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Good fences make good neighbours: A Philosophical perspective and the changing dynamics of global immigration and Diaspora

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Abstract

The objective of the study is to delve into the theoretical aspect of the phenomenon of immigration as well as the changing nature of global immigration with respect to four recent political events that have been noticed in the recent past in the Global North. The former would involve the two diverse philosophical strands of the communal argument signifying the importance of national boundaries (thus restricting immigration) and the other being the opposite strand of multiculturalism that would emphasise on the coexistence of cultural plurality. The study will try to answer questions related to patriotism and communal attachments (through Rousseau) and the moral significance of national boundaries (through Michael Walzer) in order to analyse why the citizens have obligations and special responsibilities to one another and not to other people in the world. This would help to understand the opposition for generous immigration policies (as is the trend in contemporary times). The parochial tendencies of such understandings will be countered by the ideas of Multiculturalism to be understood through the theory of scholar Bhikhu Parekh.

The latter and more prominent part of the study will comprise of four Western political events that will help us analyse the changing nature of global migration. These are as follows:

1. The changing immigration patterns in the US after the election of President Donald Trump, and the resultant detention centres, anti-immigrant sentiments and the rising Neo Nazi attacks.
2. The increased influx of West Asian immigrants in Germany that has led to the changing demographics of the country
3. The rise of anti immigrant, far right parties in Europe that recognise immigrants as the new "Other"
4. How the contemporary refugee crises is problematizing the identity of a refugee, leading to an identity crisis

Keywords: Global immigration, detention centres in US, identity crisis among refugees.

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Good fences make good neighbours: A Philosophical perspective and the changing dynamics of global immigration and Diaspora

Prachy Hooda

The late twentieth century has been described as 'the age of migration'. Massive numbers of people are moving across borders, making virtually every country more polyethnic in composition. This has also been described as 'the age of nationalism', as more and more national groups throughout the world mobilize and assert their identity. As a result, the settled rules of political life in many countries are being challenged by a new 'politics of cultural difference'. Indeed, with the end of the Cold War, the demands of ethnic and national groups have taken over centre stage in political life, both domestically and internationally. Cultural diversity gives rise to a series of important and potentially divisive questions. Minorities and majorities increasingly clash over such issues as language rights, regional autonomy, political representation, education curriculum, land claims, immigration and naturalization policy, even national symbols, such as the choice of national anthem or public holidays. Finding morally defensible and politically viable answers to these issues is the greatest challenge facing democracies today.

The objective of the study is to delve into the theoretical aspect of the phenomenon of immigration as well as the changing nature of global immigration with respect to four recent political events that have been noticed in the recent past in the Global North. The former would involve the two diverse philosophical strands of the communal argument signifying the importance and moral significance of national boundaries (through Michael Walzer and Michael Sandel) in order to analyse why the citizens have obligations and special responsibilities to one another and not to other people in the world) and the other being the opposite strand of multiculturalism that would emphasise on the coexistence of cultural plurality (through the works of Will Kymlicka). The latter and more prominent part of the study will comprise of four Western political events that will help us analyse the changing nature of global migration. These are as follows:

1. The changing immigration patterns in the US after the election of President Donald Trump, and the resultant detention centres, anti-immigrant sentiments and the rising Neo Nazi attacks.

2. The increased influx of West Asian immigrants in Germany that has led to the changing demographics of the country.

3. The rise of anti-immigrant, far right parties in Europe that recognise immigrants as the new "Other".

4. How the contemporary refugee crisis is problematizing the identity of a refugee, leading to an identity crisis.

Multiculturalism through the lens of Kymlicka

Many people, of all political stripes, have hoped and assumed that ethnic and national identities were a transient phase of human history. These parochial allegiances were supposed to fade as the world becomes increasingly integrated both economically and politically. In reality, 'globalization' has often created more room for minorities to maintain a distinct identity and group life. Globalization has made the myth of a culturally homogeneous state even more unrealistic, and has forced the majority within each state to be more open to pluralism and diversity. The nature of ethnic and national identities is changing in a world of free trade and global communications, but the challenge of multiculturalism is here to stay (Kymlicka 1995).

