

The Race and Ethnicity Hub

Student voices on examining race and policing in the UK and the USA

Francine Ryan, Dr Liliana Belkin, Avril Martin, Ian Jenkins, Danielle Reeves:

FRANCINE RYAN: Welcome to the session. Just to give you some introductions, my name is Francine Ryan. And I'm chairing the event tonight.

I'm a lecturer in the law school. And I'm one of the co-directors of the Open Justice Centre. And I'm joined tonight by Liliana Belkin, who was a research fellow in the Centre for Policing Research and Learning, Avril Martin, who was an associate lecturer in the law school, and then two of our final year law students, Ian and Danielle.

So just to give you a little recap about how this session is going to work, I'm going to start by explaining a little bit about the Open Justice Centre and how that connects with the Freedom Law Project on Race and Policing. Liliana is then going to provide an overview on policing from the perspectives of the US and the UK. And then Avril, Ian, and Danielle are going to reflect on their experiences of participating in the Freedom Law Project.

So, I'm just going to start by just giving you a little bit of an introduction into the Open Justice Centre, which was started in 2016 to build a bridge between the Open University Law School and the wider community. And so, we've developed a series of pro bono projects in partnership with prisons, schools, legal charities, and courts across the UK. Our law students are involved in projects that help members of the public understand their legal rights.

So, for example, we work in partnership with schools and deliver street law presentations with schools on issues such as joint enterprise, social media law, consent, stop and search, et cetera. We also have a partnership with the St Giles Trust, which is a charity that provides prison and community-based support for people in the criminal justice system. So, our law students work with peer mentors in prison to develop resources to help prisoners understand their legal rights.

And one of the projects that our students are involved in, which is connected to this project tonight is the Freedom Law Clinic, which is a community interest group that provides research and advice on appeals for people who have been convicted of very serious offenses, but are maintaining their innocence. So, our law students work with law students from eight law

schools across the UK to collaborate to find research grounds for Criminal Appeals. The goal of a Freedom Law Clinic is to support law students to enact social change and provide access to justice.

And so over the summer, particularly because of the lockdown and with lots of students not being able to access virtual law internships and projects such as that, Freedom Law Clinic ran two projects, one looking at the impact of COVID-19 on human rights, and the second one, which is the focus of tonight's discussion, on race and policing.

So, 10 of our law students join law students from across other law schools to discuss race and policing with experts and practitioners in a series of online seminars. The program focused on comparing the legal frameworks in the two jurisdictions considering the historical parallels and the important differences between the legal developments. The students were provided with challenging reading materials.

And at the end of the project, they had to submit a 5,000-word essay on an aspect of race and policing of their choice. So, before Ian and Danielle and Avril talk about their experiences with the project, I would like to introduce Dr. Liliana Belkin, who is going to provide an overview of the US and UK policing. Liliana joined the CPLRL as a research fellow in August of this year. And she's working on the Mobilizing Change in Police Learning and Development Project with Richard Harding and policing colleagues.

Liliana has taught at undergraduate and postgraduate levels in the US and the UK. And she was a central school leader and director of policy and implementation at the New York City Department of Education. Academically, her research and publications have focused on policy and practice barriers to formerly incarcerated youth reengaging in school, transnational education policy analysis, and supporting teachers and school administrators develop and implement instructional strategies and goals. So, I'm going to hand over to Liliana now, who's going to do her presentation.

LILIANA BELKIN: Thank you so much, Francine. OK, so I'm just going to give a very brief overview of issues of policing and recent issues in the US and the UK. So, this is very brief, quick and not as in-depth as you might like. But also, there's a lot of complexity that isn't really covered here.

So the point of this PowerPoint is really just to give a slight historical overview of some differences between policing in the US and the UK, talk a bit about race and policing, look at some statistics, and then think about some possible approaches for a reimagined future of policing or what are some ways forward.

