouldn't have any of these issues. And within a business sense, you get this quite a bit. I mean, if you look at the recent financial crisis, this is a deep structural problem that very much speaks about 30 years of policies involving marketisation and increased power of finance and how we think about society.

And yet it can often be reduced to blaming-- it's these bankers' faults, or it's these people's faults, or these people who didn't buy their home. So from a political sense, it's very interesting in terms of who we scapegoat and why, and how this plays on a desire to, in many ways, have a certain sense of agency and how that can be misdirected.

KAREN FOLEY: So there are all of these very complex issues, here, and we asked people at home whether they think people should be allowed to wear these garments if they want to. And you know, it's 100% of people agree that they should be able to. OK. So maybe we need to reframe the question.

And I'm going to ask you to reframe that question, because there are clearly more nuances than just that people should be allowed to do something, because as you say, it impacts on so

many other agendas, and it's greater than the wider issue of somebody actually dressing in a particular way. So while I'll let you think about reframing that question, I'm going to go to Sophie and Kristen and see what other chat is going on.

SOPHIE: Well, it's actually been very interesting. We did start off, actually, think we'd be talking about the ethics of money laundering. But we were talking about laundry, to start with-- had a couple of household chores going on, as we speak. But it has become very focused, and everyone's been--

KAREN FOLEY: I see what you did, there.

[LAUGHTER]

SOPHIE: I tried. So yeah, everyone is putting some really good points across that have to do with bikinis and burkinis. There's a lot of really good chat going on, generally.

KRISTEN: Yeah. What I found interesting is someone mentioned the idea of having tattoos at work and whether that was something along the same lines. And you know, I wonder if Jessica and Peter want to talk about that at all. I mean, that's a business issue, in fact. Or even like wearing heels at work, I mean, all of these things are having to do with clothing and our outward appearance. You know, what are the legal and business issues around it?

KAREN FOLEY: And you say all of that very sensibly wearing a hat.

[LAUGHTER]

KRISTEN: There is a brain under here.

KAREN FOLEY: Yes. And despite the talk about laundering and food, a lot of people in the chat are talking about more sensible things like the Law Society and law, so keep that up. What would your thoughts be?

JESSICA GILES: I think in terms of reframing the question and religious expression or religious manifestation, one can think of different spheres of public life, if you like. So for example, there are individuals who have a role as public officials. How far should their religious expression go? So for example, someone who officiates marriages, they have religious beliefs that same sex marriages wouldn't be appropriate, and therefore, they don't want to officiate. Is that appropriate?

Or because they have a public role, are they required to set aside those beliefs and undertake that public role. So that the courts have ruled, the European Court of Human Rights, has ruled that that's the case. It's a public role. That they must undertake that role, or basically, move elsewhere. The other issue, then, is in the private sphere. So in business, if someone is supplying a service, should they be free to manifest their religion in the supply of that service. So recently in Ireland, for example--

KAREN FOLEY: So is that your question you'd like the feedback on, then--

JESSICA GILES: Yes. I think should there be a difference in the scope that individuals have to express their religious beliefs, depending on what walk of life they're in? That's a very long, lawyerly question, isn't it?

KAREN FOLEY: Should you be able to do what you want to do, if that's your religion?

JESSICA GILES: Yes. I would say, depending on where you're doing it.

KAREN FOLEY: OK. Did you get that? Right. You vote. We've cleared the widget, so you can vote whether you agree or disagree. I think, ultimately, that you're allowed to do what you want based on your religion and your circumstances in a particular context.

JESSICA GILES: Should we take public life? If you are a public official, let's take that as an example. So if you are a public official, officiating, or carrying out a role, if you're a civil servant, or if you're a teacher at school-- there's a number of cases where teachers have wanted to wear religious symbols-- and different decisions throughout Europe, So between France and Germany, for example-- as to whether or not teachers should be allowed to do that. So what do students think about that?

KAREN FOLEY: OK. Well let's see what you think. And we're going to get the results from that very soon. Is there anything you would like to add to that, Peter.

DR. PETER BLOOM: Well, I think, also, that's very interesting in what this brings to the table, as well. And something that Jessica brought up is the different areas of life and the different kind of power people have in them, and how they can blur-- I think the idea of tattoos in the workplace is a very interesting one, because it doesn't have to be religion. It's who has the right to tell you you can or cannot do something or wear something, and why?

