

## **Project Title: How can teaching promote integration and humane immigration attitudes in the classroom and on the sports field?**

I intend to investigate how the Government can support value-based teaching approaches to encourage integration, and more empathetic, tolerant attitudes to refugees, asylum seekers and immigrants (RASIM). In classrooms, this entails exploring knowledge about immigration processes, citizenship and personal morals, whereas sports fields provide communal settings where values could be enacted in a well-directed environment. I would use case studies and interviews from secondary schools (n=2-3)<sup>1</sup>, sports teams (n=2-4)<sup>2</sup> and experts as evidence. To encourage the possibility that my project may have socially beneficial impacts, I will produce a report designed to reach government attention,<sup>3</sup> alongside a supplementary article raising awareness for RASIM sports teams, and offering workshops about immigration for the schools I visit.

### **Current Scholarship on Immigration Attitudes and Influences**

Labour's manifesto claimed "we have a proud tradition of welcoming people fleeing prosecution and abuse."<sup>4</sup> However, this narrative is contested by the far-right media's dehumanizing coverage,<sup>5</sup> declaring a 'migrant crisis.'<sup>6</sup> Research shows that less

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<sup>1</sup> I have confirmed with Dame Alice Owens school in Potters Bar that I could do this, and have family connections to both Dover Girls and Boys Grammar schools that I am confident would be happy to have me if my project is approved. I also have multiple backup options through teachers I know in other parts of North London to contact if any issues with these original three arise, or I decide to expand the reach of my project.

<sup>2</sup> I have confirmed the enthusiastic support of two football projects focused on refugees, asylum seekers and immigrants (Changing Lives FC in Harlow, and Bloomsbury Football's asylum seeker and refugee project in Chalk farm.) There is another local cricket team for refugees and asylum seekers whom I have direct contact with, and a similar project in Dover that I have enquired about.

<sup>3</sup> Through the connections of my tutor, Thom Brooks.

<sup>4</sup> Hollie Ridley. "Strong foundations – The Labour Party." *The Labour Party*, 2024, <https://labour.org.uk/change/strong-foundations/>. Accessed 20 January 2025.

<sup>5</sup> Gabriella Jacomella, "Media and migrations: Press narrative and country politics in three European countries." *Reuters Institute Fellowship Paper. University of Oxford*, 2010; Anna Islentyeva, "The undesirable migrant in the British press: Creating bias through language." *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen*, vol. 119, no. 2, 2018, pp. 419-442; Crawley, Heaven, et al. "Victims and Villains: Migrant Voices in the British Media." *Report from Centre for trust, peace and social relations*, 2016; P. Baker and C. Gabrielatos. "Fleeing, Sneaking, Flooding." *Journal of English Linguistics*, vol. 36, no. 1, 2008, pp. 5-38; P. Baker et al. "A useful methodological synergy? Combining critical discourse analysis and corpus linguistics to examine discourses of refugees and asylum seekers in the UK press." *Discourse & Society*, vol. 19, no. 3, 2008, pp. 273-306.

<sup>6</sup> This is the heading used as the topic indicator on both the Sun and Daily Mail websites: "Migrant Crisis - Latest news, breaking stories and comment." *Daily Mail*, <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/immigration/index.html>. Accessed 20 January 2025; "Refugee Crisis News | Latest Headlines & Updates." *The Sun*, <https://www.thesun.co.uk/topic/refugee-crisis/>. Accessed 20 January 2025.

authoritarian views<sup>7</sup> and increased exposure to diversity<sup>8</sup> have formed a less ethnocentric “imagined community”<sup>9</sup> of the nation.<sup>10</sup> Yet, recent hostilities<sup>11</sup> and continued stigmatization means that 20% of UK citizens feel ‘negatively in general’ towards immigrants.<sup>12</sup> European examples suggest the Government cannot solely rely on civic nationalism<sup>13</sup> or education<sup>14</sup> to cultivate acceptance, but should pursue its own value-based sense of inclusivist citizenship.<sup>15</sup> For instance, Norway harbors tolerant attitudes to RASIM,<sup>16</sup> and exemplifies a ‘core curriculum’ dedicated to human rights and values.<sup>17</sup>

Similarly, debates can be detoxified through understanding the scale and breakdown of immigration, rather than “inaccurate knowledge and generalizations.”<sup>18</sup> Regular interaction<sup>19</sup> and community participation might deepen integration, bringing a sense

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<sup>7</sup> R Ford, “Acceptable and unacceptable immigrants: How opposition to immigration in Britain is affected by migrants’ region of origin.” *Journal of Ethnic and Migration studies*, 37(7), pp.1017-1037. 2011, Figure 2; Robert Ford, et al. *Immigration Changing attitudes, policy preferences and partisanship*. National Centre for Social Research Report, June 2024, p.20.