So, give a very brief history-- pre-1800 in the UK, you had a very localized sort of decentralized fragmented policing system. It was very locally based. There were local constables. Some were paid. Some were unpaid. There were night-watchman.

There were a couple of instances of more organized police forces or a beginning of a sort of organized police force of the Bow Street Runners in London in 1749 and the Thames River Police to protect cargo in London in 1798. But it was, for the most part, very decentralized and fragmented. And there was a need for a more organized police force at the sort of national level or in big cities. And industrialization and urbanization were really kind of demanding that there be a new approach to policing and police for development of police forces.

In the colonial US, we have a sort of similar situation. Between 1600 and 1800 in the US, you have also just sort of sheriffs, constables, watchmen. It's very localized. It's very decentralized. And a lot of that is sort of borrowed or influenced by the UK.

But a very important distinctly American development of sort of a policing force with the slave patrols that were established in the southern colonies. And their aim was to sort of capture runaways and save people, to quell any possible uprisings. And often, they're credited as being the first modern police forces in the US.

It's important to understand that they had a very racist and racialized agenda, right? This was a sort of embedded racism within these forces. So, there's also a fair amount of inefficiency and corruption.

So, this leads us to sort of modern policing. So, in the UK, the father of modern policing is Sir Robert Peel, who established the Metropolitan Police in 1829. And it wasn't immediately popular. There was some scepticism, some concern about taxpayers paying for the police, some concerns about the police as a force in general.

But Sir Robert Peel had these principles, the Peel's principles, that were really about emphasizing the community policing, that you could police by the consent of the public, the respect for the public and these strict codes of conduct. And it was really around a sort of preventative approach to policing, less reactive and more proactive to some extent.

In the US, it developed slightly differently, again very influenced by London's Metropolitan Police force. The first sort of modern police force in New York City was established in 1844 and other cities followed. But there weren't really widespread codes of conduct. So it didn't adopt those sort of Peel's principles.

There was very little oversight. There was a lot of political parties and politicians involved in the development of police forces. So, there was a fair amount of interference and political control and a fair amount of sort of corruption within police forces.

And this ushered in sort of, by 1900, this concern about the need for police reform, the concept of developing a professionalism of policing. But some scholars argue that the tactics that were developed in sort of this professionalism movement in policing actually antagonized tensions between the police and the communities they served. So it actually didn't improve the kind of public relations of police in the communities they were serving in. And then this kind of continued in through the 1960s with kind of increased racial tensions between the police and communities of colour within the US.

Just to kind of recap the major differences in policing approaches, in the UK you have definitely a more community-based approach and policing by consent. This is less of an emphasis in the US. There's not a lot of guns in the UK. There are armed officers, but it's not as widespread. In the US, most officers are armed.

There's more of a use of military tactics in the US in policing. In the UK, there's more of an emphasis on de-escalation of situations. In general, there's much more training required to become a police officer in the UK. The amount of training in the US varies considerably.

And one of the key points is really that it's a very much more centralized system in the UK with 43 forces, with government oversight and accountability on a national level. In the US, you have about 18,000 police forces from all across the US. It's a huge number.

The accountability oversight is variable. And there's not this national oversight and accountability. And this just highlights that again, but just to show that it's a pretty stark difference. And it's very hyper-localized in the US.

And another points that kind of demonstrates the different contexts is this number of civilian firearms per capita. So, when you look at the UK, you have about 4.6 civilian firearms per 100 people. In the US, you have 120.5 civilian firearms per 100 people. So, in this chart here, you can see that, in 2017 with 326 million people in the US, there's about 393 million civilian firearms, so many more firearms in the public.

And this is a sort of interesting perception from a former police chief in the UK, Sir Denis O'Connor, who emphasized one of the differences between the experience of UK police versus police in the US. He said, "the cops here in the UK tend to fear getting it wrong and being criticized by a judge, he said. Cops in the US fear getting shot. Those are two very different worlds." So, it's just an interesting different context.

