Reconfiguring nationalism: Transnational entanglements of *Hindutva* and radical right ideology

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Dedicated to Professor Vernon F. Leidig,
who taught me how to listen.

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List of Abbreviations

BJP	*Bharatiya Janata Party*
HSC	Hindu Students Council
HSS	*Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh*
HSS UK	*Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh* UK
HSS USA	*Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh* USA
NHSF	National Hindu Students Forum
NSD	Norwegian Centre for Research Data
OFBJP	Overseas Friends of BJP
OFBJP UK	Overseas Friends of BJP UK
OFBJP USA	Overseas Friends of BJP USA
RHC	Republican Hindu Coalition
RSS	*Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh*
VHP	*Vishwa Hindu Parishad*
VHPA	*Vishwa Hindu Parishad* of America
VHP UK	*Vishwa Hindu Parishad* UK

Glossary

Term	Definition
Akhand Bharat	Translates to Undivided India. An irredentist term referring to territory covering modern nation-states of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, and Afghanistan.
Bharatiya Jana Sangh	Translates to Indian People's Association. Founded in 1951 as precursor to Bharatiya Janata Party. Dissolved in 1977.
Bharatiya Janata Party	Translates to Indian People's Party. Founded in 1980 as the only political party that has adopted Hindutva as its official ideology.
Dharma	Term in Hinduism, loosely translates to the right way of living.
Hindu Sena	Translates to Hindu Army. Founded in 2011.
Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh	Translates to Hindu Volunteer Organisation. Subsidiary of *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh* for Hindus outside India.
Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh UK	Founded in 1966 as UK branch.
Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh USA	Founded in 1989 as US branch.
Hindu Students Council	Founded in 1987 as university division of *Vishwa Hindu Parishad* of America
Hindutva	Translates to Hindu nationalism.
National Hindu Students Forum	Founded in 1991 as university branch of *Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh* UK.
Overseas Friends of *Bharatiya Janata Party*	Subsidiary of *Bharatiya Janata Party* for Hindus outside of India.
Overseas Friends of *Bharatiya Janata Party* UK	Founded in 1992 as UK branch.
Overseas Friends of *Bharatiya Janata Party* USA	Founded in 1991 as US branch.
Rashtra	Translates to state. Often used to refer to a Hindu *rashtra*.
Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh	Translates to National Volunteer Organisation. Founded in 1925 as first *Hindutva* organisation with grassroots paramilitary operandi.

Republican Hindu Coalition	Founded in 2015 as US advocacy organisation to promote Hindu American interests.
Saffron terror	Used to describe acts of violence committed in the name of *Hindutva*, with the symbolic use of the saffron colour by *Hindutva* organisations.
Sangh Parivar	Translates to Family of Organisations.
Sewa	Term in Hinduism, loosely translates to service to the poor and suffering.
Shakha	Translates to branch or cell. The organisational unit of the RSS.
Vishwa Hindu Parishad	Translates to World Hindu Council. Founded in 1964 as *Hindutva* cultural organisation.
Vishwa Hindu Parishad UK	Founded in 1969 as UK branch.
Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America	Founded in 1970 as US branch.

Summary

This dissertation explores a minority within the Indian diaspora who support the ideological agenda of the radical right in the West. It situates the Brexit referendum and process in the UK, and Trump's election and presidency in the US, as manifestations of the radical right which provided an opportunity to merge the ideological currents of *Hindutva* (or Hindu nationalism)—an ideology originating from India—with these phenomena. Thus, this dissertation traces the transnational ideological linkages between *Hindutva* and the Western radical right. It positions the role of diaspora networks as interlocutors in adapting *Hindutva* towards Western political contexts, in effect creating alliances with radical right actors. United by shared practices of exclusion, this results in the reconfiguring of nationalist imaginaries made possible by transnational entanglements.

The dissertation consists of five articles that follow an overview of the background, the theoretical framework, and the methodological approaches of the study. The background provides historical and contemporary context of the evolution of *Hindutva*, its reformulation with the diaspora, and its convergence with the Brexit and Trump campaigns. The dissertation then draws upon theoretical insights in nationalism scholarship, as well as studies of diaspora and of the radical right, focusing on the conceptual overlaps between these fields in order to establish an intellectual foundation for the topic. Lastly, it employs a combined methodological approach that utilises genealogy, qualitative content analysis on social media, quantitative social media analysis, and semi-structured interviews as a means of demonstrating how ideology is operationalised at multiple scales.

The first article introduces *Hindutva* into the terminology of right-wing extremism. It argues that the origins and development of *Hindutva* need to be understood not as processes simply taking place locally, in isolation, but in fact deeply connected to extreme right movements in the West. The subsequent growth and 'mainstreaming' of *Hindutva* has been instrumental in nation-building and in creating a majoritarian identity in India. By situating the ideological, historical, and organisational dimensions of *Hindutva*, this article provides an analytical contribution towards how we might conceptualise right-wing extremism in its global manifestations rather than just a Western phenomenon.

The second article traces the ideological linkages between diaspora *Hindutva* and the contemporary radical right in Western societies. It positions diaspora political participation and mobilisation online as not only a form of long-distance nationalism towards India: equally important is the role of minority identity formation in 'host societies'. Such practices of identity formation can be inherently exclusionary, thus creating an alliance between diaspora *Hindutva* and radical right actors on the shared basis of 'othering'. This article sheds light on processes of ideological hybridity between diaspora communities and the nationalist narratives of the Brexit and Trump agendas.

The third article discusses how Indian diaspora actors employ Western radical right discourse online. It explores how these actors engage with issues and rhetoric in the Brexit and Trump Twittersphere(s) in order to shape ideas, strategies, and agendas within this network. In doing so, these actors adapt narratives of diaspora *Hindutva* into local political contexts as a means of justifying support for radical right platforms. Importantly, it is not just diasporic Hindus, but also Sikhs and Christians, sometimes united by an anti-Muslim stance, who participate in this process. This article illustrates how Indian diaspora actors are creating new boundaries of inclusion and exclusion within radical right nationalist imaginaries.

The fourth article examines how Indian diaspora actors embed themselves into the British and American radical right online milieux. By analysing Twitter activity of diaspora users, it reveals the vast and interconnected network of radical right communities that are transnationally oriented. As a result, these communities are key nodes in building bridges for information exchange between users. This article finds that in perpetuating and circulating tropes and narratives of the radical right online, Indian diaspora actors rely on transnational dynamics to further exclusionary nationalist aims.

The fifth article addresses the negotiation between long-distance nationalist and nationalist attachments amongst Indian diaspora supporters of Brexit and Trump in the UK and US. Through interviews, it unpacks the complex associations that some individuals hold towards their countries of origin/descent versus their countries of settlement/residence. In order to make sense of their positioning, these diaspora actors construct and maintain boundaries that not only depend on transnational ties, but cement nationalist sentiments. This article highlights how Indian diaspora actors simultaneously articulate not competing, but complementary nationalisms, when articulating support for Brexit and Trump.

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1 Introduction

On 12 May 2016, a group of worshippers gathered in New Delhi performing a *havan puja* (a fire ceremony aimed to bring good fortune), chanting mantras to invoke the gods. Surrounded by statues of Hindu deities, incense, and offerings was the focal point of the *puja*: a blown up photo of Donald Trump adorned with vermillion. Behind the worshippers a banner reads 'he is hope for humanity against Islamic terror'. The event was organised by the Hindu Sena (or Hindu Army), a fringe extreme right group. The leader of the Hindu Sena, Vishnu Gupta, stated 'He's our hero. We are praying for Trump because he is the only one who can help mankind' (*The Guardian*).

Five months later, the Republican presidential candidate walked on stage in a convention centre in Edison, New Jersey to an audience holding signs such as 'Trump Great for India', 'Trump for Hindu Americans', and 'Trump Against Terror'. As Trump entered, the song 'God Bless the USA' blasted on the loudspeaker and he proceeded to light a *diya* (an oil lamp that symbolises purity, goodness, and good luck) along with prominent Hindu Americans. The rally, entitled 'Humanity United Against Terror', was hosted by an advocacy group called the Republican Hindu Coalition whose founder donated $1 million to Trump's campaign.

These two events represent an enigma that this dissertation unravels and builds upon. It situates the possibility of a maverick US presidential candidate to inspire a group of Hindu nationalists in India. It explains why that same candidate spoke at a rally targeting Indian Americans—who constitute only 1% of the US population—just three weeks before election day. By exploring this phenomenon, this dissertation looks beyond how nationalist ideology operates within national borders, or even cross-nationally, and instead unpacks how transnational dynamics occur through multi-sited entanglements in order to reconfigure nationalist imaginaries.

It begins by exploring historical entanglements between ideologues in India and Europe. It posits how the development of *Hindutva*, an ideology that promotes Hindu nationalism in India, arose out of sustained intellectual engagement between ideologues in India and their counterparts in Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany. By consolidating around ideas of *ethnie* and primordialism, this fostered a truly transnational collaboration built on the basis of a shared commitment to ethno-nationalism.

It then positions sustained entanglements between actors in the Indian diaspora and those in India. It traces how the evolution of *Hindutva* overseas parallels migrant journeys from those seeking long-distance nationalist ties to the homeland. Over time, the connection between India and the diaspora shifted from a linear trajectory into a continuous feedback loop of active engagement. An ideology became transformed through the purveyors of a global network. However, as successive generations of these migrants settled in their countries of residence creating diaspora communities, these actors modified *Hindutva* to local contexts. The resulting outcome of diaspora *Hindutva* was thus as much an invocation of long-distance nationalism as a response to the creation of narratives of belonging within 'host societies'.

Lastly, it situates contemporary entanglements between actors in the Indian diaspora and the radical right in the West. Through the process of defining who belongs within a nationalist imaginary, proponents of diaspora *Hindutva* have sought allies with Western radical right actors. The result is a convergence of *Hindutva* and radical right ideology made possible by the role of diaspora actors who act as *translators*, by not only adapting, but also creating new exclusionary narratives influenced from the homeland towards their countries of settlement/residence.

This dissertation empirically explores Indian diaspora supporters of the Brexit referendum and process in the UK and Trump's election and presidency in the US. It should be acknowledged that the number of Indian diaspora supporters of Brexit and Trump is rather marginal—approximately 41% in the UK and 16% in the US respectively. This is therefore not a study of the views of British Indian and Indian American communities more broadly, but instead a case study that explores those in the Indian diaspora who support Brexit and Trump as manifestations of Western radical right agendas.

The overarching research question of this dissertation is thus:

> *How, and to what extent, does a minority within the Indian diaspora support the radical right in the West?*

By asking how, we can situate the ways in which people adapt and transform an ideology to fit their everyday realities. We can trace practices of meaning-making that arise out of defining boundaries of

inclusion and exclusion. And importantly, we can begin to understand the scale and scope of interactions that lead to the creation of new imagined communities.

Over the course of five articles, this dissertation explores these issues with the following respective research questions:

1. How does *Hindutva* fit within Western definitions of the radical right? Can such definitions be considered universal?
2. How do Indian diaspora actors create an ideological linkage between diaspora *Hindutva* and the radical right in the West?
3. How do Indian diaspora actors employ Western radical right discourse online?
4. How do Indian diaspora actors embed themselves into the radical right online milieu in the West?
5. How do Indian diaspora actors negotiate between long-distance nationalist and nationalist attachments when supporting radical right agendas in the West?

These five articles of the dissertation provide different types of insight into the overall research question. Whilst the first article serves as a conceptual foundation of *Hindutva* vis-à-vis radical right ideology in the West, the following four explore the role of Indian diaspora actors who act as mediators in bridging and synthesising these ideologies. The confluence of *Hindutva* and Western radical right agendas furthers the reproduction of not competing, but *complementary* nationalisms.

This dissertation finds that not only are transnational dynamics integral towards the (re)construction of exclusionary nationalist imaginaries, but also results in ideological hybridity. Using a variety of theoretical and methodological approaches, it explores how the political opportunities of Brexit and Trump created a perfect storm for the merging of diaspora *Hindutva* and Western radical right platforms at a transnational scale made possible by diaspora networks. It situates the multiple ways in which the exclusionary nationalist ideologies of these movements are advanced by a small segment of political entrepreneurs with global ties. As such, this dissertation highlights how a minority of individuals, past and present, can have a great impact within and beyond territorial boundaries.

This introductory part of the dissertation consists of seven chapters. Following this chapter, chapter 2 details the contextual background which gave rise to the phenomenon under study. It traces the emergence of *Hindutva* as an ideology in India, and its proliferation and reformulation overseas with the diaspora, eventually leading to the convergence of diaspora *Hindutva* and the political opportunities of the Brexit and Trump campaigns as manifestations of radical right agendas in the West. Chapter 3 then outlines the theoretical framework of the dissertation, namely, theories of nationalism and the conceptual interlinkages between nationalism and diaspora, as well as nationalism and the radical right. Chapter 4 discusses the research design and methodological approaches employed in this dissertation, consisting of genealogy, qualitative content analysis on social media, quantitative social media analysis, and semi-structured interviews. Chapter 5 provides a summary of the five articles encompassing the dissertation. Lastly, chapter 6 offers concluding remarks on future avenues for research. The five articles are attached at the end.

2 Background

The background chapter of this dissertation draws upon scholarship in three areas: the historical evolution and present day formation of *Hindutva* in India; the emergence of diaspora *Hindutva* as both long-distance nationalism and a response to multiculturalism as a policy agenda; and the political opportunities of the Brexit and Trump campaigns in 2016 to merge *Hindutva* narratives with Anglo-Western radical right agendas.

It begins by exploring *Hindutva* as an ideology that arose and was cemented through actors and the formation of organisations which have played an integral role in helping to construct ethno-nationalism in India. Originating as an anti-colonial resistance movement, early *Hindutva* ideologues evoked the idea of 'Hindu consciousness' in order to consolidate a majoritarian identity. This took shape in the establishment of the *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh* (RSS, or National Volunteer Organisation) in 1925, which sought to create a Hindu *rashtra* (or state) on the basis of claiming territoriality according to ethnic Hindu-ness. This endeavour did not exist as an isolated phenomenon, but rather in conjunction with ideological developments in Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany, such that South Asian and European political spheres were interconnected in their intellectual engagements.

Following India's independence, *Hindutva* expanded through the development of new organisations under the umbrella of the *Sangh Parivar* (or Family of Organisations), which became instrumental towards the myth making of nation-building. The emergence of the *Vishwa Hindu Parishad* (VHP, or World Hindu Council) in 1964 as a 'cultural organisation' played an especially prominent role in equating Hindu identity with Indian identity. Also significant was the founding of the *Bharatiya Janata Party* (BJP, or Indian People's Party) in 1980, serving as the only political party which has adopted *Hindutva* as its official ideology. Under the current Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the BJP has successfully mainstreamed *Hindutva*, weaving the narrative that promises India's future as a techno-economic powerhouse with the authenticity of Modi as the voice of the people.

Hindutva, however, has not been merely confined to the boundaries of the Indian nation-state. This chapter thus follows how the ideology has travelled overseas with migrant trajectories, beginning in southern and eastern Africa, to the Caribbean, and then to Western countries. It details the rise of diaspora *Hindutva* organisations, particularly in the UK and US, as playing a role in shaping and

adapting *Hindutva* within local contexts in order to respond to the needs of migrants seeking long-distance nationalist ties 'back home'. Yet, this relationship can be characterised not as a one-way trajectory, but a continuous cycle of engagement between the homeland and the diaspora. A key way in which the diaspora influences its Indian parent organisations is through the language of multiculturalism, in the form of majority-minority rhetoric and a politics of recognition, which has been adapted by *Hindutva* actors in India. The irony is that multiculturalism policies developed in Western societies in order to redress historically marginalised and discriminated ethnic and racial communities has become exploited by diaspora *Hindutva* organisations in order to advance an exclusionary ideology. The discourse of *Hindutva* thus needs to be understood in its transnational linkages.

The Brexit referendum and Trump's election in 2016 served as conjunctures which brought to the fore the latency of diaspora *Hindutva* as complementary to radical right agendas in Anglo-Western societies. Here, a new form of mobilisation emerged amongst the diaspora, which was articulated as pro-Commonwealth (and anti-EU) migration with the Brexit vote, and strong US-India relations on trade and cooperation against Islamist extremism with Trump's platform. Equally striking was how the diaspora mobilised on social media in response to these ideas, doing so in a way which connected diaspora *Hindutva* narratives to radical right themes. The result is an ideological hybridity framed according to exclusionary nationalist imaginaries.

The Origins and Evolution of *Hindutva* in India

Colonial India and the emergence of *Hindutva*

Hindutva emerged as an ideology in the 19th century in resistance to British colonialism in India. It took shape as a reform then revivalist movement of neo-Hinduism in distinct opposition to British occupation. The idea of a Vedic 'golden age', or height of Hinduism when the Vedas scriptures were written and brought to northern India, crystallised during this time. *Hindutva* ideologues thus idolise a past that existed prior to the Mughal Empire and British Raj, attempting to rewrite a historiographical account which highlights the 'shame' of foreign invasion (see Jaffrelot, 2007; Bhatt, 2001).

In 1925, the *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh* (RSS, or National Volunteer Organisation) was founded with the aim to create a Hindu *rashtra* (or state). Its founders articulated the Hindu *rashtra* as encompassing a territorial nation-state in which the criteria for belonging is an inherent ethno-religious identity. In the decades that followed with the rise of Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany, *Hindutva* ideologues remained in contact with their European contemporaries, influencing what would later become the modus operandi for the RSS. For instance, the RSS until this day runs *shakhas*, or branches, which recruits volunteers in local chapters, modeled after the fascist paramilitary under Mussolini (Casolari, 2000). Such transnational ideological and organisational connections persisted through diplomatic ties, private correspondences, newspaper editorials, radio broadcasts, intellectual networks, and book publications (see Casolari, 2000; Goodrick-Clarke, 1998; D'souza, 2000; Zachariah, 2015, 2014). Thus, despite *Hindutva* emerging within a particular temporal-spatial milieu, its growth incorporated elements from European models. In turn, significant interactions with European political spheres helped foster a global ideological project based on a primordialist conception of ethno-nationalism.

Independent India and the growth of *Hindutva*

With the end of British colonialism in 1947 came the formation of the modern nation-states of Hindu-majority India and Muslim-majority Pakistan through Partition of the subcontinent. The violence which marked the birth of these new nations has become instrumental towards their myth making in creating nationalist imaginaries. At the heart of this myth making process for *Hindutva* ideologues is the notion of *Akhand Bharat* (or Undivided India), by which the territorial boundaries of India and Pakistan (and later Bangladesh) are once again reunited under the *rashtra*. 'Saffron terror'—the term commonly given to designate the prominence of the colour saffron as a symbol of *Hindutva*—is enacted by *Hindutva* actors as a means of claiming public space as Hindu space. Violence committed in the name of *Hindutva* has thus remained consistently visible in nation-building efforts.

From the 1960s to the 1980s, the RSS grew into a network of *Hindutva* organisations called the *Sangh Parivar* (or Family of Organisations). Together, the affiliates of the *Sangh* pursue and promote *Hindutva* through a vast apparatus. One of the largest organisations of the *Sangh*, the *Vishwa Hindu Parishad* (VHP, or World Hindu Council), was founded in 1964 by RSS members and Hindu religious leaders. Its objectives include raising awareness of 'Hindu Society', instilling 'Hindu values', connecting and reconnecting with the Hindu diaspora and those 'who had gone out of the Hindu fold', providing

social welfare services, reforming Hinduism in modernity, and abolishing untouchability (van der Veer, 1994, 653-4).

Although the VHP is a descendent of the RSS, which has taken an active role in organising political rituals for the VHP, there are key differences between the two. The RSS promotes physical strength of young men through military exercises that enhance masculinity, such that a 'healthy body' equates to a 'healthy nation'. Authoritarianism is strongly enforced at all levels. The VHP, however, is organisationally and structurally different. It is guided by religious leaders who wish to unify a 'modern Hinduism' (*ibid.*, 655). The VHP defines Hinduism as a civilisation, rather than a religion, and consequently promotes 'modern Hinduism' as a form of nationalism (*ibid.*). Accordingly, Hindu identity is Indian identity, and any other religion (i.e. Islam, Christianity) is a 'foreign' threat to the Hindu nation-state.

Another significant organisation in the Sangh is the *Bharatiya Janata Party* (BJP, or Indian People's Party), the only political party that has adopted *Hindutva* as its official ideology. Originally founded in 1951 as the *Bharatiya Jana Sangh* in response to the governing centre-left Indian National Congress party, it was reformed in 1980 as a more moderate, populist party, yet still retaining the *Hindutva* mission. Since independence, the BJP has only succeeded in local and state elections except for a coalition in national government from 1998 to 2004. This changed in 2014 as the BJP secured an outright majority with its candidate Narendra Modi.

Modi's India and contemporary *Hindutva*

During the 2014 election, the BJP candidate and now Prime Minister Narendra Modi gained mass support through a charismatic persona and populist appeal, attacking the political and media establishment in order to portray himself as the voice of the people (see Jaffrelot, 2015a). Modi came to symbolise the image of an authentic India, employing extensive social media operations (Ahmed, Jaidka, & Cho, 2016; Chadha & Guha, 2016; Pal, Chandra, & Vydiswaran, 2016; Pal, 2015; Rajagopal, 2014) in order to appear transparent, accountable, and accessible. By doing so, Modi embodied the vision of India aiming to be a 21st century technological powerhouse on the global stage.

Interlaced with Modi's populist message is mobilising support on the idea of a Muslim 'threat' to the Hindu majority, particularly from neighbouring Bangladesh and Pakistan in which migrants from these countries are portrayed as foreign invaders intent on destroying Hindu civilisation with acts of Islamic terrorism. Indian Muslims are simultaneously viewed as complicit in this alleged plot, furthering an anti-nationalist agenda. Under Modi's government, such tropes have become mainstream, legitimised by a government that promotes *Hindutva* as synonymous with Indian nationalism. *Hindutva*, however, has not been confined to the boundaries of India. The next section explores the growth and expansion of *Hindutva* as an ideology that interlaces 'both "roots" and "routes"' (Alexander, 2017, 1544) of the diaspora.

Diaspora *Hindutva*

From the mid-20th century, patterns of migration and settlement from India to the diaspora interlinked with a shifting global economy. Consequently, *Hindutva* traversed with diasporic trajectories:

> the transnationalization of [*Hindutva*] initially occurred in an unplanned and contingent manner, through individual initiatives and pre-existing family networks, before becoming part of a planned effort from India. The first shakha outside India was set up in 1947, aboard a ship bound for Kenya, by Jagdish Chandra Sharda, also known as Shastri. During the next decade (1947-1957), Shastri and his like-minded friends went to Uganda, Tanzania, Zambia, Tanganyika and Zanzibar, where they opened new local chapters of the RSS, thus setting up the first overseas extension of the Indian network (Sharda, 2008). Through their personal contacts, branches of the Sangh Parivar were also started in Burma, Mauritius and Madagascar (Bhatt, 2000: 559-593). These East African beginnings are not insignificant for understanding the establishment of the Sangh Parivar in Western countries because numerous full-time members of the RSS who were going to operate in the United Kingdom and in North America had worked in Kenya (Therwath, 2012, 554).

The organic manner in which *Hindutva* spread overseas thus parallels migrant journeys from eastern and southern Africa, as well as the Caribbean where many had historically served as indentured labour under the empire. Following India's independence, a vast number from the subcontinent emigrated to the UK, Canada, Australia, and later the US, in order to fulfil the demand for labour migrants to reconstruct post-Second World War economies (Miles & Phizacklea, 1984, 12). It was in the following decades that diaspora *Hindutva* organisations became firmly established as sites of community building around a shared minority identity in Anglo-Western societies.

It should be noted that although diaspora *Hindutva* can be viewed as a somewhat separate phenomenon from *Hindutva* in India, this does not mean that its diasporic formations have always existed in parallel. Early on, *Hindutva* actors in India have exercised considerable control over diasporic activities and operations. This is reflected in the close relationship of institutional oversight. Further, the role of the diaspora as funders has been significant for *Hindutva* organisations in India. The VHP in the US, for example, has provided millions of 'saffron dollars' by individuals and corporations to multiple front organisations of its Indian parent (Mathew, 2000). Another notable area of intervention includes the BJP's appeal to the diaspora in election manifestos, whom have contributed sizeable donations as early as the 1996 election (Jaffrelot & Therwath, 2007, 287-9). Financial support for political projects in India is thus a highly effective contribution of the diaspora (Kamat & Mathew, 2003, 12; Mathew, 2000).

Perhaps most important is that *Hindutva* has provided comfort to a diaspora seeking to define itself in the West. For many, *Hindutva* organisations signal a moral compass amidst the 'loss of Hindu identity, tradition, values and *dharma* in the face of Western materialism, consumption, permissiveness, immorality, corruption and the pursuit of lucre' (Bhatt, 2000, 572). The demand from migrants to educate their children in Hindu traditions (Jaffrelot & Therwath, 2007) reflects an attempt to reconnect with the culture and values 'back home'. The vulnerability of diasporic spaces to find one's 'roots', however, allows easy access for *Hindutva* to flourish.

Significant in this venture was the rise of multiculturalism as a policy agenda which benefited diaspora *Hindutva* organisations in the UK and US. Hence, these organisations emerged not just in response to long-distance nationalist ties to India, but equally important was the role of multiculturalism in the growth of these organisations. The term 'multiculturalism' first emerged in the 1960s and 1970s in Canada and Australia, and to some extent the UK and US, as a policy effort to politically accommodate minorities in Western societies (see Modood, 2016; Taylor, 1994; Kymlicka, 1995; Parekh, 2000). Where previously these 'host societies' would follow the model of 'assimilation' to accommodate minority communities, this was replaced with multiculturalism initiatives to foster cultural diversity in the name of 'equality of difference'. Often phrased in the discourse of a 'politics of recognition', it frequently includes the notion of 'integration' whilst simultaneously recognising the plurality of various 'communities'. Contemporary societies are multicultural in the sense that they contain multiple cultures, which are to be celebrated rather than simply tolerated (or opposed), and that they must be

given positive recognition in the public sphere. The aim of multiculturalism policies is thus to redress the historical underrepresentation and marginalisation of ethnic, racial, and religious minorities in public institutions, such as education and government.

Multiculturalism as a field of academic scholarship emerged in conjunction with, and frequently informed, policy initiatives (see Crowder, 2013). This included describing patterns of identity-making across generations in relation to 'belonging' to the nation whilst occupying liminal diaspora spaces. By translating these academic findings into policy, multiculturalism scholars sought to emancipate hegemonic cultural norms: 'Indeed, the attack on colorblind, culture-neutral political concepts such as equality and citizenship, with the critique that ethnicity and culture cannot be confined to some so-called private sphere but shape political and opportunity structures in all societies, is one of the most fundamental claims made by multiculturalism and the politics of difference' (Modood, 2016, 2).

Multiculturalism is not without its critics, who often describe it as a failure. The underlying argument is that it privileges certain minority groups under the guise of 'political correctness', viewed as inherently unequal in liberal democratic societies. More critical argumentations within the academy posit that the theoretical assumptions of multiculturalism, namely the Eurocentric specificity of the term (including individualist vs. groupist categorisations) reinforces a 'majority-minority' dichotomy. The result is that multiculturalism today 'refers to particular discourses or social forms which incorporate marked cultural differences and diverse ethnicities… [which] comprise various uneven interventions to understand and find a national resolution of the unsettled relation between marked cultural differences' (Hesse, 2000, 2). There is thus a risk of essentialising 'difference' in order to create specific, targeted policy interventions.

The following explores how British and American *Hindutva* organisations initially emerged as an expression of long-distance nationalism, but became successful due to policies of multiculturalism which favoured their development and expansion.[1]

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[1] It should be noted that this dissertation refrains from exploring the historical formation of Indian Sikh and Christian diaspora communities on two bases. Firstly, strong community mobilisation has historically been lacking due to areas of settlement where Sikhs and Christians constitute a minority in numbers compared to Hindus. Secondly, this dissertation focuses on the evolution of *Hindutva* in the diaspora rather than all forms of diasporic mobilisation. That said, the articles include discussion of Indian Sikh and Christian diaspora communities as an unexpected finding of research.

British Hindutva

Rising immigration, and consequently integration, became issues of national concern in the UK following the post-Second World War. The large arrival of migrants from the Commonwealth, mostly from Asia and Africa, came as a result of the British Nationality Act 1948. Under the new act, British citizenship was extended to individuals of the Commonwealth with the right to immigrate to the UK. A first wave to the UK following Partition, with many migrating from the Punjab and Gujarat regions in India, is linked to the aforementioned demand for labour migrants who helped build a nation recovering from the collapse of Empire and the need for a restructured economy. This first phase of migration cemented early experiences of racism and discrimination against these wage labourers. The public and political reaction to the vast influx of immigration was overwhelmingly negative, culminating in race riots. As a result, the rise of xenophobic sentiments in the British political and social milieux responded to these supposed inferior migrants as a '"race/immigration" problem' in the following decades (Miles & Phizacklea, 1984, 20-44). But the government's commitment to citizenship ensured there was no significant immigration restriction until legislation in 1962 (and not again until 1968 and 1971). The basis for new immigration restrictions was an attempt to limit non-white immigration from the New Commonwealth (i.e. Africa and Asia) and instead encourage white immigration from the Old Commonwealth (i.e. Australia, New Zealand, and Canada) (Ashcroft & Bevir, 2017).

The primary response from government during this time period was a policy of assimilation, whereby it was assumed that non-white immigrants and 'outsiders' would conform to the norms and culture of the dominant 'host society'. Such assimilationist policies defined the government's outlook, which 'utopianized the prospect of a British national identity preserved through the eventual cultural acceptance of the migrants into the putative British way of life, in exchange for the generational dissipation of ethnically marked cultural differences' (Hesse, 2000, 6). Thus, as much as assimilation arose from rapid demographic changes in British society, it was likewise an effort to cement the notion of (white) Britishness. In other words, the 'racialized reconstruction of Britain as an imagined community in the initial post-war period (1945-62) is partly characterized by developments in public culture which attempt to turn the common sense of Britain away from an imperial cosmopolitanism towards a nationalist parochialism' (*ibid.*, 5). As a nation reeling from the loss of empire and

decolonisation, anxiety over race and identity came to fruition with attempts to define who belonged to the British national imaginary.

During the mid-1960s, 'assimilation' gradually shifted to 'integration', in which equal opportunity, cultural diversity, and tolerance for minorities became implemented in legal and social institutions. Under the welfare state, funding was directed towards representing interests of minority communities (Ashcroft & Bevir, 2017). Although in some ways a departure from assimilation, it more or less served as an extension in which the underlying assumption was 'policy interventions designed to support and encourage the ideal of the "non-white immigrant" disappearing into the norms and habits of (white) British culture' (Hesse, 2000, 6). The aim was to promote 'our' dominant way of life over 'their' cultural practices.

It was also during this time that a slow and steady presence of diaspora *Hindutva* organisations came to fruition, such as the *Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh* (HSS, or Hindu Volunteer Organisation) UK, which was founded in London in 1966 by an RSS migrant. HSS UK emulates its RSS parent in ideology, structure, and organisation (Bhatt, 2000, 577-8). Like the RSS, HSS UK has a centralised structure with regional sections, a leadership council that meets annually, and a central executive committee that convenes every three months. HSS UK also holds training camps for leadership building (Jaffrelot & Therwath, 2007, 282).

In 1969, another diaspora *Hindutva* organisation, *Vishwa Hindu Parishad* (VHP) UK, was founded in order to promote 'Hindu consciousness amongst migrant groups' (Zavos, 2010, 7). VHP UK has five clear objectives which comprise of spreading awareness of *dharma* (loosely defined as the right way of living); providing *sewa* (or social services) to those in need; promoting relationships with other faith groups; being a voice for the global Hindu community; training Hindu priests; and working with and providing support to VHP affiliates in other countries (VHP UK website, 2017). Unlike the VHP in India, which engages in violence against religious minorities and exercises aggressive and militant *Hindutva*, the profile of the VHP diaspora network is to formulate an ideological political discourse and construct a global Hindu community identity (Zavos, 2010; Mukta, 2000). It does so by hosting *Hindutva* speakers who give lectures and talks aimed at 'preserving and explaining Hindu culture' as a type of spiritual solution to Western modernity, as well as social events catered towards local Hindu communities (Zavos, 2010, 10; Mukta, 2000).

Thus, the creation of HSS UK and VHP UK was primarily an expression of long-distance nationalism as UK government policies of assimilation and integration did not encourage the inclusion of these organisations and the communities they represented into the definition of British national identity.

Shortly after the founding of VHP UK, a second wave of migration occurred with those coming from eastern and southern Africa in the early 1970s, particularly after the expulsion of Indians in Uganda in 1971. Termed 'East African Asians', who originated mostly from Gujarat but also Punjab, these migrants carried twice-migrant status (of having first migrated from India to Africa, and then from Africa to the UK). The same time period also witnessed the rise of multiculturalism as a new policy agenda in response to both education curricula addressing plurality, and legislation on 'race relations' in attempt to foster harmony under increasingly strict immigration controls. Multiculturalism policies also emerged following Conservative MP Enoch Powell's infamous 'Rivers of Blood Speech' in 1968, which staunchly criticised mass immigration as an existential threat to (white) British culture and society (Hesse, 2000, 7). What distinguished multiculturalism from assimilation or integration was an overt effort to move away from simply tolerating cultural differences towards celebrating or valorising these markers. It simultaneously recognised a shift from the temporary status of migrant communities towards their settled permanence in the British landscape.

Multiculturalism persisted throughout the 1980s and 1990s, despite the anti-immigration rhetoric of the Thatcher years and the enduring racial social divisions (*ibid.*, 8-9). A third wave of Indian migration in the 1990s occurred with the arrival of more international students in the UK. In response, the National Hindu Students Forum (NHSF) was established as an HSS project to recruit and retain university students with *Hindutva* ideology. The NHSF is an umbrella organisation that oversees Hindu society chapters founded in the early 1990s at British universities (including the London School of Economics, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of Birmingham, University of Cambridge, University of Oxford, etc.), which often have connections with affiliate organisations in India and other diaspora networks. NHSF societies host cultural events and high level, public conferences addressing campus issues, such as campaigns that highlight 'religious persecution' of Hindu students and 'forced conversion' of 'vulnerable' Hindu and Sikh female students by Muslim male students (Bhatt, 2000, 581-4; Zavos, 2010, 16-17). In short, NHSF constructs an exclusive Hindu identity, in which 'the creation of boundaries, of difference are emphasized and may be the reason

that simply *being* a Hindu is stressed over the details of Hindu practice' (Raj, 2000, 548). The creation of NHSF hence played into the domain of multiculturalism policy as it promotes a broad Hindu identity through culture, community, and belonging, but with 'fixity and rigidity through a proscription and prescription of the boundaries of Hindu identity' (*ibid.*, 540).

Similarly, the Overseas Friends of BJP (OFBJP) UK was founded in 1992 with the aim of promoting the BJP's mission and aims overseas. To date, academic scholarship on OFBJP UK has been almost non-existent, and this dissertation encourages more research on the organisation.

It was not until under the New Labour government in the late 1990s and early 2000s that multiculturalism policies began to generate major criticism by academics and researchers. Despite government efforts towards inclusion and community cohesion, a report published in 2000 by the Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain, commonly known as the Parekh Report, was deeply critical in addressing the current state of British multiculturalism policies, particularly in regards to terminology:

> Such terms as "minority" and "majority" signify fixed blocs and obscure the fluidity and heterogeneity of real life. The term "ethnic group" traps the group concerned into its ethnicity, and suppresses both its multiple identity and its freedom of self-determination. The term "integration" is even more misleading, as it implies a one-way process in which "minorities" are to be fully absorbed into the non-existent homogenous cultural structure of the "majority" (Report Introduction).

The Parekh Report recognised the problematic nature of these terms, whilst simultaneously drawing to light the insufficiency of creating new terms for use. Instead, it proposed a set of policy measures to target socio-economic inequalities, especially on racial discrimination and disadvantage, in order to create equal opportunities for all in British society.

Notwithstanding the inadequacies identified by the Commission, multiculturalism policies continued to be the prominent operating blueprint. However, race riots in the north of England in 2001 resulted in the government commissioning a ministerial group to identify the causes of the riots. The resulting report, known as the Cantle Report, describes 'a depth of polarisation' in which segregated communities experience 'separate educational arrangements, community and voluntary bodies, employment, places of worship, language, social and cultural networks, [and] means that many communities operate on the basis of a series of parallel lives' in the UK (Cantle, 2001, 9). The explosive

findings of the Cantle Report became common parlance in the UK as a means to justify a more robust integration response from the government.

Further, the effects of 9/11 in 2001 and the 7/7 attacks in 2005 culminated in a new atmosphere of anti-Muslim and anti-Islam hostility in the UK. The New Labour government began to promote the necessity for British Muslims—euphemistically minority communities—to assimilate according to British values and traditions; this was reflected in the introduction of 'a new nationality test, tightened immigration and asylum law, and… draconian anti-terrorism legislation. The security measures were linked explicitly to assimilative policies that problematically muddled together counterterrorism work with community relations, particularly in relation to Muslim groups' (Ashcroft & Bevir, 2017, 6). Such policies continued under the Conservative government from 2010, and reached new heights when Prime Minister David Cameron declared the 'state doctrine of multiculturalism' a 'failure' and the need to exercise 'muscular liberalism' to counteract fears of rising 'homegrown' terrorism.

To date, multiculturalism is continuously interlinked with anti-(Islamist) extremism and immigration legislation, assuming that the 'crisis' of multiculturalism results from the combination of the latter two. It is done so often under the guise of promoting 'British values' against supposed 'values' of ethnic and religious minority communities. British *Hindutva* organisations have successfully responded to multiculturalism initiatives by emphasising the distinct separation between Islam and Hinduism, reinforcing the trope that the former is instinctively violent, intolerant, and oppressive, whereas the latter is peaceful, tolerant, and compassionate. As such, British *Hindutva* organisations describe 'the taint of Muslimness' by referring to Muslim communities in the UK as 'problematic' and frequent beneficiaries of 'appeasement' in contemporary British politics (Zavos, 2010, 12). By extension, then, British Hindus supposedly uphold the 'British values' of liberalism and inclusion as opposed to the intrinsically unassimilable traits of British Muslims.

The result is that multiculturalism today has become an ambiguous concept of what is Britishness, as it further problematises the extent to which race and ethnicity continuously serve as markers of difference. Consequently, the definition of a national identity is underpinned by who belongs within the imagined community. This notion of belonging is well complimented by the fact that British Hindus as a demographic have been generally successful, with representation in professional and managerial positions and top placements in universities. Average household income is also higher than

the national average (Dustmann & Theodoropoulos, 2010; Heath & Cheung, 2007; Office for National Statistics, 2019), and relative to other ethnic minorities, they are also more likely to support the Conservative Party (Martin, 2019; Martin & Khan, 2019). British *Hindutva* organisations still remain politically active in lobbying as 'community' representatives, receiving government funding to conduct community-wide activities (Mukta, 2000, 444) and often feature in UK government policies related to diversity, multiculturalism, and community cohesion in the name of religious and cultural plurality (Zavos, 2010, 18; Anderson, 2015).

In sum, the early stages of diaspora *Hindutva* organisations in the UK could be characterised as a form of long-distance nationalism, but its growth and expansion resulted from multiculturalism policies. British *Hindutva* is the outcome of a highly politicised agenda that is a reaction to the nexus of transnational and multicultural identity politics.

American Hindutva

It should be noted that the history of multiculturalism in the US manifests as radically different from that of the UK, both in terms of discourse and policy interventions. At the heart of American multiculturalism is the enduring issue of 'race' as a contested, and inadequately resolved, element of institutional and political representation. The myth of the US as a land of immigration and opportunity stands in bleak contrast to the history of systemic racism and structural inequalities, despite the 'melting pot' analogy characteristic of describing diversity. Following the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s, which saw constitutional and legal rights afforded to African Americans, including anti-discrimination and anti-segregation laws, the notion of a politics of recognition was gradually extended to other markers of social oppression such as gender and sexuality as popularised by the American counterculture movement. This new formation of identity politics in the US sought to address social injustices through a radical agenda of institutional transformation.