I think, oftentimes, there's a very strong idea of consent, right. Like you're consenting to agree

in a business place to wear a suit or wear a uniform. But actually, is it really consent? If you have to, for instance, try to find a job, or you really like this job, should a manager have the right to tell you what you can wear and whether you can have a tattoo-- impose their values on you.

So I think this is actually something that's very interesting in the sense that you are getting increased debate and increased discussion about who does have the right to tell you what you can and can't wear, how you can express yourself, and why. And I think in the business sense, that these are oftentimes brought up in terms of public officials, and I think you are very good reasons why.

But they're also being, now, brought to the private space. Like, how far does toleration go in the private sphere? Who has the right to, again, tell you what you can or can't do? Should you apply some of that same standards-- does not wearing high heels, for instance, constitute a public threat to your business?

Can you really tell someone that they can't wear that? Can you really tell someone that they have to wear a tie? Right? What right do they have to do that? So I think, actually, this is a really interesting time, because traditional power relations within businesses are actually, in many ways, being questioned and challenged.

KAREN FOLEY: So the widget was-- people were wildly agreeing. We had a unanimous vote on agree, earlier. And that has swung significantly, now, slightly teetering towards the disagree side of things. Why do you think that is? Do you think people are identifying with this more on an individual level, as opposed to an ideological level?

JESSICA GILES: I think often people have an idea about the roles that individuals play within society. So there's a very interesting concept that comes out of political and philosophical theory that says, there are different spheres in society. And actually, so government itself plays a role in society, but there are other groupings, if you like, that have roles, so the family-- educational institutions, private business-- and to a certain extent, they should be able to regulate themselves in terms of the conduct, the morality surrounding that.

And government really plays a role in being neutral, to a certain extent, and when it's operating through its public officials, there's an expectation of neutrality, there. But it does become more problematic-- for example, we have two cases in the health service. So we have the Chaplin case, where a nurse wanted to wear a cross on the uniform. And then we have a

social worker who came into a hospital and wanted to wear a head dress, the hijab-- so not the full face covering, the head covering.

Now, in the first, in the Chaplin case, it was ruled that she couldn't wear the cross because of hygiene reasons. In the second case, the head covering, there was no interference when they didn't renew her contract, because she refused to take that off. And that was on the grounds that there should be neutrality in the provision of public services.

And that's a very difficult issue, because actually the wearing of the headdress didn't affect, in any way, the provision of the services that she was offering to the patient. And it was the patient's prejudice, if you like, against Muslims that was causing that decision. So this idea is probably why there's such an indecision. If you're seeing much more of a swing between yes and no in your widget, in your vote, because it is much more complex when you come to public services.

What would be interesting to see is if that went even further when it came to the private sphere. Should business and individuals in the private sphere-- so they're not providing a public service, they're just providing an ordinary service-- should that allow individuals to manifest religious beliefs? So for example, if there's 10 businesses in a town, and one of them wants to say, well, this is our Christian belief, we're going to run our business like this-- same sex couples can't share a bed in our hotel.

But actually, same sex couples can go to any number of other hotels where they can share a bed. And that's an interesting question, because then you're really in the private sphere. And there, one would start to expect tolerance between individuals, but what we see is a clash of rights-- so a clash of the same sex couples, saying, we want to exercise our rights and the Christian hoteliers, saying, we want to exercise our religious freedom rights. And that's when it gets quite complex.

KAREN FOLEY: So there's a lot of discussion in the chat about this, and the scales are now going back more towards the agree side of things. And I guess this is why you were so keen that we put the context in place. Because it seems to be that what you're saying is that you can have these different ideas. But actually, it's where you're doing and in what context that really matters and affects and impacts on how we view those decisions.

JESSICA GILES: That's right. It certainly is. And interestingly, what you see-- because we have the European Court of Human Rights, which, if you like has-- it's not a watching brief, but cases are referred

from different states throughout Europe on human rights issues. So what we see, as well, coming into the European Court of Human Rights is a very different treatment of these issues or some of these issues throughout Europe.

And that's particularly interesting, because we're seeing the historical development of the treatment of religion and religious freedom and how that impacts on the creation of laws and the judicial decisions as they come out in the courts. And then, overarching all that, you have the European Court that's got to try and adjudicate on these disputes, which can be a very, very difficult task for the court.

