

Academic Curriculum

Marcus Nicolson

ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2593-7927>

Profile

Political sociologist researching migration, identity, culture, everyday citizenship, border politics, and minority rights in Europe. My research uses qualitative, comparative, and participatory methods to examine how migrants and minority communities negotiate belonging and perceive security across diverse political and cross-border contexts. My first monograph on migrant identities and ontological security is in production for publication in 2026 with Routledge. My work is grounded in sociological theory and contributes to current debates on power, culture, inequality, and political belonging.

Keywords: identities, migration, narratives, borders, security, participatory methods

Education

PhD in Social Sciences

October 2018 – September 2023

Glasgow Caledonian University, Glasgow, UK

- PhD title: Exploring the Ontological Security of Young Adult Migrants in Glasgow, UK
- Conducted a participatory research project with young adults of diverse migration backgrounds to examine identity negotiation, belonging, and perceptions of security.
- Designed and facilitated creative arts workshops (photography and collage) to generate rich narrative and visual data.
- Interviewed political leaders to analyse the relationship between migration governance, political narratives, and lived experience.
- Applied ontological security theory to advance understanding of narrative formation, social inclusion processes, and everyday citizenship among migrant youth.
- Authored and co-authored academic publications, policy-oriented writing, and public communication outputs based on the research.

MA Intercultural Encounters

September 2015 – June 2017

University of Helsinki, Finland

- Studied intercultural communication, minority studies, and the politics of multiculturalism, with a focus on cross-cultural cooperation and diversity governance.
- Completed a study exchange semester in Dijon, France, enhancing comparative and intercultural perspectives.
- Awarded the grade Magna Cum Laude for my MA thesis on sport-for-inclusion policies for migrant groups in Helsinki.

University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, UK

- Completed a Spanish-language dissertation on cultural change in post-Franco Spain, analysing shifts in youth culture, media, and political identity narratives.

Research and Academic Experience

Postdoctoral Researcher

July 2023 – Present

B-SHAPES Project, Institute for Minority Rights, EURAC Research, Bolzano, Italy

- Developing the Work Package's conceptual and analytical strategy, examining how young national minority members perceive borders, negotiate belonging, and interpret European political narratives.
- Leading the Work Package on borderland minorities, designing the methodological framework, coordinating five country teams, and overseeing multi-country data collection on perceptions of borders and security.
- Conducting and supervising qualitative, comparative, and participatory research, analysing identity construction, citizenship practices, and everyday bordering across European borderland regions.
- Producing theoretical and empirical analyses, contributing to peer reviewed publications, project reports and presenting findings at international conferences.
- Collaborating with local NGOs and community organisations to implement participatory fieldwork, ensuring ethical practice and engagement with minority communities.
- Coordinating research activities across multi-country teams, providing intellectual guidance, setting analytical timelines, and ensuring methodological in data collection.
- Synthesising comparative findings for Horizon-funded project reporting, and contributing to dissemination activities across academic, policy, and public platforms.
- Advancing expertise in border studies, minority rights, identity politics, and European governance through ongoing fieldwork and interdisciplinary collaboration.

Researcher 1A

April 2022 – July 2023

D.Rad Research Project, GCU, Glasgow, UK

- Devised qualitative and participatory research methodologies for investigating radicalisation, identity formation, and everyday political engagement across multiple European contexts.
- Conducted comparative qualitative analysis and contributed to theory-building on narrative formations, belonging, and political agency in multi-country case studies.
- Coordinated research activities within a Horizon 2020 consortium, ensuring methodological consistency across international partners.
- Produced research reports, contributed to project planning, and co-authored peer reviewed academic journal articles based on empirical findings.
- Organised dissemination events and stakeholder engagement activities to ensure societal and policy impact.

- Collaborated with local NGOs and community organisations to recruit participants, implement fieldwork, and strengthen community engagement.
- Conducted focus groups and participatory research with diverse communities using creative and dialogic methods.
- Presented findings at international conferences and participated in consortium meetings across Europe.