It was in the context of progressive social movements of the decade which witnessed the landmark Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, which became the de facto legislation shaping American immigration policy to this day. It is historically significant for repealing national-origin quotas which had previously favoured western and northern European countries. Following the act's implementation, skilled labour from outside of these regions was encouraged where previously

restricted. Consequently, the first wave of migrants from India occurred in the 1960s as a result of the act, mostly as professionals who quickly assimilated in American society based on their elite status. At this time, it was a rather small community of middle-class suburbanites, employed in universities or corporations to help fulfil the demand for STEM fields in a quickly escalating Cold War economy.

VHP America (VHPA) was founded in 1970 by these highly skilled migrants searching for a community. Its purpose remains today, like VHP UK, as a cultural organisation to reinforce Hindu culture and identity amongst the diaspora, with some of the same activities as its Indian counterpart (e.g. build temples, manage courses in Hindi and scriptures, and run festivals, summer schools, and youth camps) (Jaffrelot & Therwath, 2007, 283; Jaffrelot, 2007; Mathew, 2000). VHPA operates through multiple front organisations, some ephemeral for short-lived purposes and others with long-term functionality (Mathew, 2000, 112).

Yet, VHPA's strongest support is not the first wave of elite migrants, but draws from the second wave of migrants in the 1970s, who constituted those employed as small business owners and often living in ghettoised neighbourhoods with little resources at their disposal. Many of these migrants came from Punjab and north India, where *Hindutva* has always retained a strong base from its conception. This new wave of a largely isolated and immobilised demographic became more susceptible to diaspora *Hindutva* as they searched for a common identity. Key to the expansion of VHPA's network has been operating fundamentally at the family level (Rajagopal 2000, 473), promoting teachings of 'Hindu values' and culture. Its message is particularly salient in creating a moral compass away from the 'Americanization' of Hindu youth (Mathew & Prashad, 2000). The danger of its message, however, is a highly exclusionist definition of Hindu identity:

> [During] the course of making cultural assumptions salient and creating a rationale for Hinduism, the VHP could inflect these assumptions with nationalist meanings, presenting the Hindu nation as the most advanced product of antiquity rather than as their own fabrication. At the same time, the VHP was active in social organizations, such as temple societies, language, regional and professional networks, as well as India Associations (Rajagopal, 2000, 474).

In response, VHPA does not take an overt political stance but portrays itself as a 'cultural organization' (Mathew & Prashad, 2000, 525) much like its British counterpart. Concurrently, this desire to maintain tradition by migrants also positioned it as vulnerable to a politicised agenda.

A third wave of migration in the 1980s and 1990s came mostly from those who either work in the IT sector and/or to study at universities. This was fostered by the passage of the Immigration Act of 1990, which increased the number of permanent work-based visas and changes to temporary skilled workers regulations. These new immigration policies favoured highly skilled and educated migrants. Here, the global economy based on the rise of information and communication technologies is interconnected with the livelihood of the Indian diaspora in the US with their employment in these industries, or pursuit of educational degrees in this field.

In 1989, HSS USA was established in the US. HSS USA serves as a space of belonging for new migrants grappling with new forms of socio-cultural mobility combined with traditional authoritarianism offered by *Hindutva*. HSS USA has experienced considerable growth since, due to three factors. First was the BJP taking office in 1996, which witnessed a spike in HSS USA membership. Secondly, the increase in Indian software engineers migrating to the US created a larger pool of interest, who also possessed the skills for digital outreach. And lastly, the entry of RSS activists (whom were also software engineers) led to greater membership recruitment. The growth of HSS USA reflects an emergence of new globalisation links, with corporate offices based simultaneously in small Indian towns, as well as in New York or San Jose (Rajagopal, 2000, 480-2).

In response to the emergence of new migrant students, VHPA created the Hindu Students Council (HSC) in the 1990s, with the first chapter in 1987 at Northeastern University in Boston, and has rapidly grown to more than seventy-five chapters across American university campuses. Essentially the public face of VHPA, HSC is a student-run organisation with significant VHPA oversight. Although initially headed by male migrant graduate students with *Hindutva* ties to India, it has increasingly come under leadership of second-generation students with family connections to VHPA. Each chapter is hierarchically structured with a team of local officers reporting to the regional and subsequently, national, leadership (Jaffrelot & Therwath, 2007, 283; Mathew & Prashad, 2000, 527; Mathew, 2000, 112).

During this time in the 1980s and 1990s, multiculturalism as an intellectual phenomenon rose to prominence with the 'culture wars' at universities, which brought to light differences in 'race' and ethnicity, as well as gender, sexuality, and class (Hesse, 2000, 13) through debates on intersectionality as interlaced with discussions of power, privilege, and knowledge. American *Hindutva* organisations

such as HSC, were quick to respond to university spaces viewed as the stronghold of multiculturalism, in which ethnic and religious difference is celebrated. Like its parent organisation, the HSC plays to the cultural difference experienced by young Hindus:

> HSCs have made use of the institutional policy of multiculturalism to attract young Indian-Americans who often know little about the political situation in India, but who wish to attach themselves to a cultural imaginary of India as a great civilization. This desire is in large part facilitated by multiculturalism since within this discourse each minority ethnic and racial group is expected to present its own unique cultural repertoire (Kamat & Mathew, 2003, 13).

The history of India that is taught to HSC members is highly politicised with *Hindutva* readings. Yet, HSC legitimises its external outreach with activities such as ethnic food festivals and film screenings, in which participants can consume 'Indian' (i.e. Hindu) culture (Mathew, 2000, 120). Like its British counterpart NHSF, HSC came to co-opt the emancipative rhetoric of multiculturalism under the guise of exclusionary elements of *Hindutv*a ideology.

Further, in an effort to strategically employ the internet as a means of communication to connect the diaspora (and capitalise on their skills), HSC launched the Global Hindu Electronic Network in 1996, connected to the Hindu Universe platform run by the RSS (Therwath, 2012, 555; Rajagopal, 2000, 476; Mathew, 2000; Mathew & Prashad, 2000, 526). As a primary communicative tool for a vast and dispersed demographic, the network has helped contribute towards an expansive online *Hindutva* presence. Thus, the growth of American *Hindutva* depended on cyber connections to reach a geographically scattered diaspora, providing an opportunity to disseminate propaganda on online platforms.

Lastly, the Overseas Friends of BJP (OFBJP) USA was founded in 1991 at the request of the BJP shortly before that year's national election (Anderson & Clibbens, 2018, 1758). OFBJP USA frequently hosts visiting Indian political figures and continues to provide support during elections, such as distributing the BJP party manifesto and raising funds online during the 1996 election (Mathew, 2000, 113). The same election year, the BJP's manifesto declared NRIs [Non-Resident Indians] a high priority given their capacity to invest and provide capital in India (Rajagopal, 2000, 490). Indeed, this support was reinforced when the OFBJP USA released a statement in 1998 in favour of nuclear tests to be conducted by the BJP government as a national security measure against Pakistan (*ibid.*, 486). This dissertation encourages further research to analyse the role of OFBJP USA during Modi's 2014 and 2019 election campaigns.

Until 2001, American *Hindutva* organisations focused on portraying themselves as religious groups in order present 'Hinduism to the American public in such a way that it fit with Western norms', yet this changed with 9/11 as fear of Islam became expressed in national security terms (Kurien, 2006, 731; 2016). The activities of American *Hindutva* organisations shifted in order to emphasise the distinction between Islam and Hinduism, much like their British counterparts. Given anti-Muslim sentiment within diaspora *Hindutva*, long-distance nationalism with India became featured more prominently in the form of US-India foreign relations, particularly with concerns of Islamist terrorism (from Pakistan), in the post-9/11 period.

The discourse of multiculturalism in the US, which favours the notion of a 'melting pot', reflects the American ethos as a land of immigration and opportunity. This has suited the image of American Hindus, a demographic which today constitutes one of the highest household incomes and are employed as highly educated, highly skilled individuals in professional settings (Pew, 2014). This furthers their 'model minority' stereotype in the American parlance of diversity (see Balan & Mahalingam, 2015; Saran, 2015). Originally coined in reference to the socioeconomic success of Japanese Americans, the 'model minority' term has been extended to American Jews and Asian Americans (especially East Asians and Indians) as a means of signifying high educational attainment and income of a demographic. Coupled with this are low rates of criminality and high family/marital stability. Accordingly, 'model minorities' are praised as having integrated within American society, with Indian Americans in particular upheld as exemplars of the American Dream.

Despite the advantages that diaspora *Hindutva* has enjoyed as a result of multiculturalism policies, namely, maintaining the status of 'integration' in the UK and success as a 'model minority' in the US, Western radical right agendas describe multiculturalism as a failure. Here, the reinforcement of the narrative that Islam and Muslims are culturally incompatible within the values of Western societies takes precedence in their critique of multiculturalism. For the radical right there is a fundamental 'real conflict between national identity and multiculturalism' (Rydgren, 2007, 246) based on the critique of multiculturalism as allegedly promoting Islamist extremism. This dissertation finds that Indian diaspora alliances with radical right agendas form out of a shared anxiety with Islam as a threat to national identity, despite having profited from multiculturalism policies. The following section explores in turn how Leave campaigners during the Brexit referendum and Trump's presidential

campaign exercised overt appeals to potential Indian diaspora voters by expressing radical right ideas which converge with *Hindutva* narratives.

Brexit and Trump in 2016

With exception, few studies to date have acknowledged contemporary Indian diaspora connections to Western radical right groups, movements, or parties (see Singh, 2017; Anderson, 2015, 54; Roopram & van Steenbergen, 2014; Lane, 2012), let alone ethnic minority and/or immigrant supporters (see Mulinari & Neergaard, 2019; Pettersson et. al, 2016). The Brexit referendum and Trump's election in 2016 provided an opportunity for the ideological convergence of diaspora *Hindutva* and the radical right agendas of these phenomena. In particular, these campaigns promoted Islamophobic tropes and myths, as well as issues of immigration, which resonated with the concerns of diaspora *Hindutva* organisations. Although the articles of this dissertation expand on this convergence in-depth, the following briefly compares how the Brexit and Trump campaigns promoted these salient ideas.

Brexit referendum

In the UK, the Leave campaign emphasised the legacy of Commonwealth during the Brexit referendum in order to appeal to British Indians. By reinforcing the historical connections of the UK to its former colonies, the campaign stressed preference for Britain's 'special relationship' with the Commonwealth over that of the EU. Commonwealth migration thus took precedence over EU migration facilitated by the EU's freedom of movement clause (see Namusoke, 2016; Bhambra, 2017). In other words, the Leave campaign's slogan of 'take back control' of the borders was an invocation not only of the reawakened nostalgia for empire, but a reclaiming of the national imagined community, one in which British Indians rightfully belong.

Anxiety over territorial boundaries, however, extends beyond EU migration, and includes the image of the Muslim 'other' as encapsulated by the European refugee crisis beginning in 2015 as a result of the Syrian civil war and rise of Islamic State. The crisis, when combined with Islamist extremist motivated attacks in Paris and Brussels in 2015, ignited fears of the refugee as a potential Islamist terrorist. Thus, prominent Leave figures such as Nigel Farage called for an end to 'uncontrolled'

borders of the EU, which was manifested when he posed in front of the infamous 'Breaking Point' poster depicting a mass number of male Middle Eastern refugees allegedly entering Europe's borders as a result of the EU's failure on immigration (see Virdee & McGeever, 2018). The notion that Muslim migrants would take advantage of the current immigration system, and subsequently pose a security risk to British society, suited the Islamophobic narratives prevalent within British *Hindutva* as not only the need to securitise borders, but a threat to community cohesion.

Trump campaign

In the US, Donald Trump's campaign appealed to Indian Americans through a collaborative effort with an advocacy organisation called the Republican Hindu Coalition (RHC). According to the RHC's mission statement:

> Republican Hindu Coalition shall provide a single unified platform to build a strong, effective & respected Hindu-American voice in Washington and across the country. RHC shall become a unique bridge between the Hindu-American community and Republican Party Leaders. It shall promote the social, economic, political, cultural, religious, and spiritual interests of Hindus. We shall make the best and relentless efforts to make the 21st Century to be an Indo-American Century through an exponential increase in bilateral trade between India and the US and a strategic alliance between the two countries at all levels (RHC website, 2019).

The RHC echoes earlier efforts of American *Hindutva* organisations to represent and mobilise the US-based diaspora, albeit with a foreign policy focus on US-India relations. In addition, the RHC considers Hindus to 'include all faiths like Sikhs, Jains, and Buddhists' (*ibid.*), a controversial position which is echoed by *Hindutva* ideologies in India who view these religions as sects of Hinduism in order to include them as part of the Hindu fold to achieve a *rashtra*. Islam and Christianity, on the other hand, are seen as 'foreign' influences based on monotheistic principles. Thus, the RHC essentialises Hindu identity in order to represent myriad interests of religious communities into a universal platform.

During the election campaign, Trump spoke at a public rally hosted by the RHC, in particular emphasising India's role in fighting 'radical Islamic terrorism' and promising a stronger alliance between India and the US in 'defeating' this global threat. Trump also relayed his admiration of Modi as a strongman in this venture. By weaving the narrative of Islamist extremism as a national security threat to both the US and India, Trump promoted a radical right agenda in congruence with American *Hindutva* aims. Further, Trump described Hindu Americans in terms of their hard work and enterprise,

thus reinforcing the model minority stereotype of Indian Americans as ‘good immigrants’ who are well-integrated in the US. By extension, illegal immigrants and Muslims are viewed as undermining the fabric of American society.

Despite rhetorical differences, both the Brexit and Trump campaigns offered an opportunity for diaspora *Hindutva* to converge with radical right platforms. Specifically, issues of immigration and Islamist extremism became rallying points to mobilise Indian diaspora supporters. The result is an ideological hybridity, which combines exclusionary elements of these movements into a global discourse. Importantly, what this phenomenon reflects is the enduring role of nationalism to cement the image of who belongs within these imagined communities. The following chapter hence discusses nationalism as the foundational theoretical framework of this dissertation.

3 Theoretical Framework

Previous theoretical insights into diaspora *Hindutva* are predominantly oriented on long-distance nationalism (Thobani, 2019; Jaffrelot & Therwath, 2007; Mathew, 2000), or the nexus between long-distance nationalism and multiculturalism (Anderson, 2015; Zavos, 2010, 2008; Kamat & Mathew, 2003; Mukta, 2000; Rajagopal, 2000; Mathew & Prashad, 2000; Raj, 2000), the latter of which has been elaborated upon above. Such discussions concerning 'transnational communities' (Portes, 2000) illuminate the global flows of ideas that are adapted towards local contexts. However, there is lack of theorisation when it comes to *Hindutva* as an ideology beyond the remit of esotericism, and relatedly with diaspora *Hindutva*. This gap becomes especially problematic when connecting the ideological currents of *Hindutva* to the Western radical right.

This dissertation hence encompasses a theoretical framework which combines scholarship from nationalism studies with conceptual overlaps from diaspora and radical right literature. In lieu of drawing upon all within these vast bodies of literature, this dissertation focuses upon specific approaches within these sub-fields, namely, the role of nationalism within and between them in order to contextualise their relevance for the topic of study. This chapter begins by providing an overview of ethnic, or ethno-, nationalism, as it applies towards *Hindutva*. It draws upon the interchange between colonial administration and the categorisation of 'ethnicity' as a tool of colonial rule; in turn, colonial subjects came to embody these categories of governmentality. By extension, it explores 'ethnicity', 'groupism', and 'identity' as analytical categories in relation to ethno-nationalism.

It then theorises *Hindutva* as an ethno-nationalist ideology that travelled and adapted to diasporic formulations. In turn, the emergence of diaspora *Hindutva* is not only an expression of long-distance nationalist ties, but also a reconfiguration of narratives of belonging in nationalist imaginaries. Through the process of cementing these narratives, this dissertation argues that diaspora *Hindutva* has come to adopt articulations of civic nationalist frames, which are still exclusionary in nature. It is from this basis which offers an opportunity for those in the Indian diaspora to merge with Western radical right platforms, which have also shifted from ethno-nationalist towards civic nationalist frames. Here, boundaries of inclusion and exclusion do not necessarily have to be ethnic or racial, but can instead be determined on the basis of culture. This dissertation thus offers the terminology of exclusionary nationalism, which argues that the Western radical right's employment of civic nationalism as framed

on the premise of culture is inherently exclusionary but still open to possible adherents. It argues that the exclusionary nationalism promoted both by the radical right and diaspora *Hindutva* manifests as *complementary* nationalist imaginaries.

Nationalism

Nationalism, when broadly considered, is conceived by scholars in its various permutations according to two distinct types: ethnic (or ethno-) nationalism or civic nationalism. Civic nationalism, briefly, refers to the idea that nation-states are characterised by 'institutions, customs, historical memories and rational secular values. Anyone can join the nation irrespective of birth or ethnic origins… There is no myth of common ancestry… [Nationhood is] based on territorially defined community, not upon a social boundary among groups within a territory' (Keating in Brubaker, 1999, 61-2). This is not to deny the analytical ambiguity of civic nationalism, which certainly contains elements of exclusion. However, the basis of commonality in civic nationalism in reference to inclusive 'common values' and 'common identity' as surpassing genealogy stands in stark contrast to ethnic nationalism. This chapter will once again turn to a discussion of civic nationalism further below.

Ethnic nationalism, on the other hand, arises from the notion that ethnic communities constitute the basis for nations. Smith (1986) describes six dimensions foundational to ethnic community: 'a collective name', 'a common myth of descent', 'a shared history', 'a distinctive shared culture', 'an association with a specific territory', and 'a sense of solidarity' (22-30). Together, these dimensions ascribe ethnicity, or *ethnie*. Smith contends that 'collectivities in the process of "ethnic formation" will generally seek to augment their shared characteristics and differences along those of the six dimensions' (31), often consolidated at different historical junctures. With the formation of nations in the modern era brought forth the ambiguous and tense relations between nation-states and *ethnie*. As the nation-state came to exercise power within consolidated boundaries, pre-existing *ethnie* was transformed into the main unit for 'mobilization, territorialisation and politicization' (Smith, 1986, 137). The effect today is an ethno-nationalism that privileges supposed 'organic' genealogy, language, religion, customs, and cultural homogeneity.

The ideas of ethno-nationalism emerged in resistance and separatist movements against colonial regimes in the 19th and 20th centuries, in which local intelligentsia and elites sought to create and cement *ethnie* as the basis for newly independent post-colonial nations (see Smith, 1991, 106-10). Such instances of mobilisation 'often produced mythological accounts of their pre-colonial roots, of the heroism of anti-colonial founders, or of the commonalities of their citizens. Not surprisingly, they played down the extent to which their borders and populations were defined arbitrarily by conflicts and compromises between colonial powers' (Calhoun, 1997, 33). In the period leading up to and during India's independence, for instance, *Hindutva* ideologues identified with and reclaimed Hindu-ness as the 'authentic' and 'natural' expression of territorial boundaries, despite the fact that as an ideology it was influenced by European scholars on ethno-nationalism (Bhatt, 2001), or what Jaffrelot describes as 'the invention of an ethnic nationalism' (2007, 3). As Chatterjee points outs, there is little distinction between the colonial state and the (European defined) modern nation-state, with the former as a global extension of the latter (1994, 14).

Indeed, British colonialism had introduced a system of codifying India's vast and diverse population into ethnic and religious categories in order to effectively govern through divide and rule. The result was a massive bureaucratisation of the colonial administration which segmented newly framed ethnic and religious categories upon colonial subjects who had previously not identified with these markers: 'to the extent this complex of power and knowledge was colonial, the forms of objectification and normalization of the colonized had to reproduce, within the framework of a universal knowledge, the truth of the colonial difference…race was perhaps the most obvious mark of colonial difference' (Chatterjee, 1994, 20). By developing and enacting a system of categorisation, the British colonial state determined how biological attributes such as 'race' or 'ethnicity' designate specific configurations of identification that can be codified and sustained over time. These categories do not simply translate as a top-down direction, but simultaneously came to be embodied by the subjects of colonialism to comprise meaning relative to other categories [see Franz Fanon's influential *Black Skin, White Masks* (2008/1952) for more on the psychological effects of colonial domination]. As Brubaker effectively summarises:

> From above, we can focus on the ways in which categories are proposed, propagated, imposed, institutionalized, discursively articulated, organizationally entrenched, and generally embedded in multifarious forms of "governmentality." From below, we can study the "micropolitics" of categories, the ways in which the categorized appropriate, internalize, subvert, evade, or transform the categories that are imposed on them… (2004, 13).

Here, we consider what Brubaker alludes to as the role of the state in a Foucauldian sense, as implementing categories with the aim to exercise (bio-political) power in governance. In other words, *ethnie* became a tool of the colonial apparatus that was eventually internalised and embodied by subjects. By extension, the categorised—i.e. colonial subjects—can respond as complicit, resistant, apathetic, or a combination thereof, but nearly always recognise the category of *ethnie* as pertaining social value.

The Partition of the subcontinent in 1947 cemented the nationalist imaginaries of India as a Hindu nation and Pakistan (and later Bangladesh) as a Muslim nation. As Chatterjee elaborates, '[t]he national past had been constructed by…intelligentsia as a "Hindu" past, regardless of the fact that the appellation itself was of recent vintage and that the revivalism chose to define itself by a name given to it by "others." The history of the nation could accommodate Islam only as a foreign element…' (Chatterjee, 1994, 73-4). Islam was constructed by *Hindutva* proponents to be distinctively foreign, if only to serve as a pillar of difference for which to define an 'Other' within the newly fashioned nation-state. With this transfer of power also instilled the legacy of colonial rule—even now during the contemporary period—of 'groupism', what Brubaker describes as 'the tendency to take discrete, bounded groups as constituents of social life, chief protagonists of social conflicts, and fundamental units of social analysis…as if they were internally homogenous, externally bounded groups, even unitary collective actors with common purposes' (2004, 8). It is precisely this form of groupism that was, and still is, invoked by *Hindutva* actors, for whom being a Hindu constitutes a primordial and static identity. This is projected at the national level, for which geo-political aspirations are encapsulated by the *Hindutva* concept of *Akhand Bharat*, in which the modern territories of India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh are once again united under the Hindu *rashtra*.

The project of revisionist history enacted by *Hindutva* ideologues is thus not only a rewriting of history previously documented by foreign rulers, but the creation of a nationalist consciousness. To quote Chatterjee (1994) at length:

> The idea that "Indian nationalism" is synonymous with "Hindu nationalism" is not the vestige of some premodern religious conception. It is an entirely modern, rationalist, and historicist idea. Like other modern ideologies, it allows for a central role of the state in the modernization of society and strongly defends the state's unity and sovereignty…What, we may ask, is the place of those inhabitants of India who are excluded from this nation? There are several answers suggested in this historiography. One, which assumes the centrality of the modern state in the life of the nation, is frankly majoritarian. The majority "community" is Hindu; the others are minorities. State policy must therefore reflect this preponderance, and the minorities

> must accept the leadership and protection of the majority. This view, which today is being propagated with such vehemence in postcolonial India by Hindu-extremist politics, actually originated more than a hundred years ago, at the same time Indian nationalism was born (110).

In short, *Hindutva* ideologues' idea of an Indian nation is ironically deeply intertwined with the continuity of the colonial project, which imparted categories of difference in order to govern according to the principle of divide and rule. In nation-building efforts, *Hindutva* actors seek to reclaim a past in order to advance the future progress of a nation, but in doing so, rely upon the legacy of colonialism in constructing a national identity.

According to Brubaker, 'identity' can be conceptualised in multiple ways of which three are highlighted: 1) 'as a specifically *collective* phenomenon, "identity" denotes a fundamental and consequential "*sameness*" among members of a group or a category'; or, 2) 'as a core aspect of (individual or collective) self-hood or as a fundamental condition of social being, "identity" is invoked to point to something allegedly *deep*, *basic*, *abiding*, or *foundational*' (2004, 34). There is very clearly a connection between these first two criteria of identity in how Hindu-ness has been understood by *Hindutva* ideologues as a collective and foundational aspect of *being* Hindu.

Yet, Brubaker also describes how identity can be 3) 'invoked to highlight the *unstable, multiple, fluctuating, and fragmented* nature of the contemporary self' (2004, 35). By situating identity as a process of identification that can be relational *and* categorical, the former arises from organic dynamics of interaction vis-à-vis others whereas the latter is imposed according to categorical attributes, as described above (*ibid.*, 41-2). In other words, identity can be understood as depending on mutual recognition, interaction, and collective solidarity, rather than as a static, inflexible frame of reference determined by ethno-national actors. In considering this third criteria of identity, the contextual and situational aspect of ethnicity necessitates rethinking how '[e]thnicity, race, and nation should be conceptualized… in relational, processual, dynamic, eventful, and disaggregated terms… And it means taking as a basic analytical category not the "group" as an entity but groupness as a contextually fluctuating conceptual variable' (Brubaker, 2004, 11). The notion that ethnicity, groupism, and the nation-state are inherently fluid markers transitions to the next section on the formation of diasporas.

Nationalism and Diaspora: boundary making

Diasporas are by nature fluid and cross-territorial, often in a state of liminality. At the same time, diasporas are characterised by nationalist attachments. This dissertation defines diaspora according to Brubaker, as a noun 'designating a *collectivity*' and consequently diasporic as 'an *attribute* or modality—as in diasporic citizenship, diasporic consciousness, diasporic identity, diasporic imagination, diasporic nationalism, diasporic networks, diasporic culture, diasporic religion, or even the diasporic self' (2005, 4). Like 'ethnicity', 'groupism', and 'identity', diaspora entails a significant degree of attributing the *collective* as the primary means of configuration. This sense of collectivity figures within three elements constituting the criteria for a diaspora: dispersion, homeland orientation, and boundary-maintenance (*ibid.*, 5-7).

Dispersion, whether forced or voluntary, implies dispersion across state borders. Consequently, contemporary diasporas cannot conceptually exist without the boundaries of nation-states to demarcate the flows of bodies. However, dispersion is a relatively general term used to describe most forms of mobility and migration (see Tölölyan, 2012), and as such, should only be considered a basic criterion for diaspora formation.

The second element, homeland orientation, refers to the notion of a real or imagined homeland in which the diaspora plays a role in constructing myths and collective memory. In contemporary terms, the nation-state serves as the locus for the homeland, as 'the primary conceptual "other" against which diaspora is defined' (Brubaker, 2005, 10). Identification with the homeland in the form of a nation-state is accordingly described as diaspora nationalism (Gellner, 1983, 101) or long-distance nationalism (Anderson, 1998). Both of these abstractions have become foundational in understanding the practices of diaspora political participation and mobilisation towards the homeland, let alone what Vertovec identifies as a type of consciousness, marked by 'awareness of multi-locality', as well as a mode of cultural production 'involving the production and reproduction of transnational social and cultural phenomena' (2000, 141-60).

In these conceptualisations, however, there is a risk of essentialising '"the" nation-state, a risk of attributing to it a timeless, self-actualizing, homogenising "logic"… Discussions of diaspora are often informed by a strikingly idealist, teleological understanding of the nation-state, which is seen as the

unfolding of an idea, the idea of nationalizing and homogenising the population' (Brubaker, 2005, 10). As such, there is a strong link between diasporas and ethno-nationalism, given that the homeland is imagined as ancestral, 'authentic', and tied to the notion of *ethnie*. The view of the nation as a static, essentialist entity which shapes the diasporic psyche provides a shared sense of belonging to an otherwise dispersed population, but can also problematise how the diaspora chooses to recognise itself outside this territoriality.

In response to what Alexander (2017) highlights as 'a broader question [of] not only about what diaspora is, but why it matters: about the difference that diaspora as a concept makes, and how this marks it out as distinct from the other theorizations of migration and mobility' (1550), is the third criterion of a diaspora—boundary making and boundary maintenance.[2] As opposed to migrants, who 'themselves maintain boundaries is only to be expected' (Brubaker, 2005, 7), the boundaries maintained by second, third, and successive generations of the diaspora brings forth a rich conceptualisation of what, why, and how such boundaries prevail over time. This results in characterising their groupism as an entity. Understanding how these boundaries are created and maintained by diasporas is a central focus of this dissertation, which traces the process of Indian migration to diaspora formation.

Building upon the discussion of *ethnie* and nationalism in the previous section, Barth argues that at the most essential level, ethnic boundary maintenance is possible not only due to recognition and identification amongst members of an ethnic group, but also when such interactions are marked by the persistence of cultural differences (1998/1969, 16). These cultural differences are presumed to be foundational towards the reproduction of boundaries. When it comes to diasporic experiences, however, Brah offers a more fruitful analysis in describing the intersection between diaspora, ethnicity, and boundary maintenance:

> An ethnic group is best defined not by its cultural characteristics but by reference to the process of boundary formation. Ethnic boundaries may be constructed and maintained around a range of signifiers articulating in varying combinations under specific situations… In other words, ethnicity is primarily a mechanism of boundary maintenance between groups… Ethnicity is understood as *relational* and it is construed in terms of a *process* (1996, 163).

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[2] There is a rich body of literature dedicated towards processes of social and symbolic boundary making; for more see Pachucki et. al (2007). This discussion omits from providing a broad overview and instead focuses on the nexus between ethnicity, diaspora, and boundary making.

Rather than defining ethnicity as a primordial, top-down categorisation, Brah challenges us to understand ethnicity as a mutually reinforcing process embodied by diasporas through boundary formation. Like Brubaker, Brah stresses the relational component as significant for situating ethnicity not as an objective criterion, but a continuous negotiation of distinctiveness between and across groups.

In order to consider ethnicity beyond the categorical dimension and instead recognise the constant processes of relationality, Brah argues for the need to explore historical and sociological trajectories of the diasporic experience as modulated by power structures:

> the *concept* of diaspora concerns the historically variable forms of *relationality* within and between diasporic formations… [it] centres on the *configurations of power which differentiate diasporas internally as well as situate them in relation to one another*… it is the *economic, political and cultural specificities linking these components that the concept of diaspora signifies*… via a *confluence of narratives* as it is lived and re-lived, produced, reproduced and transformed through individual as well as collective memory and re-memory (1996, 183).

When situating the Hindu diasporas in the UK and US, such migratory patterns existed in conjunction with the shifting global political economy: from indentured labour in the Caribbean and eastern and southern Africa under the British empire, to the demand for labour migrants in order to reconstruct post-Second World War economies, to twice-migrants forcibly dispersed from south-eastern Africa to the UK as a result of 'Africanization' policies, to highly skilled migrants fulfilling America's demand in the STEM fields during the Cold War, and lastly, to the 'IT generation' which helped build Silicon Valley and the high-tech era. Each wave of migration reflects a diversity in class, caste, language, and regional affiliation. Consequently, the scale and speed of globalisation impacts our understanding of the 'forms of relationality within and between' these communities.

What unites these otherwise disparate diasporas is a commitment to 'a confluence of narratives' essential towards transnational myth making and identity formation of a singular diaspora. In other words, despite the differences which would be considered relevant 'back home', their lived experiences in the West are characterised by a *collective* process of identification, a shared involvement in defining *who* we are and *where* we belong in the nationalist imaginary. As such, ethnicity subsumes a role in boundary making in so far as it relates to the process of constructing groupism dynamics within the diaspora.

The danger of this narrative is a tendency to essentialise differences into a universal identity, which ultimately becomes vulnerable to *Hindutva* dogma. Brah warns of this potential slippage: 'It is clear that ethnic groups *do not* constitute a category of primordial ties. But does this not mean that, under particular political circumstances, they cannot come to be represented in such terms… political mobilisation of ethnicity in nationalist or racist discourses may serve to conceal precisely such social divisions (1996, 164). It is the ethno-nationalist articulations invoked by diaspora *Hindutva* ideologues which cement the notion of Hindu-ness in primordial terms.

When considering how multiculturalism policies (as outlined in the background chapter) have benefited diaspora *Hindutva* organisations, particularly in areas such as community cohesion and integration, we can posit how ethno-political entrepreneurs in the diaspora are redefining groupness through boundary maintenance practices. These actors, who 'live "off" as well as "for" ethnicity—often have what Pierre Bourdieu has called a *performative* character. By *invoking* groups, they seek to *evoke* them, summon them, call them into being' (Brubaker, 2004, 10). By exploiting categories of ethnic, racial, and religious pluralism to position their claims as 'politics of recognition', this results in 'valorizing particular cultural attachments and identities—including ethnic or ethnocultural ones—and by seeing the public recognition of such particularistic attachments as central to and supportive of rather than antithetical to citizenship' (*ibid.*, 144). They ultimately participate in essentialising dynamics of *who* is represented in this community. Consequently, multiculturalism policies have the unintended effect of categorising ethnicity, race, and religion as primordial and static groupness exploited by ethno-political entrepreneurs.

The link between ethno-political entrepreneurs and multiculturalism thus explains the partial success of diaspora *Hindutva*, which takes shape not just as a form of long-distance nationalism, but in promoting boundary maintenance within the UK and US. By virtue of defining parameters of inclusion and exclusion in boundary maintenance work, diaspora *Hindutva* ethno-political entrepreneurs help construct narratives of belonging in the nationalist imaginary. This creates an opportunity for diaspora *Hindutva* actors to align with the Western radical right, which is explored in the following section.

Nationalism and the Radical Right: a 'master concept'

The vast literature on the radical right[3] frequently alludes to the role of nationalism as a significant component in ideology, yet very few scholars directly address or specify what nationalism entails nor critically interrogate definitions of nationalism. This is not to discredit the useful scholarly interventions in the development of radical right, extreme right, or far right literature, but rather situates how such contributions can be understood within a broader framework of nationalism. One scholar who does explicitly focus on nationalism is Rydgren (2007), who describes how the radical right shares 'an emphasis on ethno-nationalism rooted in myths about the distant past. Their program is directed toward strengthening the nation by making it more ethnically homogeneous and by returning it to traditional values' (242). As such, the guiding assumption is that immigration and multiculturalism is antithetical to ethno-nationalist underpinnings of the radical right. Bar-On (2018) similarly discusses the relationship between the radical right and nationalism, in which the latter serves as the 'master concept' for the former's ideological proclivities. For Bar-On, ethno-nationalism is the foundation for the radical right: 'the national borders and the state should be equivalent with the dominant ethnic group; that national preference should be promoted; the homogenous nation is idealized; that ethnocracies are longed for; and that "enemy Others" constantly threaten to tear the nation asunder and hence should be removed from the body politic' (26). Accordingly, the radical right is driven by the notion that sovereignty is tied to nativist underpinnings. Consequently, 'immigrants and in particular Muslim immigrants are seen as the primary threats to the "health" of the nation' (28), or rather, a biological invasion to the purity of the organic ethnos.

On the other hand, Halikiopoulou, Mock, & Vasilopoulou (2012) argue that the success of the contemporary radical right stems from a rhetorical shift from ethno-nationalism to civic nationalism:

> How does a party or movement pushing what amounts to an ethnic exclusivist agenda annex the values of tolerance, liberalism and diversity in the interests of mobilising a nation? The answer: by identifying these values as the unique patrimony of the nation, threatened by an influx of outsiders who do not share and are unable or unwilling to adopt them. In other words: "our" nation is one of tolerance, liberalism and diversity and that tradition is threatened by an influx of intolerant, reactionary and narrow-minded "others" (109).

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[3] The radical right, as opposed to the extreme right, seeks to effect change by democratic, non-violent means, but often with the aim to achieve an exclusionary nationalist society (whether ethno or cultural).

By adopting civic variants of nationalism, the radical right promotes 'our' way of life under the guise of cultural 'values' in order to promote its position as a guardian of national identity. This discursive shift can be partly attributed to reformed tactics and strategies of the radical right in order to legitimise an exclusionary message for mainstream appeal (see Akkerman, de Lange, & Rooduijn, 2016, 1-27; Mudde, 2007, 2004). This could also be viewed according to what Barker (1981) terms as cultural racism, which has surpassed biological racism of the past. Here, cultural differences are assumed to be fundamentally incompatible with the dominant culture, as opposed to overt biological differences.

Yet, as Brubaker (2004) highlights, both ethnic and civic nationalism are 'simultaneously inclusive and exclusive. What varies is not the fact or even the degree of inclusiveness or exclusiveness, but the bases or criteria of inclusion and exclusion' (141). For the former, it is based on common ethnicity with 'an emphasis on descent' or 'ethno-*cultural*' (136-7); for the latter, it is based on citizenship which 'by its very nature, is an exclusive as well as an inclusive status' or by 'political creed' (141-2). By extension, civic nationalism is not inherently more inclusive but rather a different form of inclusivity.

On this basis, this dissertation argues that a consequence of the radical right's tactical shift towards civic nationalist rhetoric enables the opportunity for ethnic minority and/or immigrant supporters to support radical right agendas. Here, boundaries of inclusion and exclusion do not necessarily have to be ethnic or racial in nature, but can instead co-opt the civic variants of cultural 'values' as described by Halikiopoulou et. al. This is not to overemphasise the number of ethnic minority supporters (which remains marginal), nor does it exclude the possibility of minorities supporting exclusion of other minorities.[4] But it instead questions why and how a 'minority within a minority' would sympathise with Western radical right ideology that is fundamentally exclusionary against minorities. At a superficial level, this could be interpreted as supporting or voting against their interests; whilst at a deeper level, this could signify a socio-psychological fear of ethnic and/or religious misidentification and the consequent desire to maintain status in the hierarchy of national belonging. Both rationale, however, are insufficient towards addressing the overt, and at times, enthusiastic support for exclusionary nationalist agendas as articulated by ethnic minorities.

[4] As explored in the third article.

In the case of this dissertation, there is a shift from the ethno-nationalist expressions of *Hindutva* towards the civic nationalism articulated by diaspora *Hindutva* actors and organisations. By positioning themselves according to civic nationalist rhetoric based on liberal values of tolerance and respect for difference, as opposed to other ethnic and religious communities (i.e. Muslims) who allegedly do not support these values (see Zavos 2010; Kurien 2006), diaspora *Hindutva* shares this linguistic attribute with the Western radical right, which provides common ground between these movements. As Simonsen & Bonikowski (2019) highlight, conceptions of civic nationalism can correlate strongly with anti-Muslim, and not just anti-immigrant, attitudes. This is further reinforced, Anderson (2015, 53) notes, by the fact that the Indian diaspora in the UK and US are viewed as well-integrated and a model minority, which obfuscates an exclusionary agenda perpetuated under the guise of liberal democratic vocabulary. As such, employing the umbrella term of exclusionary nationalism throughout this dissertation is a more fruitful undertaking as it recognises that degrees of exclusivity do not have to be primarily ethno oriented in nature, nor do principles of civic nationalism guarantee inclusivity.

This dissertation attempts to theorise the interplay between (diaspora) *Hindutva* and Western radical right agendas by positing the notion of *complementary*, rather than competing, nationalisms. The Brexit and Trump campaigns echoed narratives prevalent in *Hindutva*, not only with anti-Muslim and Islamophobic tropes, but importantly, anxiety with protecting the boundaries of the nation. Here again, the notion of *Akhand Bharat* parallels the fear of uncontrolled borders promoted by the Brexit and Trump agendas. In other words, the geographies of India, the UK, and US '…are made symbolically synonymous, metaphorically mapped onto one another via concerns to secure their (different) territorial boundaries' which 'reveals the productive synergy that exists between distinct nationalist projects in the transnational present' (Thobani, 2019, 13, 3). By understanding how the diaspora acts as a mediator between these 'distinct nationalist projects', we can situate their role in perpetuating exclusionary nationalist imaginaries in their countries of settlement/residence.

4 Research Design and Methods

In order to unpack how those in the Indian diaspora bridge and merge the ideological currents of *Hindutva* and the radical right, this dissertation employs a mixed methodological approach which situates the multi-layered ways in which ideology operates. It explores this through four methods.