KAREN FOLEY: Very complex. And we've got three subject areas, which I'm keen to cover, because I want to look at consciousness, from a purely selfish perspective, right at the end. Sophie and Kristen, how's the chat going?

SOPHIE: Busy.

KRISTEN: Oh, very busy. We've had to explain that you can hit that pin at the top right, so that it slows the chat down, because a couple of people are having a hard time keeping up with all of the discussion.

SOPHIE: It's been really busy. We've had some really good points. There's a couple of discussions going on. There's one, also, about tattoos, and things like that. And there's another, sort of, religious side going. And bringing this back to sort of law, Stephanie-- I think it was Stephanie-- works in a solicitor's. And they can't have tattoos on show. And so some people are saying that, actually, it's more professional if you don't have tattoos and show us you're working.

But Stephanie also made the point that it actually makes you feel more human, especially a solicitor. It can make you feel more like a person, rather than, sort of, a man in a suit, doing something for you. So there are two very good views, there. That just epitomises the chat, really. It's very, sort of, divided, but there are two very good sides.

KRISTEN: Well, very much like the results for this particular question, with pretty much half agreeing and half disagreeing. So I think that's a really interesting question for the debate. Good.

KAREN FOLEY: Wonderful. Thank you very much. Shall we move on to our next area? Otherwise, we're not going to cover them all. OK, so the next topic was progressive manifesto, stroke, labour leadership. OK. This is, obviously, quite a political idea. And it's also quite loaded in terms of

how you presented it.

DR. PETER BLOOM: Yes. Well, I think that it's a very interesting idea in the sense that regardless of which side you find yourself on or how you identify politically, you're having real discussions, now, about some fundamental values of what is the role of government, what is the role of citizens, and what do citizens and governments-- how should they interact, and what do they owe each other?

And so what I found very interesting about the labour manifesto was that recently, before the conference, there was a kind of 10-point plan that was put out that was fairly controversial in the sense that even though by many European standards, it would be kind of a centrist, social democratic intervention, but by the UK standards, I think it's probably the most, quote unquote, "progressive" document that has been put in the last several decades.

And one of the very strong focuses on it was that it was expanding, not just a sense of technocratic notions of how should we increase economic growth, but actually what type of society do we want, what are freedoms that we should have? So it was kind of returning to a sense that you just don't have the freedom to do things, such as freedom of speech or freedom to religion, but you also have freedom from things, in many ways. Like, you have a freedom from want, you have a freedom from desperation of insecurity, materially.

And so I found this very interesting. I think if this goes forward, particularly in terms of how this is affecting discourse, how we are thinking about things, this is going to have a profound influence that goes beyond just policy making, but also within businesses, for instance-- how they have to treat their employees, and what kinds of democratic representations they have to have, and also, in a broader sense, of maybe some of the different ways in which kind of competing values are starting to be brought up for discussion, and things that previously were simply ignored, are now coming back to the fold and being updated and modernised.

KAREN FOLEY: So I guess you're saying that this is going to impact in terms of rights, individual rights?

DR. PETER BLOOM: I would definitely think that this could have a strong impact in terms of individual rights. I mean, I'll give you example. Do we have a right to shelter? Right. I think that if you go around the UK, you definitely see that, perhaps, you do not. I mean, there's a huge homelessness problem. There's a huge problem with people trying to pay their rent.

I think for a lot of students who are living, many are dealing with-- can I afford my rent, where should I live, how should I live? And it can be very insecure. Now, the notion that you might

have a right to shelter, and that the government might have a stronger role in ensuring that right, and that you might have a democratic ability, as both an individual citizen and as a community, to say no, we want you to build these types of houses, and we want to have an insurance that we can have affordable housing, these are all things that could profoundly change the role of government and the role of citizens.

KAREN FOLEY: But Jessica, in a wider sense, I mean, we've heard that whilst we can have issues, in particular, around law impacting in the UK, there is this wider-- in particular, the European Union-- impact in terms of how we do human rights, here. So what would you add, then, to this discussion in terms of, I guess, the labour manifesto and the labour leadership, and how things are changing in light of Brexit?

JESSICA GILES: So I think, for many, the Brexit vote was actually a vote about democracy. They wanted to feel closer to decision making, and that was bound up with the dialogue around rights. There's a focus on individuals taking responsibility, and individuals considering rights, and I would hope, duties. Although, I'm not convinced that always happens, because of course, if someone has a right, somebody else has a duty on the other side of things.