Some people have pointed out (including liberal scholars)

that new emphasis on 'human rights' would resolve minority conflicts. However such human rightslike freedom of speech, association, and conscience, while attributed to individuals, are typically exercised in community with others, and so provide protection for group life. Here, it can be felt that the doctrine of humanrights has been put forward as a substitute for the concept of minority rights, with the strong implication that minorities whose members enjoy individual equality of treatment cannot legitimately demand facilities for the maintenance of their ethnic particularism. However, it has become increasingly clear that minority rights cannot be subsumed under the category of human rights. Traditional human rights standards are simply unable to resolve some of the most important and controversial questions relating to cultural minorities: which languages should be recognized in the parliaments, bureaucracies, and courts? Should each ethnic or national group have publicly funded education in its mother tongue? Should internal boundaries(legislative districts, provinces, states) be drawn so that cultural minorities form a majority within a local region? Should governmental powers be devolved from the central level to more local or regional levels controlled by particular minorities, particularly on culturally sensitive issues of immigration, communication, and education? What degree of cultural integration can be required of immigrants and refugees before they acquire citizenship? The problem is not that traditional human rights doctrines give us the wrong answer to these questions. It is rather that they often give no answer at all. The right to free speech does not tell us what an appropriate language policy is; the right to vote does not tell us how political boundaries should be drawn, or how powers should be distributed between levels of government; the right to mobility does not tell us what an appropriate immigration and naturalization policy is (Kymlicka 1995).These questions have been left to the usual process of majoritari and ecision-making within each state.

As Bhikhu Parekh notes, citizenship today 'is a much more differentiated and far less homogeneous concept than has been presupposed by political theorists'. If differentiated citizenship is defined as the adoption of group-specific polyethnic, representation, or self-government rights, then virtually every modern democracy recognizes some form of it. While talking about polyethnic rights, Kymlicka says that while the special rights granted to white Jewish and Christian groups to withdraw from the larger society have at times been controversial, few people see these as serious threats to social unity or stability, and they have been part of our political culture for decades. But when accommodations were made for non-white, non-Christian groups, people started complaining about the 'tribalization' of society, and the loss of a common identity—even though these newer polyethnic rights are in fact primarily intended to promote integration! It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that much of the backlash against 'multiculturalism' arises from a racist or xenophobic fear of these new immigrant groups (Kymlicka 1995).

Recent political events and trends throughout the world—the resurgence of nationalist movements in Eastern Europe, the stresses created by an increasingly multicultural and multiracial population in Western Europe, the backlash against the welfare state, the failure of environmental policies that rely on voluntary citizen co-operation, etc.—have made clear that the health and stability of a modern democracy depends, not only on the justice of its basic institutions, but also on the qualities and attitudes of its citizens: e.g. their sense of identity, and how they view potentially competing forms of national, regional, ethnic, or religious identities; their ability to tolerate and work together with others who are different from themselves; their desire to participate in the political process in order to promote the public good and hold political authorities accountable; their willingness to show self -restraint and exercise personal responsibility in their economic demands, and in personal choices which affect their health and the environment; and their sense of justice and commitment to a fair distribution of resources (Kymlicka 1995).

The idea that social unity depends on shared values is found, in a more philosophical form, in many recent liberal theorists. Rawls, for example, claims that the source of unity in modern societies is a shared conception of justice. According to Rawls, 'although a well-ordered society is divided and pluralistic ... public agreement on questions of political and social justice supports ties of civic friendship and secures the bonds of association' (Rawls 1980: 540). However, the fact that they share the same values does not, by itself, explain whether it is better to have one state or two in that part of the world. Shared values are not sufficient for social unity. The fact that two national groups share the same values or principles of justice does not necessarily give them any strong reason to join (or remain) together, rather than remaining (or splitting into) two separate countries. The missing ingredient seems to be the idea of a shared identity. A viable way to promote a sense of