The first method, genealogy, utilises secondary sources in order to trace the historical lineage of *Hindutva* as an ideology. Its aim is theory building, and serves as a conceptual foundation in the first article which is operationalised in the subsequent four articles.

The second method, qualitative content analysis on social media, is based on a sample of thirty-nine pro-Brexit and pro-Trump Indian diaspora Twitter accounts that total 185,580 tweets, retweets, replies, and mentions. Data collection was conducted between April 2017 and April 2018. As the second, third, and fourth articles of the dissertation utilise this data, it is given the most attention below.

The third method, quantitative social media analysis, builds on the sample of thirty-nine Twitter accounts and applies quantitative metrics in order to map at a macro scale the network of these users. This method is utilised primarily in the fourth article.

The fourth and last method, semi-structured interviews, results in thirteen interviews with Indian diaspora Brexit and Trump supporters. Data was collected between January and October 2018. Nearly half of the interviewees were recruited from the Twitter accounts. This overlap was intentional, built on the aim to interview Twitter users. These interviews are presented in the fifth article.

Genealogy

The first article of the dissertation provides a genealogy that compares two vast bodies of academic literature, namely *Hindutva* in South Asian studies and right-wing extremism in the West. It attempts to answer the first sub-research question: '*How does* Hindutva *fit within Western definitions of the radical right? Can such definitions be considered universal?*'

Genealogy here refers to the approach developed by Michel Foucault, which traces the history of an idea based on the origins and context defining a specific period as interlaced with 'modalities of knowledge, power, thought, epistemologies and technologies' (Spiegel, 2001, 1; see Sax, 1989). The aim of applying a genealogical method in this dissertation is to situate the formation and development of *Hindutva* as an ideology in contrast to perspectives of right-wing extremism as a field of study in Western societies.

Much of the literature on *Hindutva* in India derives from the historical discipline, combining archival research with textual analysis into what can be considered the history of ideas. It traces the ideological development of *Hindutva* through writings of intellectuals and the establishment of organisations (Framke, 2016; Zachariah, 2015, 2014; Jaffrelot, 2007; Bhatt, 2001; Casolari, 2000; D'souza, 2000; Goodrick-Clarke, 1998). This methodological approach is complemented by insights from political science (Jaffrelot, 2015a, 2015b) and media and communications studies (Ahmed, Jaidka, & Cho, 2016; Chadha & Guha, 2016; Pal, Chandra, & Vydiswaran, 2016; Chakravartty & Roy, 2015; Pal 2015; Udupa, 2015; Rajagopal, 2014) from those researching contemporary modes of *Hindutva*. Yet, such scholarship on *Hindutva* is primarily confined to the field of South Asian studies, analysing *Hindutva* as an esoteric case and rarely drawing beyond regional studies for comparison.

Similarly, scholarship on right-wing extremism as a field of study is largely limited to case studies in Europe/North America, and builds on an epistemology from studies in fascism and Nazism. Scholars in history, political science, and sociology explain the shifts and growth of right-wing extremist ideology through the development of organisations and paramilitary/vigilante groups, as well as political parties (von Mering & McCarty, 2013; Backes & Moreau, 2012; Art, 2011; Hainsworth, 2008; Eatwell & Mudde, 2004; Davies & Lynch, 2002; Mudde, 2000; etc.). Such literature is equally esoteric, restricted to a geographical focus on Western societies.

Building on secondary sources, the first article of this dissertation thus attempts to bridge these separate strands of scholarship by tracing a historical lineage that compares and cements a common terminology. It contextualises *Hindutva* and right-wing extremism as not isolated phenomena, but interconnected and multilinear. In an attempt towards creating a universal definition, it consequently argues that *Hindutva* should be understood as a variant of right-wing extremism, and offers an

analytical contribution towards how we conceptualise right-wing extremism in its global manifestations. Overall, the tracing of an ideology for the first article of this dissertation serves as an intellectual foundation for the following four articles.

Qualitative Content Analysis on Social Media

During the Brexit and Trump campaigns in 2016, the emergence of pro-Brexit and pro-Trump social media accounts based on identitarian membership, such as 'Sikhs for Britain' and 'Hindus for Trump', sparked an initial interest in understanding these supporters. This phenomenon served '[to] stimulate research, providing an opportunity to explore some unusual occurrence or to test an explanatory idea' (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, 23). Thus, the second methodology of this dissertation, employed in the second, third, and fourth articles, is a qualitative content analysis on social media of Indian diaspora Twitter users within the Brexit and Trump Twittersphere(s). It aims to answer the following sub-research questions: '*How do Indian diaspora actors create an ideological linkage between diaspora* Hindutva *and the radical right in the West?*' and '*How do Indian diaspora actors employ Western radical right discourse online?*'

Previous research into the ideological connections between *Hindutva* and the Brexit and Trump campaigns, and particularly in reference to the role of Indian diaspora communities in the UK and US, is noticeably absent from the literature. One exception is Sitara Thobani (2019) on the relationship between *Hindutva* and American Hindu supporters for Trump. This study focuses on the role of groups such as the Republican Hindu Coalition, the Indian American Intellectual Forum, and Hindus for Trump which, in mobilising support for Trump, simultaneously foster the expansion of a global *Hindutva* that works in synergy with Trump's nationalist agenda.

Thobani employs a mixed methods approach which includes:

> discourse analysis of Hindus for Trump blog posts, as well as articles written and speeches delivered by others aligned with this group; media analysis of news coverage of pro-Trump Hindu organizations; and visual and content analysis of the cultural performances and corresponding paraphernalia that brought mainstream recognition to this diasporic political project through their online circulation (4).

This approach is useful in situating how tropes and narratives of *Hindutva* served to mobilise diaspora support for Trump. But by focusing on diaspora organisations as agents of mobilisation—and this is

not to discredit the powerful role of these organisations—one needs to explore not only how diasporic individuals respond to these organisations, but also act as mobilisers and content creators in this space. As such, combining discourse, media, and visual analysis of materials produced by organisations needs to be supplemented with an in-depth study of individuals. This is well represented by the rich body of scholarship on diaspora *Hindutva* that primarily includes sociological and anthropological approaches, particularly given the nature of ethnographic research into various organisations, events, and community representatives. Much of this literature stems from researchers' experiences in the field, whether attending talks and activities organised by diaspora *Hindutva* groups (Zavos, 2010; Rajagopal, 2000), including university campuses (Raj, 2000), collecting data in mandirs (Knott, 2009; Mukta, 2000), and interviews (Anderson, 2015; Mathew & Prashad, 2000). Other approaches include analysing content in local vernacular newspapers (Mukta, 2000), government reports (Anderson, 2015), and material derived from organisations' official websites, blogs, and social media accounts (Anderson, 2015; Therwath, 2012; Jaffrelot & Therwath, 2012; Kurien, 2006; Mathew & Prashad, 2000; Raj, 2000; Bhatt, 2000; Mathew, 2000).

However, for this dissertation it is important to situate the processes of 'online circulation', that is, understanding how the medium of online spaces allow for the proliferation of ideas amongst these Indian diaspora individuals who support Brexit and Trump. Such individuals do not exist within a pre-defined online group, forum, or chat room per say, but rather consist of spatially distributed users who participate on the Twitter platform. Here, we can conceptualise these users as a network based on 'the experience of mediated forms of engagement and to involve following connections rather than assuming physical co-presence in geographic space' (Hine, 2015, 56). The practices and experiences of these users—who are themselves geographically distributed but connected through a digital medium—shape how ideas, strategies, and agendas are cultivated into offline political realities (i.e. the Brexit movement and Trump's presidency) made possible by digital communication.

The Twitter sample of account users was manually chosen of diasporic Indians living in the UK and US who express pro-Brexit and/or pro-Trump political opinions, whether in the form of tweeting original content, retweets, mentions, and/or replies to other users. Determining account selection criteria was difficult due to a number of factors, not least that a limited number of accounts were explicit in revealing both Hindu identity and preference for Brexit and/or Trump. Often, Hindu names and/or photos became an indicator, although determining religious affiliation ran the risk of

essentialising ethnic/racial identities based on phenotype. In addition, a number of Sikh and Christian diaspora account users were actively posting pro-Brexit and/or pro-Trump content. Thus, it was decided based on these two considerations that data collection would include Hindu, Sikh, and Christian diaspora users.[5]

The location of accounts was determined by listed profile information and/or tweets that originated with British or American content which signalled deeper familiarity of local issues (this ran the risk of assuming knowledge was linked to place of residence). Although a small number of users tweeted solely about Brexit or Trump, a large majority of accounts contained overlapping material of both. By exploring users who tweet simultaneously about Brexit *and* Trump, this allows for a convergent rather than a comparative analysis at a transnational scale. In other words, the nature of social media exchange exemplified by Twitter, forces us to evaluate Indian diaspora supporters of Brexit and Trump not as separate phenomena but as a singular phenomenon.

Lastly, account users are both individuals and organisations, although a majority belong to the former. Some accounts belong to leaders, activists, or advocates, whilst others to non-affiliated individuals. The number of followers or levels of tweeting activity were not as significant as much as participating, i.e. producing content, in the pro-Brexit and pro-Trump Twitter network. The rationale for this selection was to determine *how* users perform their online political identities. Accounts that had never tweeted, however, were disregarded for the sample.

Access profoundly shaped data collection. This was due in large part to the ephemeral nature of Twitter. Over time, some account users did change privacy settings to protected tweets and data collection of users ceased unless tweets were made public again. Others had changed Twitter handles or to entirely new accounts, making it difficult to track accounts at times. Some had even deleted tweets (although this could still be documented if tweets were scraped prior to deletion).

Table 1 details the type of account user, for which two and seven are organisations in the UK and US, and thirteen and seventeen belong to individuals, respectively. The number of tweets for each account type is given rounded to the nearest thousandth, as is the number of followers.

[5] See concluding chapter for more.

Type of Account	Country		Tweets				Followers*			
	UK	US	0–1,000	1,000–5,000	5,000–10,000	10,000+	0–1,000	1,000–5,000	5,000–10,000	10,000+
Organisation	2	7	4	4	1	0	4	4	0	0
Individual	13	17	4	9	13	4	12	10	0	4

Table 1: Breakdown of Twitter account users by type of account, country, number of tweets, and number of followers. *Note: 5 accounts (1 organisation and 4 individuals) were deleted in the period following data collection and collation of the table. The number of followers for these accounts is unknown.

From April 2017 to April 2018, NVivo's NCapture software was used to scrape entire timelines of the selected Twitter accounts, providing the first to most recent tweet of each account. The earliest tweet scraped was from 2010 and the last tweet scraped was from 2018. Scrapes were downloaded every two weeks and analysed within four chronological phases (phase I from April 2017 to July 2017; phase II from July 2017 to October 2017; phase III from October 2017 to January 2018, and phase IV from January 2018 to April 2018). By allowing for a longitudinal study to prevent bias from data collection during one phase, analysing the data according to phases allowed to observe shifts, if any, in issue salience over time.

This dissertation employs a qualitative content analysis as described by Schreier (2012). In qualitative content analysis, the aim is to systematically describe the meaning of material, but only in certain respects that require specification, and in which the description of meaning serves a purpose for a basis of conclusion (3-4). In the context of this dissertation, conducting a qualitative content analysis of tweets entailed classifying all material of selected accounts (i.e. tweets) into categories for the coding scheme (i.e. nodes in NVivo). The categories were selected partially by data-driven material, but also referred to themes prevalent in radical right literature (see Rydgren, 2007; Kallis, 2015). In other words, rather than employing NVivo software to algorithmically determine categories, the coding scheme was inductively developed by assessing tweets in the preliminary stage of data collection. Given that users tweeted about local political context and/or issues, e.g. refugee crisis in Europe or CNN coverage of Trump, a qualitative coding manual was created to reflect users' topical interests.

These five categories of the coding manual—that were further broken down by subcategory—include: 1) 'immigration' (including the subcategories 'illegal'; 'refugee'; 'rape'; 'multiculturalism'); 2) 'foreign

policy' (including the subcategories 'EU'; 'India' and/or 'Modi' and/or 'BJP'); 3) 'establishment' (including the subcategories 'Clinton'; 'Obama'; 'Democrats'; 'Labour'; 'liberal' and/or 'left'; 'media' and/or 'BBC' and/or 'CNN'); 4) 'Islam' (including the subcategories 'Muslim'; 'terrorism' and/or 'extremism'; 'ISIS'); and 5) 'Indian' (including the subcategories 'Hindu'). Tweets were coded to one or more category/subcategory, depending on the content of the tweet.

Thus, instead of coding all the topics discussed by users, analysis was limited from all tweets to specific and relevant tweets. This is at the core of the qualitative content analysis approach, which can be characterised by flexibility—'flexible in the sense that you will always have to tailor your coding frame to your material'—and reduction—'you limit your analysis to those aspects that are relevant' (Schreier, 2012, 7). Here, the coding scheme was tailored to specific issues of concern within radical right discourse, as well as awareness of Indian politics and markers of ethnic identity. Using qualitative content analysis also allowed for the creation a coding scheme that changed over time as new codes were added throughout the year of data collection. In total, 185,580 English-language tweets were manually coded to result in 59,769 tweets included in the categories of the coding scheme.

Importantly, this approach resulted in extensive familiarity of these users in order to highlight the 'cultural aspects of online social phenomena' (Kozinets, 2010, 80). A year-long immersion of data collection gained knowledge of users' language use (see Bernard, 2002), vocabularies, and patterns of engagement. This included awareness of Twitter culture, including the significance of sarcasm, humour, meme posting, and trolling within radical right Internet sub-culture (see Nagle, 2017; Han, 2017). Understanding Twitter as a potentially rich research site, combined with knowledge of Indian diaspora political activism in the UK and US, provided a context for interpreting knowledge gained through data collection.

The result of using qualitative content analysis in this study can be characterised as a meso-level approach: a small number of Twitter accounts (i.e. thirty-nine) with a large number of tweets (i.e. 185,580). By designing a coding scheme to arrive 'at a higher level of abstraction than the more concrete information in [the] material' (Schreier, 2012, 7), content was compared across all relevant tweets at an aggregate level. Coding tweets according to these categories allows us to explore the nature of Twitter activity and interactions of Indian diaspora users in a specific and relevant way. It further allows us to understand how these users participate within the broader Twittersphere culture and community.

Quantitative Social Media Analysis

The third methodology employed is a quantitative social media analysis of these Indian diaspora Twitter users to map and trace interactions at a macro scale using computational methods and corpus linguistics in the fourth article. It subsequently strives to answer the fourth sub-research question, namely, '*How do Indian diaspora actors embed themselves into the radical right online milieu in the West?*' Thus, whilst a qualitative content analysis provides insight into how users participate in conversations within the Brexit and Trump Twittersphere(s), a quantitative approach can supplement these findings by exploring wider dynamics of interaction at the network level. Three metrics were employed using a quantitative approach: 1) the probability of particular word collocations of all tweets, 2) network analysis of retweets, and 3) keyword analysis of all tweets.

Gathering word collocations of all tweets allows us to explore how Indian diaspora Twitter users articulate and frame key themes related to the radical right in the UK and US. Combined with findings from the qualitative analysis, this was explored in more detail using word collocations which illustrate words that are more likely to appear adjacent to the words representing the previously defined categories listed above (see Baker, 2006). It allows us to identify linguistic features of these users within a large corpus of tweets.

Word collocations are useful to measure the discourse of users, but in order to consider links between users, a network analysis can differentiate users into different groups that they engage with the most with their Twitter activity. To map the network of users, the most influential Twitter accounts who are retweeted by these users is measured based on degree centrality of each user in the network. This allows for a measurement of the most retweeted accounts by these users. The result tells us which Twitter accounts are the most influential for these users. Then, in order to position users into communities, a modularity class algorithm was used to identify communities in a network based on their connectivity to one another (Blondel et al., 2008). Breaking down users into communities allows us to determine characteristics, as well as compare similarities and differences such as information exchange between communities.

Breaking down retweets into communities can help discern a particular discourse within each community, as shaped by influential Twitter accounts in each community. But this finding can also be

strengthened utilising a keyword analysis of all tweets. To do so, all of the tweets in each community was collected into a corpus and turned into a frequency distribution of words. Using a chi-squared test, the frequency of each word in the community was compared with the frequency of the word across all communities. The result is a keyness value that identifies words most particular to a community. This provides us with a holistic overview of the main topics of discussion within each community.

By employing word collocations, network analysis techniques, and keyword analysis, this highlights the various and differentiated communities in which these users position themselves. A quantitative approach, when combined with previous qualitative findings, exposes the ideological fragmentation of these networks, and the issues that traverse across Twitter interactions. By mapping these Indian diaspora Twitter users, this approach explores how transnational linkages are being created by users.

Semi-structured Interviews

Gathering and analysing social media data provides insight into how Indian diaspora supporters of Brexit and Trump utilise online spaces in order to mobilise and participate in conversations within the Twitter network. It simultaneously allows us to map these users into a broad network of like-minded users who help shape political narratives within these movements. Yet, whilst online data does offer insight into how these users perform on social media platforms, it limits our understanding of individual perspectives which can only be achieved one-on-one. Hence, the fourth and last methodology utilises semi-structured interviews with Indian diaspora supporters of Brexit and Trump in the UK and US, respectively, in order to explore self-articulated, life experiences. In short, it assumes that '*people* construct data' (Charmaz, 2006, 16). This approach seeks to answer the last sub-research question, '*How do Indian diaspora actors negotiate between long-distance nationalist and nationalist attachments when supporting radical right agendas in the West?*'

Initially, interviews were to be conducted with all the Twitter account users. However, lack of response from most of the contacted Twitter users resulted in what Miller & Bell (2002, 11) describe as the 'need to *re*think routes and modes of access both at the outset *and* once a study in underway is clearly

necessary in research that explores groups who may be difficult to access for a whole range of reasons'. This resulted in interviews obtained outside of the sample of Twitter users.

When it came to negotiating access, interviewees were approached using a variety of techniques and strategies which could only have been achieved after nearly a year of following their Twitter accounts. Indeed, by gaining an in-depth knowledge of not only the issues which concerned users, but the language in which these users expressed their political views, initial contact was made in a way that articulated why interviewees were interesting and how one could learn from their experiences (see Feldman et al., 2003, 7). Being able to persuade interviewees for an interview entailed being open and trustworthy towards their point of view (see Miller & Bell, 2002, 8; Feldman et al., 2003, 6). The most important strategy in this approach was tailoring interview requests according to their individual 'language' used on Twitter.

In effect, this meant relaying that their participation would help entail an understanding and explanation of pro-Brexit (if in the UK) and pro-Trump (if in the US) Indian diaspora views, but not revealing the project's broader attempt to establish the transnational connections to *Hindutva*. It also meant emphasising that the candidate was not a journalist with a biased political agenda, as interviewees were highly suspicious of media representations concerning those with right-wing political views. And importantly, it was made clear that interviewees would be completely anonymous in the presentation of findings, which seemed to elicit more agreements to be interviewed—an indicator that this was a key concern for informants. Overall, negotiating access was not just a practical matter but based upon a deeper theoretical understanding, or 'native wit' (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, 41) gained over a year of Twitter data collection prior to requesting interviews.

For those who did not respond to requests, including prominent figures that inspired the study, this remains problematic. For example, Shalabh Kumar, who is the founder of the Republican Hindu Coalition, proved difficult in eliciting an interview. After obtaining his email address from a reluctant journalist at the *Washington Post*, who covered the organisation in an article, several attempts were made to contact him. At one point, Kumar replied to an email asking for a link to what had been written thus far, implying that he considered the candidate more as a journalist (despite making clear this was a PhD project). After following up with several emails, he still hasn't replied to an interview request. This correspondence occurred over the course of a year to no response. This incident demonstrates a

common preoccupation for researchers attempting to access those in advantaged positions of 'wealth, status, and power', not least including the fact that 'powerful groups in society that desire to protect themselves from social researchers are organizations and corporations' (Adler & Adler, 2001, 9-10). As a wealthy entrepreneur who heads an advocacy organisation, Kumar also serves as an adviser in Trump's administration. Given the fact that an interview was unable to be obtained with this key informant, this limited an ability to gather data that provides unique insight for the study.

In total, thirteen interviewees conducted from January to October 2018.

Table 2 details interviewees in the UK:

Interviewee	Interview format	Twitter user	Gender	Profession
#1	In person	Yes	Male	Management consultant
#2	Twitter DM	Yes	Male	Conservative Party candidate
#3	Phone	Yes	Male	Advisor for Conservative Party and Vote Leave
#4	Twitter DM	Yes	Male	Holds master's in business administration
#5	Skype	No	Female	Retired medical doctor
#6	Twitter DM	Yes	Male	Holds master's in politics

Table 2: UK interviews

Table 3 details interviewees in the US:

Interviewee	Interview format	Twitter user	Gender	Profession
#1	In person	No	Male	Entrepreneur
#2	In person	No	Male	Entrepreneur
#3	In person	Yes	Male	Entrepreneur and Republican candidate
#4	In person	Yes	Male	Entrepreneur and Director of think tank
#5	In person	Yes	Male	Entrepreneur and Republican candidate
#6	Twitter DM	Yes	Female	Entrepreneur
#7	Phone	No	Male	Investment analyst

Table 3: US interviews

Interviews were conducted through various mediums of interaction: Twitter Direct Messenger (4), over the phone (2), via Skype video (1), or in person (6). These mediums affected the type of information obtained from interviewees and the length of the interview. For those who preferred to respond using Twitter DM, the number of questions were limited and interviewees could reply at their convenience. Some replied instantly whereas others would respond after a week of sending questions. These interviews were straightforward in manner and didn't allow for much flexibility to gather information about personal background (although these came across in the responses) and tended to focus more on political issues. Interviews conducted through other mediums, however, allowed for a more flexible approach. These provided a mix of personal narratives and broader discussion of issues. The interview setting also affected the length of offline interviews, where meeting at a café facilitated a more relaxed environment (resulting in over 2 hour interviews), as opposed to interviews conducted during an event surrounded by fast-paced activity (resulting in shorter interviews of 20 minutes). An interview guide is supplied in Appendix 2.

Interviewees are additionally similar in demographic attributes. Many come from middle- to upper-middle, or wealthy class backgrounds, often live in cosmopolitan urban areas, are highly educated with bachelor's and master's degrees, and are employed in professional occupations. Further, most

interviewees are private citizens, but a few have public profiles, either as consultants for political parties or candidates for public office. This reflects the literature on Indian diaspora communities in the UK and US as well-integrated and disproportionately successful model minorities, highlighted above. Yet, there exists more variation in the UK concerning class divisions, particularly those employed as shop keepers, factory workers, etc. This is not reflected in the UK-based interviewees, most of whom are highly educated and highly skilled. In contrast to the UK, Indian Americans are predominately middle and upper class, most of whom are entrepreneurs or work in finance/business or IT. This is reflected by US-based interviewees, all of whom are or were previously employed in these sectors. The consequence of this was observed by Bhatt (2000) nearly two decades ago:

> A striking characteristic of diaspora Hindutva movements is how sociologically different they are from each other, even as they profess identical ideological and political goals and use virtually identical political symbols. The high profile non-resident Indian [NRI] media and Internet confidence of the newly wealthy technocrats of the American VHP reflects a relatively recent migration process from India to the US of aspiring professionalized urban Indian groups. Its sociological features are at some remove from the migration in the 1970s from east Africa to the UK of descendants of indentured labourers and merchants who had originated from the rural villages and port towns of Gujarat and the Punjab during the last and earlier parts of this century. In neither process is there stasis in tradition, belief or caste. In both cases, class and racialization become important factors in community formation. But their manifestations can be radically different' (563-4).

In sum, the sociological differences between the UK and US-based diasporas continue to persist, despite the impacts of globalisation and technological affordances. This indicates that boundary maintenance practices as discussed in the theory chapter above, may continue to be vital towards understanding the reproduction of these communities.

One of the key obstacles when conducting interviews was penetrating levels of distrust and suspicion from informants. Although they agreed to an interview, for some, there still existed some resistance towards the candidate. However, as interviews progressed, and despite some difficult moments, interviewees would gradually open up about themselves, and enjoy talking about their views (see Menjívar, 2000; Thai, 2008). This shift came as a result of reciprocity which ensued throughout the interviews, whereby the candidate displayed a genuine interest in understanding what they had to say without judgement. Key to this approach was employing grounded theory interviewing techniques that involved open-ended questions, which allowed informants to articulate what was meaningful to their lives (Charmaz, 2006, 26). This created an informal and less structured environment that made informants feel less threatened with carefully phrased questions that sought to explore, not interrogate

(see Adler & Adler, 2011). Interviewees hence had significant leeway to discuss issues that mattered to them rather than feeling like questions were being imposed onto them. However, nearly all interviewees gave the impression that such interviews would be limited to a one time occurrence. It was thus decided that interviewees would not be approached for subsequent interviews based on first interview experiences.

Ethical Considerations

Twitter data

Despite Twitter being publically available data, in which the user agrees to terms and conditions of allowing their data to be available to third-parties when creating an account, this project had to secure ethical approval from the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD) in order to comply with issues of access, consent, and the protection of anonymity and privacy in reporting findings.

When it came to access and informed consent, this was negotiated with NSD such that Twitter users would not have to be notified when accessing their data. Whilst it is standard for researchers to secure consent for data collection, the case was made that doing so would risk being blocked and/or denied access by users. NSD decided that the project would be exempt from the obligation to inform the sample, due to the fact that doing so would be considered disproportionately difficult to inform all users. Further, NSD assessed that data collection would not be intrusive, given that it deals with data which users have voluntarily made known to a larger group of people, with a desire for a public audience. It was determined that these users must expect to reach a large audience, and their tweets might be used in contexts for which they have no control over, such as research purposes. Consequently, NSD assessed that the larger benefit of public interest outweighs the users' privacy disadvantage.

The data collected would have to be made anonymous in all publications of the project so as not report any personal identifying information of the Twitter users. This was solved by using pseudonyms to ensure anonymity, and omitting a combination of background variables (such as residence/work place, age, and gender). What became complicated, however, was the necessity to not use direct

quotations from tweets, as these could be searchable in an internet database and subsequently linked to a user. Thus, tweets were reworded, whilst still maintaining the substance of the content. Of course, this posed a problematic consideration, in which 'there are limits to how much the context can be manipulated when data are presented, without being accused of fabricating data' (Tyldum, 2012, 7). Unlike a verbal quote, however, all the Twitter data is available and can be easily traced to a source. This was particularly difficult but necessary in order to prevent users from being identified. Taking these steps helped alleviate the possibility of users' confidentiality being breached.

Lastly, when it came to the positionality of the candidate, there were safety concerns. A 'lurking' approach was taken, due to employment at the Center for Research on Extremism—which has been a target of right-wing extremists—in which the candidate risked being viewed as an extension of the centre with consequent repercussions (see Shenton & Hayter, 2004, 224; Feldman et al., 2003, 9). The candidate had also been previously employed by British Muslim non-profit organisations, which additionally became a concern. Throughout the year of data collection, however, the candidate engaged with some users about the project. A few users had retweeted and/or replied to the candidate's tweets related to the project, some followed the candidate as they were curious about the project, and others shared the candidate's op-ed media articles. Whilst many of these interactions were positive, the candidate also received negative responses within the wider Twitter network, especially from those holding more extreme political viewpoints, such as trolling and verbal abuse.

Interview data

In gaining access for interviews with Twitter users, the candidate's institutional affiliation would appear first in the search results if one of the users conducted a Google search. There was only so much information about the candidate's status that could be hidden, affecting an initial ability to establish rapport (see Thai, 2008, 156-9). For reaching out to interviewees in person, such as at an event, the process was much easier, as the candidate could circumvent an online presence. For all interview requests, however, the candidate had to employ a balance of honesty about the role whilst simultaneously remaining vague about the project's specific purpose (see Adler & Adler, 2001, 18; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, 42). Not providing a 'full' account of research in the beginning was a maneuver to prevent refused access (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, 57).

At the onset of interviews, the insider/outsider dichotomy endemic in qualitative research was a concern. In addition to the institutional affiliation concerns highlighted above, being a young, female candidate echoes Menjívar's positionality: 'my own social characteristics might have influenced my relationship with informants and thus shaped the nature of the data I gathered' (2000, 245). On the whole, reactions to the candidate's positionality were mixed. Many were curious about the candidate's background and the decision to embark on this project. A few were initially resistant and probed for more details regarding the project before agreeing to be interviewed, in effect testing to see if the candidate was genuine and could be trusted. Others, despite several attempts to inquire for an interview, were nonresponsive and hence the candidate was rejected many times (see Feldman et al., 2003, 9).

Overall, there were a variety of responses, but what stood out were the motives for why some became interviewees whilst others declined an interview request (see Miller & Bell, 2002, 5). One noteworthy individual, who played a significant role in the Leave campaign for Brexit, went out of his way to ensure that the candidate had 'all the facts' and even sent additional reading materials. He was pleased that an academic was researching this topic given that it is severely underreported in the public debate. For this interviewee, there was an underlying expectation that the candidate would send to him writing to review. Thus, gaining access and building trust nearly elicited a quid pro quo scenario. Such instances highlight what Tyldum (2012, 5) describes as the actual means to build trust: '[w]hat are the boundaries of what are acceptable strategies for building trust amongst respondents?'. A few felt that given the candidate's 'outsider' status, this automatically equated to naivety, and consequently provided respondents an opportunity to 'educate' the candidate on issues. Thus, the positioning as a researcher reflects the problematic view of an insider/outsider dichotomy in accessing respondents, when identity fluctuates across various communities and power relations (see Thai, 2008, 147).

Lastly, one of the interviews conducted was achieved via a gate-keeper. Tyldum (2012, 4) writes that '[i]n my experience, gatekeeper recruitment has resulted in some of the most ethically challenging interviews'. This certainly held true in this case. Referred to by a friend, the candidate interviewed his mother, which seemed like a good opportunity. The power of the friend in volunteering his mother, however, had unforeseen consequences. Firstly, the issue of consent arose. Whilst his mother agreed to the interview, it is unknown how the friend persuaded her to do so. It was determined that consent occurred once she agreed to participate, but without securing trust beforehand—as had achieved in

negotiating access with other interviewees—it is unknown what effect this had on her decision to be an interviewee. Secondly, she had brought up her son many times throughout the interview. Although she used him as a placeholder to explain a wider point, the candidate was highly conscious of his power as a gate-keeper in this instance. Finally, after the interview the candidate couldn't discuss with the friend what his mother spoke about during the interview as this was bound by an ethical obligation to keep such information confidential. Thus, placing the friend as a gate-keeper allowed access to an interviewee whom otherwise would had been difficult to reach, but it simultaneously created an ethical dilemma.

5 Summary of Articles

Article I

***Hindutva* as a variant of right-wing extremism**

Accepted in *Patterns of Prejudice*

This article serves as a conceptual foundation for the dissertation by discussing the origins, growth, and mainstreaming of *Hindutva* in India. Using a genealogical approach, it argues that *Hindutva* has been misrepresented by scholars of right-wing extremism in the West as a form of religious extremism, when it should rather be characterised as a form of ethno-nationalism; this is due to *Hindutva*'s emphasis on religion *and* territory as conditional of Hindu identity. On the other hand, studies of *Hindutva* have previously been confined to South Asian scholars who situate it as an esoteric case of the subcontinent. Thus, this article attempts to bridge these two bodies of literature towards achieving a universal definition of right-wing extremism.

It does so by first illustrating how the origins of *Hindutva* are deeply connected to transnational ties with Italian Fascism and German Nazism, influencing its intellectual development and modus operandi. It then traces how following India's independence, *Hindutva* grew and became integral towards defining a majoritarian identity through violence marking the boundaries of the new nation-state. Finally, it highlights how contemporary *Hindutva* became 'mainstreamed' in 2014 with the election of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, whose embodiment of the authentic, populist India with a promising future has cemented the exclusion of those who do not feature in the nation's majoritarianism. The re-election of Modi in 2019 exemplifies not only what happens when a right-wing extremist party is in power, but the impact that has upon society at large.

By tracing the ideological, historical, and organisational dimensions of *Hindutva*, this article provides an analytical contribution towards a universal definition which posits *Hindutva* and right-wing extremism in the West as a global phenomenon. In doing so, it addresses a theoretical and empirical lacuna in current literature on right-wing extremism.

Article II

From cyber-*Hindutva* to Ab Ki Baar Trump Sarkar: (Trans)national entanglements of Hindu diaspora political participation

Under review in edited volume *Patterns of Political Integration in Indian Diaspora Societies* (Routledge)

This book chapter highlights the ideological linkages between diaspora *Hindutva* and the radical right in the West. It builds off of the first article by taking as its starting point Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 2014 electoral victory, and follows the operationalisation of long-distance nationalism amongst the diaspora in the UK and US. It explores the role of the diaspora, officially and unofficially, in securing Modi's victory. The former was manifested in campaign operations online, whilst the latter through a networked phenomenon of cyber-*Hindutva*, or Internet Hindus.

Diaspora *Hindutva*, however, has a long legacy which is not only present online, but offline through the establishment of diaspora *Hindutva* organisations. These organisations are not solely long-distance nationalist in their orientation, but equally constituted by policies of multiculturalism in the UK and US, which reinforce their boundary-making practices of minority identity formation. Key towards such boundary-making is the anti-Islam and anti-Muslim ideological positioning of these organisations. The emergence of the Brexit and Trump campaigns, which articulated Islamophobic tropes, provided a political opportunity to synergise these movements with diaspora *Hindutva* narratives.

This book chapter then examines a case study of the Republican Hindu Coalition (RHC)—an advocacy organisation which endorsed Trump—and the RHC's sponsored Ab Ki Baar Trump Sarkar campaign advertisement targeting Hindu American voters. It argues that the Ab Ki Baar Trump Sarkar campaign, which merges religious genres with geopolitical realities, indicates a new mode of networked connectivity made possible by mass media consumption. As such, this book chapter turns to a year-long qualitative content analysis study of Hindu diaspora Twitter users who support Brexit and Trump. It reveals that these users interact at three levels of entanglement: relations between the homeland and diaspora, across diaspora communities in the UK and US, and alliances with Western radical right figures. This last entanglement marks a new mode of diaspora political participation and mobilisation.

This book chapter has two main findings. The first is that while diaspora *Hindutva* organisations continue to hold a powerful role, it is individuals who are seeking to create a voice through the medium of online spaces. By challenging the institutional framework of organisations, individuals exert a shift in diaspora representation. The second finding is that a new ideological hybridity emerges when diaspora *Hindutva* converges with the radical right in the West. United by shared practices of Muslim 'othering', proponents of diaspora *Hindutva* and Western radical right actors (re)produce narratives of exclusionary nationalism.

Article III

Immigrant, nationalist and proud: A Twitter analysis of Indian diaspora supporters for Brexit and Trump

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This article explores how Indian diaspora supporters of Brexit and Trump employ radical right discourse online. Given that the Brexit and Trump campaigns utilised Islamophobic and anti-establishment statements, this provided an opportunity for those in the Indian diaspora with shared sentiments to vocalise their support using similar rhetoric. From this premise, this article analyses Twitter accounts of Indian diaspora users who share pro-Brexit and pro-Trump content. It applies qualitative content analysis throughout a year of data collection and analysis, situating how users interact and engage on the Twittersphere.

It finds that these Indian diaspora Twitter users, who compose of Hindus, Sikhs, and Christians, draw upon diaspora *Hindutva* narratives to frame their political views. By using vocabulary such as 'integration' and 'assimilation', this further reinforces the trope that Muslims are a problematic 'other'. In doing so, these users are united by an anti-Muslim agenda in order to assert their belonging in Western societies. Such rhetoric also plays into Western radical right ideas and strategies.

Twitter offers a space for these Indian diaspora users to articulate radical right themes on multiple levels: as individuals, as part of a collective non-Muslim Indian diaspora, and as part of radical right

Twitter society. Untangling these layers provides insight into how social media platforms can foster the construction of ethnic and (trans)national identities.

Article IV

New forms of civic nationalism? American and British Indians in the Trump and Brexit Twittersphere

Co-authored with Dr Bharath Ganesh and Dr Jonathan Bright

Submitted to *Nations and Nationalism*, special issue 'Digital Nationalism, Social Media, and Strongmen'

This article maps how Indian diaspora actors embed themselves into the British and American radical right online milieu. It argues that diaspora and migrant networks do not only display long-distance nationalism when using online platforms, but can equally contribute to nationalist myth making within their countries of residence. By situating the Western radical right's turn to civic nationalist rhetoric, this has allowed for the rise of ethnic minority and immigrant supporters who also express these values as a basis of exclusion. Such articulations of civic nationalism which obfuscate an exclusionary agenda has similarly been adopted by diaspora *Hindutva* advocates. The Brexit and Trump campaigns bestowed an opportunity to synthesise diaspora *Hindutva* with Western radical right agendas as articulated through forms of civic nationalism.

Consequently, this article focuses on how Indian diaspora supporters of Brexit and Trump take to Twitter to express political views, but also embed themselves into the British and American radical right milieu by consolidating around civic nationalist frames. It builds upon the previous qualitative study of Indian diaspora users by complementing this approach with qualitative analyses, including network analysis and keyword analysis. Using quantitative approaches allows for exploration of a few dynamics raised in qualitative findings that require different methods and scales of analysis, such as extent of participation in the Twitter network and transnational connections.

This article provides insight into how these Indian diaspora users share civic nationalist discourse that portrays 'others' (i.e. illegal immigrants, Islam/Muslims, and the leftist political and media establishment) as not conforming to the values of the nation. By extension, these users promote exclusionary displays of nationalism. Importantly, this article also finds that despite being confined to

national contexts, these users are uniquely transnationally oriented in their Twitter activity within the radical right online milieu.

Article V

Looking back, looking forward: Nationalist imaginaries of Indian diaspora supporters of Brexit and Trump

Unpublished manuscript

This article compares how Indian diaspora individuals negotiate between long-distance nationalist and nationalist attachments when supporting radical right agendas in the West. Through interviews with British Indians and Indian Americans who support Brexit and Trump, respectively, it situates through the experiences of interviewees their simultaneous employment of these attachments when justifying their support. Hence, this article calls for an approach in methodological transnationalism, which recognises diaspora actors as not just long-distance nationalists, but nationalists as well; this conceptual framework also requires addressing the role that diaspora networks play in shaping and adapting long-distance nationalism towards the creation of new nationalist narratives.

It finds that long-distance nationalist sentiments are most pronounced amongst British Indian Brexiteers when expressing nostalgia for Empire and the Commonwealth, whereas Indian American Trump supporters look towards promising future US-India relations. On the other hand, these interviewees articulate nationalist affinities when describing similar experiences of immigration and settlement. This article further examines disparities between these diaspora communities with regards to temporal outlook, the role of class, and generational shifts. However, despite such differences, they share a common feature of boundary-making and maintenance practices. This article thus attempts to situate how diasporic identity formation processes leads to the emergence of not competing, but complementary nationalisms that are fundamentally exclusionary.

6 Concluding Discussion

Shortly before submitting this dissertation, an event was held in Houston, Texas titled 'Howy Modi!' sponsored by the Texas India Forum. Modi and Trump entered the stage together to a cheering crowd of more than 50,000 attendees. Behind a podium emblazoned with the flags of the US and India, a projector bore the words 'Shared Dreams, Bright Futures'. Modi delivered opening remarks by stating that upon meeting Trump, he knew that 'India has a true friend in the White House'. Trump later returned the compliment, declaring 'I look forward to working with you to make our nations even more prosperous than ever before'. After Modi delivered a long speech in Hindi, the two world leaders left the rally together holding hands and waving to the crowd.