And the rights dialogue has been criticised from that point of view, sometimes, because individuals say, well, this is my right, and this is my right to this, and also expand that beyond what one would term legal rights, and they just claim a right to something and think that then trumps other arguments, as it were.

But so Brexit is particularly interesting, because what we have, at the moment, but are coming out of, is within the European Union, is the Charter of Fundamental Rights, which actually is a wide spectrum of rights linked to European Union freedoms, so factum ability. So when I exercise my right to move freely under the EU treaties into France, there are certain fundamental rights that attach-- piggyback on, if you like-- that right to free movement.

So it's all up in the air, at the moment, as to what the legal ramifications are going to be, and negotiations are under way. And the likelihood is that there won't be any sort of tighter agreement. There is an agreement called the European Economic Area, whereby the Charter of Rights would still have impact, but the likelihood is we won't have that tighter agreement, because that will just feel like being in Europe, and people have said, they don't want to feel like being in Europe, in the sense of the legal arrangement. We still are Europeans, because that's our geography, of course.

So I think, certainly, what Peter says is the case. We're having a complete rethink about governance and rights and the framework we want to be in. And what is very exciting to see, as a lawyer, is we are engaging more with law creation and law formation, not just law application. The law isn't being made for us anymore in Europe, and we're thinking about applying it and interpreting it.

Actually, it's very exciting to think about that, and it will be fascinating to watch that around rights dialogue, because we have a very strong tradition of the civil and political rights-- so the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion, the right to family life, the right to freedom of expression.

But they're first generation rights, if you like. But there are many other rights that we need to think about and think practically about, whether it's possible to enforce them. You know, does everybody have a right to food? If we made that a global right-- you know we could do that, but would countries be willing to afford that? So there's all sorts of issues around creating additional rights.

KAREN FOLEY: So can we pose a question, then, for our audience that they could answer, and we'll refresh that widget, so that they can see whether we agree or disagree on an issue. This is really touching, though, on this whole idea of how far the parameters are, isn't it?

DR. PETER BLOOM: Yes.

JESSICA GILES: Yes.

KAREN FOLEY: So you know, we're saying, you know, whilst we're in Great Britain, we are then within the European Union. And we're looking very specifically, I guess, in terms of how the European Union is impacting on our legal system and our way of governance and being. But is it wider than that? Are there other issues that are impacting? And specifically, I guess, I'm talking about with the progressive manifesto, here? Is anything wider than the European Union, or can we be quite categorical and look at this, as you say, Jessica, in terms of our identity and our democracy?

JESSICA GILES: Yes. So I've got-- Peter, did you want-- I've got definite answers for that one. But if Peter wanted to--

DR. PETER BLOOM: I also-- I mean, one of the elements, I think, this brings up, as well, is the right of communities and right of nations and right of groups to self-determination, and what kind of duties that also implies. And to reiterate a point that Jessica made that is very important, is that when you have a vote like Brexit, which has a range of different reasons for why it occurred, one of the key reasons that continually comes out is democratic deficit. This is a real opportunity for people to say, I'm unhappy about this, and I'm angry about this.

Now, from a political point of view, and in terms of business, in general, this actually plays on a broader sense of democratic deficit within the EU and more generally about what kind of rights do individuals and communities have to shape their economic destiny? So within the UK, on an informal level, we're told consistently that globalisation is inevitable, that we have to do these things, because that's just global competition.

And yet how democratic is that really? How much do people have a right to say, actually, I don't want to have that type of economic system? I think on a kind of EU level-- and I think this is very much wrapped up with things that's happened, for instance, in Greece and these kind of issues-- we have a whole range of economic policies, like austerity, that are kind of applied with, oftentimes, very little democratic accountability from outside forces. So you have to have these policies, even though there is very little economic evidence that they work the way they say they're going to do or that they're effective.

KAREN FOLEY: So could a question, then, to ask our audience be, do individuals have a right to shape the economic policies that apply to them?

DR. PETER BLOOM: Absolutely. That would be good question.

KAREN FOLEY: So do you agree or disagree? Do individuals have a right to shape the economic policies that apply to them? So do you think you should have a say in things that apply to you on an economic level, agree or disagree?

JESSICA GILES: So just to come back to your question, because it was so interesting. I told you I'd give Peter a chance to respond. But the other thing we must bear that in mind, in terms of our rights framework, they were originally created as international legal instruments. It was as a result of the horrors of the world wars, particularly the Second World Wars, that we created these instruments at an international level.