Project Manager

July 2021 – March 2022

D.Rad Research Project, GCU, Glasgow, UK

- Managed a large-scale, multi-country Horizon 2020 project examining de-radicalisation, identity narratives, and political belonging.
- Coordinated a 15-country research consortium, ensuring intellectual exchange, alignment of research activities, and supporting comparative analytical work.
- Facilitated cross-partner communication, organising regular in-person and online research meetings.
- Designed and delivered webinars, workshops, and knowledge-transfer activities for academics and external partners.
- Led monthly steering committee meetings, synthesising discussions, guiding strategic decisions, and contributed to smooth governance.
- Supported the financial administration of the project and contributed to managing resource allocation.
- Oversaw submission of deliverables to the EU portal and coordinated amendments to the Grant Agreement.
- Directed the development and launch of the project communication platform and website.

Project Manager

January 2019 – June 2021

VOLPOWER Research Project, GCU, Glasgow, UK

- Managed the EU-AMIF funded VOLPOWER project on migrant social inclusion, youth participation, and intercultural community engagement.
- Led a consortium of seven European research institutions and NGOs, coordinating comparative fieldwork and analytical frameworks.
- Contributed to project deliverables and co-authored research reports and academic outputs on migrant integration and identity negotiation.
- Designed and delivered public engagement events, including an online academic conference on migrant integration that led to a co-edited special issue.
- Collaborated with local NGOs support intercultural activities for migrant youth in sports and arts contexts.
- Coordinated an international youth event for project participants from all seven partner countries in Zagreb, Croatia.

List of Publications

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Peer Reviewed Journal Articles

- Opilowska, E., Engl, E., Mitterhofer, J., **Nicolson, M.**, Klatt, M., Balogh, P., & Bohm, H. (2026) Navigating re-borderings: Resilience strategies of national minorities in border regions. *European Planning Studies*.
- **Nicolson, M.**, Engl, E., Mitterhofer, J., Opilowska, E., Klatt, M., Balogh, P., & Bacziewicz, D. (2025). Europe in the Shadow: Ambivalent Border Narratives in Minority Media in European Borderlands. *Journal of Contemporary European Studies*.
- **Nicolson, M.** (2024). Transnational Identities and Agency: Navigating Everyday life as a Young Adult Migrant in Glasgow, UK. *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power*.
- **Nicolson, M.** (2023). Racial Microaggressions and the Ontological Security of Young Adult Migrants in Glasgow, UK. *Social Inclusion*.
- Carlà, A., & **Nicolson, M.** (2023). Negotiated Belonging in Sub-State Nationalist Contexts: Young Adult Migrant Narratives in Scotland and South Tyrol. *Comparative Migration Studies*.
- Atalay, D., Korkut, U., **Nicolson, M.**, Scholten, P., & Laidlaw, M. (2023). Beyond Integration: A Re-Evaluation of Migrant and Host Society Relations. *Central and Eastern European Migration Review*.
- Favell, A., Fox, J., Mahendran, K., Phillimore, J., Scholten, P., Korkut, U., et al. including **Nicolson, M.** (2023). Volpower Panel of Integration Discussion. *Central and Eastern European Migration Review*.
- **Nicolson, M.**, & Korkut, U. (2022). The making and the portrayal of Scottish distinctiveness: How does the narrative create its audience? *International Migration*.

Accepted Publications (forthcoming):

- **Nicolson, M.** (2026) *Young Migrant Narratives: Collaging Identity and Ontological Security*. Routledge, London (In production, June 2026).

Publications Under Review

- **Nicolson, M.**, & Opilowska, E. (2026) Cross-border Living Areas as Spaces of (In)Security: Narratives of Young Minority Members in South Tyrol and the Zaolzie Region. *Regional Studies*.