To demonstrate this, police officers killed in the line of duty in the UK versus the US, it's a very stark contrast to the numbers there. So, let's go on to race and policing. So, there's a number of historical issues when we're talking about race and policing.

And there are some similarities in the UK and US and some differences. In the UK, there's been sort of issues with race relations since the post-World War II era. And this has been an issue with police and communities of colour within the UK.

Some kind of flash point or critical incidents are the Brixton riots in 1981, the handling of the Stephen Lawrence murder by the police, and the Macpherson report in 1999, and the police forces being deemed institutionally racist after that report and inquiry. The use of stop and search has been found to disproportionately impact BAME communities in the UK, which is often attributed to this developing of a lot of distrust of the police in the BAME communities. There's an issue of disproportionality of Black and Asian populations in all aspects of the criminal justice system in the UK.

There's a relatively low proportion of BAME officers in the forces. And there's been media attention to some persistent examples of racial profiling by the police. This is somewhat maybe more exacerbated in the US if you consider that racism is somewhat embedded in the modern police force from this legacy of the slave patrols with a sort of many legalized racist practices and laws such as Jim Crow and others in the US and widespread issues of institutional racism in the US.

There's been a longstanding sort of issue of distrust of the police with a variety of communities and some issues of police brutality, especially in the riots during the 1960s and '70s in many cities in the US, Rodney King in 1992. And there's a lot of evidence around sort of Black communities being overpoliced in the US, issues of stop and frisk and stop and search in the US, and the high numbers of Black people killed by the police. There's also a lot of issues of disproportionality of Black, Native American, and Latinx people in all aspects of the criminal justice system in the US.

And this is a quote from Baroness Doreen Lawrence, who's Stephen Lawrence's mother and a member of the House of Lords. When asked about her thoughts in 2015 about how things may have changed since the Macpherson Report and policing, she says, "things have changed. I presume laws have changed, but I think a lot of police attitudes hasn't changed much. You still have a great deal of stop and search on the street. You still have members of the community complaining about how police are treating them."

And so this is just to give a sort of more community-based opinion of people's perception of the police. She also says, "I think there are underlying things where people believe that they can still get away with racism, especially within the police." So, this is really an issue.

So just to highlight some things about sort of stop and search or stop and frisk policies that have been an issue, so New York City came under a lot of scrutiny for this. From between 2002 and 2012, it was used a great deal. And you can see that the number of stops is quite a lot.

And there was a change in the mayor, and it was reduced. But if you look here at these percentages, you see that with the first Mayor Bloomberg from 2010 to 2013, there's a disproportionately number of Black and Latino people who are stopped in the stop and frisk searches. And there's 685,000 searches.

But under Mayor de Blasio, from 2014 to 2019, in 2019 the total number of stops has significantly reduced. But you see that the proportion of Black and Latinos is relatively similar. So that hasn't really changed this sort of racial profiling element.

This is a chart about racial profiling in England and Wales. And you see there's also an issue of disproportionality here, where it's sort of like you look-- this is based for 1,000 people. But definitely 38 Black people per 1,000 people are racially profiled in stop and search compared to 4 white, 7 others including Chinese, 11 Asians who see that there.

But when looking at sort of differences in the US and the UK, there's very few shootings by police in Britain. So, this is showing incidents in which police officers discharge their firearms and then the deaths from police officers' firearms, so relatively low numbers. When you look at the US, this first chart here, the bigger chart, is showing the number of people who have died in police custody or being arrested in the US.

So, the number in 2019 was around 1,099, but then you see some differences in fatal police shootings per million by race. So very disproportionately, Black people and Latino people are represented there. And it just sorts of demonstrates this difference.

And this is something that recently came out that shows that there have only been, between January and August, 12 days in 2020 where police did not kill anyone. So, this just sort of shows the situation in the US is maybe more extreme. And this kind of brings us up to George Floyd and discussions around police conduct and issues with the police and communities of color in the US, just showing some of the people who have been killed by the police or shot by the police in the US, which brings us sort of talking about Black Lives Matter and calls to defund the police, which I thought we should touch on.