solidarity and common purpose in a multination state, it will involve accommodating, rather than subordinating, national identities. It gets much more complicated in countries which are not only multinational but also polyethnic, containing many national and indigenous groups, often of vastly unequal size, as well as immigrants from every part of the world. In this context, we need what Charles Taylor calls a theory of 'deep diversity', since we must accommodate not only a diversity of cultural groups, but also a diversity of ways in which the members of these groups belong to the larger polity (Taylor 1991: 75). What would hold such a multination state together? Taylor admits that this is an open question, but suggests that citizens might 'find it exciting and an object of pride' to work together to build a society founded on deep diversity, and so be willing to make sacrifices to keep it together (Taylor 1991: 76). This seems to beg the question. Why would citizens find this exciting rather than wearying, given the endless negotiations and complications it entails? But according to Kymlicka, Taylor is pointing in the right direction. A society founded on 'deep diversity' is unlikely to stay together unless people value deep diversity, and want to live in a country with diverse forms of cultural and political membership. Even this is not always sufficient. For example, a sovereign Quebec would still be a very culturally diverse country, with immigrants from around the world, as well as a historically settled anglophone community, and various indigenous peoples, including the Cree, Mohawk, and Inuit. Secession rarely if ever creates homogeneous nation-states; it simply rearranges the pattern and size of groups. For citizens to keep a multination state together, therefore, they must value, not just 'deep diversity' in general, but also the particular ethnic groups and national cultures with whom they currently share the country. The problem, of course, is that this sort of allegiance is the product of mutual solidarity, not a possible basis for it. The demands of immigrants and disadvantaged groups for polyethnic rights and representation rights are primarily demands for inclusion, for full membership in the larger society. To view this as a threat to stability or solidarity is implausible, and often reflects an underlying ignorance or intolerance of these groups (Kymlicka 1995).

The Communitarians' Claims of Community

If we understand ourselves as free and independent selves, unbound by moral ties we haven't chosen, we can't make sense of a range of moral and political obligations that we commonly recognize, even prize. These include obligations of solidarity and loyalty, historic memory and religious faith—moral claims that arise from the communities and traditions that shape our identity. Unless we think of ourselves as encumbered selves, open to moral claims we have not willed, it is difficult to make sense of these aspects of our moral and political experience (Sandel 2010).

Most of us are born into or find ourselves in what may well be the most important groups to which we belong—the cultural and religious, the national and linguistic communities within which we cultivate not only identity but character and whose values we pass on to our children (without asking them). Our membership in these communities is also likely to determine, or at least to influence strongly, our standing in the social hierarchy and our central or marginal location in social space.[1]

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, an ardent defender of patriotism, argues that communal attachments and identities are necessary supplements to our universal humanity. "It seems that the sentiment of humanity evaporates and weakens in being extended over the entire world, and that we cannot be affected by the calamities in Tartary or Japan the way we are by those of a European people. Interest and commiseration must somehow be limited and restrained to be active." Patriotism, he suggests, is a limiting principle that intensifies fellow feeling. "It is a good thing that the humanity concentrated among fellow citizens takes on new force through the habit of seeing each other and through the common interest that unites them." But if fellow citizens are bound by ties of loyalty and commonality, this means they owe more to one another than to outsiders (Sandel 2010).

Countries do provide more to their own people than they do to foreigners. U.S. citizens, for example, are eligible for many forms of public provision—public education, unemployment compensation, job training, Social Security, Medicare, welfare, food stamps, and so on—that foreigners are not. In fact, those who oppose a more generous immigration policy worry that the new entrants will take advantage of social programs American taxpayers have paid for. What, really, is the moral significance of national boundaries? Sandel brings in the example of two adjacent towns of Texas and Juarez (Mexico) that are only separated by a river. A person born in the former is entitled to all American social welfare programmes and opportunities, while the one from the latter is not. Through no doing of their own, the two children will have very different life

1 Walzer Michael, Politics and Passion

prospects, simply by virtue of their place of birth. The inequality of nations complicates the case for national community. In a world with vast disparities between rich and poor countries, the claims of community can be in tension with the claims of equality. The volatile issue of immigration reflects this tension (Sandel 2010).

The best argument for limiting immigration is a communal one. As Michael Walzer writes, the ability to regulate the conditions of membership, to set the terms of admission and exclusion, is "at the core of communal independence." Otherwise, "there could not be communities of character, historically stable, ongoing associations of men and women with some special commitment to one another and some special sense of their common life." For affluent nations, however, restrictive immigration policies also serve to protect privilege. Many Americans fear that allowing large numbers of Mexicans to immigrate to the United States would impose a significant burden on social services and reduce the economic well-being of existing citizens. A stronger argument for limiting immigration is to protect the jobs and wage levels of low-skilled American workers, those most vulnerable to displacement by an influx of immigrants willing to work for less.