This dissertation unpacks moments such as these and the instances described in the introduction. It encompasses two main findings for reflection. The first is that transnational entanglements between *Hindutva* and the Western radical right results in an ideological hybridity. By virtue of the Indian diaspora acting as a bridge between these movements, exclusionary elements within each are brought forth and merged into a new expression. This does not underestimate the transnational flows of ideas and people that have long existed. Certainly, ideologies have never existed in a vacuum. Rather, this dissertation serves to highlight the historical and contemporary dynamics of interaction by which such interconnections are formed, shaped, and reconfigured at multiple scales.

Such transnational processes are enacted with the aim to reinforce nationalist imaginaries. Consequently, the second main finding is the notion of complementary, and not competing, nationalisms. Here, distinct nationalist projects can operate in such a way that they are mutually beneficial, given that boundaries of inclusion and exclusion of who belongs to the nation are clearly defined. By working in unison, this allows for the reproduction of difference as something to be defined against, to be 'othered', and to constitute claims for national identity making.

A supplementary finding to these two was an unexpected one of this dissertation: the uniting of Hindu, Sikh, and Christian Indian diaspora individuals as a result of anti-Muslim distancing practices. Importantly, at times, Sikh and Christian diaspora individuals did express disdain for *Hindutva*. But what added richness to the data was that these individuals notably distinguished themselves by explicitly asserting a non-Muslim identity. This reveals a new and interesting mode of non-Muslim

Indian diaspora mobilisation, namely, convergence around anti-Muslim anxiety. Thus, some Hindu, Sikh, and Christian Indian diaspora individuals help reconstruct the myth of Muslim 'otherness' in order to cement the notion that Muslims do not belong with their nationalist imaginaries.

When considering future avenues for research, this first beckons the question of whether or not this case study of the Indian diaspora and its relationship to *Hindutva* is an exception. Perhaps the Brexit and Trump campaigns merely served as convenient political opportunities, and were it not for *Hindutva*'s originating connections to the West, the legacy of diaspora *Hindutva* organisations, and the election of Modi and resulting mainstreaming of *Hindutva*, this study would not be possible.

But it also raises important questions concerning narratives of belonging in Western societies. Will we see a rise in ethnic minority, immigrant, or other diaspora communities supporting the radical right in Western societies? And if so, how will such engagement be mobilised and articulated? What will be the catalyst for their emergence? These questions are as much about political participation as they are about the future of democratic societies. The rise of the radical right around the world will undoubtedly continue to spark timely discussions on the role of nationalism and who constitutes the nation.

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Appendices

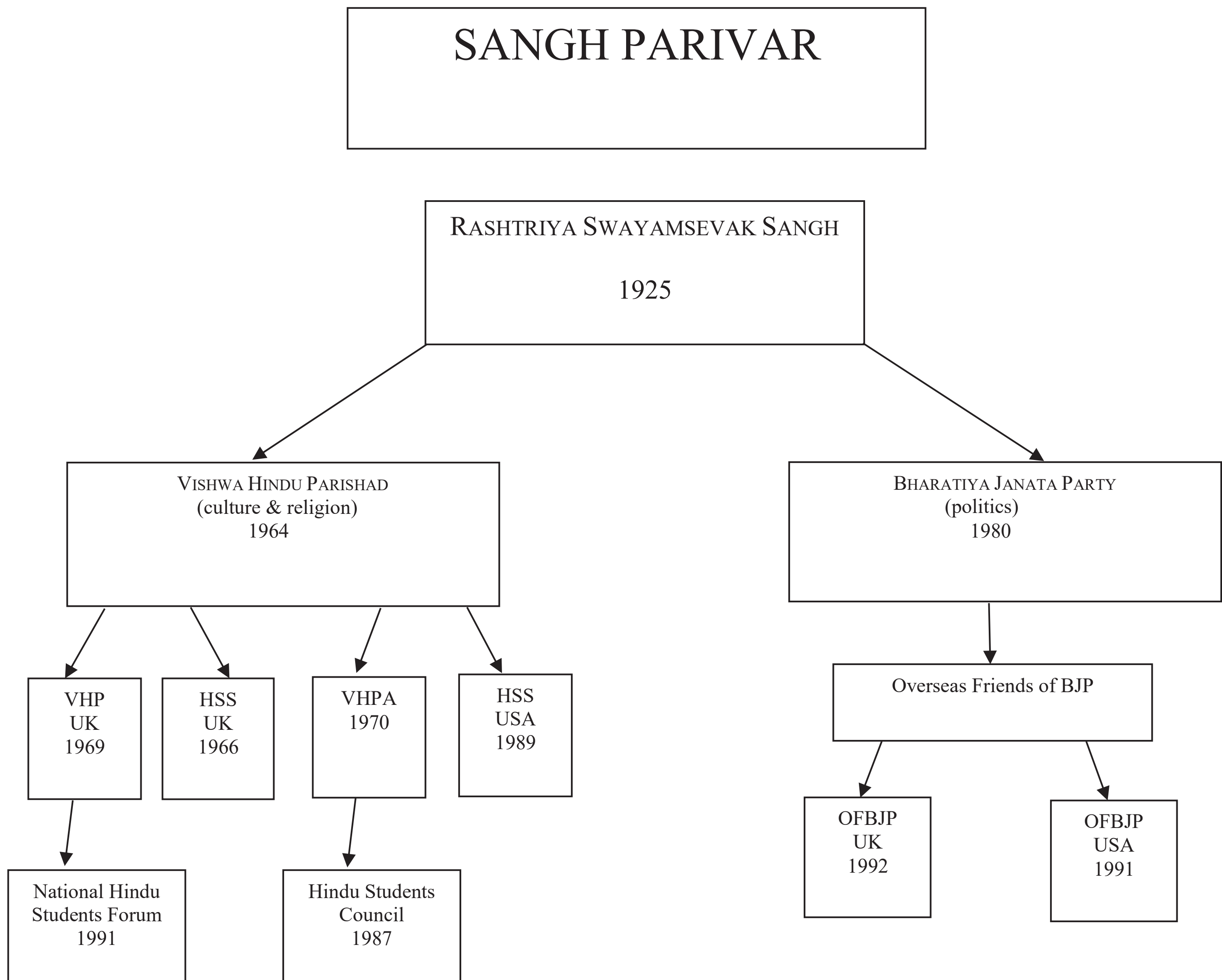
Appendix 1: Chart of *Hindutva* organisations in India, UK, and US

Appendix 2: Interview guide

Appendix 3: Co-author declaration and confirmation

Appendix 1

Chart of family of *Hindutva* organisations in India, UK, and US



Appendix 2

Interview Guide

Initial approach for interview request on Twitter:

i. UK-based interviews

Hi [insert name], I'm a PhD researcher looking at British Indians who support Brexit. I want to chat with you about why you voted Leave and where you feel the establishment has failed with Brexit today. Unlike a journalist, I want to understand and explain your views, not insert bias. Any conversation will be anonymous. Thanks, Eviane

ii. US-based interviews

Hi [insert name], I'm a PhD researcher looking at Indian Americans who support Trump. I want to chat with you about why you support Trump and his policies. Unlike a journalist, I want to understand and explain your views, not insert bias. Any conversation will be anonymous. Thanks, Eviane

Interview guide:

Thank you for agreeing to an interview. As I mentioned when I first contacted you, this is part of my PhD project and your participation is very valuable. I would like to emphasise that anything you say in this interview is anonymous and will be kept confidential. You may choose to withdraw at any time. Let's begin by you telling me a bit about yourself?

i. UK-based interviews

What is your take on Brexit? Why did you vote Leave?

Did your views change during or after the referendum?

What are your thoughts on the referendum campaign overall?

Did you agree with Leave's campaigning strategies during the referendum?

Given that the Leave campaign focused heavily on migration, are you also concerned about migration?

Is it primarily EU migration that you are concerned about, or other migrant groups as well?

Do you identify as a commonwealth migrant, Indian, or other ethnic group? Is this important to you?

Do you think Commonwealth migrants see immigration differently from other Britons?

Are you involved in community organisations, or other politically active groups?

What is your opinion of party politics? The mainstream media?

Where do you think Brexit has thus far failed and succeeded in the negotiations thus far?

Why do you like to use Twitter to share your political views? Are you political on other social media platforms?

ii. US-based interviews

Why do you support Trump?

Did your views change during the election campaign or after Trump began the presidency?

What are your thoughts on the 2016 election overall?

Did you agree with all of Trump's policies for his election campaign platform? What resonated with you?

What do you think of the current Trump administration's immigration policies, and are you also concerned about immigration?

Is it primarily immigration from Central America and Mexico that you are concerned about, or other migrant groups as well?

Do you identify as an immigrant, Indian, or desi? Is this important to you?

Do you think Indian Americans see immigration differently from other Americans?

Are you involved in community organisations, or other politically active groups?

What is your opinion of partisan politics? The mainstream media?

Where do you think Trump has far failed and succeded in his administration thus far?

Why do you like to use Twitter to share your political views? Are you political on other social media platforms?

Appendix 3

Co-author declaration and confirmation

Co-author declaration and confirmation

Required enclosure when requesting that a thesis be evaluated for a doctoral degree at the Department of Sociology and Human Geography (the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Oslo).

Describing the independent research contributions of the candidate and each co-author

This declaration should describe the independent research contributions of both the candidate and each of the coauthors for each paper constituting the thesis. The descriptions follow the recommendation from The International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (the "Vancouver Declaration") See the three criteria for authorship below. All three criteria must be fulfilled in order to be named co-author:

1.) **My contribution to conception and design, or development and analysis of a theoretical model, or acquisition of data, or analysis and interpretation of data**
2.) **My contribution to drafting the article or revising it critically for important intellectual content**
3.) **I have approved the version to be published:**

For each article the declaration should be completed (capital letters if handwritten) and (electronic) signed by the candidate and the co-author(s). Use additional form(s) if necessary. The last page should include all authors' signatures to ensure that you have looked through the declarations, and find the descriptions in accordance with your view of the co-operation that has taken place.

Paper no.: 4
Title: New forms of civic nationalism? American and British Indians in the Brexit and Trump Twittersphere

Candidate: Eviane Leidig

Authors: Leidig, Eviane, Ganesh, Bharath, and Bright, Jonathan

The contribution of the candidate:

1.) The candidate led in all parts of the conception and design, the analysis of a theoretical model, the acquisition of data, and the analysis and interpretation of the data.

2.) The candidate led drafting all sections of the article, and in the subsequent revisions of the article. The first version of the paper was drafted by the candidate with input from the co-authors on methodology and data collection. The following versions of the paper will be

jointly revised by the candidate and co-authors, based on discussion and agreement of necessary changes and adjustments from reviewers.

3.) The candidate has approved the version to be published.

Candidate (capital letters): **EVIANE LEIDIG**

Co-author's contribution:

1.) The co-author applied quantitative data analysis and corpus linguistic techniques to data collected by the candidate to provide findings for interpretation. The co-author also contributed to discussions on research design and analytical approaches.

2.) The co-author contributed drafting for the methodological and analytical sections of the paper, and will contribute to future revisions. The co-author provided intellectually important content in the form of methods and data analysis.

3.) The co-author approves the version to be published.

Name (capital letters): **BHARATH GANESH**

Co-author's contribution:

1.) The co-author applied quantitative data analysis techniques to data collected by the candidate. The co-author also contributed to discussions on research design and analytical approaches.

2.) The co-author provided to intellectually important content by validating and helping to revise methods used in the article.

3.) The co-author approves the version to be published.

Name (capital letters): **JONATHAN BRIGHT**

I have looked through the declaration from the other co-authors, and find the descriptions of their contribution in accordance with my view of the cooperation that has taken place

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Hindutva as a variant of right-wing extremism

Eviane Leidig

Accepted in *Patterns of Prejudice*

Abstract

This article addresses a theoretical and empirical lacuna by introducing *Hindutva* in the terminology of right-wing extremism. It situates the origins of *Hindutva* in colonial India as it emerged through sustained interaction with ideologues in Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany, who in turn, engaged with *Hindutva* to further ideological developments. Following India's independence, *Hindutva* actors played a central role in the violence of nation-building and in creating a majoritarian identity. Yet, *Hindutva* was not truly 'mainstreamed' until the election of current Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2014. Modi mobilised along recurring themes of a Muslim 'threat' to the Hindu majority in order to construct a narrative to further Hindu insecurity. The result is that *Hindutva* has become synonymous with Indian nationalism. This article seeks to bridge the scholarly divide between, on one hand, the study of right-wing extremism as a field dominated by Western scholars and disciplines and, on the other hand, the study of *Hindutva* as a field that is of interest almost exclusively to scholars in South Asian studies. It provides an analytical contribution towards how we might conceptualise right-wing extremism in its global manifestations.

Introduction

The mission of reorganizing the Hindu society on the lines of its unique national genius which the Sangh has taken up is not only a great process of true national regeneration of Bharat but also the inevitable precondition to realize the dream of world unity and human welfare. Our one supreme goal is to bring to life the all-round glory and greatness of our Hindu Rashtra.

Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, 'Mission'[1]

The only positive thing about the Hindu right wing is that they dominate the streets. They do not tolerate the current injustice and often riot and attack Muslims when things get out of control, usually after the Muslims disrespect and degrade Hinduism too much… India will continue to wither and die unless the Indian nationalists consolidate properly and strike to win. It is essential that the European and Indian resistance movements learn from each other and cooperate as much as possible. Our goals are more or less identical.

Anders Behring Breivik, '2083: A European Declaration of Independence'[2]

[1] Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, 'Mission', available on http://rss.org//Encyc/2012/10/22/rss-vision-and-mission.html (viewed 5 March 2016).
[2] Anders Behring Breivik '2083- A European Declaration of Independence', available on https://info.publicintelligence.net/AndersBehringBreivikManifesto.pdf (viewed 5 March 2016).

There is currently a right-wing extremist party governing the world's largest democracy, yet it is remarkably absent in the literature on right-wing extremism. To address this theoretical and empirical Eurocentrism, this article presents the first in-depth analysis of *Hindutva* in the terminology of right-wing extremism. *Hindutva* refers to the project of achieving a Hindu *rashtra*, or state, in India. Although Hindu nationalism or Hindu extremism may be used interchangeably to designate this socio-political phenomenon, this article posits *Hindutva* as a term with a spanning ideology; it encompasses a spectrum in the form of violent, paramilitary fringe groups, to organisations that advocate restoring Hindu 'culture', to contesting party politics. By refining the definition of *Hindutva* in this manner, we can subsume its expression into universal dimensions of right-wing extremism.

This article begins with the transnational engagements between South Asian and European intellectual spheres as *Hindutva* emerged vis-à-vis Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany. *Hindutva* in pre-independence India sought to incorporate elements from European models into its own modus operandi. At the same time, intellectuals in Europe engaged with *Hindutva* ideologues to further ideological developments. Following India's independence in 1947, *Hindutva* has been instrumental in nation-building and majoritarian identity in India. *Hindutva* actors view violence as a legitimate means towards ethno-national territorial claims, which has, at times, been enacted by the state. Yet, *Hindutva* truly succeeded as a mainstream phenomenon in 2014 with the election of current Prime Minister Narendra Modi. By marking Hindus as 'insiders' and other religious groups, notably Muslims, as 'outsiders', Modi's government has constructed *Hindutva* as synonymous with Indian nationalism.

With experiences of xenophobia and prejudice confined to Western definitions, this leaves a considerable intellectual gap of its diverse lived forms. This article showcases how right-wing extremism operates in a non-Western, multi-ethnic, and multi-cultural society, in order to shed light on the paradigmatic resemblances between various exclusionary nationalisms.

Right-Wing Extremism Beyond the West

The birth of right-wing extremism in Europe originates from European philosophical exchanges in the 19th century which signaled the rise in popularity of fascist thought. This is best exemplified by Hegel's critique of the philosopher Jakob Fries, who argued on the basis of moral subjectivism: 'When a nation is ruled by a common spirit, then from below, out of the people, will come life sufficient for

the discharge of all public business'.[3] Fries' involvement with the *Burschenschaften*, a German student union propagating anti-Semitic calls to action in the name of German nationalism, has been likened to an early formation of right-wing extremist ideology, such that 'the anti-rationalism, xenophobia, anti-semitism, intolerance and terrorism of the *Burschenschaften* present the same syndrome which, under different circumstances, the Nazis were to institutionalize'.[4]

These ideological developments became dominant when European fascism came to fruition shortly before the Second World War. Here, fascism drew from principles of radicalism, anarchism, and populism, heavily influenced by anarchist and socialist movements during the early 20th century. Fascism is defined as 'a genius of political ideology whose mythic core in its various permutations is a palingenetic form of populist ultra-nationalism'.[5] Populist ultra-nationalism subsequently refers to conceptualising the nation as a 'racial, historical, spiritual or organic reality' with a distinct community of members whom belong.[6] Following 1945, fascism has since disintegrated into factions in response to various political environments.[7] Scholars have thus shifted their attention towards examining the extreme right that developed into several movements, organisations, and parties across Europe in the decades following the Second World War. The rise of extreme right organisations and paramilitary/vigilante groups, as well as political parties, is well documented.[8] Influential academic scholarship on contemporary right-wing extremism as a field of study is thus primarily confined to a geographical focus on Europe and North America (and subsequently published in academies located in these regions), building on ideological and organisational developments originating from earlier studies in fascism and Nazism.

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3 Georg Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right* (Mineola, New York: Dover Publications 2012), xv.
4 Shlomo Avineri, *Hegel's Theory of the Modern State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1972), 119.
5 Roger Griffin, *The Nature of Fascism* (London: Routledge 1991), 26.
6 Griffin, *The Nature of Fascism*, 37.
7 Roger Eatwell, 'Introduction: the new extreme right challenge', in Roger Eatwell and Cas Mudde (eds), *Western Democracies and the New Extreme Right Challenge (*London: Routledge 2004), 1-16.
8 Sabine von Mering and Timothy Wyman McCarty (eds), *Right-Wing Radicalism Today: Perspectives from Europe and the US* (London: Routledge 2013); Uwe Backes and Patrick Moreau (eds), *The Extreme Right in Europe: Current Trends and Perspectives* (Göttingen, Germany: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 2012); David Art, *Inside the Radical Right: The Development of Anti-Immigrant Parties in Western Europe* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press 2011); Antonis A. Ellinas, *The Media and the Far Right in Western Europe: Playing the Nationalist Card* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press 2010); Paul Hainsworth, *The Extreme Right in Western Europe* (London: Routledge 2008); Bert Klandermans and Nonna Mayer (eds), *Extreme Right Activists in Europe: Through the Magnifying Glass* (London: Routledge 2006); Elisabeth Carter, *The Extreme Right in Western Europe: Success or Failure?* (Manchester: Manchester University Press 2005); Peter Davies and Derek Lynch (eds), *The Routledge Companion to Fascism and the Far Right*. London: Routledge 2002); Cas Mudde, *The Ideology of the Extreme Right* (Manchester: Manchester University Press 2000); Peter Merkl and Leonard Weinberg (eds), *The Revival of Right-Wing Extremism in the Nineties* (London: Frank Cass 1997).

Despite a plethora of comparative literature on right-wing extremism in the Western context very little research has been conducted outside this terrain. The exception are case studies in Turkey[9], South Africa[10], Israel[11], Japan[12], and Indonesia, [13] [14] which often adopt the typology used to characterise right-wing extremism in the West as a springboard for conceptual comparison. This article employs a similar approach in the case of India, in order to broaden the field of right-wing extremism as a global phenomenon.

When it comes to India, scholars of right-wing extremism in the West have misrepresented *Hindutva* as a type of religious nationalism rather than primarily ethno-nationalist. The influential fascism scholar Robert Paxton, for instance, notes that 'for Hindu fundamentalists, their religion is the focus of an intense attachment that the secular and pluralist Indian state does not succeed in offering. In such communities, a religious-based fascism is conceivable'.[15] Thus, whilst Paxton does acknowledge that 'no two fascisms need be alike in their symbols in rhetoric, employing, as they do, the local patriotic repertory',[16] the notion that religious identity takes precedence over national identity is flawed when considering the evolution of *Hindutva* as an ideology seeking to create an ethno-nationalist state.

Paxton's analysis indicates a need for critique in the way that religion is conceptualised amongst Western scholars, and is especially consequential for those who focus on right-wing extremism.

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[9] Stéphane de Tapia, 'Turkish extreme right-wing movements- between Turkism, Islamism, Eurasism, and Pan-Turkism', in Uwe Backes and Patrick Moreau (eds), *The Extreme Right in Europe: Current Trends and Perspectives* (Göttingen, Germany: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 2012), 297-320.

[10] Adrian Guelke, 'The quiet dog: the extreme right and the South African transition', in Peter Merkl and Leonard Weinberg (eds), *The Revival of Right-Wing Extremism in the Nineties* (London: Frank Cass 1997), 254-270.

[11] Arie Perliger and Ami Pedahzur, 'The radical right in Israel', in Jens Rydgren (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of the Radical Right* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2018), 667-680; Shai Bermanis, Daphna Canetti-Nisim, and Ami Pedahzur, 'Religious fundamentalism and the extreme right-wing camp in Israel', *Patterns of Prejudice*, vol. 38, no. 2, 2004, 159-176; Ami Pedahzur, 'The transformation of Israel's extreme right', *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, vol. 24, no. 1, 2001, 25-42; Raphael Cohen-Almagor, 'Combating right-wing political extremism in Israel: critical appraisal', *Terrorism and Political Violence*, vol. 9, no. 4, 1997, 82-105; Ehud Sprinzak, *The Ascendance of Israel's Radical Right* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1991).

[12] Naoto Higuchi, 'The radical right in Japan', in Jens Rydgren (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of the Radical Right*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2018), 681-697; Alan Tansman (ed.), *The Aesthetics of Japanese Fascism* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press 2009); Alan Tansman (ed.), *The Culture of Japanese Fascism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press 2009); George Macklin Wilson, 'A new look at the problem of "Japanese Fascism"', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol. 10, no. 4, 1968, 401-412.

[13] Yannick Lengkeek, 'Staged glory: the impact of fascism on 'cooperative' nationalist circles in late colonial Indonesia, 1935-1942', *Fascism*, vol. 7, no.1, 2018, 109-131.

[14] See also Stein Ugelvik Larsen, *Fascism Outside Europe: The European Impulse Against Domestic Conditions in the Diffusion of Global Fascism* (New York: Columbia University Press 2002).

[15] Robert O. Paxton, *The Anatomy of Fascism* (London: Penguin Books 2004), 204.

[16] Paxton, *The Anatomy of Fascism*, 204.

Paxton, largely due to lack of scholarly exchange between Western and South Asian theorists, displays a fundamental misreading of secularism based on a common Eurocentric understanding of the term. Secularism on the subcontinent does not denote a separation of church and state as has been conceived in the West. A contentious issue in scholarship about Hinduism is the argument that the idea of Hinduism as a world religion was created by colonial scholarship rather than an indigenous category. Over the past few decades, a number of influential scholars of religion have claimed that it is a mistake to see Hinduism as a world religion on a par with Christianity and that the tendency to make this false parallel originated in theological arguments from within the Christian tradition as well from the need of the colonial power to map and control its Asian subjects.[17] However, Indian intellectuals and leaders participated actively in a dialogue about the nature of religion in general and of Hinduism in particular during the colonial era[18] and this laid the foundation for Hindu leaders to reinvent Hinduism as a modern, universal, and missionary religion.[19] Given the cultural complexity of South Asia and the long history of interaction between Hinduism and Western political concepts and traditions, there is no reason to expect Indian concepts and practices of secularism to look familiar to a Western observer.

Consequently, the Indian brand of secularism encompasses the ability to practice religion in which the state affords religious plurality. India embodies a 'contextual secularism' in which the relationship between religion and state can be characterised not by 'a strict wall of separation' but a 'principled distance'.[20] Or succinctly put, 'that even when a State is tolerant of religions, it need not lead to religious tolerance in a society'.[21] In this way, India has never truly experienced a Western form of secularism; its post-independence political landscape has witnessed continuous expressions of religiosity on the basis that such expressions are inherently egalitarian. Indeed, this problematic implementation of Western concepts is precisely what Menski describes as a 'serious methodological

[17] Torkel Brekke, *Makers of Modern Indian Religions in the late nineteenth century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2002); Bernard S. Cohn, *Colonialism and its Forms of Knowledge: The British in India* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press 1996); Timothy Fitzgerald, 'Hinduism and the "world religion" fallacy', *Religion*, vol. 20, 1990, 108-118; Ronald Inden, *Imagining India* (Oxford: Blackwell 1990); Richard King, *Orientalism and Religion: Postcolonial Theory, India and the Mythic East* (London: Routledge 1990).

[18] Brian K. Pennington, *Was Hinduism Invented? Britons, Indians, and the Colonial Construction of Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2005).

[19] Torkel Brekke, 'The Conceptual Foundation of Missionary Hinduism', *Journal of Religious History*, vol. 23, no. 2, 1999, 203-214.

[20] Rajeev Bhargava, 'The distinctiveness of Indian secularism', in Aakash Singh and Silika Mohapatra (eds), *Indian Political Thought: A Reader* (London: Routledge 2010), 99-119.

[21] Ashis Nandy, 'An anti-secularist manifesto', *India International Centre Quarterly*, vol. 22, no. 1, 1995, 35-64 (36).

error committed by this approach to take everything "Hindu" or "Muslim" as religious, although it is a fact that since ancient times religious and cultural traditions have known the coexistence and connectedness of the religious and the secular'.[22] Thus, 'Hindu fundamentalists' reactions to the state as a 'secular' institution challenges religious coexistence rather than practicing religion per se.

Further, and on a related note, Paxton displays a misunderstanding of religion as 'an intense attachment' for 'Hindu fundamentalists'. As will be discussed throughout the article, *Hindutva* is not centred on religion (although Hinduism does play a significant role), but rather how religion is *politicised* in such a way that being a Hindu equates belonging to an ethno-nationalist identity. Indeed, the founder of *Hindutva*, Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, stressed that religion is not even the most important element of Hindu identity, but the combination of sacred territory, race, and language as influenced by Western theories of nationalism.[23] Furthermore, we can interpret fundamentalism as a structure of authority in which lay people take on new religious roles in a power vacuum opened by modernity, rather than a particular obsession with religiosity.[24] In this sense, fundamentalism can have local expressions based on contextual nuance, e.g. Hindu, Islamic, Christian, Buddhist fundamentalisms, yet fundamentalism encompasses a universal appeal that lends itself to adoption in various exclusionary movements.

It is similarly important to clarify that thus far, scholarship on *Hindutva* has largely been confined to the field of South Asian studies. This esotericism is due to the fact that *Hindutva* is viewed as inherently unique to the subcontinent. Consequently, most scholars of *Hindutva* describe it as religious or majoritarian nationalism (with the connotation of an insular case), before detailing the intricacies of South Asian communal politics. Although such scholars do acknowledge the complexity of *Hindutva* as an ideology that deploys cultural and ethno-national sentiments to develop a political agenda, their interventions are not situated within the broader scope of right-wing extremism as a global occurrence.

This article challenges the notion that *Hindutva* is an isolated ideological phenomenon. It does not disregard the circumstantial origin, evolution, and adaptation of *Hindutva*, but it illustrates this

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[22] Werner Menski, 'Assessing communal conflicts and Hindu fascism in India', *European Yearbook of Minority Issues*,vol. 8, 2009, 313-335 (313).
[23] Christophe Jaffrelot, *Hindu Nationalism: A Reader* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press 2007), 15.
[24] Torkel Brekke, *Fundamentalism: Prophecy and Protest in an Age of Globalization* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press 2011).

development in congruence with global ideological engagements, especially with Italian Fascism and German Nazism linkages early on. Despite the lack of continued physical engagement with European contemporaries following the Second World War/India's independence, this article argues that *Hindutva* in India parallels right-wing extremism in the West. Whilst India's 'pluralism and diversity is not a postmodern phenomenon, [but] has ancient roots in the most distant layers of Indian cultures',[25] contemporary *Hindutva* actors express Muslim 'otherness' in a vocabulary similar to European right-wing extremists.

The following section details the historical evolution of *Hindutva* in correspondence with broader geo-political dynamics. It demonstrates how ideological and organisational developments occurred vis-à-vis European contemporaries such that these engagements were mutually interconnected at a fundamental level. At the same time, *Hindutva* offers new insight into alternative expressions of ethno-nationalism, authoritarianism, and chauvinism well suited to provide new perspectives on right-wing extremism as a global phenomenon.

Common Origins

The intellectual journey of *Hindutva* began in the 19th century, emerging as an anti-colonial resistance movement against the British in India. Early ideologues—influenced by European scholars—claimed Indian civilisational superiority through language (as mother of Indo-European tongues) and race (with Aryan origins).[26] In 1909, the British set up a system of separate electorates, in which Hindus and Muslims could only vote for Hindu and Muslim candidates, respectively, in local elections. This divide and rule strategy helped construct a polarising environment conducive for the flourishing of religiously framed identity politics throughout the century. Local Hindu elite across the country formed *Hindu Sabhas* (Hindu associations) that culminated into the *Hindu Mahasabha* in 1914, advocating anti-British and anti-Muslim sentiment.[27] The idea of 'Hindu consciousness' spread through the circulation of print materials, which instilled notions of national belonging based on Hindu symbols and practices.[28] The spectre of the Muslim as a 'foreigner' and 'invader' complicit in

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[25] Menski, 'Assessing communal conflicts and Hindu fascism in India', 318.
[26] Jaffrelot, *Hindu Nationalism*; Chetan Bhatt, *Hindu Nationalism: Origin, Ideology, and Modern Myths* (New York: Berg 2001).
[27] Jaffrelot, *Hindu Nationalism*.
[28] Bhatt, *Hindu Nationalism*.

the colonial project placed Hindu identity in sharp contrast to the Muslim 'other', an internal enemy, whilst resisting the British as an external enemy.

From its origin, *Hindutva* ideologues sought connections with Fascist Italy. During the 1920s, Mussolini's regime had considerable influence amongst *Hindutva* ideologues reading in regional newspapers about the transformation of Italian society. The appeal of militarisation in order to instill order in society was considered an attractive alternative to democracy, which was viewed as too close to a British value.[29]

Such ideas evolved through the ascent of grassroots social movements, namely the *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh* (RSS, National Patriotic Organisation), established in 1925 by Keshav Baliram Hedgewar. Its founding ideological text, *Hindutva: Who is a Hindu?*, first published in 1923 by Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, defines the nation according to categorically ethnic Hindu-ness and territorial belonging. Here, Savarkar 'assimilates territorial-cultural determinants into a concept of nationalism that stresses the ethnic and racial substance of the Hindu nation'.[30]

In 1931, Hedgewar's mentor, Balakrishna Shivram Moonje, toured Europe and met with Mussolini during a long visit to Italy. Here, Moonje observed how young Italian boys were recruited to attend weekly meetings that included participating in physical exercises and paramilitary drills, influencing what would later become the RSS' modus operandi. Upon his return to India, Moonje remarked how Hindus should emulate their Italian counterparts.[31] To this day, the RSS runs *shakhas*, or cells, which volunteers join or are recruited into by their local chapters. Each *shakha* administers physical drill exercises as well as education courses on (selective) ancient Hindu texts. Volunteers are indoctrinated into the *Hindutva* mission and receive responsibilities such as assisting in social support services to the poor and needy, who are the most vulnerable to *Hindutva* dogma.

By the end of the 1930s, Italian officials in India, such as the consulate in Bombay, established connections with *Hindutva* actors, including recruitment of Indian students for the purpose of learning

[29] Marzia Casolari, 'Hindutva's foreign tie-up in the 1930s: archival evidence', *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol. 35, no. 4, 2000, 218-228 (219).
[30] Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, *Hitler's Priestess: Savitri Devi, the Hindu-Aryan Myth, and Neo-Nazism* (New York: New York University Press 1998), 50.
[31] Casolari, 'Hindutva's foreign tie-up in the 1930s', 220.

Italian and exposure to fascist propaganda.[32] These transnational ideological and organisational connections persisted with the rise of Nazism in Germany. The *Hindu Mahasabha* openly supported the Third Reich, advocating for an Aryan connection between Nazism and *Hindutva*.[33] Then president of the *Hindu Mahasabha* and close affiliate of the RSS, Savarkar made continuous reference in writings and speeches to Germany's treatment of the Jewish population as a model for India's Muslim 'problem'.[34] In response, the Nazi Party paper, *Völkischer Beobachter*, featured Savarkar's approval of German occupation.[35]

RSS leader Madhav Sadashiv Golwalker took a more extreme position, arguing that 'being a Hindu was a matter of race and blood, not only a matter of culture. In turn that was an idea which was strikingly similar to the racial myths elaborated in Germany, more than in Italy'.[36] Golwalker's *We or Our Nation-hood Defined* (1938) reflects this view:

> The foreign races in *Hindusthan* [India] must either adopt the Hindu culture and language, must learn to respect and hold in reverence Hindu religion, must entertain no ideas but those of the glorification of the Hindu race and culture, and must loose *(sic)* their separate existence to merge in the Hindu race, or may stay in the country, wholly subordinated to the Hindu Nation, claiming nothing, deserving no privileges, far less any preferential treatment—not even citizen's rights. There is, at least, should be, no other course for them to adopt.[37]

Inspired by Hitler's actions in Austria and the annexation of the Sudetenland as embodying 'the true Nation concept', Golwalker advocated race as fundamental to the Hindu nation.[38] Disciplined nationalism under a superior leader, whereby the nation is a collective unity, led to National Socialism as an attractive model for *Hindutva* ideologues that rejected British individualism.[39] Such racist underpinnings later led Golwalker to withdraw the publication from circulation in 1948, given the negative attention it received as one of the most frequently quoted *Hindutva* texts and its effect on the RSS' reputation.

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[32] Casolari, 'Hindutva's foreign tie-up in the 1930s', 222.
[33] Goodrick-Clarke, *Hitler's Priestess*, 66;
Eugene J. D'souza, 'Nazi propaganda in India', *Social Scientist*, vol. 28, no. 5/6, 2000, 77-90 (88).
[34] Casolari, 'Hindutva's foreign tie-up in the 1930s', 224; D'souza, 'Nazi propaganda in India', 89.
[35] Goodrick-Clarke, *Hitler's Priestess*, 59.
[36] Casolari, 'Hindutva's foreign tie-up in the 1930s', 224.
[37] Golwalkar, 1939, 47-48 in Sangeeta Kamat and Biju Mathew, 'Mapping political violence in a globalized world: the case of Hindu nationalism', *Social Justice,* vol. 30, no. 3/93, 2000, 4-16 (9).
[38] Goodrick-Clarke, *Hitler's Priestess*, 60.
[39] Benjamin Zachariah, 'A voluntary gleichschaltung? Perspectives from India towards a non-Eurocentric understanding of fascism', *Transcultural Studies*, vol. 2, 2014, 63-100 (82-83).

In *Hindutva*, representations of 'the people' are thus central towards positioning relational ties between belonging and the imagined community. Described as 'pure' and 'authentic', the idea of the *volk* with its Germanic origins can be applied in congruence with *Hindutva*'s focus on the Aryan past. Inspired by the emergence of race science as a field of inquiry in the colonial academy, as well as Orientalist philosophy, Aryanism developed as a 'racial theory of Indian civilization'[40] based on primordialist ideas of evolutionary conceptions of nationalism. The outcome was not simply a direct application of European nationalist thought, but a process of sustained and complex intellectual engagement between colonial India and Europe.[41] Indeed, 'the Third Reich embraced a range of pagan, esoteric, and Indo-Aryan religious doctrines that buttressed its racial, political, and ideological goals…[with the] belief in the ethno-religious connections between the lost Ario-Germanic civilization of the Thule (Atlantis) and an Indo-Aryan civilization centred in northern India'.[42] *Hindutva* as a result is characterised by a continued interest in connecting notions of *Arya Dharm*, or the 'Hindu race', to European conceptualisations of the Aryan 'race' as a source of legitimation.[43] Its guiding premise advocates a civilisational superiority based on racial determinants.

By extension, being a Hindu literally equates to *Blut und Boden*: 'a "natural" geography and sacred ties of blood'.[44] *Hindutva* depends on a territorial nation-state and the criteria for belonging is an ethno-religious identity. The nostalgia for a Vedic 'golden age' is a guiding myth within the *Hindutva* narrative. By idolising a golden past that existed prior to the Mughal Empire and British Raj, *Hindutva* attempts to rewrite a historiographical account contrary to the 'shame' of foreign invasion. Grievances of the 'oppressed' motivate for a restoration of the Hindu *rashtra*. Just then as we might conceptualise the *reich* as authority and sovereignty emanating from the people, *rashtra* within *Hindutva* similarly connotes a sacred nation that emanates from indigenous Hindu claims of bounded geography.

Like the Italians, a reciprocity ensued with the aid of German authorities. Nazi agents translated *Mein Kampf* into Indian languages, as well as conducted covert intelligence operations, radio broadcasts, and

[40] Thomas R. Trautmann, *Aryans and British India* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press 1997), xxiv.
[41] Bhatt, *Hindu Nationalism*, 3.
[42] Eric Kurlander, *Hitler's Monsters: A Supernatural History of the Third Reich* (New Haven: Yale University Press 2017) 163, 184. See also Joanne Miyang Cho, Eric Kurlander, and Douglas T. McGetchin (eds), *Transnational Encounters between Germany and India: Kindred Spirits in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (London: Routledge 2014).
[43] Benjamin Zachariah, 'At the fuzzy edges of fascism: framing the volk in India', *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*, vol. 38, no. 4, 2015, 639-655 (648).
[44] Zachariah,'At the fuzzy edges of fascism', 653.

distributed pro-Nazi propaganda material to sympathetic press agencies in India.[45] *Hindutva* writings circulated in German newspapers in exchange for articles favouring Germany's Jewish policy in regional Indian newspapers.[46] Nazi propagandists and German businesses generously funded these newspapers, or they were owned by organisations such as the *Hindu Mahasabha* that openly advocated National Socialism for India and a 'Hindu Fuehrer'.[47]

At the institutional level, the *Indisches Ausschuss* (India Institute) was founded in 1928 under the parent organisation *Deutsche Akademie*. Between 1929 and 1938, the *Indisches Ausschuss* awarded scholarships to Indian students and funded *lektors* to teach German to students hoping to travel to Germany. The institute became incorporated into the NSDAP Auslands-Organisation and created Nazi cells in Calcutta, which were active in promoting pro-Nazi propaganda during the Third Reich.[48] Simultaneously, Indian exiles in Europe conspired with the German government by reporting to informants in India through private correspondences as well as in newspaper articles.[49]

Although Italian fascists gained more recruits in India, Indo-German connections formed between Indian intellectuals and Nazi ideologues. Benoy Kumar Sarkar was one such figure that became a spokesperson for a range of networks composed of scholars, ideologues, and political activists in right-wing circles, and who was an enthusiast of both Fascism and Nazism.[50] Intellectual and educator Taraknath Das also engaged in various ideological projects, including National Socialism for a brief period (but favoured Italian Fascist policies as a model for India until the Second World War).[51] Lastly, Subhas Chandra Bose, a freedom fighter in India's independence movement, sought allies with Nazi Germany, Italy, and Japan during the war, having fled to Berlin in 1941 and founding the *Indische Legion*.[52] [53]

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[45] D'souza, 'Nazi propaganda in India', 78-79.
[46] Casolari, 'Hindutva's foreign tie-up in the 1930s', 225.
[47] D'souza, 'Nazi propaganda in India', 81-82.
[48] Zachariah,'At the fuzzy edges of fascism', 647.
[49] Zachariah, 'A voluntary gleichschaltung?', 78.
[50] Zachariah,'At the fuzzy edges of fascism', 646.
[51] Maria Framke, 'Shopping ideologies for independent India? Taraknath Das's engagement with Italian Fascism and German National Socialism', *Itinerario*, vol. 40, no. 1, 2016, 55-81.
[52] Romain Hayes, *Subhas Chandra Bose in Nazi Germany: Politics, Intelligence and Propaganda 1941-43* (London: Hurst & Company 2011).
[53] Bose had long held left-wing beliefs, being involved in radical politics of the Indian National Congress during his youth. Bose sought Axis allies with the primary aim to overthrow British rule on the subcontinent. Thus, Bose's residence in Germany was fraught with strategic differences with authorities.