So Black Lives Matter was founded in 2013. And it's an organization that operates in the US, UK, Canada, kind of worldwide. And they've been calling for this need to defund the police. And this is not really a new idea.

There's been a call to around police abolition for maybe 50 years or so. But what are they talking about here? And there's a lot of debate around this.

But I think defunding the police really, on some level, is about taking some funding from the police and prison system, which is very heavily funded in the US, and redirecting those funds to mental health services, and school services, and education services, jobs and things like that, that would alleviate some of these things that have been criminalized, like poverty and mental illness.

Well, I thought this was an interesting quote to sort of end on. And I'm sorry. I hope I'm not going over time. But this issue of systemic racism reflected in institutions-- so if we think of policing as an institution, I thought this was a very powerful quote. "I'm convinced we do not have a race problem in policing, rather we have a race problem in society that is reflected in policing."

I think that's very interesting. And if we look at some possible ways forward, there's a lot of recommendations for both the US and the UK about ways to improve these issues with policing in communities, especially communities of color. One call is really to recruit and retain more BAME officers. That's both in the UK and the US.

The need for more evidence-based policing and needing more research into policing-- for the US, there's definitely a call for more national accountability and oversight which potentially could improve some of these issues. Removing barriers to prosecute police misconduct, that's mostly for the US-- a need to change the training for police officers. But another kind of issue is really around these organizational level issues in policing and rejecting this sort of bad apples theory and this focus on individual police officer's conduct and thinking about the organizational and the institutional level of policing.

So, I'll just leave you with this last part. This is Ronald Davis, who was part of this task force under Obama to develop a policing for the 21st century. And he kind of hits on this idea that, "the discussion of police reform seems to focus primarily on individual officer behavior and ignores the operational systems that have an even greater impact on policing outcomes. The great management guru, William Edwards Deming, captured this notion through his 85-15 rule, which says that 85% of the problems in any organization are system related. Only 15% are work-related."

And it's a very kind of interesting idea, that the focus on individual actors, individual police officers' misconduct, really doesn't get at sort of maybe there's other issues. And they're not really being looked at.

And he says, "I have faith in a positive future for American policing, even amid a growing chasm of distrust between the police and many communities, is that I see first-hand the outstanding work the vast majority of dedicated men and women in law enforcement do every day. And I see them take great efforts to identify the best ways to serve their communities." So, I think there's a lot of hope here and possibility. And I just kind of wanted to leave it at that. So, thank you.

FRANCINE RYAN: Thanks, Liliana. That's great. Thank you.

LILIANA BELKIN: I'll stop sharing, sorry.

FRANCINE RYAN: Yes. Great. So now, it would be great to hear from Avril, Ian, and Danielle about the project and their involvement.

I hope Liliana's overview kind of helps give it some context. So, I'm just starting with you, Avril, if that's OK. I just wanted if you could just tell a little bit about your role in the project and how you found the experience.

AVRIL MARTIN: Yes. So, thank you, Francine. Yes. So, I'm Avril. And as Francine said, so I'm an OU lecturer with the Open University.

It was an exciting project to be involved with. So, the students were involved using Slack, which is a large online communication platform. And in that platform, they could communicate with members of the Freedom Law Clinic, with each other.

And also, the Freedom Law Clinic would file documents. And also, the students would be able to engage in online sessions and seminars with experts and practitioners in the field. But it was quite a challenging project, as Francine said, that there were various materials to read.

So, it was a lot of evidence and academic evidence as well as the depth of analysis that students had to be involved with. So, my role really was to support and encourage the students. We had 10 of our own students involved in this project. I know there were a lot of other students elsewhere.

So really, I was someone that students could come to to ask questions or seek advice. Administratively, I was checking with Slack, what they were filing, the documents, like, they

would give guidance on, how to start the essays, and the time limit by which they all had to be submitted. So, I just made sure that the students were aware of that.