Americans must worry for fellow native vulnerable workers only if one accepts the communitarian idea that only if you accept that we have a special obligation for the welfare of our fellow citizens by virtue of the common life and history we share. And this depends on accepting the narrative conception given by Alasdair MacIntyre of personhood, according to which our identities as moral agents are bound up with the communities we inhabit. As Walzer writes, "It is only if patriotic sentiment has some moral basis, only if communal cohesion makes for obligations and shared meanings, only if there are members as well as strangers, that state officials would have any reason to worry especially about the welfare of their own people . . . and the success of their own culture and politics" (Sandel 2010).

Changing nature of Global Migration

In their book 'Cultural Backlash: Trump, Brexit and Authoritarian Populism', Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart say that there is overwhelming evidence of powerful trends toward greater income and wealth inequality in the West, based on the rise of the knowledge economy, technological automation, and the collapse of the manufacturing industry, global flows of labour, goods, peoples, and capital (especially the inflow of migrants and refugees), the erosion of organized labour, shrinking welfare safety-nets, and neo-liberalausterity policies. According to this view, rising economic insecurity and social deprivation among the left-behinds has fueled popular resentment of the political classes. This situation is believed to have made the less secure strata of society susceptible to the anti-establishment, nativist, and xenophobic scare-mongering exploited of authoritarian-populist movements, parties, and leaders, blaming 'Them' for stripping prosperity, job opportunities, and public services from 'Us.'

Changing immigration patterns in the Trump led US

In this view, Trump's base is attracted by his Make America Great Again promises to restore blue-collar jobs lost in factories, mills, and mines, to attack the opioid crisis devastating local communities, to rebuild America's crumbling infrastructure of roads and bridges, to scrap or renegotiate free trade deals like NAFTA and TPP, to reduce the costs of healthcare insurance, and to implement massive tax cuts for the less well-off. In this argument, economic vulnerability is conducive to in-group solidarity, rigid conformity to group norms, and rejection of outsiders.[2]

Trump's slogan 'Make America Great Again' – and his rejection of 'political correctness' – appeals sentimentally to a mythical 'golden past,' especially for older white men in small-town America, when society was less diverse, US leadership was unrivalled among Western powers during the Cold War era, threats of terrorism pre-9/11 were in distant lands but not at home, and conventional sex roles for women and men reflected familiar power relationships in the family and workforce.[3]

Trump declared his candidacy promising to wall off Mexico and deport millions of illegal aliens: 'When Mexico sends its people, they're not sending their best . . . they're bringing drugs, they're bringing crime, they're rapists, and some I assume are good people but I speak to border guards and they tell us what we're getting.' On the campaign trail, Trump called for 'a total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States,' declaring on CNN that 'Islam hates us,' although on coming to office the initial botched executive order banning travel from seven Muslim-majority countries was quickly overturned by the courts. He has repeatedly attacked African-American leaders and athletes on Twitter.

2 Norris Pippa, Inglehart Ronald; Cultural Backlash: Trump, Brexit and Authoritarian Populism
3 *Ibid*

Rise of the Far Right in Europe and backlash against the 'Other'

Now looking at Europe, the rapid influx of large numbers of immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers from poorer societies has generated social tensions. The refugee crisis, with the number of people applying for asylum in the EU peaking at 1.26 million in 2015, including many from Muslim-majority societies, raised difficult challenges for European policymakers in managing welfare, maintaining social cohesion, and providing educational training services for the refugees.

Germany's desirability as a destination for asylum seekers is long standing: over the past 30 years it has received 30 percent of all asylum applications in Europe – a greater share than any other country. In 2015, Angela Merkel adopted an 'open border' policy and the country took in 890,000 refugees and received 476,649 formal applications for political asylum – the highest number in history. In 2016, the government reinstated border controls. An agreement between the EU and Turkey allowed Greece to return 'irregular migrants' to Turkey and made it more difficult for refugees from the Middle East to reach Western Europe overland.[4]