It is also worth to describe in some detail the figure of Savitri Devi, who cultivated a Nazi-Aryan ideology during her time in India. Born Maximiani Portas in 1905, the French writer identified with her Greek ancestry early in life, idolising its ancient civilisation and Hellenism. Portas continued her intellectual journey towards Aryan racial philosophy in India, adopting the name Savitri Devi in pursuit of seeking 'truth' in the Hindu 'homeland'. During the late 1930s, Devi encountered *Hindutva* individuals and groups, including Moonje, Hedgewar's RSS, and Savarkar's *Hindu Mahasabha*, which greatly influenced her development of the Aryan myth. Devi echoed *Hindutva* ideologues in the need to foster a Hindu consciousness in the wake of Muslim ascendancy and Hindu disadvantage. As such, she promoted *Hindutva* for creating 'a sense of shared history, culture, and an awareness of India as one's Holy Land'.[54] In *A Warning to Hindus* (1939),[55] Devi stressed the achievement of 'Hindudom' through a cultivated, unified nationalism rooted in Aryan civilisation. Military resistance and self-defence, she argued, should be employed against the threat of 'Mohammedanization'. In 1938, Devi met Asit Krishna Mukherji, editor of *The New Mercury*, a National Socialist magazine supported by the German consulate in Calcutta. The two married and carried out espionage on American and British officials for Axis powers during the war.[56] Following the Second World War, *Hindutva* did not feature in Devi's life. However, her writings, such as 1958's *The Lightning and the Sun*, which claimed Hitler to be a reincarnation of the god Vishnu, has continued to inspire neo-Nazi supporters and circles.[57]

Thus, European and South Asian political spheres were interconnected in their engagement(s): 'The idea of the authenticity of the "folk", connecting to organicist ideas of community and nation in the twentieth century … the directionality of narratives of travel and absorption of fascist ideas: [was] not from Europe to elsewhere, but multilinear and multilaterally invented'.[58] Fascism and Nazism were not European products available for export, but a continuous cycle of ideological and, at times, mobilised engagement.[59] *Hindutva* ideologues often incorporated elements of Italian and German

[54] Goodrick-Clarke, *Hitler's Priestess*, 45, 51.
[55] Savitri Devi, *A Warning to the Hindus* (1939), available at www.mourningtheancient.com/hindus.pdf.
[56] Goodrick-Clarke, *Hitler's Priestess*, 67-74.
[57] An online archive collection of her writings is managed by Dr R.G. Fowler, a pseudonym for white nationalist and Counter-Currents editor Greg Johnson.
[58] Zachariah,'At the fuzzy edges of fascism', 641.
[59] Similarly, we should look to broader processes of global engagement with various ideologies of mobilisation. The emergence of 'cosmopolitan thought zones' in colonial South Asia, for instance, sought to consolidate intellectual transnational configurations of anticolonial resistance beyond mimicry of Western revolutionary concepts. For more see Sugata Bose and Kris Manjapra (eds), *Cosmopolitan Thought Zones: South Asia and the Global Circulation of Ideas* (London: Palgrave Macmillan 2010).

models that were attractive yet to some extent already present in India.[60] At the same time, intellectuals in Europe engaged with *Hindutva* ideologues to further ideological developments.

Post-colonial *Hindutva*

With the withdrawal of the British in 1947, this marked the Partition of the subcontinent into modern day India and Pakistan (and later Bangladesh), into a Hindu-majority and Muslim-majority nation, respectively. Although the RSS avoided taking part in the independence movement struggle in the years prior—likely due to fears of being banned by the British—activists played a major role in the ensuing Hindu-Muslim communal riots of Partition. Whilst Hindu-Muslim communal violence is endemic to India's history, it was central to the founding of the Indian nation-state, which witnessed the greatest levels of violence prior to, during, and immediately following Partition. Hence,

> what appears as Hindu fascism or fundamentalism to outsiders may have many other dimensions than simply religious traditionalism and deadly desires to exterminate the religious 'other'. It is certainly partly concerned with the protection of an imagined and actual motherland against neighbouring others that claimed their territory in the horrible struggles of 1947, a troubled memory that haunts India and Pakistan.[61]

Hindutva's aim to restore *Akhand Bharat* (Undivided India) is a claim to recover lost territory from the past. Following the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi in 1948, by former RSS member Nathuram Godse who detested Gandhi's 'Hindu-Muslim unity' for ceding to the formation of Pakistan, the RSS was temporarily proscribed as an organisation. Yet, *Hindutva* actors have justified Godse's act of violence as an expression of ethno-national claims. Violence has a deep legacy in the European extreme right, in which historically, 'the street violence that accompanied Fascism's rise to power served to reinforce the idea that it was about action, not words'.[62] Right-wing extremist movements consequently resort to violent behaviour to project an extreme ideological message that views violence as an acceptable means for their vision of society.[63] 'Saffron terror'[64] committed by *Hindutva* actors,[65] on the other hand, enacts a majoritarian nationalism that is fused with organised violence whereby

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[60] Zachariah, 'A voluntary gleichschaltung?', 89-91.
[61] Menski, 'Assessing communal conflicts and Hindu fascism in India', 316.
[62] Davies and Lynch (eds), *The Routledge Companion to Fascism and the Far Right*, 171.
[63] Cas Mudde, 'The populist zeitgeist', *Government and Opposition*, vol. 39, no. 4, 2004, 541-563.
[64] A term used to designate Hindutva violence in India.
[65] Guy Elecheroth and Stephen Reicher, *Identity, Violence and Power: Mobilising Hatred, Demobilising Dissent* (London: Palgrave Macmillan 2017).

public space is designated as Hindu space, both physically and in the national imagined community.[66] Thus, whilst European right-wing extremism is arguably confined to a fringe phenomenon, *Hindutva* has been visible in nation-building and majoritarian identity in India.

The 1960s and 1970s witnessed extensive growth in political activities as the RSS expanded its position as a parent organisation that oversees the *Sangh Parivar*, or family of organisations in the *Hindutva* fold.[67] There are numerous affiliates of the *Sangh*, ranging from extreme and violent paramilitary groups, including youth wings (e.g. *Bajrang Dal*), to 'cultural' organisations (e.g. *Vishwa Hindu Parishad*), charity-based NGOs (e.g. *Sewa Bharati*), trade unions (e.g. *Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh*), farmers' unions (e.g. *Bharatiya Kisan Sangh*), and student organisations (e.g. *Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad*). Female-only organisations (e.g. *Rashtriya Sevika Samiti*, *Sadhvi Shakti Parishad*) promote women as heroic mothers and wives/daughters of the nation. These affiliate organisations share the pursuit of *Hindutva* ideology, often creating local alliances and volunteer networks.

In the 1980s and 1990s, in an attempt to recruit mass support, the *Sangh* created campaigns with merchandise featuring Hindu symbols, such as stickers and calendars, which became widely popular and visibly connoted Hindu images with *Hindutva*.[68] The 1990s additionally witnessed *Hindutva* actors seeking formal political power in the electoral arena.[69] It is during this time that *Hindutva* first came to mainstream prominence as ideologues sought to institutionalize Hindi as the official language of government and push for the revival of Sanskrit.[70] Similarly, popular culture references, particularly in films,[71] [72] represented Muslims as a perceived enemy to Hindu majoritarian identity, instilling into public consciousness the relevance of *Hindutva* tropes and narratives. The rise in lower-middle class support for *Hindutva* in the 1990s helped cultivate a space for *Hindutva* actors to tap into this sentiment

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[66] Dibyesh Anand, 'The violence of security: Hindu nationalism and the politics of representing "the Muslim" as a danger', *The Round Table: The Commonwealth Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 94, no. 379, 2005, 203-215; Rupal Oza, 'The geography of Hindu right-wing violence in India', in Derek Gregory and Allan Pred (eds), *Violent Geographies: Fear, Terror, and Political Violence* (London: Routledge 2007), 153-173.

[67] Suhas Palshikar, 'The BJP and Hindu nationalism: centrist politics and majoritarian impulses', *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*, vol. 38, no. 4, 2015, 719-735 (729); Oza, 'The geography of Hindu right-wing violence in India', 159-160.

[68] Oza, 'The geography of Hindu right-wing violence in India', 160.

[69] Palshikar, 'The BJP and Hindu nationalism', 730.

[70] Manisha Basu, The Rhetoric of Hindu India: Language and Urban Nationalism (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2017), 12.

[71] Sanjeev Kumar HM, 'Constructing the Nation's Enemy: Hindutva, popular culture and the Muslim "other" in Bollywood cinema', *Third World Quarterly*, vol. 34, no. 3, 2013, 458-469.

[72] Madhavi Murthy, 'Representing *Hindutva*: nation, religion and masculinity in Indian popular cinema, 1990 to 2003', *Popular Communication*, vol. 7, no. 4, 2009, 267-281.

decades later.[73] Thus, in the 1990s, *Hindutva* was slowly becoming more mainstream, irrespective of the party in central government.

Throughout, the RSS consistently remains the epicentre of the *Hindutva* family as its ideological nucleus.[74] Although officially non-political, it operates through a complex web of networks, each reproducing and sustaining *Hindutva* in two important ways. First, through an 'elaborate institutional edifice' within civil society; and secondly, functioning with a 'dual identity', either with a highly visible, political profile or through voluntary, grassroots services.[75] By embedding the concept of *Hindutva* across different sectors of society through functions and affiliate groups, the RSS uses its umbrella influence in order to conflate the cultural, religious, and political aspects of Hindu identity.[76]

Compared to European right-wing extremism, *Hindutva* in India proliferates at a greater scale. Key to its success is the rise of the *Bharatiya Janata Party* (BJP, Indian People's Party), a manifestation of how *Hindutva* operates in party politics. Although *Sangh* affiliates comprise a broad spectrum of grassroots movements, the BJP is the only organisation that contests elections as a political party. Since its founding, the BJP has been successful at the ballot box with local elections. In 2014, however, the party secured its largest electoral victory in India's political history with a majority coalition in the national parliament. The following details the evolution of the BJP and how it truly 'mainstreamed' *Hindutva* under Narendra Modi.

Mainstreaming ***Hindutva***

An affiliate of the *Sangh*, the *Bharatiya Jana Sangh* (Indian People's Party) was founded shortly after independence in 1951 to counter the centre-left, secularist Indian National Congress party. The BJS rejected universalism as promoted by Gandhian ideals of pluralism and diversity, promoting instead ethnic nationalism. From the late 1960s, the BJS campaigned on a xenophobic platform, calling for minorities to 'Indianize' and assimilate into a purportedly 'Hindian' nation. However, it had to accommodate in order to survive elections: either take a moderate stance as a patriotic, populist party,

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[73] Palshikar, 'The BJP and Hindu nationalism', 730-731.
[74] Chetan Bhatt and Parita Mukta, 'Hindutva in the West: mapping the antinomies of diaspora nationalism', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, vol. 23, no. 3, 2000, 407-441 (414).
[75] Kamat and Mathew, 'Mapping political violence in a globalized world', 11.
[76] Arvind Rajagopal, *Politics after Television: Hindu Nationalism and the Reshaping of the Public in India* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press 2001).

or appeal to a militant sense of aggressive *Hindutva*. The BJS faced an 'adaptation dilemma', in which 'to become accepted by the mainstream, and prevent repression by the state, [right-wing parties] need to moderate, but to satisfy their hard-core members, and to keep a clear profile, they need to stay extreme'.[77] This eventually led to the reformation of the party as the *Bharatiya Janata Party* (BJP) in 1980, favouring the former, more moderate approach, but continuing to assert that India is a Hindu nation. The BJP today affirms 'Hindu identity and culture [as] being the mainstay of the Indian nation and of Indian society'.[78]

Yet, this adaptation dilemma has remained a key tension within BJP operations. In 2002, a key event drew international attention to India: the Gujarat riots, in which Hindu-Muslim violence lasting several weeks resulted in thousands of (overwhelming Muslim) deaths in the state. International agencies such as Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International have documented atrocious human rights violations, including rape and torture. These reports that describe the violence as a pogrom demonstrate the complicity of state officials, including then BJP Chief Minister Narendra Modi, working alongside *Sangh* affiliates to orchestrate and plan attacks well in advance. By framing Muslims as a threat to the Hindu collective, 'the maintenance of communal tensions… is essential for the maintenance of militant Hindu nationalism, but also has uses for other political parties, organizations, and even the state and central governments'.[79] State sponsored violence during the riots assisted in the construction of *Hindutva* majoritarian nationalism. Investigations by the Indian government have pardoned state officials despite evidence of complicity. Narendra Modi—a leading RSS activist in his youth—was subsequently banned from entering the United Kingdom, United States, and several European countries for his administration's involvement in the riots.

Except for a coalition in the national government of 1998-2004, the BJP only succeeded in local and state elections in post-independent India. It once again entered government in 2014, this time securing a stunning outright majority. Its key ingredient for victory was the former Chief Minister of Gujarat. Throughout the election campaign, Modi exploited a populist narrative to secure mass support across Indian society. Positioning himself as an outsider with humble origins and magnetic persona, Modi's

[77] Mudde, 'The populist zeitgeist', 193.
[78] Bharatiya Janata Party, 'BJP History', available on www.bjp.org/en/about-the-party/history?u=bjp-history (viewed 5 March 2016).
[79] Paul R. Brass, *The Production of Hindu-Muslim Violence in Contemporary India* (Seattle: University of Washington Press 2003), 9.

tactic of attacking the political and media establishment was a strategy to 'present himself as an *aam admi*, a common man'[80] often a "'victim" of an elite "news media conspiracy"'.[81] He constructed an image as the voice of the people, as the authentic India. Modi's spectacular display of a 'populist zeitgeist'[82] targeted the incumbent Indian National Congress party for decades of 'dynastic politics', invoking a new democratic future promising transparency, accountability, and accessibility.

At the same time, the BJP constructed a 'civic zeitgeist'[83] by mobilising along recurring themes of a Muslim 'threat' to the Hindu majority, creating a narrative to further Hindu insecurity. In Hinduism, the goddess *Durga* combats evils threatening the sanctity of good. Within *Hindutva*, *Durga* is personified as the nation in the form of *Bharat Mata* (Mother India). Islam is framed as a harbinger of evil to the Hindu nation. Muslim men are viewed as instinctively fanatic terrorists rooted in Islam as a violent religion.[84] There is likewise an attempt to frame Muslim masculinity through hypersexualised and barbaric tropes (reinforcing Orientalist portrayals), especially against 'vulnerable' Hindu women. Claims of 'love jihad' (a familiar refrain amongst right-wing extremists in the West), whereby Muslim men falsely declare their love to Hindu women in order to convert them to Islam, is a constant anxiety.[85] The Hindu woman symbolises daughters of *Bharat Mata*, and consequently, an attack on a Hindu woman is an attack on the nation itself. Muslim men, according to this logic, are designated as instinctively anti-national. On the other hand, *Hindutva* promotes an image of Hindu masculinity as assertive, protective, and patriarchal. Hindu deities, such as *Rama*, are transformed from pensive and peaceful figures to chauvinistic warriors. Such 'masculine Hinduism' stems from a reaction to the effeminate representation of Hindu men during the colonial era.[86] The masculine pride of *Hindutva* as a warrior-like figure is embedded within a narrative of survival.

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[80] Christophe Jaffrelot, 'The Modi-centric BJP 2014 election campaign: new techniques and old tactics', *Contemporary South Asia*, vol. 23, no. 2, 2015, 151-166 (159).
[81] Paula Chakravartty and Srirupa Roy, 'Mr. Modi goes to Delhi: mediated populism and the 2014 Indian elections', *Television and New Media*, vol. 16, no. 4, 2015, 311-322 (316).
[82] Mudde, 'The populist zeitgeist'.
[83] Daphne Halikiopoulou, Steven Mock, and Sofia Vasilopoulo, 'The civic zeitgeist: nationalism and liberal values in the European radical right', *Nations and Nationalism*, vol. 19, no. 1, 2012, 107-127.
[84] Rajagopal, *Politics after Television*; Anuj Nadadur, 'The "Muslim threat" and the Bharatiya Janata Party's rise to power', *Peace and Democracy in South Asia*, vol. 2, no. 1/2, 2006, 88-111.
[85] Charu Gupta, 'Hindu women, Muslim men: love jihad and conversions', *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol. 44, no. 51, 2009, 13-15.
[86] Sikata Banerjee, *Make Me a Man! Masculinity, Hinduism, and Nationalism in India* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press 2005).

The BJP not only projected Muslims as an internal enemy, but an external enemy as well. It prominently stoked fear surrounding 'illegal' migration from Muslim-majority Bangladeshi labourers—as encouraged by the Congress party—to advance its agenda. Such rhetoric is far from unusual for right-wing extremist parties in the West who have combined anti-establishment populism with a core belief in ethno-nationalist xenophobia.[87] The structural transformations in Europe that emerged from globalisation following the Second World War has been cathartic in furthering right-wing extremism; changes in cultural, linguistic, economic, and political realms resulted in a condition of insecurity and instability in an uncertain world of rampant change. By positioning the loss of industries, employment, cultural lifestyle, and political representation, European right-wing extremist parties respond to a perceived disappearing ethno-national identity. This manifests as opposition to immigration in order to preserve cultural homogeneity and cultural protectionism.[88] The idea that minorities 'steal' jobs and disrupt 'values', capitalises on an anxiety that views immigrants as a threat to ethno-nationalist identity.[89] Just as right-wing extremist parties in Europe employ a reactionary discourse of 'us versus them', seizing upon ethno-national identity as a shared denominator against fear of the unknown (*viz.* the foreigner), the BJP similarly advocates the preservation of national values from the threat of foreign invasion, in particular, Muslim migrants deemed a threat to these values. Importantly, it is not necessarily that such threats exist to endanger ethno-national identity, but rather, that these threats are perceived. In turn, the centre-left political elite, i.e. Congress party, are targeted for neglecting 'common' values of the people.

Throughout the 2014 campaign, Modi subtly integrated *Hindutva* with citizenship. The candidate maintained ties to Hindu socio-cultural practices by merging Hindu practices and rituals with voting behaviour: 'he associated himself with Hindu symbols and personalities. Besides wearing saffron clothes in some of the most important occasions of the election campaign, Modi visited many Hindu

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[87] Jens Rydgren, 'The sociology of the radical right', *Annual Review of Sociology*, vol. 33, no. 1, 2007, 241-262; Mudde, 'The populist zeitgeist'.
[88] Don Kalb, 'Introduction: headlines of nation, subtexts of class: working-class populism and the return of the repressed in neoliberal Europe', in Don Kalb and Gábor Halmai (eds), *Headlines of Nation, Subtexts of Class: Working-class Populism and the Return of the Repressed in Neoliberal Europe* (New York: Berghahn Books 2011), 1-36; Art, *Inside the Radical Right*; Ellinas, *The Media and the Far Right in Western Europe*; Mabel Berezin, *Illiberal Politics in Neoliberal Times: Culture, Security and Populism in the New Europe*. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press 2009); Cas Mudde, *Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press 2007); Carter, *The Extreme Right in Western Europe*; Hans-Georg Betz, 'Contemporary right-wing radicalism in Europe', *Contemporary European History*, vol. 8, no. 2, 1999, 299-316.
[89] Rydgren, 'The sociology of the radical right'; Roger Eatwell, 'Ten theories of the extreme right', in Peter Merkl and Leonard Weinberg (eds), *Right-Wing Extremism in the Twenty-First Century* (London: Frank Cass, 2003), 45-70.

sacred places before his meetings'.[90] By vernacularising the language of *Hindutva*, 'nation' and 'citizenship' shifted meaning to include localised narratives conflating Hindu symbols with political demands through an everyday brand of 'saffron politics'.[91] Such expressions of Modi's ethno-religiosity constituted a basis of belonging against the corrupt, secular political and media establishment.

Despite this newfound anti-establishment message, the BJP has historically attracted upper-caste white collars, professionals, merchants, and other middle to upper-class groups[92] by weaving an exclusionary narrative built on in-group differences:

> The political culture of the Hindu middle class is largely imbued with ethno-religious connotations. This development has resulted from the need to compensate with some religiosity for an increasingly pervasive form of materialism after years of double-digit growth rates. But it reflects also the influence of years of Hindutva politics and the fear of Islam(ism), especially after the terrorist attacks of the last decade. The middle class tend to use its new financial means to protect itself from the influence of outsiders… [reflecting] the uneasy way in which the middle class relates to others, including religious minorities.[93]

With Modi's victory, however, one cannot simply situate BJP supporters as solely upper-caste and urban-based. The BJP's success can partly be attributed to the diversification of the party. In 2014, the BJP reached beyond its traditional demographic to a group with rising socio-economic ability in the wake of India's neoliberal globalisation—the neo-middle class. For the neo-middle class, the BJP, and Modi in particular, represents an opportunity to aspire to upward mobility through simultaneous material achievement and communal identity.[94] This shift in BJP supporters thus reflects how *Hindutva* can manifest as a fluid ideology that appeals to a wide audience in contemporary India: as a frame for economic neoliberalism, as well as espousing a religio-mythic narrative. This multi-faceted approach ensures a growing, sustainable collective identity that has normalised *Hindutva* within Indian society.

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[90] Jaffrelot, 'The Modi-centric BJP 2014 election campaign', 160.
[91] Thomas Blom Hansen, *The Saffron Wave: Democracy and Hindu Nationalism in Modern India* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press 1999); Rajagopal, *Politics after Television*.
[92] This is likely due to the fact that the BJP's founding leadership constituted the elite and intelligentsia.
[93] Christophe Jaffrelot, 'The class element in the 2014 Indian election and the BJP's success with special reference to the Hindi belt', *Studies in Indian Politics*, vol. 3, no. 1, 2015, 19-38 (24).
[94] Jaffrelot, 'The class element in the 2014 Indian election and the BJP's success with special reference to the Hindi belt'; Palshikar, 'The BJP and Hindu nationalism', 732.

This 'mainstreamization' of *Hindutva*[95] can be compared to the 'mainstreaming' effect[96] in the West whereby right-wing extremist views initiated from the margin or fringe is spread to political parties through practices, discourses, and frames. This phenomenon in India resulted in a strategic coalition of religious groups and neo-middle classes, described as a new cultural identitarian political movement that emerged out of a neoliberal political economy.[97] Thus, whilst *Hindutva* began to be mainstream in the 1990s, under Modi, *Hindutva* is arguably more widely accepted across all socio-economic classes in Indian society. Yet, the BJP may be far from becoming a mainstream party for two reasons. First, it cannot dissolve its *Hindutva* agenda that is salient to a core group of supporters expectant of its implementation in government. Second, the BJP remains in a larger network of *Hindutva* organisations operating in the political milieu.[98] Nonetheless, the mainstreaming of *Hindutva* in India today has allowed for expressions of an exclusionary nationalist discourse previously confined to the fringe.

Under the current Modi government then, what are the implications of *Hindutva* dominating Indian party politics, as well as for the longue durée of Indian society? Since the 2014 election, a clear tension marks the BJP's strategy to appear inclusive for maintaining its electoral success whilst continuing to promote *Hindutva* as its ideological legacy.[99] Despite an overt effort not to overemphasise *Hindutva*, however, the party has thus far failed to take a centrist approach.[100] In some states, the BJP has implemented a *Hindutva* agenda within culture and education (e.g. school texts[101]), as well as cow protection campaigns.[102] Other acts include 'attacks on places of worship, delegitimising of inter-faith marriages, privileging of Hindu symbols and identities, equating of Hindu identity with national identity and, perhaps most dramatically and contentiously, challenging the right to propagate religion

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[95] Christophe Jaffrelot and Ingrid Therwath, 'The Sangh Parivar and the Hindu diaspora in the West: what kind of "long-distance nationalism"?', *International Political Sociology*, vol. 1, no. 3, 2007, 278-295.
[96] Hainsworth, *The Extreme Right in Western Europe*; Aristotle Kallis, 'Far-right "contagion" or a failing "mainstream"? How dangerous ideas cross borders and blur boundaries', *Democracy and Security*, vol. 9, no. 3, 2013, 221-246; Tjitske Akkerman, Sarah L. de Lange, and Matthijs Rooduijn, *Radical Right-Wing Populist Parties in Western Europe: Into the mainstream?* (London: Routledge 2016).
[97] Pradeep Chhibber, 'Who voted for the Bharatiya Janata Party?', *British Journal of Political Science*, vol. 27, no. 4, 1997, 631-640; Sebastian Schwecke, *New Cultural Identitarian Political Movements in Developing Societies: The Bharatiya Janata Party* (London: Routledge 2011).
[98] Palshikar, 'The BJP and Hindu nationalism'.
[99] Palshikar, 'The BJP and Hindu nationalism', 721.
[100] Palshikar, 'The BJP and Hindu nationalism', 727.
[101] Shruti Jain, 'Rajasthan textbooks revised to glorify Modi government', available on *The Wire* website at https://thewire.in/education/rajasthan-textbooks-revised-glorify-modi-government (viewed 23 May 2019).
[102] Human Rights Watch, 'Violent cow protection in India', available on the *Human Rights Watch* website at www.hrw.org/report/2019/02/18/violent-cow-protection-india/vigilante-groups-attack-minorities (viewed 23 May 2019).

by running a campaign that seeks to convert Muslim and Christian families "back" to Hinduism'.[103] Censorship of journalists and academics critical of the government is also widespread,[104] many of whom are subsequently branded as 'anti-national'. Further, the BJP government has renamed cities, streets, and airports to Hindu figures,[105] and controversy ensued when flight crew on Air India were asked to proclaim '*Jai Hind*' ('Long Live India') at the end of every flight announcement in order to promote the 'mood of the nation'.[106]

The BJP government has additionally faced controversies around ministry appointments, first with Gajendra Chauhan and later Anupam Kher, as chair of the Governing Council of the Film and Television Institute of India under the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. Chauhan and Kher's appointments, both of whom lack necessary professional experience for the role, were viewed as an attempt from the BJP to influence an ideological agenda in official government cinema documentation and education.[107] But perhaps the most controversial figure in Modi-led BJP is Yogi Adityanath, who was elected Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh in 2017. A *Hindutva* hardliner, Adityanath has at times criticised the BJP for diluting *Hindutva* ideology, whilst inciting calls for violence against Muslims, and making derogatory remarks about women and homosexuality.[108]

The landslide re-election of Modi and the BJP in 2019, with an even greater majority than 2014, signals that *Hindutva* is no longer in a process of becoming but *is* mainstream. In short, it has reached a state of normalcy and legitimacy that is not merely imposed but vastly supported. *Hindutva* is ultimately the outcome of a sustaining trend in Indian society that will likely persist in the future.

Conclusion

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[103] Palshikar, 'The BJP and Hindu nationalism', 728.

[104] Maya Prabhu, 'Is free speech under threat in Modi's India?', available on the *Al Jazeera* website at www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2017/07/free-speech-threat-modi-india-170712131837718.html (viewed 23 May 2019).

[105] Rizwan Ahmad, 'Renaming India: Saffronisation of public spaces', available on the *Al Jazeera* website at https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/renaming-india-saffronisation-public-spaces-181012113039066.html (viewed 23 May 2019).

[106] Vanessa Romo, 'Air India crew directed to "Hail the Motherland" after every announcement', available on the *NPR* website at https://www.npr.org/2019/03/05/700512781/air-india-crews-directed-to-hail-the-motherland-after-every-announcement (viewed 23 May 2019).

[107] Not unwarranted considering parallels with the making of Leni Riefenstahl's film *Olympia* of the Berlin Olympics in 1936.

[108] See Christophe Jaffrelot, 'India's democracy at 70: toward a Hindu state?', *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 28, no. 3, 2017, 52-63 (58-59).

This article fills a lacuna in the field of right-wing extremism scholarship by situating the ideological, historical, and organisational dimensions of *Hindutva*. It begins by highlighting a theoretical and empirical gap in studies of right-wing extremism as largely limited to European/North American case studies, and argues that Western scholars have misrepresented *Hindutva* in India as a type of religious extremism. This interpretation stems from misunderstanding *Hindutva* as centred on religion, when it is instead how religion is politicised such that being a Hindu equates belonging to an ethno-nationalist identity. On the other hand, South Asian scholars tend to analyse *Hindutva* as an isolated case, rarely drawing beyond regional studies for comparison.

From this basis, this article presents *Hindutva* in an attempt towards creating universal dimensions of right-wing extremism. It does not disregard the circumstantial origin, evolution, and adaptation of *Hindutva*, but illustrates this development as mutually interconnected through transnational entanglements with Italian Fascism and German Nazism. Whilst *Hindutva* ideologues incorporated elements of European extreme right models for its modus operandi, intellectuals in Europe engaged with *Hindutva* actors to further ideological developments. By situating *Hindutva* in conjunction with the European context, transgressing this geographical boundary enhances the discussion surrounding the transnational nature of right-wing extremist ideology. Ideological, and at times, physical connections occurred within a continuous cycle of mobilised engagement between European and South Asian political milieux.

Following India's independence, the scale of communal riots that ushered in the founding of India as a Hindu-majority nation and Pakistan as a Muslim-majority nation, led *Hindutva* actors to justify violence as an ethno-national claim for *Akhand Bharat* (Undivided India) in order to recover lost territory. As such, violence against the threat of 'otherness' became a legitimate means of preserving the 'motherland'. The evolution of *Hindutva* in post-colonial India parallels European theories of ethno-nationalism (i.e. geography, race, religion, culture, language) for justifying ethnic superiority over 'foreigners', namely Muslims, who are viewed as 'invaders' of the 'pure' Hindu nation and must be eradicated or 'converted' back into Hinduism. In European countries, the evolution of right-wing extremism post-Second World War has similarly relied upon defining an 'other', primarily through racialisation of difference. By projecting individual subjectivity onto the national imaginary as a boundary of exclusion against fear of the unknown 'foreign' entity, *Hindutva* and European right-wing extremism simultaneously formulate such threats, whether actual or perceived, as a danger to collective

identity. Yet, whereas European right-wing extremism was confined to a fringe phenomenon, *Hindutva* has been visible in nation-building and majoritarian identity in India.

Lastly, this article highlights the 'mainstreaming' effect of right-wing extremism from the fringe to party politics by showcasing the emergence of the *Bharatiya Janata Party* (BJP), the only political party with *Hindutva* as its official slogan. The 'adaptation dilemma' of the BJP has not been without its pitfalls, however, as evident with the 2002 Gujarat riots, which revealed how state sponsored violence during the riots assisted in the construction of *Hindutva* majoritarian nationalism. Thereafter, the BJP only succeeded in local and state elections, until 2014, when the party secured an outright majority in the national election with its candidate and now Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Modi's campaign galvanised mass support amongst the Indian populace by presenting an image of the 'authentic' Indian nation. It importantly did so by positioning Muslims as a threat to the Hindu majority, eliciting a narrative of cultural protectionism against fear of the 'other', similar to narratives employed by European right-wing extremist parties. Under Modi's government, the success of the BJP as a political party with an overt *Hindutva* agenda has not only mainstreamed exclusionary nationalism at the ballot box, but has also allowed for expressions of 'otherness' to become increasingly acceptable in a historically diverse society. The marking of Hindus as 'insiders' and other religious groups as 'outsiders' has constructed *Hindutva* as synonymous with Indian nationalism.

This article thus provides not only an overview of *Hindutva*, but also an analytical contribution towards how we might conceptualise right-wing extremism in its transnational manifestations. In a time in which right-wing extremism exists as a contemporary phenomenon within Western societies whilst also as a growing force in the world's largest (post-colonial) democracy, such theoretical intervention is timely given the current wave of global right-wing extremism.

II

From cyber-*Hindutva* to Ab Ki Baar Trump Sarkar: (Trans)national entanglements of Hindu diaspora political integration

Eviane Leidig

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Abstract

This chapter explores how the internet serves as a medium that creates new ideological hybridities between diaspora *Hindutva* and the radical right in Western societies. It begins with an overview of Modi's 2014 election campaign in India, situating how the then-candidate's social media outreach depended on significant diaspora support, especially with Cyber-*Hindutva*. Yet, Cyber-*Hindutva* builds on a legacy of diaspora *Hindutva* organisations in the UK and US. These organisations, which have flourished under multiculturalism policies of 'host societies', reinforce the narrative that Muslims are 'unassimilable' vis-à-vis Hindus as 'well-integrated'. Given the Islamophobic sentiment of diaspora *Hindutva*, a lacuna exists in whether diaspora *Hindutva* translates into support for the radical right in the West. This is first explored in the Republican Hindu Coalition sponsored Ab Ki Baar Trump Sarkar campaign, which marks a shift in political integration through mass media consumption. This chapter consequently draws on a year-long qualitative study of Hindu diaspora Twitter users in the UK and US who support Brexit and Trump. For these individuals, online interactions occur at multiple levels of entanglement: between the 'homeland'-diaspora, across diaspora communities, and within new alliances with Western radical right leaders. This last entanglement marks a new transition in Hindu diaspora political integration.

Introduction

This chapter situates the role of the Hindu diaspora in the UK and US as interlocutors in the ideological linkages between diaspora *Hindutva* and the radical right in Western societies. The Brexit referendum and Trump's election (and later presidency) in 2016 provided an opportunity to synergise these phenomena at a transnational scale. But it also indicates the emergence of complementary nationalisms, in which the diaspora simultaneously projects the image of India as a Hindu nation, whilst still creates a sense of belonging as 'good (i.e. non-Muslim) immigrants' in the Western-Anglo narrative of integration.

It begins with an overview of Narendra Modi's 2014 election campaign, situating how the then-candidate's social media persona signals the rise of a mediatised populism foregrounded in the hope of India's future as a technology powerhouse in the 21st century. Yet, Modi's success

depended on significant diaspora support, both by official and unofficial means. In the former, the campaign's IT operations recruited those in the diaspora, or those who had lived abroad, with the skills to assist in the election. For the latter, the growth of Cyber-*Hindutva*, a phenomenon originating in India but strengthened by diaspora involvement in the UK and US, bolstered Modi's popularity. Cyber-*Hindutva* actors have been instrumental in promoting Islamophobic anxiety online, speaking 'truth' about the danger of Islam on the subcontinent as well as in the West.

Cyber-*Hindutva* builds on a legacy of long-distance nationalism in the diaspora. Long-distance nationalism vis-à-vis the diaspora does not operate as a two-way trajectory, however, but as a continuous cycle of active engagement between the 'homeland' and communities outside India. British and American *Hindutva* organisations have emerged in response to long-distance nationalism, but equally due to political conditions in 'host societies'. Such conditions have led these diaspora *Hindutva* organisations to mobilise through effective lobbying efforts and consultation with national government departments and agencies. Under the guise of multiculturalism legislation and policymaking, these organisations represent a universal Hindu community distanced from the Muslim 'other', ultimately reinforcing the narrative that Muslims are 'unassimilable' vis-à-vis Hindus as 'well-integrated'.

Given the ideological basis of anti-Muslim and anti-Islam sentiment of diaspora *Hindutva*, as expressed simultaneously with long-distance nationalism and within multiculturalism agenda-setting, a lacuna exists in whether diaspora *Hindutva* translates into support for the radical right in the West. Indeed, the Brexit and Trump campaigns echoed themes prevalent in diaspora *Hindutva* discourse, not only reinforcing Islamophobic tropes but anxiety with protecting the boundaries of the nation-state. This is exemplified in a case study of the Republican Hindu Coalition (RHC) sponsored Ab Ki Baar Trump Sarkar campaign. The rise of new identitarian organisations such as the RHC serve as institutional mobilising agents that replicate activities of diaspora *Hindutva* organisations in Western-Anglo societies. The RHC continues to manifest political integration as a groupist phenomenon, asserting the rights of the diaspora community in the vocabulary of multiculturalism. Yet, the RHC marks a shift in merging religious genres

with contemporary geopolitical realities in a hybridised format made possible by mass media consumption, i.e. the Ab Ki Baar Trump Sarkar campaign.

This chapter thus explores how the internet serves as a medium that creates new ideological hybridities between diaspora *Hindutva* and the radical right in Western societies by drawing on a year-long qualitative study of Hindu diaspora Twitter users in the UK and US who support Brexit and Trump. Here, users challenge traditional groupist political integration strategies of diaspora *Hindutva* organisations. This does not disregard the very powerful role that organisations continue to hold in this space, but as this chapter shows, the increasing capacity of individuals seeking a voice within online milieu surpasses that of diaspora organisations. For these individuals, political integration occurs by virtue of online interactions at multiple levels of entanglement.

Firstly, these users reinforce the 'homeland'-diaspora relationship by adapting *Hindutva* narratives towards local contexts. In the process of doing so, they use the language of multiculturalism to foster a collective diasporic consciousness. Secondly, entanglements traverse diaspora communities in the UK and US. Hindu diaspora users share in common expressions of positionality as 'good immigrants' who belong in Western-Anglo societies. Lastly, entanglements exist between the Hindu diaspora and Western radical right leaders. There is a mutual ideological commitment to exclusionary nationalism, united by the 'othering' of Islam, whilst reinforcing that Hindu diaspora political integration is feasible due to their status as non-Muslims.

This last entanglement marks a new transition in Hindu diaspora political integration. By creating alliances with the radical right in the West, the new boundary making of inclusion/exclusion delineates diasporic Hindus from Muslims. As such, fear of being misidentified as Muslim ultimately reinforces Muslims as a threat due to their fundamental 'otherness' which is culturally incompatible in Western societies. By extension, diasporic Hindus in alignment with the radical right, view Muslims as not belonging to the national imaginary. This development challenges traditional frames of groupist political integration by highlighting new dynamics of social relations as relational and contextual, rather than static, as a pattern of political integration.

‘India has Won’

India’s 2014 general election was unprecedented in political history. Combined with an innovative communications strategy, the Hindu nationalist *Bharatiya Janata Party* (BJP) truly excelled on a platform focusing on issues of governance, anti-corruption, economic development and job creation (particularly in the technology industry), and infrastructure development. By simultaneously targeting the incumbent Congress Party for decades of ‘dynastic politics’ and the failure to create sustainable growth, the BJP reached out to a large and growing audience disillusioned with unscrupulous party politics. Thus, if ‘Hindu nationalist politics has oscillated between ethno-religious nationalism, and socio-economic issues of corruption and economic growth throughout its career in postcolonial India’ (Udupa 2014: 15), then 2014 was the hallmark of a success story.

The key ingredient towards BJP success was undoubtedly its candidate Narendra Modi. Positioned as an outsider with a charismatic persona during the campaign, Modi presented ‘himself as an *aam admi*, a common man’ (Jaffrelot 2015a: 159) construed in the populist vein. Drawing on Engesser et. al, populist ideology comprises key elements of ‘popular sovereignty’, ‘pure people’, ‘corrupt elite’, ‘dangerous others’, and ‘glorification of the *heartland*, an “idealized conception of the community” (Taggart, 2004, p. 274) or “retrospective utopia” (Priester, 2012, p. 2)’ (2017: 3). Historically, the BJP has championed an ethno-nationalist ideology through its affirmation of India as a Hindu nation, commemorating a nostalgic past of the Vedic period as the golden era of Hinduism. It claims ‘Hindu identity and culture being the mainstay of the Indian nation and of Indian society’ (BJP website 2016). Modi’s populist revolt drew on the BJP’s legacy by distinctively conflating ethno-religiosity as a basis of belonging against the secular, corrupt political and media establishment. Modi deliberately ‘associated himself with Hindu symbols and personalities’, playing into the domain of upper class, upper caste Hindu culture saturated with ethnoreligious connotations wrought by a legacy of *Hindutva* politics (Jaffrelot 2015a: 160; 2015b: 24). By claiming to represent ‘the people’ (i.e. Hindus) against the ‘dangerous others’ (i.e. Muslims and secular elite), Modi became a populist figure within the BJP apparatus.