<sup>8</sup> Gianfranco Addario, et al. “Public attitudes towards immigration and minority ethnic groups.” *Report by National Centre for Social Research*. February 2024, Figures 28 and 29.

<sup>9</sup> B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London Verso, 1983.

<sup>10</sup> Sir John Curtice, and Alex Scholes. *British Social Attitudes 41 | “National Identity.” National Centre for Social Research Report*, September 2024. p.4.

<sup>11</sup> Robert Ford, et al. *Immigration Changing attitudes*. June 2024, p.11; Lindsay Richards et al. “UK Public Opinion toward Immigration: Overall Attitudes and Level of Concern.” *Migration Observatory*, 28 September 2023.

<sup>12</sup> Gianfranco Addario et al. “Public attitudes towards immigration and minority ethnic groups.” *Report by National Centre for Social Research*. February 2024, p.7.

<sup>13</sup> Simonsen, et al. “Is Civic Nationalism Necessarily Inclusive? Conceptions of Nationhood and Anti Muslim Attitudes in Europe.” *European Journal of Political Research*, vol. 59, no. 1, 2020, p. 114; Yael Tamir, “Not So Civic: Is There a Difference between Ethnic and Civic Nationalism?” *Annual Review of Political Science*, vol. 22, no. 4, 2019, pp. 19–34; E. Tonkens, and J. W. Duyvendak. “Introduction: The Culturalization of Citizenship.” *The Culturalization of Citizenship*, edited by E. Tonkens, et al., London: Springer, 2016, pp. 1-20.

<sup>14</sup> B Lee. “Educational Content, Exclusive National Identity, and Anti-Immigrant Attitudes.” *Journal of Politics*, vol. 85, no. 4, 2023, pp. 1182 - 1197. p.1195

<sup>15</sup> Patricia Bromley. “Multiculturalism and Human Rights in Civic education: in the case of British Columbia, Canada.” *Educational Research*, vol. 53, no. 2, 2011, pp. 51-64; Julia C Lerch, Garnett S. Russell, and Francisco O. Ramirez, “Wither the Nation-State? A Comparative Analysis of Nationalism in Textbooks.” *Social Forces* 96 (1): 153–80. 2017

<sup>16</sup> A. Heath and L. Richards. “Contested boundaries: consensus and dissensus in European attitudes to immigration.” *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, vol. 46, no. 3, 2018, pp. 489-511. Table 3 and 4; T Aalberg et al. “Who is a “Deserving” Immigrant? An Experimental Study of Norwegian Attitudes.” *Scandinavian Political Studies*, vol. 35, no. 2, 2012, pp. 97-116; Richards et al. “UK Public Opinion toward Immigration,” *Migration Observatory*, 28 September 2023; M Wright. “Diversity and the Imagined Community: Immigrant Diversity and Conceptions of National Identity.” *Political Psychology*, vol. 32, no. 5, 2011, pp. 837-62. p.848.

<sup>17</sup> Norwegian Government. *Core curriculum – values and principles for primary and secondary education*.- Part of the curriculum as laid down by Royal Decree on 1 September 2017, and pursuant to section 1-5 of the Education Act. 2017.

<sup>18</sup> S. Blinder, “Imagined immigration: The impact of different meanings of ‘immigrants’ in public opinion and policy debates in Britain.” *Political Studies*, vol. 63, no. 1, 2015, pp. 80-100.

<sup>19</sup> Kierans, Denis. “Integration in the UK: Understanding the Data.” *The Migration Observatory*, 23 March 2021, Figure 8.

of belonging for RASIMs, and developing empathy,<sup>20</sup> hopefully discouraging horrors like detention.<sup>21</sup> Sport is one setting where “imagined communities seem more real,”<sup>22</sup> possibly facilitating relationships, identity and local belonging.<sup>23</sup> Therefore, I would consider how coaching content and environment can be optimized to encourage tolerant attitudes, enabling better integration of RASIM.