The most hardline policies in the European Union have been enacted by Hungary's Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, who has consolidated power since 2010, revising the constitution to reduce judicial independence, electoral integrity, and press freedom. Orbán strongly opposed the EU's refugee reallocation quota program, designed to ease the burden on Germany, Greece, and Italy. His government refuses to accept Hungary's designated quota of just over 1,000 refugees, despite losing legal battles over the issue in the European Court of Justice. He proposed that financial assistance and migration reception centres should be established by the European Commission in African countries that agree to take back refugees. In the Netherlands, Geert Wilders' Party for Freedom (PVV) expresses similarly radical anti-immigration sentiments; their program in the 2017 elections called for an end to immigration from Islamic countries, closing all mosques, banning Muslim headscarves, as well as strengthening policing and holding a referendum on Dutch membership in the EU. Britain's traditional anti-immigrant parties, the National Front and the British National Party, have faded in strength in recent years. But the UKIP's manifesto in the June 2017 election campaign, advocating a 'hard' Brexit from the EU, sought to ban the burqa, outlaw sharia law, impose a temporary moratorium on new Islamic schools, and require annual checks against female genital mutilation for high-risk girls, as well as introducing a net migration target of zero in five years.[5] In the European Parliament, the Europe of Nations and Freedom (ENL) coordinates Authoritarian-Populist parties in an alliance of the FN, the Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ), the Flemish Vlaams Belang (VB), the Alternative for Germany (AfD), the Italian Northern League, the Dutch PVV, and the British UKIP, among others. These parties share a deeply Eurosceptic philosophy, seeking to restore national sovereignty, to roll back Brussels bureaucracy, and to control immigration. As the ENL web site proclaims: 'Our European cultures, our values and our freedom are under attack. They are threatened by the crushing and dictatorial powers of the European Union. They are threatened by mass immigration, by open borders and by a single European currency: one size does not fit all'.[6]

Trump has repeatedly advocated tightening America's borders against illegal aliens and limiting legal immigration. As the official White House website summarizes these immigration policies: 'The United States must adopt an immigration system that serves the national interest. To restore the rule of law and secure our border, President Trump is committed to constructing a border wall and ensuring the swift removal of unlawful entrants. To protect American workers, the President supports ending chain migration, eliminating the Visa Lottery, and moving the country to a merit-based entry system. These reforms will advance the safety and prosperity of all Americans while helping new citizens assimilate and flourish.'[7]

The debate continues about the factors driving these expressions of authoritarian sentiments, particularly the relative importance of (1) concerns about the impact of immigration on jobs, wages, and benefits, versus (2) the impact of anxieties about the impact of multiculturalism on traditional European identities, lifestyles, and symbols, and (3) the influence of fears of Muslim terrorist violence. Understanding the reasons behind anti-immigrant attitudes is important both theoretically and for understanding how policymakers can best respond to these fears. Cultural distances also seem to be important. And attitudes vary according to the immigrants' economic background (such as skilled professionals versus unskilled labourers), humanitarian considerations (such as refugee families with children fleeing war), and their religious faith (such as Assyrian Christians, and Sunni Muslims from Iraq). Some people

4 *Ibid*

5 *Ibid*

6 www.enfgroup-ep.eu/

7 www.whitehouse.gov/issues/immigration/

see Muslims in France, the UK, and the Netherlands as seeking to create a society entirely separate from the mainstream (especially after the 9/11 terror attack on the Twin Towers in US and increasing number of lone-wolf attacks in Europe).

Identity Crisis Among Immigrants

The real life story of German football player Mesut Özil can be used as an example to understand the problem of multiple identities prevalent among immigrants. He pointed out that "I am a German if we win, but an immigrant if we lose." He was celebrated as a hero when Germany won the FIFA World Cup in 2014 but received flak for a photograph with the Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan that made headlines questioning his loyalty. The controversy took a different turn when the soccer player left the German national football team. Many Turkish Germans agreed and started to share their negative experiences on Twitter via "#MeTwo," whereby "Two" referred to the dual identity of people with an immigrant background. The problem of multiple identities involves not just immigrants' perception about their ethnic group memberships, or the religious, local, racial, and supranational groups to which they belong, but also how others view immigrants and act toward them (Verkuyten, 2018). These multiple identities demand competing loyalties and allegiances. It is more about how individuals as group members position themselves in their social environment and how they understand meaning and values from their positions.

