

## Research Proposal.

### Title: We are here to stay Inna Ingran: The role of Immigration Legislation in the 'Un-Homing' of British, Windrush Descendants

#### Background

In light of the wrongful citizenship deprivation of members of the 'Windrush Generation' through the 2014 Hostile Environment policy, there has been a renewed interest in the experiences of this group of West Indian, British Subjects who arrived in the United Kingdom from the former colonies between 1948-71 (Williams, 2020). But what has the impact been on their British born descendants who have citizenship? While their legal status has not been jeopardised, this research asks, *what has the impact been on their ontological security within their 'British' identity'?*

The principal aim of the proposed research is to interrogate this question by assessing the role of racialised, immigration legislation in triggering insecurity within a citizens self-perceived national identity; a process which will be referred to as '*ontologically un-homing*'. The objective is not to use 'Britishness' as the yardstick of personal security, but rather to consider the role of state control in shaping a sense of national identity. The research will interrogate this firstly through a socio-legal analysis of legislative changes and commentary surrounding the post-war immigration system and the impact of such developments on those of the West Indian diaspora. It will then use interviews to determine the impact of proliferating migration control, on descendants, for whom Britain is their only home.

The research will capture those who were born in Britain pre-1981, who acquired citizenship through the abolished '*jus soli*' birth right, in addition to those born post-1981 who have been defined as 'British' by law since birth. This multi-generational group will be defined as 'Windrush descendants'.

#### Research Questions

- What is the role of post-war British Immigration legislation in '*ontologically un-homing*' British, Windrush descendants?
- How has post-war immigration legislation developed to progressively limit the mobility and social rights of the Windrush Generation and their descendants?
- How do social occurrences shape ontological security within the national identity amongst British Windrush descendants?

#### State of the Art and Theoretical Framework

There is a notable body of work which has documented the experiences of the Windrush Generation in Britain, since their arrival. Black academics, such as the sociologist Paul Gilroy and cultural theorist Stuart Hall, have explored the sense of 'British Identity' among the Windrush arrivals, and how a notion of belonging was flouted through racialised exclusion and state control (Gilroy, 1987; Hall, 2014). This has also been documented in artistic forms, such as through the work of Jamaican-born, dub-poet Linton Kwesi Johnson (1978), who wrote '*Maggi Tatcha on di go, wid a racist show... West Indian, an' Black British, Stan firm*

*inna Ingran*, in response to increased state control of Black people under Margaret Thatcher's governance. Such work has driven an awareness of the notion of precarious national belonging and the impact of state control on those who migrated to Britain. But does not consider how the state control of the Windrush Generation, may shape a sense of national identity and 'belonging' amongst their British-born descendants with secure citizenship status.

Ontological security concerns the security of the self in one's identity and has been applied by political scientist Stuart Croft (2012), to interrogate the hostile exclusion of British Muslims from the national identity by British state actors since the 9/11 and 7/7 terrorist attacks. This research proposes to apply this concept to the experiences of those of Afro-Caribbean descent, who have similarly been subjected to control through an evolving 'security agenda'. An evaluation of this impact is important, as scholarship suggests that the post-war period was characterised by a proliferation of immigration legislation which excluded Black West Indian people from British Citizenship, whilst leaving racialised 'paternal' loopholes to citizenship for white, Commonwealth citizens (El-Enany, 2020; Hall, 2014). Such loopholes have been highlighted as key reasons why members of the Windrush Generation are disproportionately subjected to unfounded immigration control, such as through the 2014 'Hostile Environment' policy (Williams, 2020). Additionally, scholarship indicates that a system of 'Crimmigration' has gradually emerged; a complex marriage of the Criminal Justice and Immigration Systems (Bhatia, 2020). The impact of this system on those from the West Indies has been highly publicised, as many individuals face the double punishment of domestic imprisonment and subsequent deportation to countries which they left as young children or have never lived in (Townsend, 2021). As a result of the aforementioned immigration control, many relatives have been forced to advocate on behalf of those whose citizenship is denied, such as the activist group 'Families for Justice' (Williams, 2020; Townsend, 2021). However, little focus has been placed on the ontological effect of this on the British-born relatives of those who have been physically 'un-homed' through this citizenship deprivation and forcible repatriation.

In light of this, it is therefore salient to consider the impact of changing immigration legislation on descendants, for whom Britain is their sole de jure home.

### Methodology

The proposed research will draw upon a triangulation of primary and secondary methods to determine the impact of immigration control on identity. As Stuart Hall argued (2008, p16) identity is a *'never-completed process of becoming and shifting identifications'*. Therefore, the research will evaluate the interplay between the legislation and lived identity, rather than the contested concept of the 'British identity' itself.

Drawing on my legal background, the research will commence with a socio-legal analysis of developments in domestic immigration legislation, the accompanying commentary and the impact on those of the West Indian diaspora. It will draw upon legislation, Hansard publications and other sources of political commentary from 1948-onwards, as this period was characterised by a notable West Indian movement to the UK, and frequent legislative initiatives to curb this settlement. The research will specifically utilise qualitative sources

developed by those of Afro-Caribbean lineage, in order to amplify the voices of the focus group when determining the impact of such developments. To this end, it will employ poetry, music, community publications and various archives, such as the 'Black Cultural Archive'. The use of such diverse sources is in acknowledgement of the considerable barriers to literary and academic publication for those of Afro-Caribbean heritage, and recognition of the opportunity to construct a 'living history' that is mostly missing from official and academic accounts of the Windrush Generation and their descendants.

The final element of the research will draw upon approaches that I practiced during my MA dissertation research, which interrogated the impact of the '2014 Hostile Environment Policy' and subsequent Windrush Scandal, on British-born Windrush descendants. I will conduct semi-structured interviews with approximately 30 Black and mixed-heritage descendants of the Windrush Generation and community activists who currently reside in Britain. The data from which will be used to explore the impact of an evolving immigration regime on a sense of national identity, whilst also considering the role of 'social occurrences', such as racism, political events and microaggressions.

The recruitment of participants will be facilitated by the relationships that I have established with community activist groups through previous research, activism and my positioning as a Windrush descendant. This will also be complemented by social media recruitment and snowballing. The research raises several ethical challenges, which I plan to overcome by applying practices that I utilised during my MA dissertation research, such as providing all participants with a list of support services and partaking in regular 'de-brief' conversations with my supervisors.

In parallel to writing the formal PhD thesis, I plan to disseminate key research findings in the format of accessible blogs. I have constructed several accessible, 'anti-racism' blogs for the National charity 'Ladders4Action' and am due to publish my dissertation research findings in a blog for 'Discover Society' in 2021. I will therefore utilise these pre-existing contacts, when considering platforms to disseminate the findings of the proposed research.

#### Timescale

<b>Year</b>	<b>Activity</b>
Year 1	Practice and improve research skills, through reading and guidance from supervisors.  Research design, literature review, ethics application.  Socio-legal research and initial primary research.
Year 2	Primary research and initial drafts.
Year 3	Analysis, write-up and submission.

### Bibliography

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