I think what was really enjoyable was when students used me to bounce off ideas about what they wanted to do in the essay, the direction that they wanted to take. I invited all of the students to discuss their ideas with me either on the phone or by email. And that was really, really interesting and the different directions that you're all taking.

And so we discussed that. And I might give some tips or just reassurance. And then once you had all formulated their ideas, I then arranged an online session, which Danielle and Ian and other students came to.

And then, one by one, the students went through their ideas for the essay. There was a great opportunity for all of the students to then hear the other students' ideas as well and compare their different approaches and experiences. And some students were focusing on the political, the cultural, or historical.

And so that was really good. And then I could just check that everyone was on track and everyone was OK. And I guess once we have the date for the submission, I asked the students to confirm that they had submitted.

And then some of the students then sent me their essays. And I really enjoyed reading them. And I was really impressed with the quality of the analysis of the issues and the final overviews that you all put together.

So, I was really pleased to have been involved in the project. And I feel that the students made valuable contributions to the discussion of this important area, as well as developing their own academic research and analytical skills. And I personally also learned a lot as well about the subject. And so, thank you. Back to you, Francine.

FRANCINE RYAN: Thanks very much, Avril. That's brilliant. And so starting with you, Ian, can you just tell us a little bit about some of the different speakers who gave the presentations to the students?

IAN JENKINS: Of course, I can. Good evening, everyone. My name is Ian Jenkins. I'm a current student studying W360 and, yes, was engaged in this project.

So the project itself was comprised of four online sessions with different speakers. And they provided an input to all of the students in a variety of specialist areas that they all had a connection with. And they're equally all connected to race and policing.

These four sessions were then supplemented by four additional reading sessions. As Francine and Avril have said, there was quite a significant amount of prereading, a number of books, a number of articles, to give you a flavour of the various different facets of race and policing and the relationship that intersects between.

So, we had a range of speakers, academics, a magazine editor, a former assistant chief constable, an author, a charity director, a columnist, and a practicing lawyer. Each provided their own perspective upon that often-strained relationship between race and policing along with some of their thoughts regarding how that could be remedied in the future. So, all the speakers were passionate and quite thought-provoking.

There was only limited opportunity to question the speakers. But to be fair, that's because we were using an online platform similar to this. And there was often in excess of 100 students.

FRANCINE RYAN: Wow, that's a lot of students. Okey-doke. So, Danielle, do you want to just tell us a little bit about perhaps the online seminar or speaker that you particularly enjoyed or found engaging?

DANIELLE: Yes. Hello, everyone. I would say we had-- I think it was a bit of showstopper actually. And I think it was a last-minute speaker that was scheduled, but I think it had to be Alex Vitale. I think that's how you pronounce his surname.

He wrote a book in 2017 entitled *The End of Policing*, which was on our reading list. And who is he? He's an American who is a professor of sociology at Brooklyn College. And he writes for *The New York Times*.

And his book-- sorry, I'm just going to look at my notes. I do know this, but it needs to come out right, really, doesn't it? His book explores the idea that the solution is to end policing and, in doing so, invites you to explore the role of the police and to evaluate if the problems that the police effectively end up managing can be addressed by a different service.

And interestingly, he began his career in homelessness. So you can see that that is how his idea developed, that actually many of the problems that the police are required to manage, or their role as such in society, that role could perhaps be managed by other means, not primarily by a police force that is trained in a certain way. So these social issues of homelessness should be handled by people who are specialists in homelessness, that these are actually, in effect, problems that can just be solved and managed in other ways or even problems that can be invested in before they become problems as such. So, Alex Vitale was the prominent speaker, I think.

FRANCINE RYAN: And was it something about his delivery as well that kind of was very engaging? Or was it kind of more the subject matter of what he was talking about?

DANIELLE: Well, it is the subject matter. It invites you to look at it differently, rather than just looking at the fact that you can change things within the police force. So, he is saying that it doesn't matter how much diversity training you implement or whether you up the levels of BAME officers, that that, in effect, won't solve the issues at hand.