Member states committed to them, and they have, certainly, in this country, for example, been built into the national legal framework. So whilst there is a certain freedom for a nation to determine its rights framework, it does sit within a framework of international fundamental rights norms that are global.

Now, that doesn't mean that all states submit to them, as it were, but there is an international framework. And some interesting debate is going on, at the moment, for example, in law and religion circles about whether or not the right to freedom of religion means the same in every state.

DR. PETER BLOOM: Absolutely.

JESSICA GILES: So for example, if you go to Africa, what does freedom of religion mean there? If you go to America or Canada or South Africa or Asia-- Asia, for example, the societies are very communal, and Africa. So they would prioritise their rights in a very different way. So you have this tension, if you like, between international human rights frameworks and norms and then nation states saying, and individuals within a nation state, saying, well, we've got a right to this, or we want these rights.

So a government can be permissive to a certain extent. But actually, if it's going to start being restrictive and restricting rights, it has to have an eye to international fundamental rights norms.

DR. PETER BLOOM: And I think that's a very important point that, really, is going back to the labour manifesto that is oftentimes missed, and in many ways, is going to be a key part about how the UK debates about things. And I think we can study, within business, as well, in a globalising world, when you have oftentimes competing commitments, which rights take precedent?

And I think that one of the fundamental things that happened in the 21st century is a sense that when you had a country like the United Kingdom that was committed to maintaining a special relationship with the United States, for instance, and invading Iraq, and there were other countries in Europe who they also have commitments to, that said, actually, we're not sure that this follows international law, we're not sure that this follows what we would consider the reason we made these treaties.

This brought up a really strong point about who gets to decide what's prioritised? Is it

relationships? Is it self-interest? Or is it these kind of international, oftentimes abstract, kind of laws that are the supposed basis for these relationships? And I think when you're looking, then, at these kind of broader questions, it goes, again-- and it's so nice that you brought up the point of duty, because when you're talking about this, if you make certain rights, if you say, for instance, we are going to make sure-- not just to have a millennium development challenge-- but we're going to have to make sure that you have a right to food.

This, all of a sudden, creates a duty to say well, if you can't afford to make sure that you have a right to food, then you can afford to spend however much you're spending on your military, right? So these duties, actually-- and I think the labour manifesto brings them up-- is you have to make priorities, and you have to do this on the basis of which rights are you prioritising and why.

KAREN FOLEY: So we've got around at the minute-- as its swinging-- but 80% of people agreeing with the statement-- do individuals have a right to shape an economics economic policy that applies to them? And you're making this really, really good point about that whilst we can look at something like this as an isolated case, there are priorities. So other things would, then, outweigh this. And then we would have to choose to what extent we agree with that based on, I guess, our hierarchy of needs.

Joanne made a really good point that democracy, in Greek, means power to the people. And I have a specific question from Stuart, as well-- well, more a point, maybe, or a question. But he said, was Brexit a vote against the EU or against Westminster itself. I mean, this whole idea about what we were voting for and against is not only evidence in some of the widgets that we're actually asking people to vote about. But equally, you know, it's very unclear in terms of how people are actually swaying things.

And yet we have these very categorical outcomes at the end of it that we're, then, struggling to identify what they mean. But the implications, I guess, are very, very broad, aren't they?

JESSICA GILES: I think, yes, it's very difficult to identify one thing that the Brexit vote was, because, I think, many people had many different motivations. Certainly those I was speaking to, rather than being a vote against anything, it was a vote for something. And it was a vote for democracy.

And what we have noticed-- and I've discussed this with colleagues-- what we've noticed at the time of the Brexit vote, and since then, is how engaged with politics people are. You will hear political discussions in ways that I have not heard for many, many years. And I find that very

exciting, actually. But the knock on effect of that is, then, that we have to do the politics, as well, not just talk about it. We need to start--

DR. PETER BLOOM: Absolutely.

JESSICA GILES: --engaging with it in ways that we inform policy, and that the government then manages to run policy. And one of the dangers we have to be wary of is not to be too isolationist. We don't want to-- for example, there's talk about rights frameworks now-- not just coming out of Brexit, but perhaps coming out of some of the human rights frameworks, because it's reengaged or reopened that debate.