Modi and the mainstreaming of *Hindutva* parallels an emergence in post-1991 India as the country witnesses a new era of liberalisation. At the core of this paradigm shift is the Internet symbolising India's economic future as a global technology powerhouse (Chopra 2006: 190-2). Access to IT had been previously restricted to English-speaking, middle and upper-class, urban elite, who also constituted the *Hindutva* base. Yet, the rise of a new group of IT professionals with education and expertise challenges this phenomenon (*ibid.*: 194). In 2014, the BJP gained traction amongst the 'neo-middle class' who identify with Modi's 'upwardly mobile trajectory' and 'humble origins' (Jaffrelot 2015b: 26). This 'neo-middle class' of IT professionals envision a future personified by Modi, and thus supporting *Hindutva* becomes synonymous as a route to social mobility.[1]

Crucially, the 'social media politician' (*New York Times* 2014) used social networking platforms (Twitter, Facebook, Google+, YouTube) throughout the campaign as a highly effective communicative tool in engaging with the public by replying to questions, crowdsourcing comments and recommendations on key issues, and hosting live streams with young, first-time voters (Ahmed, Jaidka, and Cho 2016; Chadha and Guha 2016; Pal 2015; Rajagopal 2014). Modi continues to be especially active on Twitter, with one of the fastest growing accounts of nearly 44 million followers at present. Modi crafts his Twitter persona by strategically 'following' public and non-public accounts, tweeting about both political and non-political issues, tweeting less *Hindutva* content (Pal, Chandra, and Vydiswaran 2016), and simultaneously tweeting in English and vernacular languages. During the campaign, Modi encouraged the electorate to 'VOTE FOR INDIA' and subsequently tweeted 'India has Won' upon victory.

By 'branding India' (Rajagopal 2014: 14), Modi strikes at the heartland element conducive to populism 'by shot-circuiting institutions in order to be perceived as a man of the people and for the people' (Jaffrelot 2015a: 154). As a '"victim" of an elite "news media conspiracy"' (Chakravartty and Roy 2015: 316), Modi constructs a self-image of transparency, accountability,

[1] Note, however, that being pro-Modi and pro-Hindutva is not necessarily mutually exclusive. Often, the two are conflated but due regard should be taken towards recognising that Modi's victory came from a variety of supporters, including those that voted for his neoliberal economic proposals rather than his Hindutva background.

and accessibility by exploiting a populist narrative. In many ways, Modi encapsulates 'a larger brand image that at once straddles two spaces—a man who represents values and tradition and a man who represents globalized modernity' (Pal 2015: 2). Modi's electoral performance illustrates this delicate balance of defining India in the 21st century.

Modi's rise in popularity corresponds with the development of a young, technologically savvy population in India more generally, but also signifies the particular emergence of 'Internet Hindus' or 'Cyber Hindus'. Described as 'self-styled right-wing Hindu activists,' they are frequently recruited by the BJP in India and in diaspora locations to push pro-*Hindutva*/Modi, as well as anti-Muslim and anti-left, coverage online (Udupa 2014: 15; Chadha and Guha 2016: 4397-8; Chakravartty and Roy 2015: 318). Internet Hindus help construct the narrative of India as a Hindu *rashtra* by promoting a 'golden' Hindu past in which Modi is viewed as a figure capable of restoring lost glory. For Internet Hindus based in India, online performance is a means of engaging in 'Hindutva politics as discursive practice' in order to 'recast Hindu nationalism as an entrepreneurial, ideological project of net-enabled youth' (Udupa 2015: 436, 433). The Internet Hindu hence 'can be seen as a local phenomenon with a global presence, with his elite character intact and his penchant for aggressive, identity-based political speech amplified through his presence on social media networks' (Mohan 2015: 342). Internet Hindus ultimately manifest how *Hindutva* adapts to online spaces in contemporary times.

Yet, Modi's victory could not be possible without significant diaspora support, who fit neatly within liberalised India's 'state discourse as the most authentic incarnation of post-colonial citizenship' (Chopra 2006: 192). Volunteer networks abroad, such as the Overseas Friends of BJP, played a prominent role during the election (Chadha and Guha 2016). But even more so were those involved in Modi's campaign operations, within and outside India:

> Modi's campaign hired ad agency Ogilvy and Mather and was run by the convenors of the BJP national information technology (IT) cell at the party's headquarters. Reported associates included Illinois Institute of Technology's PhD Arvind Gupta, Chanakya Institute professor Radhakrishnan Pillai, Columbia University graduate and tech entrepreneur Rajesh Jain, and a number of volunteers from investment banking, consulting, technology and management (Pal, Chandra, and Vydiswaran 2016: 59).

Modi's appearance as a populist figure was thus a well-crafted operation led by a team of consultants, communications strategists, and funders. Further, 'the communication teams were coordinated by the BJP IT Cell whose chief, Arvind Gupta—another US-trained supporter of Modi—had started the National Digital Operations Centre at the party headquarters in Delhi in July 2013' (Jaffrelot 2015a: 156). The BJP crucially recruited diasporic Hindus, or those who had lived abroad, with the necessary skills to achieve Modi's social media image. The following section details the evolution of Hindutva in the British and American diaspora.[2]

Diaspora *Hindutva*

Scholarship on the Hindu diaspora is dominated by the legacy of *Hindutva* organisations in the United Kingdom, United States, Canada, the Caribbean, and eastern and southern Africa (Bhatt and Mukta 2000: 435). Due to length considerations, this chapter omits from presenting a holistic overview of literature on the global Hindu diaspora, and instead focuses on the UK and US contexts. It first provides a brief outline of long-distance nationalism amongst the diaspora (as manifested through the proliferation of Cyber-*Hindutva*), in order to situate how contemporary British and American *Hindutva* emerged in response to long-distance nationalism, as well as multiculturalism as a policy agenda in Western-Anglo societies.

The Hindu diaspora first began to settle in the UK in large waves beginning after the partition of the subcontinent in 1947. A second successive wave occurred in the 1970s, with many migrating from east Africa, particularly when Uganda ordered the expulsion of Asians in 1972. And a further wave in the 1990s resulted from UK immigration policy allowing for more international students. British Hindus as a demographic have been generally successful, with representation in professional and managerial positions and top placements in universities. Average household income is also higher than the national average (Office of National Statistics, UK Government 2013).

[2] This chapter defines diaspora according to Vertovec's three meanings: as a social form ('an identified group characterized by their relationship-despite-dispersal'), as a type of consciousness (marked by 'awareness of multi-locality' and 'engagement with, and consequent visibility in, public space'), and as a mode of cultural production ('involving the production and reproduction of transnational social and cultural phenomena') (2000: 141-160).

On the other hand, Hindus began migrating to the US in large waves during the 1960s as professionals who quickly assimilated into American society based on their elite status. Most settled in middle-class suburban communities, universities, and corporations. The 1970s, however, witnessed the arrival of Hindu migrants that worked as small business owners and traders, who settled in ghettoised neighbourhoods with little resources at their disposal. Yet, a third wave during the 1980s and 1990s witnessed highly skilled and highly educated Hindu migrants employed in the IT sector or arriving for study in advanced degrees. Consequently, American Hindus constitute one of the highest average household incomes, and regularly feature in top-ranked university admissions and professional occupations (Pew Research Center 2016).

Despite sociological differences within the Hindu diaspora, e.g. most in the UK are descendants of indentured labourers and merchants who first settled in east and south Africa (thus 'twice migrants'), as opposed to wealthy professionals that directly resided in the US, long-distance nationalism remains a prominent feature. Long-distance nationalism can be conceptualised as the allegiance of a diaspora to their 'homeland' (see Anderson 1998)—in this case India[3]—or what Alexander (2017) refers to as 'engagement with both "roots" and "routes"' (1544). As such, the diaspora may hold citizenship in a 'host society' whilst identify with their country of origin and/or ancestry. Long-distance nationalism has especially amplified in reaction to the proliferation of modern technologies and increasing flows of migration under processes of globalisation. The third wave of the Hindu diaspora in the US is particularly well-suited towards studying long-distance nationalism as patterns of migratory settlement are often intertwined with the rise of information and communication technologies, thus exemplifying the speed and scale of hyper-connectivity.

Whilst religious identification plays a degree in the search for common belonging, *Hindutva* offers a unique ethno-nationalist appeal well situated for the Hindu diasporic condition. The Hindu diaspora in turn has played a crucial role in shaping the ideological and political trajectory of *Hindutva* across global networks. From its early days, the *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh* (RSS) has

[3]Although twice migrants problematise long-distance nationalism as not merely a one-way spatio-temporal phenomenon, but the 'space between places, on circulation rather than either departure or arrival' (Alexander 2017: 1548).

been a constant force, even if organisationally lacking, amongst the diaspora (Bhatt 2000: 576). The RSS has since transformed its operations abroad from a small group of migrants to a vast internet network that virtually connects thousands everyday (Jaffrelot and Therwath 2007). Cyber-*shakhas* were launched as early as 1999 and sophisticated *e-shakhas* in 2008, reflecting the RSS' innovative approach in using the web to reach the diaspora worldwide. Indeed, when mapping *Hindutva* websites, in particular the BJP and RSS, India continues to be the symbolic epicentre, whilst the US remains the main node of operations by hosting site domains (Lal 1999: 155; Therwath 2012: 564).

As noted briefly above, the BJP recruits Internet Hindus from the diaspora to supplement India-based volunteers. In contrast to the outdated RSS *e-shakhas*, whereby participation is constricted in an institutionally controlled forum or chat room, this new version of Cyber-*Hindutva* is exemplified through the Internet Hindu as an individual who becomes empowered by adopting a persona/avatar across an expansive network of platforms. For Internet Hindus in the diaspora, the element of belonging to a global collective *Hindutva* attracts those seeking a connection with the homeland.

The relationship between Cyber-*Hindutva* and the diaspora builds on a legacy of exploiting resources and skills of Hindus abroad. Early on, *Hindutva* organisations sought those in the diaspora employed as software engineers with the skills to manage *Hindutva* websites in order to disseminate ideology and express 'jingoistic nationalism' views (Therwath 2012; Mathew & Prashad 2000; Rajagopal 2000, 485; Mathew 2000). Given that the core base of diaspora *Hindutva* comprises of young, skilled males whose livelihood is within the IT industry, the Internet becomes an obvious medium to virtually connect and promote *Hindutva* (Chopra 2006: 194; Lal 1999: 154; Rai 1995: 43-4). Although much of this activity occurs amongst the US-based diaspora, communications also plays a central role in disseminating information and issues between *Hindutva* in India and the UK (Burlet 2013: 15).

Yet, long-distance nationalism is not a one-direction trajectory, either spatially, temporally, or bodily, but rather, a continuous cycle of active engagement between the homeland and communities abroad. By specifying a diasporic consciousness as distinct from Indians in India,

we can situate the Indian diaspora as its own unique trajectory. Here, India is not a measure of 'authentic' culture contrasted against the 'diluted' culture of the diaspora community (see Vertovec 2000). Rather, diasporic identity is dynamic and constantly reproduced based on contextual experiences. As such, 'that migrants themselves maintain boundaries is only to be expected; the interesting question, and the question relevant to the existence of a diaspora, is to what extent and in what forms boundaries are maintained by second, third and subsequent generations' (Brubaker 2005, 7). The role of diaspora *Hindutva* organisations has been crucial in these boundary-making claims.

British and American *Hindutva* both emerged in the context of an articulation of groupist political integration that places the Hindu diaspora in the US and UK within a distinct ethno-religious category in Western-Anglo societies. Political integration here refers to the definition given in the introduction to this volume, as a formal level of access to political institutions and political rights. Diaspora *Hindutva* organisations serve as lobbies at the state level in order to secure representation for a 'universal' Hindu community. What distinguishes this phenomenon as groupist is the essentialising dynamics of these *Hindutva* organisations, which although may be characterised as internally diverse, e.g. Gujarati, Punjabi, operate under an umbrella term of faith-based belonging. This adheres to what Brubaker (2004) describes as 'groupism', or 'the tendency to take discrete, bounded groups as basic constituents of social life, chief protagonists of social conflicts, and fundamental units of social analysis… as if they were internally homogeneous, externally bounded groups, even unitary collective actors with common purposes' (8). Here, Brubaker draws upon 'boundary-maintenance' practices of diasporas, which involves 'the preservation of a distinctive identity vis-à-vis a host society (or societies)' juxtaposed against 'hybridity, fluidity, creolization, and syncretism' (2005, 6). Boundary-maintenance characterises the diaspora as a substantive 'entity' which runs the risk of 'groupism' (*ibid.*, 11). In other words, diaspora *Hindutva* organisations play a central role in constructing the notion that the Hindu diaspora can be understood as a homogenous entity in which Hindu-ness is a bounded category of identity that is universal in practice.

It is not just long-distance nationalist sentiments that motivate diaspora *Hindutva* organisations to form boundary-maintenance, however. Equally important has been multiculturalism as a

policy agenda in Western-Anglo 'host societies', which emphasises ethnic and religious plurality through the 'political accommodation of minorities' (Modood 2016). Such political accommodation takes shape through the provision of access to government policymaking on issues of 'recognition' highlighting difference (see Taylor 1994). Consequently, this privileges groupist identity formation built around the notion of 'communities' rather than individuals. Diaspora *Hindutva* organisations seize this opportunity to present themselves as representative of Hindus 'to make claims, to articulate projects, to formulate expectations, to mobilize energies, to appeal to loyalties' (Brubaker 2005, 12) more broadly.

In the UK, despite disproportionate socio-economic success as a minority population, the articulation of 'Hindu hurt' by diaspora *Hindutva* organisations plays upon experiences of historical marginalisation and racism. Consequently, these organisations appropriate a victimhood narrative to garner a voice in the name of religious and cultural plurality; many consult with national government departments and agencies on issues related to diversity, multiculturalism, and community cohesion (Zavos 2010a: 18). Other umbrella organisations (which operate outside the *Sangh Parivar* network) campaign for Hindu representation, employing the discourse of multiculturalism such as politics of recognition for 'the Hindu community', thus essentialising a universal Hindu identity (Anderson 2015: 51).

British Hindus mobilised as a distinct ethno-religious minority in response to multiculturalism legislation and policymaking, but also largely due to opposition of British Muslim mobilisation beginning in the 1980s (and accelerated by the Rushdie affair) (Burlet 2013: 5-7). The result is 'a general ambiguity in relation to the positioning of Hindu-ness… a common desire to exclude British Muslims is apparent, but this commonality is overlaid by a sense of Hindu-ness in process, a negotiation of the identity in relation to different discourses: of nationality, of a kind of "post-nationality", and of religion' (Zavos 2010b: 335). British *Hindutva* thus reinforces a privileging of Hindu-ness that merges religious identification with projections of ideological superiority. Yet, a 'post-nationality' arises, whereby Hindu-ness is envisioned as a broader diasporic consciousness beyond the nation-state imaginary; in short, *being* a Hindu drives collective identity building.

In the US, on the other hand, joining *Hindutva* organisations traditionally provided a means to build socio-cultural capital with other entrepreneurs and IT professional migrants (Mathew and Prashad 2000: 524), but simultaneously reflects an attempt to reconnect with the 'culture' of 'back home'. American Hindus likewise navigate a multicultural society that 'seeks to accommodate itself to its minority status in a pluralistic but racially polarized society' (Rajagopal 2000: 468). Consequently, 'Yankee Hindutva', or 'the *style* in which Hindutva is imagined in the US… [is] as much a response to US racism through the provision of support structures for Indian Americans who are at a social loss in the US, as it is to the growth of Hindu nationalism as "home"' (Mathew and Prashad 2000: 518). *Hindutva* organisations seize upon this opportunity to present a version of Hinduism that can accommodate the American Hindu experience. They play on the cultural anxieties of a professional middle class demographic in the US, fearful of 'losing' their heritage but with resources that allow for its reproduction in 'cultural' spaces (*ibid.*). This is reflected in cases such as the textbook controversy in California, in which American Hindutva organisations protested the California State Board of Education 'claiming that California textbooks discriminated against Hindus and presented a demeaning image of Hinduism' (Visweswaran et. al 2009: 101). By expressing grievances in the realm of education, these organisations could further an ideology but do so by representing 'truth' in knowledge.

Following 9/11, however, in a climate of Islamophobia, American *Hindutva* organisations shifted focus to lobby policy makers and legislators in an effort to distinguish Hindus from the Muslim 'other'. By proclaiming Hinduism as an 'American' religion rooted in peace and non-violence, Islam by contrast is reinforced as a religion fundamentally incompatible with US national interests. Such organisations additionally designate critics as 'Hinduphobic' (Kurien 2016, 2006), thus sublimating an ideological agenda under the guise of religious pluralism.

In sum, diaspora *Hindutva* organisations are successful not merely due to long-distance nationalist sentiments of the diaspora, but 'such an undertaking would have been doomed to fail if the host societies hadn't played along through a peculiar mixture of racism and multiculturalism, and if the international context, dominated by the "Islamist threat," hadn't mirrored certain features of the situation in India' (Jaffrelot and Therwath 2007: 279). A prime example of this is how the language of multiculturalism, as articulated by diaspora *Hindutva*,

transposes to *Hindutva* rhetoric in India. In particular, 'processes of discrimination or minority status in the West become translated in religious and ethnic terms to create new languages of majorities and minorities that are rearticulated as coherent ideologies of religious or ethnic nationalism and which then have repercussions on the countries of origins themselves' (Bhatt and Mukta 2000: 409). When *Hindutva* ideologues in India describe themselves as 'oppressed' due to Islamic invasion, then, this reflects an articulated politics of recognition as experienced by the diaspora in Western-Anglo multicultural societies. Such rhetorical appropriation draws upon 'multiculturalism pluralism… to represent a unified, Hindu India' (Rai 1995: 51-2). The effect is a transnationalisation of human rights vocabulary (Chopra 2006: 188) originated by the diaspora in Western-Anglo multicultural societies and adapted by *Hindutva* actors in India to further the logic that Hindus are a majority that have become a minority in their own homeland. Diaspora *Hindutva* is thus the outcome of a highly politicised agenda that combines transnational and multicultural identity politics.

Given the ideological foundation of diaspora *Hindutva* as not merely representing Hindu communities but doing so in opposition to Islam/Muslims—both in the 'homeland' and within 'host societies'—a lacuna exists in whether diaspora *Hindutva* translates into support for the radical right in the West. The Brexit referendum and Trump's campaign in 2016 provided an opportunity to synthesise diaspora *Hindutva* narratives with populist radical right agendas. The following section details how these phenomena came to fruition.

From #JaiHind to #MAGA

Throughout 2016, the Brexit referendum in the UK and Trump's campaign (and later presidency) in the US prominently featured anti-Muslim discourse well established within *Hindutva* narratives. During the Brexit referendum, the Leave campaign was heavily criticised for instilling 'Project Fear' (Galpin 2016) by constructing narratives of uncontrolled migration—especially of Muslim refugees as displayed in the 'Breaking Point' campaign banner (Hackett 2018)—and linking failed immigration and integration policies with the potential for terrorist attacks committed by Muslim migrants.

During Trump's campaign, the then-candidate called for a 'total and complete shutdown' of all Muslims entering the US. In the first week of the administration, the 'Muslim ban' was implemented, whereby immigrants, refugees, and visa holders from a list of Muslim-majority countries could not enter the US. Fulfilling policies under the 'America First' agenda was thus given top priority as Muslims were assessed to be a national security threat, thus reinforcing Islamophobic anxieties of Muslims as 'foreigners' with the intent to cause violence and terrorism in the US (Tesler 2018; Abdelkader 2016).

The Brexit and Trump campaigns brought to the fore the visibility of populist radical right discourse in the UK and US. Both events can be analysed as a continuum of the other, with 'simultaneous eruptions of populist nationalist sentiment involving heightened suspicion toward those deemed as "foreign"' (Mandaville 2017: 59). Following the Brexit referendum, racially-motivated hate crimes spiked (particularly towards Muslims but also Eastern Europeans), creating a hostile climate already ridden by political polarisation (Burnett 2017; Khalili 2017; Virdee and McGeever 2017); such abuse extended online as well (Evolvi 2017). Similarly, under Trump's presidency, reported hate crimes against Muslims have increased (Levin and Reitzel 2018), whilst a 45% increase in hate violence and xenophobic political rhetoric against South Asians was documented within the first year of the administration, with 82% of perpetrators driven by anti-Muslim sentiment (SAALT 2018). Online hate speech directed towards minorities has also flourished as Trump supporters feel emboldened to express bigoted views (Eddington 2018; Barkun 2017; Hine et. al 2017).

Yet, the Brexit and Trump campaigns echoed themes prevalent in *Hindutva* discourse, not only with Islamophobic tropes, but anxiety with protecting the boundaries of the nation-state. The *Hindutva* notion of *Akhand Bharat*, whereby the modern geographies of India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh are once again united under one state, parallels the fear of uncontrolled borders promoted by the Brexit campaign and Trump's nativist agenda. The diaspora, despite its liminal positionality, also plays a role in furthering 'the epistemological imperatives of modernity and the nation-state' (Lal 1999: 163). Here, a 'productive synergy that exists between distinct nationalist projects' creates not competing, but complementary nationalisms, in which the imaginary of India as a Hindu nation and Western nations as a white, Christian hegemony is

compatible (Thobani 2018: 3). The diaspora hence serves as 'active members in political projects "back home"' whilst simultaneously engage as 'dynamic participants in furthering nationalisms rooted in their countries of settlement as well' (*ibid.*: 6). This is best exemplified with the Ab Ki Baar Trump Sarkar campaign in the US, a case study discussed in the following section of how diasporic Hindus participated and mobilised around Trump's platform to reinforce such complementary nationalisms.

Ab Ki Baar Trump Sarkar

During autumn of 2016, at the height of the US election, a particular Indian American individual, Shalabh Kumar, gained notoriety in the media spotlight for having donated nearly $1 million to Trump's campaign. The year prior, Kumar founded the Republican Hindu Coalition, an advocacy organisation seeking to be the 'bridge between the Hindu-American community and Republican policymakers and leaders' (RHC website 2017) on issues pertinent to the US and India, such as trade and foreign policy relations, as well as security cooperation on Islamist extremism. Kumar had previously arranged a congressional delegation to visit Modi in India when he was still Chief Minister of Gujarat (who at the time was denied a visa to the US for his role in the 2002 Gujarat riots). After Modi became Prime Minister, Kumar organised a cultural event for Modi's 2014 visit to Madison Square Gardens, inviting members of the US Congress. In 2016, the RHC under Kumar endorsed Trump's campaign *before* Trump had secured the Republican nomination (Thobani 2018: 6).

In October 2016, the RHC sponsored a public, 'family fun' event entitled 'Humanity United Against Terror' to highlight the plight of Kashmiri Pundits and Hindu refugees from Bangladesh. It featured Bollywood performances in music and dance, yet steeped in a distinctly Islamophobic undertone:

> Coding the cultural identity of the event, the performances enabled its organizers to enact the "exemplary Other"... Exotic yet already familiar—for Bollywood has long occupied a place in popular Western imaginaries, conjuring up ideas of colour, extravagance, and the carnivalesque—the inclusion of Bollywood dance helped catapult the racio-religious delinations of the RHC into American public consciousness (*ibid.*: 14).

By masking anti-Muslim sentiment in a familiar aesthetic of Bollywood, the RHC successfully promoted a spectacle of diasporic cultural production designated with tropes of the 'exemplary Other', i.e. Hindus. Under this guise, the RHC projected an ideological message amicable for mainstream audiences: that (non-violent) Hindus suffer under the oppression of (violent) Islam.

When Trump entered the stage as keynote speaker of the event, his speech contained a few key themes that drew praise from the audience.[4] First, Trump stressed entrepreneurial success, both in India and amongst Hindu Americans. The then-candidate described how '[Hindu] values of hard work, education, and enterprise' have contributed to US society. By reinforcing the idea that Hindu Americans are 'good immigrants' who serve as the 'model minority' in American society, Trump asserted the myth of the American Dream.

Secondly, Trump praised India's role in fighting 'radical Islamic terrorism', especially against Pakistan, and signaled the need for US-India collaboration to eliminate this evil threat. Although Trump expressed anxiety towards Islam throughout the campaign, equating Islam as a foreign threat to India's national security, and ultimately reinforcing the idea that India is a Hindu nation and Pakistan a Muslim nation, was a bespoke narrative tailored to the event. Here, Trump evoked a "'diasporic imaginary", shown to be generative of diasporic subjectivity in its ability to first produce the imagined homeland to which the diaspora relates and through which it defines itself in turn. Imbricated with the diasporic imaginary then, long-distance nationalism is not only the result of historical migrations, but of the violence of nation-formation as well' (*ibid.*: 5). The violent legacy of Partition resulting in the nation-states of India and Pakistan has cemented in the diasporic imaginary as a continuous struggle to define who belongs in these national formations.

Trump's statement can additionally be viewed in conjunction with sensationalised stories of 'radicalised' Bangladeshi migrant workers in India who are stigmatised for 'promoting' Islamist activities, prompting reactionary responses to increase border security with the Muslim-majority nation. The event's aim to highlight the plight of Kashmiri pundits and Hindu refugees from

[4] For whole speech see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bz51FYfHV2M

Bangladesh implies that in order to defeat 'radical Islamic terrorism', it is imperative to maintain and secure India's boundaries from a looming threat. This reinforces the *Akhand Bharat* narrative and by extension, the 'geographies of India and the US are made symbolically synonymous, metaphorically mapped onto one another via concerns to secure their (different) territorial boundaries' (*ibid.*: 13).

Lastly, Trump called out on 'crooked Hillary' with her links to the 'politically correct' establishment. At the event, a poster surfaced of Hillary Clinton, with devil horns, as being in cahoots with Congress' Sonia Gandhi to eliminate Modi in a 'witch hunt'. Trump reinforced 'identifying these leftist adversaries as intent on destroying the US and as extension of progressive groups in India' (*ibid.*: 12). Implicitly, Trump equated his anti-establishment persona challenging Clinton, to that of Modi's initiative to root out corruption imposed by Congress' legacy of dynastic politics.

Following its pseudo-rally, the RHC produced campaign material specifically targeting Hindu Americans. Described as the Ab Ki Baar Trump Sarkar (This time a Trump government) campaign—modeled after Ab Ki Baar Modi Sarkar in 2014—the RHC released a video advertisement[5] featuring clips of the 'Humanity United Against Terror' event and Trump reinforcing his commitment to Hindu American interests, including speaking in Hindi, '*Ab Ki Baar Trump Sarkar*' (Figure 1). The advertisement went viral, receiving coverage in news media articles in India, the US, and UK (and even on late night television programmes[6]).

[5] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IzZVhLdtLV8
[6] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MkzRKXhwhv8

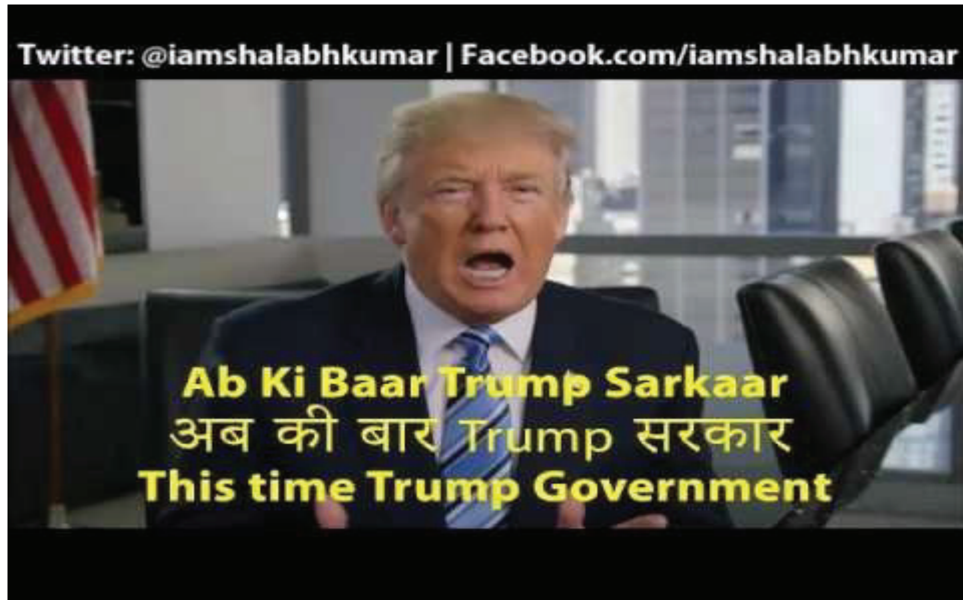

Figure 1 (source: Twitter)

Representations of hybridity permeate throughout the Ab Ki Baar Trump Sarkar advertisement. Released during Diwali with Hindi music playing in the background, it signifies the ushering of a Trump era as a new beginning laced with optimism. Indeed, when Trump lights the diya upon first entering the stage, the symbolism of light over darkness marks a forthcoming period of hope. Trump's statement that 'We love the Hindus… We love India', refers to working with Modi in order to build a better US-India relationship to achieve a state of harmony (or, in the words of Kumar, *Ram Rajya*).

Since the election, Kumar has held a prominent role in Trump's transition team, and continues to be involved in the White House as part of the Asian Pacific American Advisory Committee and the National Committee of Asian American Republicans. Kumar often visits India as spokesman for the RHC, providing media interviews where he declares support for the Trump administration and promises favourable US-India relations. In 2017, the RHC released a book written by a Republican campaign strategist entitled *Ab Ki Baar Trump Sarkar: How One Man Flipped the Hindu-American Vote to Put Trump in the White House*, which documents the founding and development of the organisation.

The RHC builds on a legacy of diaspora *Hindutva* mobilisation. Yet, it's Ab Ki Baar Trump Sarkar campaign symbolises a larger phenomenon that merges religious genres with contemporary geopolitical realities in a hybridised format made possible by mass media consumption. In other words, the Ab Ki Baar Trump Sarkar campaign politicised expressions of Hindu-ness by weaving in *Hindutva* narratives of Islamist extremism as a simultaneous threat to India and the US. It targeted the diaspora with a visual representation well-suited towards virality on social media (by releasing the advertisement on YouTube). Combined with the emergence of identitarian social media groups such as Hindus for Trump (Figure 2)[7], and the less vocal but noticeable support for Brexit in the UK, this new mode of highly visible diaspora mobilisation as a groupist political integration project has gained traction in the national spotlight.[8]

Ideological linkages between diaspora *Hindutva* and the Western-Anglo radical right are materialised and reinforced via online spaces in which 'information exchange on the internet is characterized by the borrowing of ideas, concepts and stratagems *across* movements… In this manner, internet discourse may be characterized by the somewhat paradoxical quality of standardized hybridity, a bricolage across borders' (Chopra 2006: 201-2). The following section theorises how the convergent nature of 'internet discourse' creates new ideological hybridities between diaspora *Hindutva* and support for populist radical right ideas.

[7] The aesthetics of the Hindus for Trump logo is equally striking. The red, white, and blue image of Trump in the lotus position, with the Om featured, reveals a syncretism of dramatic interplay between ancient spirituality and aspiration for enlightenment. Trump is the figure that will be guided by divine intervention to seek a greater truth for humanity.

[8] Based on polling data, 30% of Hindus voted for Brexit in 2016 (Ashcroft Polls) and 16% of Indian Americans voted for Trump in the US national election (National Asian American Survey). Due to differences in polling design, as well as differences in how ethnicity and race is measured in the UK and US, we do not have numbers on Hindu voters for Trump per say as the 'Indian American' category comprises all religious groups.

Figure 2 (source: Twitter)

Methodology

This chapter highlights the participatory dynamics and interactions of Hindu diaspora Twitter users living in the UK and US who express pro-Brexit and/or pro-Trump views. Determining account selection criteria was difficult due a number of factors, not least that a limited number of accounts were explicit in revealing both Hindu identity and preference for populist radical right politics. Often, Hindu names and/or photos became an indicator, although determining religious affiliation ran the risk of essentialising ethnic/racial identities based on phenotype. In addition, a number of Sikh and Christian diaspora account users were actively posting pro-Brexit and/or pro-Trump content. Thus, data collection included Hindu, Sikh, and Christian diaspora users. This chapter, however, focuses on Hindu diaspora users and their role in creating new boundaries of diaspora *Hindutva*.[9]

From April 2017 to April 2018, entire timelines of thirty-nine selected Twitter accounts was scraped, providing the first to most recent tweet of each user, with a total of 185,580 tweets that

[9] For more on the relationship between diasporic Hindu, Sikh, and Christian pro-Brexit and pro-Trump supporters in this study, see Leidig (2019).

were manually coded. The location of accounts was either provided by users or determined according to the tweets that displayed a familiarity with local political issues in the UK or US. With the exception of a few accounts, nearly all the users tweeted about both Brexit *and* Trump, thus allowing for a convergent rather than a comparative analysis of users.

Accounts comprised of both organisations (two in the UK, seven in the US) and individuals (thirteen in the UK, seventeen in the US). Individuals were distinguished by a few characteristics, such as composing the majority of users, tweeting at a greater frequency than organisations, and the only users to have more than 10,000 followers. Hence, although organisations may serve as mobilising agents, instead, individuals dominated the Twitter network.[10] The following highlights main findings of these Hindu diaspora Twitter users, emphasising how ideological hybridities form by virtue of online interactions at multiple levels of entanglement: between the 'homeland' and diaspora, across diaspora communities in the UK and US, and amongst diaspora communities and radical right leaders in Western societies.

(Trans)national Imaginaries Between the 'Homeland' and Diaspora

Hindu diaspora users visibly display a sense of belonging to the imagined 'homeland' on the Twitter platform. Proud Immigrant reflects this connectivity to India in defense of her political views:

> 'I was born in India where many support Trump'.[11]

Indeed, approximately forty percent in India view Trump as a strong leader who is well-qualified to be president. Nearly the same percentage support Trump's restriction on immigration from Muslim-majority countries, with BJP supporters more likely to support this initiative (Pew Research 2017). There does exist a small following of overt Trump supporters in India, especially

[10] For more on methodology see Leidig (2019).

[11] Quoted tweets have been changed from the original, but still reflect the meaning of content, unless the tweet has been deleted by the user in which case the original is quoted. Similarly, words in quotation marks are direct usage as they appear across a majority of tweets, thus anonymising users. Twitter user handles have been changed to protect anonymity, unless the account is managed by an organisation. Personal identifying information has not been revealed and/or disclosed in the findings. These alterations are necessary to ensure ethical compliance according to the Research Council of Norway.

amongst fringe *Hindutva* groups that have organised public rallies (e.g. Hindu Sena). But rather than stating evidence for her claim, Proud Immigrant indicates her positioning as a diasporic individual as justification. By identifying her 'homeland', Proud Immigrant constructs a 'diasporic imaginary' whereby her role is one of transnational engagement within a global diasporic consciousness.

Connection to the 'homeland' is further evident in the way Hindu diaspora Twitter users reinforce *Hindutva* tropes. By referring to the historical Islamic 'conquest' of the subcontinent, this ignites contemporary fears of 'suffering' and 'oppression' by Muslims who have 'invaded' India in order to convert Hindus. Such tweets are used to caution the West to protect its sovereign borders in order to avoid a repeat of history. Similarly, users describe instances of Hindu 'persecution' in other parts of the world, e.g. Kashmir, Bangladesh (especially in heavily populated Rohingya areas), as incidences of 'genocide' and '#religiousapartheid'. Users often include the hashtag '#MakeIndiaGreatAgain' and '#hindulivesmatter' in response to an imagined 'jihad' against Hindus and the 'Hindu way of life'. Building on the legacy of diaspora *Hindutva* mobilisation, these users call for the recognition of Hindu victimhood as an endemic global predicament. But they importantly do so in a vocabulary that exploits current discourses—as well as mimicking popular viral hashtag strategies—within contemporary left-wing identity politics. The discursive tactic of exploiting Western social movement narratives (i.e. using hashtags such as #hindulivesmatter compared to #blacklivesmatter) is a distinct framing that evokes civil liberties in the struggle for social justice.

Hindu diaspora Twitter users also contextualise Hindu-Muslim tension as local conflictual incidents. For instance, preserving Hindu temples is a means of 'survival', whereas mosques are depicted as sites of cultural intrusion. Tweets refer to a story reported by far-right media site *Breitbart News*, of British Hindu protests against plans to construct a Muslim centre in a 'non-Muslim area' of Leicester. These territorial wars over symbolic places of worship reveal how Hindutva rhetoric traverses to the diasporic context—from Ayodhya to Leicester. It reveals how claims-making 'functions across scales—often simultaneously and multi-directionality—from the transnational through the national to the local […]' (Alexander 2017, 1549). Muslims and Islam are viewed a threat, not just as a violent and dangerous religion, but fundamentally at odds

with the cohesion of local communities in Western-Anglo societies. The diaspora, in contrast, portrays Hinduism as a religion compatible with Western values of law and order, tolerance, and peace. Thus, when politicians visit Hindu temples, such as British Prime Minister Theresa May, or when Trump celebrates Diwali (Figure 3), this reinforces the notion that Hinduism is a religion that belongs in the West.

Figure 3 (source: Twitter)

(Trans)national Imaginaries Between Diasporas

If 'diaspora encapsulates the idea of "scattering" to, as Safran insists, "at least two 'peripheral' places" (1991, 83-84), this begs the question of what links these dispersed places and groups without recourse to a place of origin? And, relatedly, how are these links to be operationalized as part of a process of claims-making without falling back on even strategically essentialized collective identities?' (Alexander 2017, 1548). Despite Hindu diaspora Twitter users located in different regions, they express in common their positionality as 'good immigrants' in order to

assert their belonging in Western-Anglo societies. For example, Proud Immigrant, a young female in the US, voices the advantages of Hindu diaspora immigration when responding to the Trump administration's policy initiative on H1-B immigration:

> 'Merit based is the way to go. There are so many brown engineers, doctors, PhD students, entrepreneurs in Silicon Valley'.

Here, Proud Immigrant refers to merit-based immigration as a traditional route for highly skilled and highly educated Hindus to gain work permits in the US. The 'good immigrant' stereotype of diasporic Hindus as 'assimiliated' in Western societies helps construct the 'model minority' myth which users such as Proud Immigrant perpetuate in the form of groupist political integration. Interestingly, the use of the word 'brown' as a racial designation signifies once again how left-wing identity politics discourse is appropriated to serve an exclusionary agenda.

Similarly, many British Hindu diaspora users support Brexit in the hope that immigration from the EU will decline once the UK is no longer a member state. Rohan, a very politically active young male in the Brexit movement, often responds to commentators on Twitter on the issue of immigration:

> 'I'm brown and a migrant. You do not represent me you libtard'.

Clearly, Rohan feels the need to intervene in the EU immigration debate as someone who does not feel included in public discussion. By additionally revealing his 'brown' racial identity, Rohan believes this is sufficient to afford him a voice as a representative on immigration. Proud Immigrant likewise asserts her personal background in the immigration debate:

> 'As a minority, woman and legal immigrant in this country, I am hopeful and feel respected'.

The legal/illegal distinction is key for Proud Immigrant, as it shifts the conversation away from racial tropes to an ideological positioning. Despite efforts to foment an ideological debate on immigration, however, both Proud Immigrant and Rohan chose to self-identify their immigrant backgrounds as justification for their positionings. By using the terms 'minority' and 'woman' in Proud Immigrant's case, and 'brown' for Rohan, they adopt the discourse of multiculturalism, i.e. a politics of recognition, in order to assert their belonging in the US and UK. In short, these

individuals in the Hindu diaspora articulate their ethnic difference in order to 'prove' they have successfully integrated into Western-Anglo societies. The link between them is emphasising a 'good immigrant' trope, which in its claims-making creates a strategically essentialized collective identity based on ethnic groupism.

Adopting such identifying labels may seem antagonistic to the populist radical right agenda, which seeks to eliminate the 'otherness' of diversity as a threat to ethno-nationalist identity. However, underpinning the populist radical right critique of multiculturalism is a reinforcement of the ethnopluralism thesis, in which self-governing regions are determined by ethnicity. When diasporic Hindus signal their status as 'good immigrants' whom are not a threat to Western societies, they reinforce a groupist identity that posits ethnic groups as homogenous entities. These individuals reconstruct all Hindus as culturally (and ethnically) compatible with the West, thus embedding themselves in an exclusionary nationalist narrative. The following section further explores the relationship between these Hindu diaspora users and radical right leaders in the West.