So really it was the subject matter. But, yeah, he was a great guy, very easy to listen to. And his book is excellent to read.

FRANCINE RYAN: Brilliant. Thanks very much, Danielle. And what about Ian? Was there a particular speaker that you particularly engaged with?

IAN JENKINS: There was, indeed. And I didn't speak to Danielle before, honestly. But it was certainly, Alex Vitale.

I wasn't expecting him. And I think he was very much a last-minute addition. And I had read his book as part of [AUDIO OUT]. And it was, by far, the one that I had the greatest relationship with, or I thought I'm connecting with the content of his book.

And in my opinion, I think he was an exceptional sort of public speaker as well, very engaging. And yes, for him to come up and then to go through-- he didn't reiterate. He went into various points. And it was very good, actually, because he made some comparisons between the US and the UK and the differences, very much like Dr. Belkin did. No, no-- very, very good.

FRANCINE RYAN: Brilliant. And Danielle, how did you find sort of working with the other students? So obviously, there were 10 OU Law students. But obviously there were law students from different law schools kind of across the country. And I think Ian alluded to around, or Avril maybe, around 100 or so law students in the project. How did you find that aspect of this project?

DANIELLE: So, I think that, as it has been mentioned, that was the biggest surprise. Actually, I thought it would have been a smaller forum. And obviously, when you have in excess of 100 students, it becomes much more difficult to contribute or facilitate debate effectively.

And notably, as a mature student and learning with the Open University, you come to expect or you become-- how can I put this? You end up mixing with a lot of other mature students.

So, it was a surprise, which it shouldn't have been, that the demographic was notably younger than myself, because they were students from other universities.

That said, as in any forum, there were always a number of students that dominate the debate. So that was difficult with in excess of 100 students. But that said, there were lots of gems, lots of gems of information, you know?

The mention of something meant that you could go away, look at something, can research it yourself. I'm always on a breadcrumb trail. And there were lots of breadcrumbs as things like the Garden Court Chambers and their lectures, the introduction of that, critical race theory, was all new to me and amazing. It was such an eye opener. So, yeah, those were the gems.

FRANCINE RYAN: Brilliant. So obviously, you alluded about the fact-- so within the Open University, we have such a diverse range of students particularly in relation to age. But obviously, a lot of the other students were probably younger. So did they look at things from a slightly different perspective than, say, OU students? Or was it quite similar across the board?

DANIELLE: I think the level of debate, because of the number of students, didn't ever go that deep. And I think that, going forward, that that should be addressed potentially. I think it was too many students to come to a debate really. So, you never scratched effectively below the surface in debate, but then your own research allowed for that.

FRANCINE RYAN: OK, thanks. So, Ian, I was wondering. I know that you previously worked in the police force. So, I wondered about how that shaped your kind of thoughts on this particular project.

IAN JENKINS: Yes. Yeah, up until four years ago, I myself was a police officer, which may or may not surprise some people considering I thought Alex Vitale was the best speaker and probably the best material that I'd engaged with as part of this forum.

It did make me look at things from a different context. I thoroughly enjoyed, I suppose, a decade and a half that I was in the police. And the irony of me liking Mr. Vitale's book wasn't lost on me at all. But I was aware from the outset that I would probably have a form of bias towards the police service.

However, within that initial career, I experienced a significant number of changes, some positive, some negative, increase in political intrusion. There was a great diversity of students who were involved in this forum. And a number of those students were from BAME backgrounds, who had had directly negative experiences of interactions with the police.

Listening to those stories made me personally feel incredibly uncomfortable, even though I'd had no direct involvement in those events. I could not help, because of that role that I used to hold, feeling an element of responsibility, I suppose, in some way. But I have, throughout my police service, worked with thousands of officers and staff, who, in the overwhelming majority, were hardworking decent professionals. But I also worked with a number of officers that I thought didn't deserve to hold or to be given the responsibility of the officer constable.