Now, that would be a step which really would make us look very nationalistic and very isolationist in a global interaction of states, which I think would be dangerous. So as much as we might want to shape our own destiny and have all these ideas, that's fantastic, but I think at the same time, we need to be aware of our position on the world stage.

DR. PETER BLOOM: I would say, in addition to that, democracy is becoming beyond just traditional democracy. So when you say is it a vote against Westminster, is it a vote against EU? I would say yes, both, and-- and the point is, I think people feel like they have a complete lack of democracy in many ways, their lives. I mean, in many ways, power and agency and freedom is found, and I think this will go to many of our students is-- how well you can do your CV so you can be more employable?

Right? You don't have a lot of democracy in your workplaces. You don't always have a lot of democracy in your communities. So people feel very isolated in terms of being able to actually make a really democratic ability. And you know, I think it was, in many ways, implicitly and explicitly a reaction to the fact that I have more choices in who I vote for on *Strictly Come Dancing* and *X-Factor*, than I do in Westminster or the EU.

You know, these people seem to be saying many of the same things. I don't know if they represent me, and more than that, they ask me to tell them whether they're doing a good job every four years. So I think it is a fact that you're now dealing with a desire for democratisation of society. But I think this will bring to our third point is-- what are the limits of this democracy?

I mean, I think the Brexit debate, one thing that we can't go out is the immigrant part. And if you have a situation in which there's a whole majority of people within a community that feel,

we should really not allow certain people into our communities, and they're basing this on a whole range of facts that maybe are not right. I mean, there's no evidence, for instance, from my sense as an economist, there's no evidence that immigrants actually bring down wages in this country at all. In fact, quite the opposite.

But that was a key point, right? So what are the limits of this democracy? And this brings us back to a lot of age old debates about why you have rights in the first place. They're not just creations for-- you know, we want to be law creators, as Jessica said. But also these are the limits of what kind of laws you can create, because we don't always make our laws in the most dispassionate, reasonable, deliberative way.

Oftentimes, they are based on very strong passions that lead to very strong consequences for huge parts of the community that don't feel like they have a point, a voice.

KAREN FOLEY: Now, absolutely. And there are so many issues this is bringing up. We're nearly out of time, and I guess, Brexit is something that is very emotive. We actually had a student hub live event on Brexit just after the referendum, and you can watch that on the Catch Up, by going to the website studenthublive.kmi.open.ac.uk, where I had a whole bunch of people from the social sciences, and we were talking about various issues around identity and politics and what that meant for the UK, shortly after that event.

Sophie and Kristen, you guys have had a lot of chat, a lot of clanking going on over there. What are people talking about? I hear there's a lot happening.

SOPHIE: It is. It's very busy. It's really nice to see. It's a really nice debate going on. We've had some really nice, little comments throughout, really. We had a really nice one from Stuart. He said our economy is very much like a tree-- if you don't feed and water the roots, the whole thing dies. I quite like that idea.

SOPHIE: And you've got another one from Michele, who's also saying that the duty of knowledge of economic policies that have impact existence and duty to vote. So basically, people have sort of a duty to teach themselves about the economics of policies and politics in general. And hopefully, if you know, we all made a bit more effort to do that, it would mean that we can make more informed decisions, in general. So there's some really nice chat going on.

Joanne is also-- we also had a bit of a Brexit discussion, which is always quite tenuous. But Joanne did make a good point-- that it has given the people a new interest in how our country

is run. And I agree. It's at least brought politics to the forefront of everyone's sort of lives, now. And I think people are more interested and willing to learn, which is definitely needed, I think. So lots of really great chat going on, here. It's really nice, so keep it up, guys.

KRISTEN: It's a fabulous chat.

KAREN FOLEY: Thank you so much. Well, we're out of time, and I'm not going to blow the whistle and torment everybody at this time of night. But Jessica, Peter, thank you so much for joining me. You've raised some really, really interesting issues that I imagine will continue in the chat for a long time. And thank you for coming on the student hub live and filling us in on those issues, also.

OK. Next, it's time for sport. And we're going to welcome Paul Raven, Simon Lee, and Steve Godrich into the studio very soon. We're going to have a brief video. Don't forget to grab a cup of tea or a beer, because it's that time of day. And we have been talking a lot about bars, so go and grab a drink. We'll see you in five minutes or so, for our next talk, which is all about ethics in sport. See you soon.

[MUSIC PLAYING]