National Imaginaries between Diasporas and the Radical Right

Diaspora entanglements are not only shared between the 'homeland', nor across users in the UK and US, but is significantly bolstered by interactions (in this case through retweets), with radical right leaders in Western societies. These leaders perpetuate the narrative that Hindu diaspora political integration is possible due to their positionality as non-Muslims. Thus, when influential radical right ideologues such as Tommy Robinson in the UK acknowledge that Hindus and Sikhs have suffered 'genocide' under 'Islamic rule in India' (Figure 4), this reinforces the historiographical revisionist claims of *Hindutva*. Similarly, Anne Marie Waters, a vocal proponent of anti-Islam and anti-Sharia in the UK, implies that Hindus are peaceful and law-abiding, as opposed to Muslim migrants who are inherently violent terrorists with the aim to 'rape' European women (Figure 5). Muslims, then, are depicted as 'crimmigrants' vis-à-vis 'good immigrant' Hindus.

@TRobinsonNewEra

Follow

The Biggest Hindu-Sikh Holocaust in World History Whitewashed

The Biggest Hindu-Sikh Holocaust in the History of World ...

The Barbaric Islamic Rule in India: The Biggest Holocaust in World History Whitewashed from History Books. The Jews News | Intl Media Feed | Reposted 4 Feb 2015:: The genocide suffered

hinduexistence.org

2:27 PM - 17 May 2017

Figure 4 (source: Twitter)

@AMDWaters

Follow

If the recent million or so migrants to Europe had been Hindu (say), would the terror/rape still have followed? We all know the answer.

8:06 AM - 10 Jul 2017

Figure 5 (source: Twitter)

Crucially, it is not only radical right actors at the grassroots level who serve as allies, but prominent politicians of populist radical right parties as well. In one tweet, leader of the Dutch Party for Freedom (PVV), Geert Wilders, stands with RHC founder Shalabh Kumar (Figure 6). Wilder's trademark claim of the 'Islamization of the Netherlands' echoes what Roopram and van Steenbergen (2014) find amongst Hindustani PVV voters. Whilst most Hindustani supporters promote a 'work ethos' discourse citing concerns of immigration as an economic burden on the welfare state, others advocate a 'hindu-nationalist' discourse that fears Islam as a cultural threat to the Netherlands (56-7). The latter warn of Islamist radicalisation and

extremism, connecting historical and cultural narratives of past Muslim rule in India to the contemporary threat of 'Islamization' of Dutch society (*ibid.*: 55-6). By standing with RHC founder Kumar, Wilders indicates that 'Islamization' must be fought with 'allies' in a global battle.

Figure 6 (source: Twitter)

Additionally, former UK Independence Party leader and lead Brexit campaigner Nigel Farage spoke at a RHC rally celebrating the 70th anniversary of India's independence (Figure 7). Farage admired the world's largest democracy which 'under its current strong leadership [of Modi], I believe India is going places'. Farage also discussed the need to fight for sovereignty as reflected with the UK's 'independence' from the EU with the Brexit vote. He additionally remarked how

the US similarly chose an 'independently minded President' with Trump. Farage hoped to consequently create a new partnership between the UK, US, and India.[12] Despite Farage's idiosyncratic comparison of India's resistance to British colonialism with that of the UK's 'independence day' from the EU and Trump's mission to 'Make America Great Again', Farage describes an exclusionary nationalist narrative which posits that each of these nations can have successful futures, thus reinforcing the notion of complementary rather than competing nationalisms.

Figure 7 (source: Twitter)

[12] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eK4i53o117E

When alliances are formed with figures such Robinson, Waters, Wilders, and Farage, this signals a new form of groupist political integration that emerges in response to the rise of the radical right. Here, it is not just long-distance nationalism between the diaspora and India that characterises diaspora *Hindutva* (although *Hindutva* ideology continues to play a significant role in these transnational linkages). Rather, it is a development in creating new narratives of nationalism centred on a shared ideological commitment to exclusionary nationalism, which is built on the basis of anti-Islam and anti-Muslim 'othering' in order to reproduce the notion of the Hindu diaspora as 'well-integrated' in Western societies. To some extent this builds on the groupist political integration approach present in the multiculturalism agenda, as it reinforces tropes of ethnic groupism. But the rise of the radical right in the volatile and uncertain political landscape of contemporary Western societies adds an additional element in defining who belongs to the nation. By virtue, this transforms the dynamics of groupist political integration in the diaspora 'at which boundaries of inclusion and exclusion, of belonging and otherness, of "us" and "them", are contested (Brah 1996: 208-209) in order to accommodate to the radical right national imaginary.

Ethnic groupism vis-à-vis the nation should thus be understood not in terms of entities, but instead as dynamic and contingent:

> Ethnicity, race, and nation should be conceptualized… in relational, processual, dynamic, eventful, and disaggregated terms. This means thinking of ethnicity, race, and nation not in terms of substantial groups or entities but in terms of practical categories, situated actions, cultural idioms, cognitive schemas, discursive frames, organizational routines, institutional forms, political projects, and contingent events. It means thinking of ethnicization, racialization, and nationalization as political, social, cultural, and psychological processes. And it means taking as a basic analytical category not the "group" as an entity but groupness as a contextually fluctuating conceptual variable (Brubaker 2004: 11).

By conceptualising ethnic groupism as a process rather than an entity, we can situate how diaspora *Hindutva* and the radical right create entanglements. At the same time, new boundaries of inclusion and exclusion performed by diasporas redefine who belongs to the national imaginary, thus reconceptualising the nation as not merely a static entity but relational in its formations.

Conclusion

According to Alexander (2017), there exists 'an insufficient sociological attention to the historical and cultural specificities of diaspora experiences, and how these impact on diaspora identities' (1552). This chapter aims to address this gap by exploring how the experiences of the Hindu diaspora in the UK and US led way towards creating ideological hybridities between diaspora *Hindutva* and the radical right.

It begins by situating Modi's election in 2014, which depended on significant diaspora support, particularly in IT and communications operations. Modi's campaign built on a pre-existing relationship of long-distance nationalism between India and diaspora communities. Yet, such long-distance nationalism vis-à-vis the diaspora is not a one-way trajectory, but instead a multi-directional engagement. This is exemplified through the formation of diaspora *Hindutva* organisations in the UK and US. Whilst British and American *Hindutva* organisations emerged in response to long-distance nationalist sentiments, equally significant has been the institutionalisation of multiculturalism as a policy agenda in these 'host societies'. By speaking as representatives of a 'universal' Hindu community, diaspora *Hindutva* organisations have secured formal political access in lobbying efforts and consultation with government departments and agencies. In the name of ethnic and religious plurality, these organisations employ a groupist approach to reinforce their positioning as 'well-integrated', in contrast to Muslims as 'unassimilable' and culturally incompatible with Western societies.

A lacuna thus exists in whether diaspora *Hindutva*, motivated by anti-Muslim and anti-Islam 'othering', translates into support for the radical right in the West. The Brexit referendum and Trump's campaign (and later presidency) in 2016 provided an opportunity to synergise these phenomena. Not only did these campaigns reinforce Islamophobic tropes, but instilled an anxiety with protecting the borders of the nation-state. As such, the diaspora came to occupy a position within the 'diasporic imaginary' to construct not competing, but complementary nationalisms, between India and the West. The rise of identitarian Hindu diaspora organisations in 2016, such as the Republican Hindu Coalition in the US, build on the legacy of diaspora *Hindutva* organisations in Western-Anglo societies. Whilst the RHC manifests a groupist political

integration approach, what marks a shift from its predecessors is how it merges religious genres with contemporary geopolitical realities in a hybridised format made possible by mass media consumption.

At the same time, groupist integration is being challenged by a desire to move beyond the institutional framework of diaspora *Hindutva* organisations. This is not to disregard the very powerful role which these organisations continue to hold, but by exploring Hindu diaspora Twitter users that support Brexit and Trump, this chapter shows that representation of diaspora communities via organisations is being surpassed by the increasing capacity of individuals seeking to create a voice through the medium of online milieu. For these individuals, political integration occurs by virtue of online interactions at multiple levels of entanglement: between the 'homeland' and the diaspora, across diaspora communities in the UK and US, and lastly, between diaspora communities and radical right leaders in Western societies.

For these Hindu diaspora individuals, supporting Brexit and Trump is not simply a desire to evoke a nostalgia for the Commonwealth or strengthen the US-India relationship, as suggested by entanglements between the 'homeland' and diaspora. Nor is it solely about maintaining a groupist identity of the 'good immigrant' status, as a commonality across diaspora communities. Rather, the last entanglement marks a development beyond diaspora *Hindutva* to support for radical right platforms as a new mode of political integration. These individuals cement ideological hybridities with radical right leaders in order to create new narratives of nationalism that further the image of Islam and Muslims as the 'other' in the Western imaginary. These individuals highlight new dynamics of groupist political integration as relational rather than entity bound, defining new boundaries of inclusion and exclusion in Western-Anglo societies.

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III

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Article

Immigrant, Nationalist and Proud: A Twitter Analysis of Indian Diaspora Supporters for Brexit and Trump

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Abstract
The Brexit referendum to leave the EU and Trump's success in the US general election in 2016 sparked new waves of discussion on nativism, nationalism, and the far right. Within these analyses, however, very little attention has been devoted towards exploring the transnational ideological circulation of Islamophobia and anti-establishment sentiment, especially amongst diaspora and migrant networks. This article thus explores the role of the Indian diaspora as mediators in populist radical right discourse in the West. During the Brexit referendum and Trump's election and presidency, a number of Indian diaspora voices took to Twitter to express pro-Brexit and pro-Trump views. This article presents a year-long qualitative study of these users. It highlights how these diasporic Indians interact and engage on Twitter in order to signal belonging on multiple levels: as individuals, as an imaginary collective non-Muslim diaspora, and as members of (populist radical right) Twitter society. By analysing these users' social media performativity, we obtain insight into how social media spaces may help construct ethnic and (trans)national identities according to boundaries of inclusion/exclusion. This article demonstrates how some Indian diaspora individuals are embedded into exclusivist national political agendas of the populist radical right in Western societies.

Keywords
Brexit; diaspora; Indian; integration; multiculturalism; populism; radical right; Trump; Twitter

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1. Introduction

This article explores the role of British and American-based Indian diaspora supporters for Brexit and Trump. It begins by introducing how the Brexit referendum to leave the European Union and Trump's campaign and presidency in the US (both which at times deliberately targeted the Indian diaspora) utilised populist radical right rhetoric to galvanise support on social media. In response, the emergence of pro-Brexit and pro-Trump social media movements based on identitarian membership, such as 'Sikhs for Britain' and 'Hindus for Trump', as well as the establishment of advocacy organisations such as the Republican Hindu Coalition in the US which openly supported Trump's candidacy, reveals some diasporic Indians as proponents of populist radical right ideas.

One legacy of Indian diaspora political mobilisation in the West is largely based on Hindutva (or Hindu nationalism), an ideology that promotes the superiority of Hindu civilisation from the threat of Islam and Muslim 'invasion'. Hindutva resonates amongst a diaspora keen to preserve their Hindu identity by cultivating a long-distance nationalism that foregrounds belonging 'back home' whilst still creating a sense of collective identity amongst diaspora communities in the West. Sikh and Christian Indian diaspora groups have likewise successfully mobilised in community building efforts that aim to highlight their religious identities in Western multicultural societies. Consequently, non-Muslim Indian diaspora activism has attempted to distinguish a boundary against the Muslim 'other', building on Islamophobic anxiety prevalent in a post-9/11 era. This article thus posits that anti-Muslim

anxiety, and anti-establishment sentiment (who are held accountable for pro-Muslim policies), are core issues that motivate such Indian diaspora communities to support populist radical right agendas.

Following a year-long qualitative study of Indian diaspora Twitter users who express pro-Brexit and pro-Trump views, this article highlights their engagement in political discourse within the Brexit and Trump Twittersphere(s). Their interactions help (re)produce key issues and rhetoric within the populist radical right online milieu. Importantly, these users incorporate an 'integration' narrative to justify their positioning as 'good immigrants' in Western societies (as opposed to non-'integration' tendencies of Muslims). By doing so, these diasporic Indians provide insight into how online spaces may help construct meanings of ethnic and (trans)national identities according to boundaries of inclusion/exclusion.

This article highlights online Indian diaspora supporters for Brexit and Trump by situating their expressions of Islamophobia and anti-establishment sentiment in order to embed themselves within the populist radical right agenda of exclusionary nationalism in Western societies. By illuminating what may be assumed as paradoxical political views of an ethnic minority demographic, this article contributes towards understanding and explaining their support for populist radical right ideology in the West.

2. "The Most Imminent and Urgent Threat and Problem That Faces This Country, Namely Open-Door Immigration, and the Security and Social Implications of It"—Nigel Farage[1]

Ideologically, the populist radical right promotes a combination of ethno-nationalism, xenophobia expressed as cultural racism, and anti-establishment populism (Rydgren, 2005, 2017). National identity is conflated with a distinct cultural identity rooted in an ethnic past; the populist radical right seeks to 'preserve' national culture by keeping separate different cultures, i.e., ethno-pluralism. The contemporary threat of ethno-pluralism is the apprehension that Islam—and consequently, Muslims—is the fundamental 'other' in Western societies. Therefore, the populist radical right holds "a visceral opposition to, and demonization of Islam" and consequently, "immigrants from Muslim countries", whom are viewed as threatening to national values (Kallis, 2015, p. 28; Rydgren, 2007, p. 244) in the post-9/11 era. The populist radical right criticises the 'elite' political and media establishment for failing to adequately resolve issues such as immigration, integration, and (ethno-)national identity, using Islam as a placeholder to articulate these grievances.

Whilst demand and supply factors help explain the emergence and success of the populist radical right, including political opportunities and increasing discontent and disaffection with governing institutions and parties, the role of mass media is also key in disseminating populist radical right discourses and agendas towards a wider audience (Kallis, 2013; Rydgren, 2005). The transnational diffusion of ideas and practices made possible through media and communication technologies reflects a pivotal shift in populist radical right platforms. The effect is a growing global wave that has taken root across numerous locales:

> [S]trong points of ideological and political convergence have started to crystallize, turning the radical right into a truly transnational European and occasionally trans-Atlantic force...The topicality of a new range of issues, such as immigration, international terrorism, national sovereignty, globalization…have created a political milieu that has allowed the radical right not only to thrive but also to unite its otherwise disparate and fragmented forces. (Kallis, 2015, p. 28)

This noteworthy phenomenon describes the appeal, and at times, success, of populist radical right movements and parties. In the case of the UK Independence Party (UKIP)-backed Brexit campaign and Trump's election and presidency, both presented issues that resonated with similar demographics, but delivered them according to local narratives.

During the 2016 referendum campaign for Britain's membership in the EU, UKIP seized the opportunity to combine its Eurosceptic platform with disdain for Westminster. UKIP took a tactical approach by attacking the establishment for failing to address issues of immigration and integration—escalated by sensational media coverage of the refugee crisis. Indeed, then UKIP leader Nigel Farage "blamed state multiculturalism for the rise of home-grown terrorism in Europe" (Kallis, 2015, pp. 34–35), citing the metropolitan elite for enacting policies that created 'parallel lives' and hence, Islamist extremism within communities. In doing so, UKIP portrayed Muslims as a 'fifth column' within British society who were a threat to national security, but more importantly, national culture. By linking potential extremist activity of future refugees to past integration policy failures, UKIP promoted a discourse of fear in the present. Given UKIP's stance as the party which claimed issue ownership on immigration (see Goodwin & Milazzo, 2017), its referendum rhetoric built on pre-existing anxieties surrounding uncontrolled borders.

During the campaign, UKIP employed an extensive social media strategy for Vote Leave. The party significantly used Twitter's infrastructure as an avenue to garner support for Brexit, including the ability to broadcast the party's platform to users instead of the mainstream media; setting the discursive framing of the Leave camp; building on previous Eurosceptic movements to create a broader coalition; and providing the appearance of democratic representation in the political realm. Yet, there was "substantial focus on mobi-

[1] Nigel Farage speech, 29 April 2016.

lization of existing supporters, rather than converting new ones" (Usherwood & Wright, 2017, p. 380). Pro-Brexit Twitter users engaged in diffusing information to ideologically similar users, thus creating online "polarized in-groups" as had also occurred in the 2015 general campaign (Segesten & Bossetta, 2016, pp. 14–15). This phenomenon reflects what are termed "ideological cyberghettoes" (Lilleker & Koc-Michalska, 2017, p. 4) or "homogeneous affective echo chambers" in which individuals selectively expose themselves to sources that reinforce their political opinions (Himelboim et al., 2016, p. 1395). The extensive use of Twitter bots by the pro-Brexit side additionally helped generate targeted content (Howard & Kollanyi, 2016). In short, UKIP exercised an impressive social media strategy during the EU referendum that helped ensure its populist radical right message had reached an intended audience.

With parallels in rhetoric and strategy to the UKIP-backed Vote Leave campaign (Wilson, 2017), Trump's campaign likewise galvanised support employing a populist radical right narrative throughout the US national election the same year. Whilst a majority of Trump's policy proposals were not radical, the campaign's rhetoric was outwardly hostile towards governing political institutions (Eiermann, 2016). In a study of Trump's Twitter following, for example, Wang, Niemi, Li and Hu (2016) found that attacks on the Democrats (i.e., the incumbent political party) received the most "likes"; in short, anti-establishment sentiment was a motivating factor for Trump supporters who were largely disaffected with the governing status quo. Further, Trump's use of informal, direct, and provocative language on Twitter helped construct and normalise the image of a homogenous nation threated by the dangerous 'other' (Kreis, 2017). More research on the Trump campaign's social media strategy is needed in order to effectively evaluate the extent of online support for populist radical right discourse, although it has been noted how Trump disrupted the norms of election campaigning on social media (Enli, 2017).

3. A New, Growing Base?

It seems paradoxical (and rare) that ethnic minorities and/or immigrants would support populist radical right platforms. As such, there exists very little research on these supporters. Two exceptions are case studies in Sweden and the Netherlands.

The Sweden Democrats (SD) is an ethno-nationalist party with roots in Swedish fascism. Pettersson, Liebkind, and Sakki (2016) found that ethnic minority and/or immigrant SD politicians had complex, fluid, and multifaceted identity constructions. Often revealed was a "discursive tension between an assigned immigrant or ethnic minority identity on the one hand, and an asserted Swedish identity on the other" (Pettersson et al., 2016, p. 637). By presenting themselves as a 'good immigrant,' these politicians reinforced the narrative that immigrants need only to work hard to succeed and will ultimately be accepted in society. As such, 'elite' liberals were viewed as pandering to immigrants who are assumed to "not think for themselves" and who are, importantly, non-national (Pettersson et al., 2016, pp. 637–638). Mulinari and Neergaard (2018) similarly found that migrant activists in the SD describe individual stories of hard work as a means of successful integration, as opposed to assumed cultural differences or unwillingness of new migrants to assimilate into Swedish culture. Combined with this narrative was opposition to Islam that feared new migrants of Muslim background would create "enclave societies" and foster the "Islamisation of Sweden" (Mulinari & Neergaard, 2018, p. 14).

In the Netherlands, Roopram and van Steenbergen (2014) analysed Hindustani[2] voters of the Freedom Party (PVV), a populist radical right party with a strong anti-immigration and anti-Islam platform. Whilst some Hindustani PVV voters promoted a "work ethos" discourse citing concerns of immigration as an economic burden on the welfare state, others feared Islam as a cultural threat to the Netherlands (Roopram & van Steenbergen, 2014, pp. 56–57). The latter spoke of Islamist radicalisation and extremism, connecting historical and cultural narratives of past Muslim rule in India to the contemporary threat of "Islamization" of Dutch society (Roopram & van Steenbergen, 2014, pp. 55–56). This is key as it signals how global Islamophobic tropes can operate and adapt to local contexts, and ultimately, bolster support for populist radical right ideology in the West.

If we are to consider how the SD and PVV appeal to ethnic minorities and/or immigrants, then such insight might also apply to pro-Brexit and pro-Trump Indian diaspora supporters. Islamophobic and anti-establishment views promoted by the Vote Leave campaign and Trump's campaign and presidency likely resonated with some diasporic Indians[3]. Yet, the articulation of populist radical right ideas amongst the diaspora is grounded within a historical legacy of anti-Muslim sentiment. The next section highlights the evolution of Indian diaspora political mobilisation in the UK and US as framed according to non-Muslim identity building.

4. Building a Minority Identity

The performance of diasporic identity is a way of simultaneously constructing imaginaries of the homeland and of creating a minority identity outside India. For many within the Indian diaspora, the formation of a minority identity in Western societies is construed along religious lines as reflected in the historical and contemporary politics of nation-building on the subcontinent. Although political mobilisation and activism of Hindu, Sikh, and

[2] Hindustani refers to Hindus, Muslims, and Christians who migrated as indentured labourers from India to Suriname, and then to the Netherlands.

[3] Based on polling data, 33% of British South Asians voted for Brexit in 2016 (Ashcroft Polls) and 16% of Indian Americans voted for Trump in the US national election (National Asian American Survey).

Christian communities in the West has alleviated these religious tensions carried over with the diaspora, one issue remains stark in the post-9/11 era: their distinct framing as non-Muslim religious identities.

Hindutva (or Hindu nationalism) ideology and its organisations have a historical legacy amongst the Hindu diaspora in the UK, US, Canada, the Caribbean, and eastern and southern Africa (Bhatt & Mukta, 2000, p. 435)[4]. Whilst joining in Hindutva activities is a way of building socio-cultural capital with others (Mathew & Prashad, 2000, p. 524), it more importantly provides comfort to a diaspora seeking to define itself in the West (see Bhatt, 2000). The demand from migrants to educate their children in Hindu traditions (Jaffrelot & Therwath, 2007) reflects an attempt to reconnect with the 'culture' of 'back home'. Hindutva organisations seize upon this opportunity to present a version of Hinduism that can accommodate the diasporic experience.

The shift to multiculturalism as a policy agenda in the West has had a profound impact on diasporic Hindutva organisations, whether serving as ethnic lobbies in party politics, or adopting a human rights discourse in terms of a victimhood narrative (Bhatt, 2000, p. 580; Jaffrelot & Therwath, 2007; Kamat & Mathew, 2003; Therwath, 2012; Zavos, 2010, p. 12). In the UK, these organisations regularly feature in British government policies related to diversity, multiculturalism, and community cohesion in the name of religious and cultural plurality (Zavos, 2010, p. 18). Self-described umbrella organisations campaign on issues of Hindu representation in the public sphere, thereby institutionalising (and essentialising) Hindu identity (see Anderson, 2015). In post-9/11 America, Hindutva manifests as a religious lobby to policy makers and legislators, as Hindu advocacy organisations frame their agendas according to US national interest. They distance themselves from the Muslim 'other' and exploit anti-Islam sentiments whilst simultaneously proclaim its critics as "Hinduphobic" (Kurien, 2006, 2016). Diasporic Hindutva becomes a mediator of transnational ideological manifestations of anti-Muslim anxiety, albeit adapted to local contexts. It is thus the outcome of a highly politicised agenda that combines transnational and multicultural identity politics.

In addition to diasporic Hindutva, Sikh and Christian diasporas have also played a prominent role in political mobilisation in the West. Of relevance is the rise of some Sikh activism surrounding the narrative of Muslim grooming gangs in the UK, which allegedly target Sikh girls for conversion to Islam (Singh, 2017). For these Sikhs, such cases "often feeds on existing historical narratives and contemporary Sikh/Muslim tensions" which reinforce Muslims as a threat to non-Muslim communities in Western societies (Singh, 2017, p. 6). Indeed, the issue of Muslim grooming gangs (further explored below), has created alliances between diasporic Sikhs, Christians, and Hindus, with counter-jihad organisations such as the English Defence League, to promote an anti-Muslim agenda (Lane, 2012). In a move towards populist radical right support, such ideological connections have expanded to include issues such as immigration. In Thorleifsson's (2016) research amongst British Sikh Brexiteers, for example, support for restrictive immigration policies was articulated in order to maintain historic Anglo-Indian links. In the context of the Brexit referendum, not only (dominantly Muslim) migrants from the refugee crisis, but Eastern European migrants from the EU were viewed as not 'culturally' belonging to Britain's national imagined community. Here, British Sikhs evoked a nostalgia for Commonwealth and empire that they perceived as an entitlement for immigrant status.

A lacuna remains in how some diasporic Hindus, Sikhs, and Christians, united by the othering of Islam/Muslims as an approach to integration, translates into support for populist radical right agendas. The following section details a year-long qualitative study of Indian diaspora Twitter users who express support for Brexit and Trump. It posits that anti-Muslim anxiety and anti-establishment sentiment are core issues that motivate such users.

5. Methodology

Unlike a large number of studies conducted on Twitter that mainly incorporate a quantitative approach with data collection (Ampofo, Anstead, & O'Loughlin, 2011; Barbera & Rivero, 2014; Freelon & Karpf, 2014; Froio & Ganesh, 2018; Hartung, Klinger, Schmidtke, & Vogel, 2017; for an exception see Tromble, 2016), this article focuses on a qualitative design that aims to capture the nature of Twitter activity and interactions of users. Thirty-nine Twitter account users were manually chosen of diasporic Indians living in the UK and US who express pro-Brexit and/or pro-Trump political opinions, whether in the form of tweeting original content, retweets, and/or replies to other users. Data collection included diasporic Hindus, Sikhs, and Christians as a way of empirically demonstrating expressions of anti-Muslim Indian identity in the West. At times, Sikh and Christian diaspora users did express disdain for Hindutva, but these users distinguished themselves by explicitly asserting a non-Muslim identity. Their deliberate discursive identification reveals how individuals in the Indian diaspora choose to actively distance themselves from Muslims. Hence, these Hindu, Sikh, and Christian Indian diaspora users help reconstruct the myth of Muslim 'otherness' in an effort to politically integrate in Western societies.

The location of accounts collected was determined by listed profile information and/or tweets that originated with British or American content which signaled deeper familiarity of local issues (this ran the risk of assuming knowledge was linked to place of residence). What was certain was that accounts had to contain po-

[4] For more on Hindutva organisations in the UK and US see Kamat and Mathew (2003), Mathew (2000), Mukta (2000), Raj (2000), Rajagopal (2000), Therwath (2012), van der Veer (1994).

litical content that favoured Brexit (not exclusively UKIP) and/or Trump (not exclusively Republican). Although a small number of users tweeted solely about Brexit or Trump, a large majority of accounts contained overlapping material of both. (If accounts additionally tweeted Hindutva material this was a bonus, but not a necessary condition, especially considering that Sikh and Christian users were also analysed in the sample.) By exploring users who tweet simultaneously about Brexit and Trump, this allowed for a convergent rather than a comparative analysis at a transnational scale.

Lastly, account users were both individuals and organisations, although a majority belonged to the former. Some accounts belonged to leaders, activists, or advocates, whilst others to non-affiliated individuals. The number of followers or levels of tweeting activity were not as significant as much as participating, i.e., producing content, in the pro-Brexit and pro-Trump Twitter network. The rationale for this selection was to determine *how* users perform their online political identities. Accounts that had never tweeted, however, were disregarded for the sample. Over time, some account users did change privacy settings to protected tweets and data collection of users ceased unless tweets were made public again. Others had changed Twitter handles or to entirely new accounts, making it difficult to track accounts at times.

Table 1 details the type of user accounts, for which two and seven are organisations in the UK and US, and thirteen and seventeen belong to individuals, respectively. The number of tweets for each account type is given rounded to the nearest thousandth, as is the number of followers[5].

We can already note two characteristics of users. Firstly, a majority of account users comprise of individuals rather than organisations. Second, individuals tweet at a greater frequency than organisations, despite a majority with less than 5,000 followers (yet, it is only individual accounts that have more than 10,000 followers). Based on these characteristics, we can infer that although organisations serve as mobilising agents, it is clearly individuals that act as mobilisers in the Twittersphere. The findings discussed below indicate how these individuals establish an online presence which moves beyond quantitative impact, towards performing a discursive political identity.

From April 2017 to April 2018, NVivo's NCapture software was used to scrape entire timelines of the selected Twitter accounts, providing the first to most recent tweet of each user. Scrapes were downloaded every two weeks and analysed within four chronological phases, with phase I including tweets collected from April 2017 to July 2017, phase II from July 2017 to October 2017, phase III from October 2017 to January 2018, and phase IV from January 2018 to April 2018. By allowing for a longitudinal study to prevent bias from data collection during one phase, analysing the data according to phases allowed to observe shifts, if any, in issue salience over time.

6. Findings

6.1. Employing Populist Radical Right Discourse

Utilising NVivo software tools, the word frequency of tweets was extracted, inclusive of stemmed words, e.g., 'vote' and 'voting'. Figures 1 to 4, reflective of each phase, display a word cloud generated by NVivo of the most commonly used words in tweets.

Clearly, the word 'Trump' (as well as the president's Twitter handle) was the most frequent word within the tweet collection across all phases. Other frequent words included: 'people', 'vote', 'Clinton', 'Obama', 'Muslim', 'election', 'Islam', 'media', 'liberal', etc. Visualising word frequency in a word cloud is useful as it indicates common topics discussed on Twitter. Word frequency shifted in relation to current political events during the Brexit referendum and subsequent negotiations, as well as Trump's campaign and administration. However, as indicated in the figures, word usage tended to remain consistent across all phases. This repetition of language is key as it reflects how users choose to display themselves according to what Papacharissi (2011) describes as "a networked self", whereby users construct a self-identity within "converged mediated environments" (p. 309) such as Twitter. Twitter becomes:

> A sense of place…formed in response to the particular sense of self, or in response to the identity performance constructed upon that place. This presents the modus operandi for the networked self, and the con-

Table 1. Breakdown of Twitter account users by type of account, country, number of tweets, and number of followers.

	Country		Tweets				Followers*			
Type of Account	UK	US	0–1,000	1,000–5,000	5,000–10,000	10,000+	0–1,000	1,000–5,000	5,000–10,000	10,000+
Organisation	2	7	4	4	1	0	4	4	0	0
Individual	13	17	4	9	13	4	12	10	0	4

Note: *5 accounts (1 organisation and 4 individuals) were deleted in the period following data collection and the collation of the table. The number of followers for these accounts is unknown.

[5] To protect anonymity of account users.

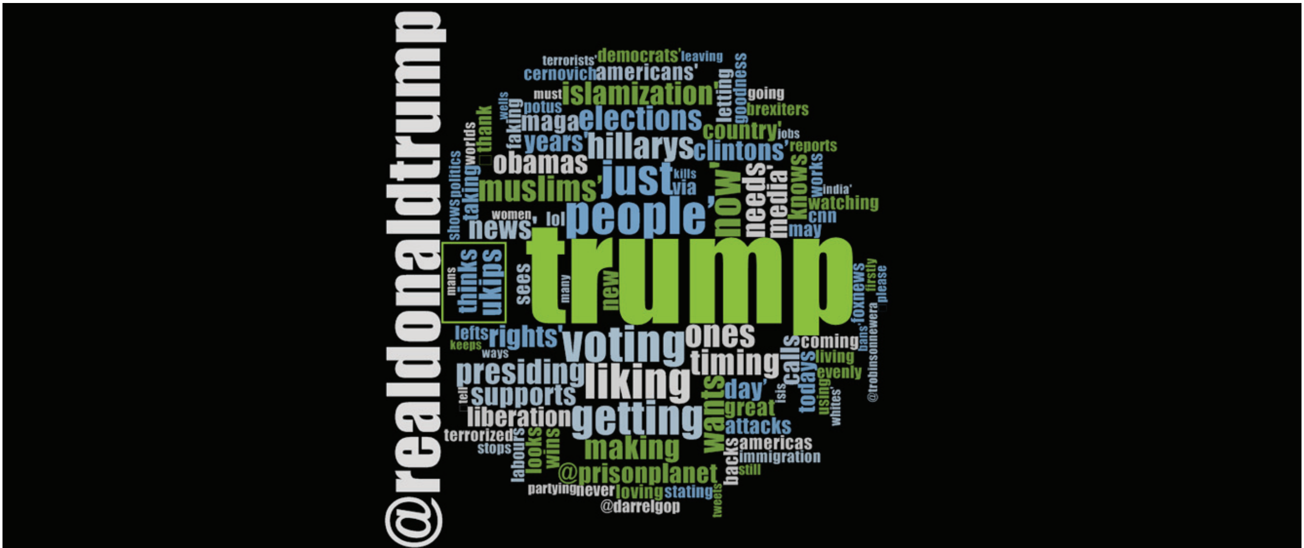

Figure 1. Phase I: April 2017 to July 2017.

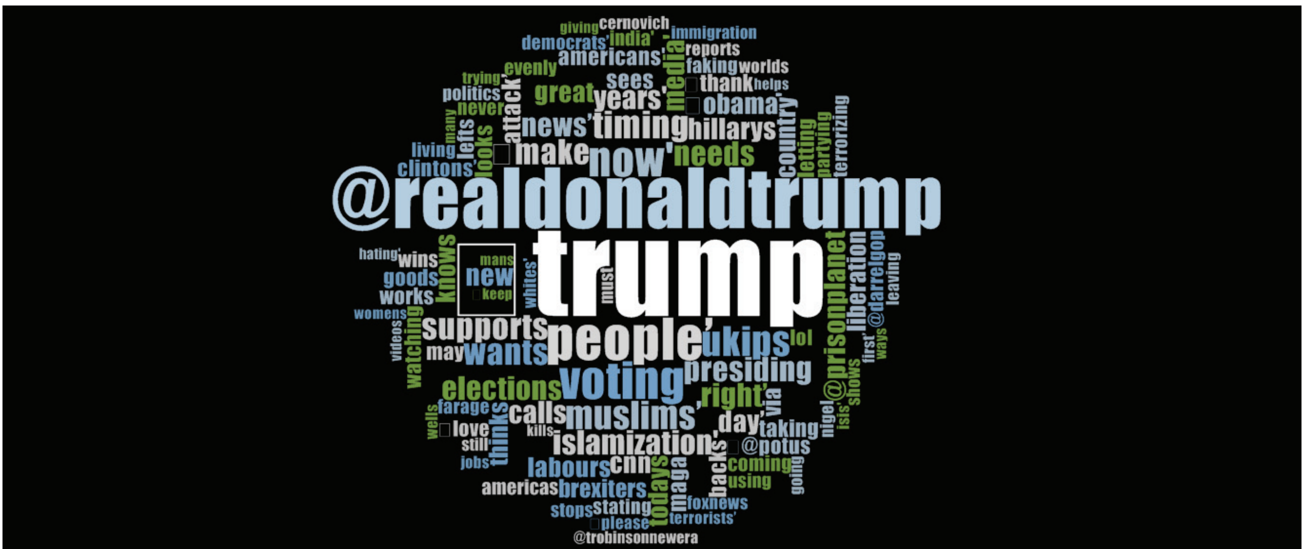

Figure 2. Phase II: July 2017 to October 2017.

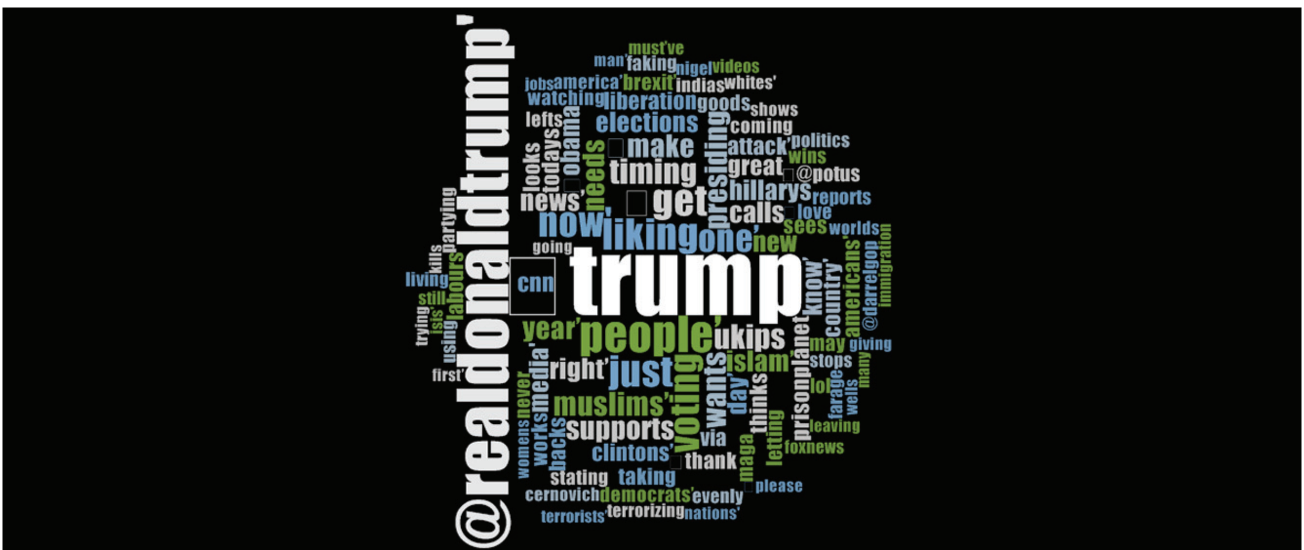

Figure 3. Phase III: October 2017 to January 2018.

Figure 4. Phase IV: January 2018 to April 2018.

> text of newer patterns of sociability and routes to sociality that emerge. (Papacharissi, 2011, p. 317)

Here, we can see that users continue to perform a particular identity over time by engaging in a discourse—or "a semiology that affords connection" (Papacharissi, 2011, p. 317)—as constituted within a Twitter community.

In order to explore how certain words were used in context, however, five themes reflective of populist radical right discourse (as discussed in Section 2), and speculated issues of concern for Indian diaspora users living in the UK and US were selected. These five themes—that were further categorised by subtheme—include: 1) 'immigration' (including the subthemes 'illegal'; 'refugee'; 'rape'; 'multiculturalism'); 2) 'foreign policy' (including the subthemes 'EU'; 'India' and/or 'Modi'[6] and/or 'BJP'[7]); 3) 'establishment' (including the subthemes 'Clinton'; 'Obama'; 'Democrats'; 'Labour'; 'liberal' and/or 'left'; 'media' and/or 'BBC' and/or 'CNN'); 4) 'Islam' (including the subthemes 'Muslim'; 'terrorism' and/or 'extremism'; 'ISIS'); and 5) 'Indian' (including the subtheme 'Hindu'). Rather than employing NVivo software to algorithmically determine themes (i.e., codes), the coding scheme was inductively developed by assessing tweets in the preliminary stage of data collection. Given that users tweeted about local political context and/or issues, e.g., refugee crisis in Europe or CNN coverage of Trump, a qualitative coding manual was created to reflect users' topical interests. Instead of coding all the topics discussed by users, codes pertained to populist radical right discourse; the exceptions were tweets discussing 'India'/'Modi'/'BJP', as this indicated awareness of Indian politics, and tweets including 'Indian'/'Hindu' as markers of ethnic identity. Tweets were coded to one or more themes/subthemes, depending on the content of the tweet. Throughout a year of data collection, a total of 185,580 English-language tweets were manually coded.

To examine the nature of the relationship between themes, a NVivo-generated cluster analysis as displayed in Figures 5 to 8 provides a visual representation of themes/codes clustered together based on words in common. NVivo generates a cluster analysis of word similarity using the Pearson correlation coefficient as a metric. The result is a diagram that clusters codes together if they have many words in common. In short, Figures 5 to 8 show that themes which share a branch contain the same words as used in tweets. By conducting a cluster analysis for each phase, we can again observe how conversations shift over a year, but now relating to themes.

