# Immigrant mother’s dedication to England met with rising exclusion and hostility



Despite her legal residency and significant contributions to society, the experience of an immigrant mother in England reveals a troubling reality marked by gratitude, cultural integration, and persistent exclusion. For Gaia Neiman's mother, originally from Italy, it has been 15 years since she made England her home, yet the sense of belonging remains elusive.

Her dedication to her adopted country, while commendable, often feels overshadowed by a political climate increasingly hostile to newcomers. Rising at dawn to volunteer at polling stations, she embodies the quintessential community spirit, but faces substantial hurdles, from navigating language barriers to grappling with the cryptic nuances of British humour. Neiman notes her mother’s palpable feelings of needing to prove herself, a sentiment further complicated by the consistent challenges she encounters in British society, such as applying for pension assistance amidst bureaucratic complexities designed to discourage her kind.

The 2021 census captured her tireless community efforts as emblematic of an immigrant's contribution to civic responsibility. Yet, despite her perseverance, she often encounters the harsh realities of prejudice, met with indifference or hostility when trying to encourage community engagement. This mirrors broader trends in the UK, where anti-immigration sentiment has not only intensified but has become increasingly mainstream, particularly in the wake of Brexit. Many British citizens feel that immigration levels are excessively high, prompting political discourse that frames newcomers as a burden rather than a boon to society.

Current political dynamics exacerbate her feelings of exclusion. Following the emergence of right-leaning voices who advocate for stringent immigration controls, communities like hers find themselves in a bind—striving to assimilate and contribute while being told they are essentially unwelcome. Statistics reveal a stark reality: in the year ending June 2024, about 95,000 EU citizens exited the UK, and many immigrants now navigate a landscape rife with anxiety about their precarious status in a country increasingly rallying against them.

Even amidst rising anti-immigrant sentiment, Neiman's mother continues to embody resilience and uphold her sense of duty. Her involvement in an anti-racism protest signals a growing awareness and advocacy despite the personal toll that xenophobia exacts. The kindness she extends, even to those who may scoff at her, reflects a deep-seated hope for a society that is not merely inclusive but actively embraces diversity.

Neiman articulates a stark dichotomy: her mother's EU passport offers a safety net that many immigrants lack. This privilege is tinged with sadness and highlights the harsh realities faced by those without similar options. The so-called “Great Opportunity” that defines the UK for many becomes hollow when juxtaposed with the constant fear and uncertainty that immigrant communities endure.

In an era defined by increasing division and polarisation, her mother’s story poignantly underscores the human experience behind the statistics—illuminating individuals who contribute significantly yet feel undervalued. Her unwavering gratitude and commitment to service challenge the narratives peddled by political factions that seek to diminish her worth, advocating instead for recognition of the value and potential inherent in every member of society. Neiman concludes with a testament to her mother's resilient spirit, which perseveres in giving back to a country that, regrettably, has shown an all too familiar lack of compassion.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

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