In a classic study, Ödegaard reported that the rates of schizophrenia among Norwegians who had migrated to the USA were higher when compared with Norwegians who had stayed back in Norway. Acceptance and welcome by the new nation will also be significant in the genesis of stress and how the individual deals with such stress (Bhugra 2004). It can be argued that the process of migration, sense of dislocation and alienation must contribute to the stress on the individuals and their families even though their experiences of alienation and dislocation will be different both at individual and group levels.

Acculturation has been defined as a 'phenomenon' which results when groups of individuals from different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either one or both groups (Bhugra 2004).It consequently influences post-migration factors such as loss of social roles, confidants, attitudes, etc., and the effects of cultural orientation, e.g. assimilation (becoming a part of the majority culture), separation (becoming alienated), or marginalization (becoming withdrawn and isolated from both the cultures). Hofstede's descriptions of cultures as individualistic and collectivist also comes in handy. Individualism refers to a society where the ties between individuals are loose and each individual is seen as a monadic entity, marked by the 'cult of the individual'. Collectivism, on the contrary, refers to a society in which people cohesively integrated. Hofstede suggests that individualistic societies emphasize 'I' consciousness: autonomy, emotional independence, individual initiative, the right to privacy, pleasure seeking, financial security and the need for specific friendship and universalism. Collective societies stress 'we' consciousness: collective identity, emotional inter-dependence, group solidarity, sharing, duties and obligations, the need for stable and predetermined friendships, group decisions and particularism (Bhugra 2004). Another hypothesis is usually proposed suggesting that when sociocentric individuals from sociocentric cultures migrate to egocentric societies they may feel more alienated.

COVID-19: Heightened nationalism leading to further anti-immigration sentiments?

The menace of COVID-19 has brought back the idea of nation-state (which was thought to have been pushed to the background in the era of globalisation, and thereby the precept of the nation-state being dead) under the scanner. While the virus spread into a pandemic with the free movement of people globally, it has brought back the nation states to the centre which are now being looked at by citizens as the only hope for the provision of free rations, vaccines, and public health care when economies have been ravaged by lockdowns. The first response of the governments has been to close borders and stop international travel. In the times of right-wing hyper nationalism where leaders like Trump have been focusing on building border walls, and pushing rhetoric against free trade and international organizations like UN or WTO, the COVID-19 pandemic has raised even further questions about the future of globalization. The research and development of COVID-19 vaccine is being seen as a matter of international competition. It has resulted into accusations of 'vaccine nationalism' with the U.S. attempting to poach German advances towards finding a vaccine as well as hoarding of millions of surplus doses by the Western countries at a time when countries of the 'Global South' are facing inaccessibility and unavailability of vaccine doses . It has also led to a revision of the world order as China is extensively sending aid, medicines and vaccines to

struggling nations. States have undertaken rampant surveillance, i.e., in the name of combating the disease, some governments are rushing to expand their use of surveillance technologies to track individuals and even entire populations.

The rampant spread of COVID-19 is also being seen as a failure of the contemporary world order and its institutions. That the United Nations Security Council took so long to meet (that too inconclusively) to discuss the pandemic is a ringing testimony to the UN's insignificance. Meanwhile, countries like Taiwan have been criticizing the WHO for not having taken any timely action even after being informed at the time of the deadly breakout. Trump has even slashed the funding for WHO by accusing it of negligence for not taking appropriate timely actions against China. This has led to global governance further taking a step backwards. In April 2020, Trump announced Twitter that he would be "signing an Executive Order to temporarily suspend immigration into the United States," because of the need to protect the jobs of American citizens after millions lost their jobs. The order does not prevent the entry of temporary guest workers , it rather blocks the citizenship of immigrants who were on the verge of obtaining it[8]. At the same time, it preserves the EB-5 immigrant investor program, which effectively allows wealthy foreigners to purchase green cards. In keeping with Trump's authoritarian instincts, the executive order does so without Congress's approval, instead relying, as prior decrees have, on a putatively temporary measure that can be renewed indefinitely if the administration so chooses.

A more inclusive global political and economic order is unlikely any time soon, if ever. Instead, as former National Security Adviser Shiv Shankar Menon warns, "we are headed for a poorer, meaner, and smaller world." We are already seeing rising incidents of racism against Asians in Europe and America.