I worked within a professional standards unit. So, I saw some outright corruption. The latter always did and continues to anger me personally.

But equally, in touching on what Danielle said, but with my life experience, also you can be aware of that bias. And with that comes with an element of objectivity, which stems from the appreciation that individuals and institutions are often not perfect.

So, I suppose jumping to the point, my participation in the race and policing forum hasn't fundamentally changed my viewpoint of the police services. But my views of the role of the police within the broader socio-political and socio-legal framework have quite dramatically changed.

FRANCINE RYAN: That's really interesting, thank you. And Danielle, what would you sort of say your sort of takeaways from this project were?

DANIELLE: So, I have a few of these, actually. There are a few takeaways.

FRANCINE RYAN: Oh, excellent.

DANIELLE: So firstly, it was an introduction into an area that I would never have explored with any depth without this project. The reading list was phenomenal. And I'm going to list now the reading list for you all.

We had Ida B. Wells and Southern Horror's, Lynch Law In All Its Phases. And Ida B. Wells was a journalist and an activist in the 1800s, late 1800s. And she wrote a pamphlet on lynching and exposing the media lies in America during that time. And she [AUDIO OUT].

And another on the reading list was James Baldwin, The Fire Next Time. And I highly, highly recommend it, truly poetic, such a depth of feeling that it was quite phenomenal.

And then in my own research, I was led to-- and I'm going to pronounce his surname wrong. And I'm so sorry. David Olusoga who has written Black and British. And I actually found this in the airport, and it was my holiday reading.

And it was an incredible, because it was Black history from a British perspective. And of course, the debate had generally been dominated by the American perspective. So, the introduction into all that material just left me-- I felt ashamed that I'd never read such amazing, amazing reading materials, that I'd never known about these people. So that was fantastic.

And the other two takeaways are a bit shorter. It gave me an intro into conducting research without that framework, without-- so far, when we've been undertaking essays, we've done it as part of our OU course. But this really was our own research. We chose the topic.

And that was terrifying. And it was confusing. But it was also, I think, a step in the direction of doing things yourself, conducting research yourself.

So, I was no expert at it. I was definitely a beginner. And I was definitely frustrated. But I'm there. I've taken that first step.

FRANCINE RYAN: Absolutely.

DANIELLE: And then finally, it really reinvigorated my passion for public law, which is the reason I started this degree. So, I will always be grateful for that. So that's it.

FRANCINE RYAN: Brilliant.

DANIELLE: Those are my takeaways.

FRANCINE RYAN: Thank you. Fantastic. Ian, what about yourself?

IAN JENKINS: Very similar, Francine. I would utterly reiterate what Danielle said, particularly in regard to the freedom that was given to all the students, which was initially very daunting. But once I'd reflected upon it, had a real think about it, done some significant amount of more research, it was actually quite liberating.

And I realized how much that I enjoyed that ability or the opportunity to freely express my own opinions, whereas, because of learning objectives and outcomes, all of my studies prior, although there is some flex within the system, there were quite strict parameters. So that was very different. And I haven't come across that before. Yeah. So I found that very liberating at the end.

I would say the project was challenging both in terms of the subject matter, very emotive, very powerful, but also the amount of time that needs to be dedicated to the project if you have

other commitments. But I would certainly recommend a project like this or similar to other students.

And I think, ultimately, if you really want to challenge your own preconceptions, which might well be deeply ingrained, a project like this is wonderful. And I really haven't experienced anything similar to it, particularly with myself from my career background. Yeah. I'm dribbling on a bit now, but, yeah, that's my takeaway.

FRANCINE RYAN: No, no. That's great. So, I've got kind of one last question just in relation to. So, you wrote an essay, which you've kind of both talked about in terms of researching it. And you were completely liberated in the sense you could choose what you wanted to write about, which is amazing and scary at the same time.

I completely recognize that. If you didn't mind, just touch a little bit on what you both decided to write about would be really interesting, I think, for the audience. Ian, do you want to go first?