Peer Reviewed Book Chapters:

- Brumat, L., and **Nicolson, M.** (2026) Liberal Regionalism, Illiberal Borders: Navigating Contradictions in South America's Migration Governance. *Varieties of securitization: Governing migration along the Central Mediterranean Route*. Routledge, London.
- Mitterhofer, J., & **Nicolson, M.** (2025). Glossary–Voices on the Border. In *Through the Prism of Borders: Beyond the Threshold: Art and Spaces in Between*. Kunstverein Publishing.
- **Nicolson, M.** (2022). 'Leave a light on for Scotland', examining cosmopolitan Nationalism in Scotland. In *Contesting Cosmopolitan Europe: Euroscepticism, Crisis, and Borders*. Amsterdam University Press.

Online Publications

- Nicolson, M., Mitterhofer, J. and, Engl, A. (2025) Minority Media in the Borderlands: Shaping Perceptions of Europe. *EURAC Science Blog*.
- Nicolson, M. (2024) Ontological Security and Migration Politics: A Critical Perspective. *EURAC Science Blog*.
- Nicolson, M. (2022). Scotland and immigration: moving beyond political narratives of openness. *EURAC Science Blog*.
- Nicolson, M. (2022). Narrative security: exploring young adult migrant experiences in Scotland. *Europe Now*.
- Nicolson, M. (2021) Immigration: how Scotland sees itself and how migrants actually experience it. *The Conversation* (over 14000 reads worldwide and re-published in several national newspapers).
- Nicolson, M. (2021). Islamophobia report reveals Scotland not quite as tolerant as it would like to think. *The Conversation*.
- Nicolson, M., & Carlà, A. (2020). Beyond appearances: negotiating discourse and policies on diversity in Scotland and South Tyrol. *DISCOVER SOCIETY*.
- Korkut, U., Atalay, D., & Nicolson, M. (2020). FOCUS: Re-examining integration through the study of narrative, personal experience and the everyday. *DISCOVER SOCIETY*.

Teaching Experience

Experienced teaching at BA and MA level, including course leadership, curriculum design, active learning methods, and international summer school teaching.

- Organised and delivered Border Studies Summer School 2025 to international students, including lectures, workshops, and field-based activities (Eurac Research, Bolzano, Italy)
- Led the MA-level *Social Justice* study module for university students on the MA course International Economic and Social Justice. I was responsible for lectures, seminar design, assessment, and marking (Glasgow Caledonian University, UK).
- I have delivered guest lectures on migration politics, identity, nationalism, and creative research methods to politics and sociology students at BA and MA levels (Glasgow Caledonian University, UK)

Selected Conference Presentations

- *The Security of Borderlander Identities: Exploring the Narratives of Young Minority Members in Border Regions: South Tyrol and Polish/Czech borderlands*, Ethnography and Qualitative Research Conference, Trento (July 2025)
- *Changing Perspectives on Europe from the Borderlands*, British International Studies Association Conference, Belfast, UK, 2025 (June 2025)
- *Young Minority Borderland Identities and Perceptions of Europe*, Association for the Study of Ethnicity and Nationalism Conference, Budapest, Hungary (April 2025)
- *Negotiated Belonging in Sub-State Nationalist Contexts: Young Adult Migrant Narratives in Scotland and South Tyrol*. European International Studies Association, Athens, Greece (August 2022)

- *Picture this: Collaging' young adult migrant identities in Scotland.* at BSA 2021, Online (April 2021)

Languages

- English – Native
- Italian – B2 (understanding, speaking, writing)
- Spanish – B2 (understanding, speaking, writing)
- Finnish – A2

Media Appearances and Awards

- BBC Documentary (2022) *Who Lives in Scotland?* – Interviewed as a migration research expert in BBC documentary on immigration narratives and the experiences of young adult migrants in Glasgow.
- Scottish Graduate School of Social Science Saltire Scholarship (2021) awarded to conduct a 3-month research exchange at the Institute for Minority Rights, Eurac Research, Bolzano, Italy.
- Glasgow Caledonian University Global Talent Award recipient (2018) covering all PhD tuition fees.

Reviewing and Editing

- Co-edited special issue on migrant social inclusion politics for *Central and Eastern European Migration Review*.
- Frequently serving as reviewer for journal articles in international journals including *Identities*, *Review of International Studies*, *International Migration*, and other international journals.