## My Project

I intend to research how the government’s curriculum review<sup>24</sup> can encourage greater understanding around RASIM by advancing attitudes valuing human rights and diversity, aligning with the OECD’s 2030 Curriculum.<sup>25</sup> Visiting secondary schools in North London and Dover to gauge students’ viewpoints and knowledge around immigration and identity, providing data and contributions from different regional contexts. Alongside this, asking students about their sources of identity and personal values can encourage thoughtful self-reflection.<sup>26</sup> Getting students to attempt the citizenship test could trigger solidarity when negotiating its largely irrelevant, complex content,<sup>27</sup> whilst participation and reform suggestions could

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<sup>20</sup> Thomas F Pettigrew et al. “Recent advances in intergroup contact theory.” *International journal of intercultural relations*, vol. 35, no. 3, 2011-5, pp. 271-80.

<sup>21</sup> M. Bosworth, “Subjectivity and identity in detention: Punishment and society in a Global Age.” *Theoretical Criminology*, vol. 16, no. 2, 2012, 123-140; Jesuit Refugee Service. *Detained and Dehumanised: The impact of immigration detention*, 2020; Melanie Griffiths and Peter William Walsh. “Immigration Detention in the UK,” *Migration Observatory*, 12 December 2024; Medical Justice, *Clinical safeguards continue to fail across all IRCs*. 2023; S. Turnbull, “Stuck in the middle’: Waiting and uncertainty in immigration detention.” *Time and Society*, vol. 25, no. 1, 2016, pp. 61-79; M. Von Werthen, et al. “The impact of immigration detention on mental health: a systematic review.” *BMC Psychiatry*, vol. 18, 2018, p. 382.

<sup>22</sup> Eric Hobsbawm, Eric. 1990. *Nations and nationalism since 1780. Programme, myth, reality*. Cambridge University Press, p.143.

<sup>23</sup> Leah R. Rosenzweig and Zhou Yang-Yang, “Team and Nation: Sports, Nationalism, and Attitudes toward Refugees.” *Comparative Political Studies*, vol. 54, no. 12, 2021, pp. 2123–54; Josh Denington, “Jumpers for Goalposts: A Study of Refugee Integration in the UK Through Sport” – *Uni of Man Dissertation, sportanddev community*; E. Tonkens, and J. W. Duyvendak. “Introduction: The Culturalization of Citizenship,” 2016.

<sup>24</sup> Curriculum and assessment review.” *GOV.UK*, <https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/curriculum-and-assessment-review>.

<sup>25</sup> OECD. *OECD Learning Compass 2030 Concepts*.: Concept Notes on: Learning Compass, and Knowledge, Skills and Attitudes and Values for 2030 Core Foundations, 2030, Student Agency, Transformative Competencies, . 2018. <https://www.oecd.org/en/about/projects/future-of-education-and-skills-2030.html> . Accessed 27 December 2024

<sup>26</sup> Channel 4's findings in their recent report provides a good base for understanding some of the issues of identity and attitudes. Seeing their conclusions has reinforced my own belief in the importance of this proposed study. Channel 4. *Gen Z Trends, Truth and Trust*, January 2025

<sup>27</sup> T. Brooks *Reforming the UK's Citizenship Test: Building Bridges, Not Barriers*. Bristol University Press, 2022.

improve the test's modern compatibility.<sup>28</sup> Despite inherent sample size limitations,<sup>29</sup> this study may provide valuable insights into young people's beliefs and awareness.

Simultaneously, I will explore how inclusivist attitudes could develop in school or community sport, thus utilising how the environment sport provides may build relationships and foster identity.<sup>30</sup><sup>31</sup> I have contacted sports teams targeted for RASIM to discuss their potential social benefits and integrating effects of squad dynamics and interactions with other teams.<sup>32</sup> Identifying programmes in local communities whose approaches have beneficial results will provide a spotlight on their successes, furthering the expansion and emulation of such schemes and practices.

Given the cross-departmental and policy focused nature of my proposal, I will pursue interviews with relevant Government personnel or outsider experts to enrich my understanding of topics and policy-related application.<sup>33</sup> I have discussed the ethical implications of the project with my supervisor, and the process of ethical approval which he is willing to support.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Thom Brooks, *New Arrivals: A fair Immigration Plan For Labour*, FABIAN IDEAS NO.658, 2022 Chapter 5, Key recommendation 30.- <https://fabians.org.uk/publication/new-arrivals/> accessed Nov 25 2024

<sup>29</sup> As I am only researching schools on a case study basis, I cannot claim that the findings represent a national consensus.