IAN JENKINS: Yeah, certainly.

FRANCINE RYAN: Cool.

IAN JENKINS: Yeah. My essay was titled Race and Policing, the Tip of the Equality Iceberg with the analogy being that equality itself transcends much more than simply policing. And it's much more of a societal issue, as argued by a number of academics, a number of speakers, that it is a much broader macro subject rather than the micro relationship simply between race and policing.

It touched upon then the politicization, if I'm using the word correctly, mainly more in the US, but much more covertly in the UK, which I witnessed to a degree in the latter years particularly of my policing career with the introduction of PCCs, the government interactions, the statutory instruments, all of the greater interactions with policing that took it away from the Peelian principles-- of the people, by the people, for the people-- in my opinion. And that's what I argued, that that was lost. And very similar to the political policing in the US, where the majority of police chiefs are put in post by the mayors, so it touched upon-- and with hindsight maybe it was far too broad a subject matter.

But it started on electoral reform, representation within democracy. It touched an oligarchy and how a small economic elite are preventing a society revolution, which is then impacting upon the race and policing almost like it's an inevitable, because of that that construct and that framework that was put in place.

And then I touched upon-- well, I didn't touch upon. I queried at the end whether constitutional safeguarding is necessary if we're ever going to move forward.

FRANCINE RYAN: Brilliant.

IAN JENKINS: I've gone about that-- instead of in sequence, I've jumped around all over the place. But as a nutshell, that was my essay.

FRANCINE RYAN: Fantastic. And Danielle?

DANIELLE: Oh, I was having trouble recalling. Actually, it was really interesting that you chose to do your essay, Ian, around the politics of policing. Because guess what? So, did I. And this is not contrived, so I am quite surprised. Yeah. My essay, the headline, was The Order of Deflecting Power. And it was the politics of policing race in the UK inspired by the US struggle.

I think I may have gotten lost in my essay somewhere, but it did start with Black history, both in America and UK. And it really explored the social movements and why we haven't seen the change that we should have seen, so how the Civil Rights Movement didn't bring about the progress that it should have done, that it brought about initial progress.

But then we've taken a step back-- and why social change is so slow. And really, I situated the blame with politics. And that actually it doesn't matter how we view what we do within the police, that that is actually small-scale change, because actually we need to be looking at the power between the state and the citizen.

But it was a very challenging essay to write. And I think it was-- how could I put this? It was ambitious, there we are. But it has started me on a path.

And I think it's really interesting that the SpyCops Bill is currently going through Parliament. And I think we should be very worried. I think that, even though in the UK our police officers don't carry firearms, that actually the power of the state that is wielded by the police should be of concern. And it's much more covert rather than overt, as it is in America, in Britain.

So, I'm a bit of a pessimist. That was a bit of a pessimist ending. But I'm not, because I really truly believe in change. And I think that change should happen through politics, where the blame actually lies.

FRANCINE RYAN: Brilliant Well, Ian, Avril, and Danielle, thank you so much for your contributions. I'm mindful of the time, because I want to obviously leave a little bit of time for questions in case people do have questions to ask.

So, I just want you to say that we wanted to share this project with you. And I think Danielle's highlighted, and Ian, some of the readings. And we're going to put the list of readings on the Open Justice website, because we want to really encourage other people to engage with the readings.

And interestingly, I'd highlighted a couple of the readings that I thought that would be really useful and kind of really interesting. And the first one I highlighted was the Ida Wells one, Danielle, Southern Horrors, Lynch Law In All Its Phases.

And also, the second one I highlighted, which I don't think either of you have mentioned, but I think is a really kind of good overview of the situation and I think good to kind of look to see where it is now and how far we've moved on from that was the David Lammy Report, which I know that Liliana touched on in her presentation.

So, I just wanted to thank everybody for attending tonight. And thank you to all our speakers and particularly to Danielle and to Ian for engaging in the project and then talking so eloquently about what their role's in this.