The pandemic seems to have resuscitated the nation-state that had been under attack by the forces of globalization for decades. It has demonstrated not just that the nation state is not dead, but also how crucial it is in times of public emergencies. This heightened sense of territoriality of nation states has given another boost to the idea of exclusivity, where the 'Other' is not only seen as an outsider, but is also blamed for the problems caused (in the case of COVID, certainly the pandemic). This was visible in the increase in incidents of racial abuse against Chinese-Americans. The pandemic has not only led to our 'alienation from our species beings', to use Marx's term (maintenance of social distancing, locking up ourselves in the confines of our homes, seeing others as potential carriers), but also alienation from our own bodies (we are constantly told not to touch our face). In the end, we need to realize that the only way out of it is not more individualization, but coming together as a collectivity. Beyond the rhetoricisation of the virus, the nation states will have to come together, pool their resources, and conceptualize the changes in action for future. What happens next is yet to be seen!

Conclusion

In times of increasing racial attacks globally (especially in the West as it has been the geographical focal point of this paper) and more so in the wake of the COVID pandemic, one must look at what seems to be a fairly simple idea of toleration, given that the demands of recognition are not being fulfilled. Due to exhaustion of space, I shall not be able to develop further the theoretical distinction between the concepts of recognition and toleration.

I would like to conclude this study on immigration on a normative note by referring to Bhikhu Parekh's and Rajeev Bhargava's stances on the idea of toleration. In his book, 'Rethinking Multiculturalism: Cultural Diversity and Political Theory', Parekh points out that the demand for recognition (in our case, of minorities or immigrants) goes far beyond the plea for toleration, for the latter implies conceding the validity of society's disapproval and relying on its self-restraint[9]. There are increasing demands for acceptance, respect and public affirmation of these differences. Although the politics of recognition has its own logic, it is closely related to the older and more familiar politics of social justice or economic redistribution.

While talking of a Post-Secular India, Rajeev Bhargava points out the difference between love based toleration and hate based toleration, by referring to Gandhi who did not find any inconsistency between demanding toleration and equal respect. It is of course true that in the classical seventeenth century meaning of the term, to tolerate is to refrain from interference in the activities of others even though one finds them morally disagreeable, even repugnant and despite the fact that one has the power to do so. Here one puts up with, even suffers, the morally reprehensible activities of others. The powerless Other escapes interference of the powerful because the latter shows mercy towards them, a virtue in the powerful exercised in relation to those

8 https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2020/04/trump-order-immigration/610822/

9 Parekh Bhikhu, Rethinking Multiculturalism: Cultural Diversity and Political Theory

who do not really deserve it. He calls this a hierarchical notion of toleration, given the asymmetry of power between the two groups and the attitude of superiority that one has towards the other. Gandhi did not use the word 'toleration' in this sense. His notion of toleration is different. Parents often put up with the blemishes of their children which they would not suffer in others. We choose to overlook a fault in our lover, even in our close friends that we would not excuse in others. We might endure deep difference in worldviews in fellow citizens because we value fraternity. In all such cases, we put up with dislikeable states of doing or being in others even if we have some power to do something about them simply because we have love or love-like feelings for them. Here one tolerates not despite hate but rather because one loves the other.[10].

My purpose of laying these arguments in my concluding remarks is not to argue that we should let go off demands for recognition in favour of some simplistic idea of toleration. In these polarized times marked by hatred, bigotry and scapegoating where the 'other' is not even considered a human being, we must strive for a forward movement (even baby steps!) from Gandhian toleration to fully recognizing the equal moral worth of all individuals.

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Global Research Forum on Diaspora and Transnationalism (GRFDT) is a consortium of researchers and policy makers drawn from national and international universities, institutes and organizations. GRFDT is presently based in India and is shaping as the largest such group focusing specifically on the issues related to diaspora and transnationalism.

The GRFDT works as an academic and policy think tank by engaging national and international experts from academics, practitioners and policy makers in a broad range of areas such as migration policies, transnational linkages of development, human rights, culture, gender to mention a few. In the changing global environment of academic research and policy making, the role of GRFDT will be of immense help to the various stakeholders. Many developing countries cannot afford to miss the opportunity to harness the knowledge revolution of the present era. The engagement of diaspora with various platform need to be reassessed in the present context to engagethem in the best possible manner for the development human societies by providing policy in-put at the national and global context.