<sup>30</sup> This research field is rapidly advancing, as demonstrated by figure 1 in Ramón Spaaij, et al. "Sport, Refugees, and Forced Migration: A Critical Review of the Literature," *Frontiers in Sports and Active Living*, 1, 2019; and well covered in S. Agergaard, *Rethinking Sports and Integration: Developing a Transnational Perspective on Migrants and Descendants in Sports* (1st ed.) 2018, Routledge.

<sup>31</sup> There are many studies that show that a sporting context is not determinative to developing positive attitudes, but that specific coaching goals and a well-directed environment are incredibly relevant (Mark Doidge, Marc Keech & Elisa Sandri (2020) "Active integration': sport clubs taking an active role in the integration of refugees," *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics*, 12:2, 2020, 305-31. ;Denington, Josh. "Jumpers for Goalposts: A Study of Refugee Integration in the UK Through Sport" – *Uni of Man Dissertation. sportanddev community*, <https://www.sportanddev.org/research-and-learning/resource-library/dissertation-jumpers-goalposts-study-refugee-integration-uk>. - Accessed Jan 8 2025.) For example, Houlihan discusses how despite Belfast having the most municipally owned sports halls per head in Europe as a result of Thatcher Government policy, this still resulted in segregationist attitudes and identities between Catholics and Protestants. (Barrie Houlihan *The Government and Politics of Sport*, Routledge, 1991)

<sup>32</sup> As explored in Chris Stone, "Utopian community football? Sport, hope and belongingness in the lives of refugees and asylum seekers," *Leisure Studies*, 37:2, 2018, 171-183; Brent McDonald, Ramón Spaaij & Darko Dukic, "Moments of social inclusion: asylum seekers, football and solidarity," *Sport in Society*, 22(6), 2018, 935–949; and most relevantly Mark Doidge, Marc Keech & Elisa Sandri (2020) "Active integration': sport clubs taking an active role in the integration of refugees," *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics*, 12:2, 2020, 305-31.

<sup>33</sup> I have spoken to Durham and Chester sports professors that I know who have agreed to put me in touch with the leading researchers in the field of sports integration of refugees (Doidge, Spaaij.) I intend to contact political figures through Thom and my friend Raza Husain KC and some through my local MP whom I work with. Educational experts I will contact directly, with the guidance of my friends and family who are teachers.

<sup>34</sup> Doidge, "Active Integration," p.310 and Spaaij et al. "Sport, Refugees, and Forced Migration: A Critical Review of the Literature," p.9, 15. offer guidance on this specifically to do with RASIM based sports clubs. In terms of school visits, as a regular volunteer TA with an Enhanced DBS, I have a

## Timings-

I have confirmed collaboration with schools and RASIM sports teams, enabling me to structure my workload. I anticipate my six weeks to consist of:

14 days reading.<sup>35</sup>

13 days interviewing, visiting and recording findings- three in Dover, ten at Home (two planning.)

12 days writing (two planning, two editing)

3 days leeway for flexibility and rest.

A schedule could be created through this action plan:<sup>36</sup>

Beforehand- finalize dates with schools, clubs, and pursue interviews

Week 1- Plan school and club visit content, write interview questions, background reading, writing introduction draft, potential first interviews.

Week 2 – 2-3 school visits,- 1x club visit, 3 days in Dover, education reading, draft education paragraph.

Week 3- 1-2 club visits, interview space, integration reading, draft integration paragraph

Week 4- Final interviews (use these to further research), bring findings together, definitive essay plan.

Week 5- Final research, conclusions, writing,

Week 6 – Finish writing report (2 days editing), write article, consider additional presentation formats.

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good base understanding of how to behave appropriately in schools, and am aware of how to seek further guidance through my supervisor and the teachers that I know and will work with.

<sup>35</sup>Broken down into: Immigration Law Basics (1) , Public attitudes (2), Government approach (2), Education (5), Integration (4)

<sup>36</sup> This may be altered depending on term times, and arranged dates with schools, clubs and interviewees.

My prior researching and academic reading,<sup>37</sup> have informed my scheduling through increasing understanding of my working processes.

Overall, my project supports cross-departmental, progressive policy providing long-term solutions to the persistent issues of disinformation and toxicity regarding immigration, envisioning a more cohesive society, and a better life for RASIM amongst a more compassionate populace.

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<sup>37</sup>Judith Bell, *Doing Your Research Project*, McGraw-Hill Education, 2010. *ProQuest Ebook Central*, <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/durham/detail.action?docID=771407>.

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