Based on the cluster analysis in Figure 5, we can infer, for example, that the theme of 'multiculturalism' is frequently used in tweets referencing the British Labour party, as well as the role of the 'BBC' and the 'EU' in relation to 'Labour'. In Figure 6, this shifts to include the 'establishment'. This is likely due to the policy mandate of the centre-left political and media establishment on multiculturalism, and subsequently how critics place blame on its failure. In Figure 7, however, tweets about 'multiculturalism' and the 'establishment' shifts towards conversations focusing on 'ISIS', 'refugees', 'Islam', 'terrorism/extremism', 'Muslim', and 'rape'. This indicates that no longer is a single political party being targeted, but all mainstream political parties which are designated as the 'establishment'. Additionally, anti-Muslim sentiment becomes the primary articulation for criticism of multiculturalism. But, in Figure 8, 'establishment' disappears and once again, 'BBC', 'EU', and 'Labour' are prominently featured within tweets, only this time in relation to Islamophobic discourse. Thus, the centre-left political and

[6] Prime Minister Narendra Modi of India.

[7] The Bharatiya Janata Party, a Hindu nationalist political party, which is the ruling party in India led by Modi.

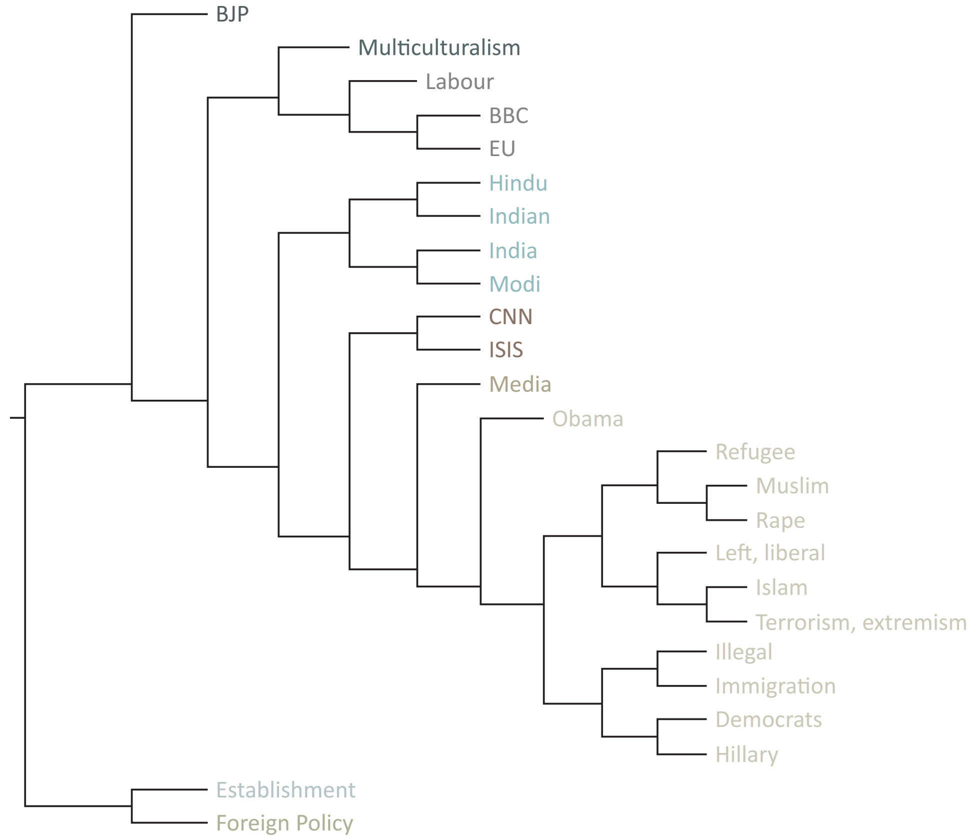

Figure 5. Phase I: April 2017 to July 2017.

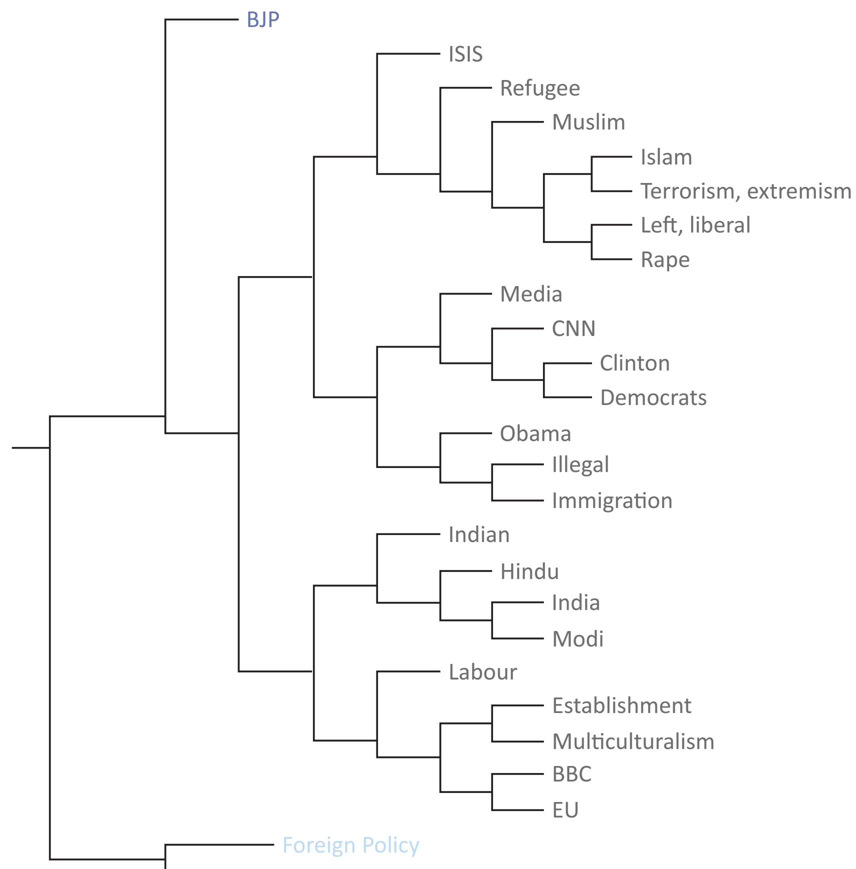

Figure 6. Phase II: July 2017 to October 2017.

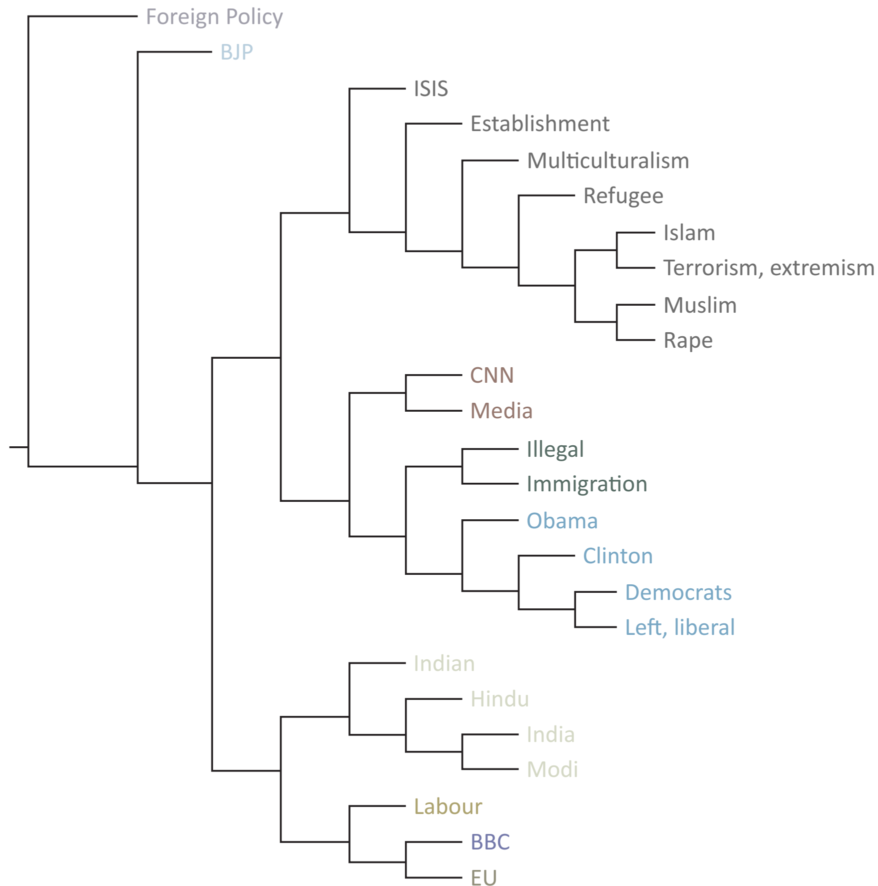

Figure 7. Phase III: October 2017 to January 2018.

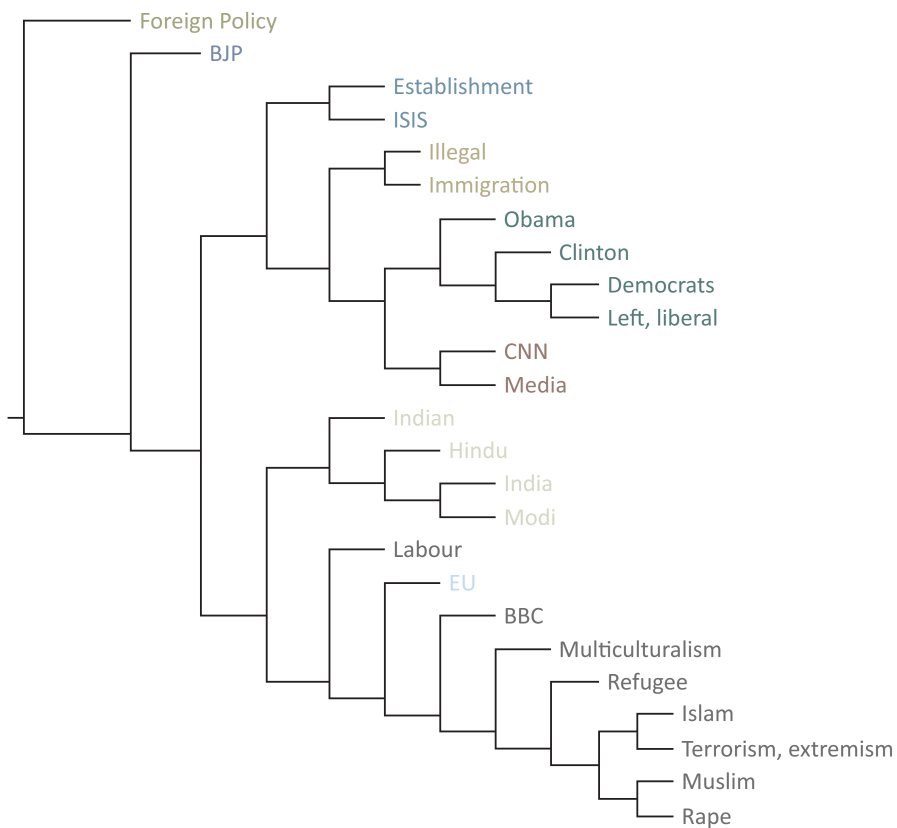

Figure 8. Phase IV: January 2018 to April 2018.

media establishment remains over time the primary opposition for these Indian diaspora users, who are in turn reinforcing populist radical right ideology.

Similarly, 'left/liberal' is often initially referenced in tweets that also discuss 'Islam' and 'terrorism/extremism', which in turn, is also related to the branch of tweets that reference 'refugee', 'Muslim', and 'rape'. But again, this shifts after six months as 'left/liberal' is then used almost exclusively in tweets that refer to 'Democrats', 'Clinton', and 'Obama' for the last two phases. This change is due to a surge in Twitter activity as the Trump administration increasingly targets the Democratic Party for opposing policy changes.

The relationship between these branches of tweets thus highlight not only how certain populist radical right narratives circulate in online conversations, but also how these conversations shifted over a year-long period in response to current events. Tracing conversation dynamics amongst users provides insight into how their articulation of populist radical right discourse adapts to wider socio-political conditions. Although all tweets were analysed combining UK and US-based accounts—that is, convergently rather than comparatively—these two examples of themes highlighted above indicate country-specific nomenclature. 'Multiculturalism' remains primarily a British term, likely due to its popular usage in the UK context, as opposed to 'diversity' as is common in American parlance. Similarly, the 'left/liberal' theme signals greater usage in US-based tweets, given the greater propensity to identify Democrats as liberals (vis-à-vis Republicans as conservatives) in American popular understanding of the liberal/conservative dichotomy. This is not to suggest all tweets within these two themes fall neatly within national boundaries, however, but serves as an indication based on volume. What is apparent is that anti-Muslim anxiety becomes a continuous refrain within both themes, thus suggesting how these users understand 'multiculturalism' and the 'left/liberals' in relation to fear of Islam/Muslims. The effect is a transnationalisation of anti-Muslim anxiety as a recurring trope.

Like the word clouds, the cluster analyses provide visual representation of the tweets at a general scale to show the relationship between themes. Repetition once again appears as a trend (e.g., anti-Muslim sentiment), as the cluster analyses indicate that word similarity generally remains consistent between themes, with slight changes taking place over a year's duration. As such, we can infer that these users tend to hold stable political attitudes in line with populist radical right ideology. The following section explores tweets of the 'Muslim' theme in-depth in order to provide insight into how these users conceptualise the notion of 'integration' through online discursive performativity.

6.2. A Case of 'Love Jihad'

By coding tweets according to word usage in conversation, this explores how these Indian diaspora users participate within Twittersphere culture and community. But in order to situate conversation dynamics *within* themes, this allows us to look in-depth at how issues are framed in tweets. In tweets coded to the 'Muslim' theme, for instance, Muslims are often characterised as violent, especially with the aim to cause "destruction"[8] in the UK, US, and/or Europe more generally. Links to ISIS or terrorist activity is frequently cited as a major concern (as indicated in the cluster analyses above). Similarly, Muslims are described as a "cancer" in relation to Islam as a "poisonous ideology". Further references to Islam include describing the Prophet Mohammed as a pedophile and rapist, and consequently, Western women as targets of "rape" or "sex slaves" by Muslims continuing Islamic practice. Tweets also frequently describe Muslims in reference to immigration. Portrayed as "cockroaches", Muslims are seen as invaders constantly "breeding" in order to destruct Western/European "civilization". Consequently, they are viewed as foreigners who must be deported. Following this line of logic, then, tweets usually criticise the left (or "libtards") and the media (or "presstitutes") for their failure to see Muslims along these tropes. Depicting Muslims according to these negative representations fits into the populist radical right narrative. By dehumanising Muslims as violent terrorists or 'crimmigrants', this reinforces an 'otherness' that is foundational towards the ideological projection of exclusionary nationalism. Here, these Indian diaspora Twitter users are consciously embodying an image of non-Muslimness in order to assert claims of national belonging.

Indeed, these Indian diaspora Twitter users choose to emphasise a non-Muslim Indian identity in order to differentiate themselves from Muslims. Users often describe instances of "love jihad" in which not only white Western young women, but also Hindu, Sikh, and Christian girls are targeted by Muslim grooming gangs. For instance, Rohan, a young British man of Hindu background, tweets:

> "Horrible sexual grooming of Hindu girls in UK."

A website link in Rohan's tweet emphasises that the perpetrators of these grooming—or "rape"—gangs are young Muslim men who have also targeted Hindu diaspora girls. Similarly, another user, Sikhs for Britain, tweets:

> "A Sikh group wants politicians to stop describing the Rotherham grooming gang as 'Asian'."

[8] Words in double quotation marks are direct usage as they appear across a majority of tweets. However, personal identifying information has not been revealed and/or disclosed in the findings. Twitter user handles have been changed to protect anonymity, unless the account is managed by an organisation. Similarly, any quoted tweets have been changed from the original, but still reflect the meaning of content, unless the tweet has been deleted by the user in which case the original is quoted. Such alterations are necessary to ensure ethical compliance according to the Norwegian Centre for Research Data.

Here, Sikhs for Britain refers to the Rotherham grooming scandal in the UK, in which a group of British Pakistani men had been targeting young girls for sexual exploitation. This tweet highlights the need to distinguish the perpetrators' religious background (i.e., Muslim) as the rationale for their actions.

Hence, these non-Muslim Indian diaspora users fear being misidentified as Muslim in the West. They push to be recognised for their religious identity and not an all-encompassing 'Asian' descriptor. Such tweets are used to justify Hinduism, Sikhism, and Christianity as religions that dictate respect for law and order, tolerance, and peace. The consequent representation is that Hindus, Sikhs, and Christians—as opposed to Muslims who are instinctively intolerant and violent—are well-integrated in Western societies.

Further, many tweets on this issue target the political and media establishment with claims of Muslim "appeasement" rather than protecting "innocent" Hindus, Sikhs, and Christians. Jasjit, a Sikh activist in the UK, tweets:

> "Evidence that public officials withheld information of sexual grooming to protect liberalism."

By presupposing that government officials have a leftist agenda that prevents transparency on the issue of grooming gangs, Jasjit reinforces a populist radical right discourse of anti-establishment sentiment. Other users also express this worldview. Rohan further tweets:

> "The left clearly don't give a s**t about organised Muslim child grooming gangs targeting non-Muslim children."

Arjun, a young man of Hindu ancestry that converted to Christianity, similarly tweets:

> "Wow, lefty white racist lady on Twitter calls me uncivilized for having an opinion on Muslim grooming gangs."

Lastly, Chetan, a young British Hindu, tweets:

> "Grooming gangs prosper under political correctness."

By denoting the political orientation of the establishment as left-leaning, this serves as the basis for government officials to fail to address grooming gangs. Using terms such as 'political correctness' serves to augment the notion that multiculturalism policies promoted by the establishment have failed to address the concerns of non-Muslim Indian diaspora communities who feel victimised but are largely ignored in the public conversation.

Twitter serves as a site for these Indian diaspora users to create a networked self, one simultaneously built by fusing digitally networked action with personal action frames. An opportunity arises on Twitter "in which new public spaces opened up by media technologies are spaces with an implicit potential to frame vigorous, 'bottom up' trajectories of autonomous action accompanied by a strong sense of moral legitimacy" (Zavos, 2015, p. 22). Tweeting about Muslim grooming gangs targeting Hindu, Sikh, and Christian diaspora girls provides these users "a strong sense of moral legitimacy" given what they view as the failure of the political and media establishment to protect victims of abuse. By highlighting intercommunity tensions within the diaspora, these users reinforce the populist radical right narrative that Muslims will never be able to fully 'integrate' due to their fundamental 'otherness'. Consequently, these users cultivate their own sense of identity and belonging on multiple levels: as individuals, as part of a collective non-Muslim Indian diaspora, and as members of (populist radical right) Twitter society.

7. Conclusion

This article highlights those in the Indian diaspora who promote exclusionary nationalist political agendas in Western, multicultural societies. It begins by situating how the UKIP-backed Vote Leave campaign in the Brexit referendum and Trump's election in 2016 advanced populist radical right discourse—in particular immigration and integration—on Twitter as a strategy to target intended audiences. Populist radical right discourse might alienate ethnic minorities and/or immigrants, yet, case studies in Sweden (with the SD) and the Netherlands (with the PVV) reveal that such supporters do exist to promote these platforms. In particular, the 'good immigrant' myth of 'integration' remains a constant refrain amongst supporters. Given previous, albeit limited, research on this phenomenon, such insight might apply to pro-Brexit and pro-Trump Indian diaspora supporters in the UK and US. This article then provides a brief overview of anti-Muslim Indian diaspora activism amongst Hindu, Sikh, and Christian communities in the UK and US in order to contextualise how these diasporic Indians, united by the othering of Islam/Muslims as an approach to integration, translates into support for populist radical right agendas. It posits that anti-Muslim anxiety and anti-establishment sentiment motivate Indian diaspora supporters of Brexit and Trump.

This article subsequently presents a year-long qualitative research design of Indian diaspora Twitter users who express support for Brexit and Trump. By exploring users who tweet simultaneously about Brexit *and* Trump, this allows for a convergent rather than a comparative analysis at a transnational scale. As active users in political conversations within the Brexit and Trump Twittersphere(s), they help shape ideas, strategies, and agendas within the online milieu of populist radical right discourse. For these users, Twitter serves as a digital third place, a networked media environment that best reflects what McArthur and White (2016, p. 1) describe as "sites

of online sociality that both mirror and deviate from physical gathering sites", but can effectively create the notion of a collective place for community gathering.

This article demonstrates the ways in which these Indian diaspora Twitter users express support for Brexit and Trump by cultivating a discursive online performance of a networked self. By highlighting their Hindu, Sikh, and Christian Indian diasporic identities, these users situate themselves as socially well-integrated in which they emphasise a non-Muslim identity that reproduces the notion that Muslims are a problematic 'other'. The political and media establishment is similarly targeted for promoting pro-Muslim policies at the expense of non-Muslim communities in order to advance 'political correctness'. Thus, these users not only further populist radical right narratives but help it adapt towards new boundaries of inclusion/exclusion. This article sheds light on how such practices amongst Indian diaspora individuals adds complexity in their support for populist radical right agendas in the UK and US.

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Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

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IV

New forms of civic nationalism? American and British Indians in the Trump and Brexit Twittersphere

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Abstract

This article showcases how transnational dynamics are reconfiguring nationalism within countries. One of the key, but often invisible, drivers in this process are diaspora and migrant networks that not only reinforce long-distance nationalism towards the 'homeland', but simultaneously construct nationalist myths within their countries of settlement. This article thus examines how Indian diaspora supporters of Brexit and Trump in the UK and US promote exclusionary nationalist imaginaries. By combining qualitative (content analysis) and quantitative (network analysis and keyword analysis) approaches, it analyses how Indian diaspora Twitter users circulate radical right narratives and tropes within the Brexit and Trump Twittersphere(s). This article finds that these Indian diaspora Twitter users express issues of concern pertinent to the radical right—e.g. immigration, Islam and Muslims, the left-oriented political and media establishment—by framing their interventions as civic nationalist discourse. It sheds light on how such digital practices amongst the Indian diaspora adds complexity to understanding their support for radical right agendas that promote exclusionary nationalism in Western societies.

Introduction

The resurgence of the radical right in Europe and North America, as well as in countries as diverse as India, the Philippines, Brazil, and Turkey, forces us to evaluate the contemporary form of exclusionary nationalism across the world. Whilst we contend that methodological nationalism prevents us from exploring larger processes of transnational dynamics in an era of hyperconnectivity, and indeed international connections have long existed between nationalist radical right movements (see Motadel 2019), we take as our premise the notion that 'transnational communities' (Portes 2000) can reconfigure and reinvigorate nationalist imaginaries. One of the key, but often invisible, drivers in this process is the role of digital communications in diaspora and migrant networks.

Until now, much focus has been given towards exploring how diaspora and migrant communities employ digital communications in order to reconnect with the 'homeland' and foster long-distance nationalism (see Koukoutsaki-Monnier 2012). With regards to the Indian diaspora, our focus in this article, much of the existing literature concerns the phenomenon of *Hindutva* (or Hindu nationalism) in order to support a majoritarian nationalism in India (Therwath 2012; Conversi 2012; Biswas 2010; Mathew 2000). Yet, we argue that there is a lacuna in the literature towards situating not only how the

diaspora reinforces long-distance nationalism, but nationalism within their countries of settlement. For despite reference to virtual diasporic communities that '[represent] a cultural minority hoping to function as an interest group in a consolidated nation-state' as a 'reformed, expanded' nationalism (Hylland Eriksen 2007: 10-11), we argue for a need to look beyond this focus on the formation of ethnic and religious interest groups in order to secure representation as a means to fulfill governmental policy agendas of integration and pluralism. Rather, we seek to consider how discourse and information exchange on online platforms amongst members of diasporic communities extends our conceptualisation of nationalist identification.

In this article, we situate how Indian diaspora Twitter supporters of Brexit and Trump in the UK and US rely on articulations of civic nationalism to foster their inclusion in exclusionary forms of nationalism. We first introduce how the Western radical right has come to adopt civic nationalist rhetoric as a means of foregrounding "our" national values on the basis of culture. We then turn to the emergence of *Hindutva* amongst diaspora communities in the UK and US, which contrary to the ethno-nationalism of *Hindutva* in India, is reconfigured in the diaspora through the framing of civic nationalism. Here, we argue that diaspora *Hindutva* merged with the Brexit and Trump campaigns in 2016 to create a new expression of exclusionary nationalism as articulated through civic nationalist frames.

From this basis, we explore how Indian diaspora supporters of Brexit and Trump use Twitter as a means of embedding themselves into the British and American radical right milieu. Using combined qualitative and quantitative analysis, we seek to understand what kinds of discourse and social ties connect American and British Indians to the Anglo radical right Twittersphere. To do so, we select pro-Brexit and pro-Trump Indian diaspora Twitter accounts and employ a word collocation of tweets, a network analysis of retweets, and a keyword analysis of retweets, in order to determine how key themes related to the radical right are articulated and framed by these users. We find that this sample of Indian diaspora Twitter users utilise civic nationalist frames to engage with influential radical right networks that promote exclusionary nationalism. Overall, we shed light on how individuals in diaspora networks employ digital communications to participate in the reinvigoration of exclusionary nationalist imaginaries expressed by the Western radical right.

Ethnic minority support for the radical right?

Literature on radical right parties, movements, and politicians considers their articulation of nationalism to centre on ethnic homogeneity. For example, Rydgren describes the radical right's 'emphasis on ethno-nationalism rooted in myths about the distant past' with the aim of 'strengthening the nation by making it more ethnically homogenous' (2007: 242). Bar-On similarly develops the notion of nationalism as the 'master concept of the radical right' (2018: 17). He stresses the ethnic or ethno-nationalist grounding of this master concept, without which issues pertaining to cultural and national identity such as immigration and multiculturalism would cease to play a significant role. The implicit assumption in both lines of argumentation is that the radical right favours ethnic over civic variants of nationalism, with the former seen as exclusionary and the latter as inclusionary.

Whilst we acknowledge that a vast majority of the radical right supports an ideology that falls within the definition of ethno-nationalism, on the other hand, Halikiopoulou, Mock, and Vasilopoulou (2012) argue that much of the success of the radical right today stems from an ability to articulate civic nationalist frames:

> How does a party or movement pushing what amounts to an ethnic exclusivist agenda annex the values of tolerance, liberalism and diversity in the interests of mobilising a nation? The answer: by identifying these values as the unique patrimony of the nation, threatened by an influx of outsiders who do not share and are unable or unwilling to adopt them. In other words: "our" nation is one of tolerance, liberalism and diversity and that tradition is threatened by an influx of intolerant, reactionary and narrow-minded "others" (109).

Here, they claim that the radical right has successfully adopted civic nationalist rhetoric in order to proclaim itself a guardian of the 'values' of the nation-state. This shift in rhetoric is partly due to reformed strategies and tactics of the radical right for recruitment purposes, as well as a discursive transformation to legitimise the radical right's message for mainstream appeal (Akkerman, de Lange, and Rooduijn 2016: 1-27; Mudde 2007; Mudde 2004). By denoting the nation in terms of cultural values, this could similarly be viewed as adopting the language of cultural racism which surpassed the biological racism characteristic of the radical right (see Barker 1981).

Yet, we also challenge the assumption that ethnic nationalism equates to exclusionary practices, and civic nationalism equates to inclusionary agendas. As highlighted by Brubaker (2004), both ethnic and civic nationalism are 'simultaneously inclusive and exclusive. What varies is not the fact or even the degree of inclusiveness or exclusiveness, but the bases or criteria of inclusion and exclusion' (141).

Namely, the former is based on common ethnicity with 'an emphasis on descent' or 'ethno-*cultural*' (136-7); the latter is based on citizenship which 'by its very nature, is an exclusive as well as an inclusive status' or by 'political creed' (141-2). Civic nationalism, by extension, is not inherently more inclusive but rather a different form of inclusivity.

We argue that one consequence of the radical right's tactical shift towards civic nationalism has enabled the rise of ethnic minority and immigrant supporters that favour radical right agendas in Western societies (see Leidig 2019; Mulinari and Neergaard 2018; Pettersson, Liebkind, and Sakki 2016; Roopram and van Steenbergen 2014). Here, boundaries of inclusion and exclusion do not have to be necessarily ethnic or racial in nature, and can instead co-opt the civic variants of 'values' as described by Halikiopoulou, Mock, and Vasilopoulou. Thus, we aim to illustrate in this article how individuals in the Indian diaspora use digital communications to revise and reconfigure the boundaries of who belongs in the nationalist imaginary articulated by British and American radical right parties, movements, and politicians, afforded by their deployment of civic nationalist discourse.

The civic nationalism of diaspora *Hindutva*

The rise of diaspora *Hindutva* organisations has partly responded to the desire of diaspora communities to create an identity as a minority outside of India. As such, we first provide a brief overview of *Hindutva*, before situating the emergence of diaspora *Hindutva*. We highlight how diaspora *Hindutva* organisations arose in congruence with the creation of (virtual) long-distance nationalist sentiment, but equally important, came to adopt narratives of nationalist myth making in countries of settlement.

Hindutva (literally Hinduness) refers to an ideology that aims to create a Hindu *rashtra*, or state, in India. Its ideologues equate Hindu identity with Indian identity, and thus advocate for a majoritarian nationalism based on the territorial domain of ancient Hindu civilization (Jaffrelot 2007). Thus, *Hindutva* can be characterised as a variant of ethno-nationalism, in which being a Hindu literally equates to *Blut und Boden*: 'a "natural" geography and sacred ties of blood' (Zachariah 2015: 653). *Hindutva* first emerged during the period of British colonialism vis-à-vis transnational engagements with ideologues in Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany (Casolari 2000; D'souza 2000; Zachariah 2014). Under the British Raj, Muslims were viewed as an internal enemy complicit in the colonial project, whilst the British were resisted as an external enemy. Following India's independence in 1947 and the Partition of the subcontinent into India and Pakistan, *Hindutva* continued to play a role in cementing the imaginary of

India as a Hindu nation-state. The subsequent decades witnessed the proliferation of *Hindutva* organisations, including the formation of the *Bharatiya Janata Party* (BJP, or Indian People's Party), the only political party that has adopted *Hindutva* as its official ideology.

It wasn't until 2014 with the election of Prime Minister Narendra Modi of the BJP that *Hindutva* became a mainstream phenomenon in India. Under Modi's government, the BJP has successfully mobilised with the recurring theme of a Muslim 'threat' to the Hindu majority, both internally (through demographic warfare and fear of Islamist extremism) and externally (by virtue of shared borders with Muslim-majority Pakistan and Bangladesh). Importantly, Modi rose to prominence as a figure who symbolises an India defining itself as a technology powerhouse in the 21st century. Coined the 'social media politician' (*New York Times* 2014), Modi presents himself as a populist figure who claims to represent 'the people', using digital communications as an avenue to disseminate his message and engage with India's growing young population (Ahmed, Jaidka, and Cho 2016; Chadha and Guha 2016; Pal 2015; Pal, Chandra, and Vydiswaran 2016; Rajagopal 2014). Yet, Modi associates 'himself with Hindu symbols and personalities' (Jaffrelot 2015: 150) in order to embody an aesthetic of traditional values typically associated with *Hindutva* culture. Modi as a figure has thus garnered a favourable response from 'Internet Hindus' or 'Cyber Hindus', who are *Hindutva* activists often recruited by the BJP in India and the diaspora to create pro-*Hindutva*/Modi, as well as anti-Muslim content online (Chadha and Guha 2016: 4397-8; Chakravartty and Roy 2015: 318; Udupa 2015). For Internet Hindus, Modi is portrayed as a figure capable of turning India into a Hindu *rashtra*.

India additionally witnessed significant levels of emigration during the second half of the 20th century. Although many migrants had previously settled in eastern and southern Africa, as well as the Caribbean as indentured labour, a sizeable number arrived in the UK, US, Canada, and Australia in response to the demand for labour in post-Second World War economies. It was during this period and the following decades that diasporic *Hindutva* organisations were established (often in close connection with their parent counterparts in India) in order to build community identity around shared experiences of racism and discrimination within these new 'host societies', in addition to creating long-distance nationalist sentiments towards the 'homeland' (Zavos 2010; Jaffrelot and Therwath 2007; Bhatt 2000; Mathew 2000; Mathew and Prashad 2000; Mukta 2000; Raj 2000; Rajagopal 2000). Thus, whilst diaspora *Hindutva* organisations operate according to an ideological political agenda, they

simultaneously provide a space for those in the diaspora who fear 'losing' their heritage despite class, regional, linguistic, and caste divisions that would otherwise differentiate these migrants 'back home'.

Over time, the Indian diaspora in Western societies gained socio-economic status in middle-class professions, especially with the wave of migrants in the 1980s and 1990s employed in the information and communication technology sector. As such, *Hindutva* organisations adapted their recruitment tactics to appeal to migrants and the diaspora abroad, 'amongst whom students in information technology and engineers figured prominently. The World Wide Web rose to prominence as an outreach medium towards Hindus settled in the West and particularly in North America' (Therwath 2012: 555). Such active interventions resulted in the phenomenon of cyber-*Hindutva* as a virtual expression of long-distance nationalism that supports *Hindutva* in India, but also creates a greater diasporic community globally united under the banner of Hindu identity. In short, *Hindutva* organisations were 'quick to understand and tap the potential of the Web to bind together a heterogenous and geographically spread-out community and transform it into an "imagined community"' (Therwath 2012: 557). This article explores how the 'imagined community' of cyber-*Hindutva* can also result in new formations of digital nationalism expressed by the diaspora towards their countries of settlement.

Indeed, although diaspora *Hindutva* organisations maintain long-distance nationalist sentiments towards India, they simultaneously came to construct narratives of nationalist myth making in Western societies. Many organisations responded to the policy agenda of multiculturalism by serving as lobbies in party politics, or mobilising at the community grassroots level in the name of cultural and religious pluralism (Kurien 2016, 2006; Anderson 2015; Zavos 2010; Jaffrelot & Therwath 2007; Kamat & Mathew 2003; Bhatt 2000). By claiming to represent the Hindu community, diaspora *Hindutva* organisations became the dominant voice in 'interfaith forums and government consultations' (Anderson 2015: 41) on issues of community cohesion, diversity, and integration. As such, diaspora *Hindutva* organisations came to adopt articulations of civic nationalism based on liberal values of tolerance and respect for difference, as opposed to other ethnic and religious communities (i.e. Muslims) who allegedly do not support these values (Zavos 2010; Kurien 2006). Here, we detect a shift from the ethno-nationalist expressions of *Hindutva* in India towards the civic nationalist rhetoric employed by diasporic *Hindutva*. Although both *Hindutva* in India and diaspora *Hindutva* maintain exclusionary nationalist elements, when reconfigured by the diaspora, such exclusion is articulated

through civic nationalist frames. This shared linguistic attribute with the Western radical right as highlighted above provides common ground between these movements.

The political opportunities of Brexit and Trump

The EU referendum and Trump's campaign and election in 2016 brought to the fore the latency of diaspora *Hindutva*, and served as conjunctures for the merging of these phenomena into an exclusionary nationalism expressed as radical right civic nationalism. Certain issues highlighted by the campaigns resonated with what diaspora *Hindutva* organisations had been vocalising for years, especially the threat of Islam to community cohesion. Even more so, the Brexit and Trump campaigns made a direct appeal to British Indian and American Indian voters, respectively.

During the EU referendum, the Leave campaign and key spokespersons sought to reinforce the legacy of Commonwealth connections, highlighting the 'special relationship' between Britain and its former colonies. The argument put forth was that by drawing on these cultural ties, Brexit Britain would be open to migration from the Commonwealth over that of EU migration (Bhambra 2017; Namusoke 2016). Leading figures in articulating this preference included Boris Johnson, Michael Gove, and Priti Patel, whom sought to 'take back control' of borders and 'join the rest of the world'.[1] Indeed, British Indians constitute the largest ethnic minority group, as well as the largest percentage of Commonwealth residents in the UK (Namusoke 2016: 470). Commonwealth migration has helped the shape the British national imaginary; EU migrants, on the other hand, are not viewed as belonging to the imagined community.

It was not just EU migration that became a salient issue for Vote Leave, but equally significant was the role of the Muslim 'other' as encapsulated by the refugee crisis which dominated news headlines beginning the year prior mostly due to the Syrian civil war and escalating conflict with Islamic State. In response, during the referendum campaign, Nigel Farage posed in front of what became the infamous 'Breaking Point' poster depicting a mass number of (mostly male) Middle Eastern refugees supposedly at Europe's borders (Virdee and McGeever 2017), and bearing the words 'We must break free of the EU and take back control'. This sensationalist reaction to some EU countries' decision to accept refugees ignited a fear which, when combined with Islamist extremist motivated attacks in Paris

[1] https://www.standard.co.uk/news/politics/minister-priti-patel-quit-eu-to-save-our-curry-houses-a3251071.html

and Brussels that received wide media coverage in 2015, and reports of widespread sexual assaults committed by Middle Eastern asylum seekers in Germany on New Year's Eve 2015-2016, created a perfect storm. By connecting potential Islamist extremist activity of future refugees to past integration policy failures, key figures such as Nigel Farage helped promote an agenda of fear in the present. The Leave campaign's referendum rhetoric thus built on and reinforced pre-existing anxieties surrounding uncontrolled borders as dictated by the EU's freedom of movement clause, with the implication that Muslim migrants would take advantage of the current immigration system and pose a threat to British society.

The referendum results revealed that approximately one-third of British Asians voted Leave. Specifically, 33% of Hindus supported Brexit (Ashcroft 2016) and 41% of British Indians voted for Leave, in as much as those of Indian descent 'are between 1.6 and 2 times more likely to support Leave when compared to other minority groups' (Martin, Sobolewska, and Begum 2019: 6). This is significant considering the Leave campaign's overt and targeted efforts to appeal to British Indians. It is difficult to determine whether or not the Leave campaign persuaded British Indian voters, or if such pre-existing sentiments was a stronger motivation. Nonetheless, the British Indian Brexit vote highlights that the Leave campaign's selective immigration platform appealed to the concerns of this demographic.

The Trump campaign and election in the US, on the other hand, performed less successfully amongst the Indian diaspora. Ultimately, only about 16% of Indian Americans voted for the Republican candidate (Ramakrishnan et. al 2016). This is unsurprising given that the majority of Indian Americans identity as Democrat and ideologically liberal (Ramakrishnan et. al 2016). Yet, the minority of Indian American Trump supporters remain a highly vocal and importantly, well-funded bloc. This is best epitomised by the efforts of the Republican Hindu Coalition (RHC), an advocacy organisation founded by a wealthy businessman named Shalabh Kumar in 2015 in order to represent Hindu American interests, including favourable US-India foreign relations. Earlier, Kumar arranged for a US congressional delegation to visit Modi in India when he was Chief Minister of the region Gujarat, and later arranged a cultural event that included members of Congress for Modi's 2014 visit to the US after becoming Prime Minister. In 2016, the RHC endorsed Trump's campaign *before* Trump secured the Republican nomination (Thobani 2019: 6). During the election, Kumar made news headlines for donating nearly $1 million to Trump's campaign.

In October 2016, the RHC hosted a public rally which featured Trump as the keynote speaker.[2] Trump began by stating 'I'm a big fan of Hindu and I'm a big fan of India… if I'm elected President, the Indian and the Hindu community will have a true friend in the White House'. The then-candidate continued by highlighting India's role in fighting 'radical Islamic terrorism', and the promise for stronger US-India collaboration in 'defeating' this existential threat. Trump stressed his commitment to remain 'key strategic allies' with India, and especially in 'look[ing] forward to working with Prime Minister Modi'. By referencing Islam as a national security threat to both the US and India, Trump merged the narrative of a global War on Terror into the long-standing narrative of India as a Hindu nation and Pakistan/Bangladesh as Muslim nations. In other words, the 'geographies of India and the US are made symbolically synonymous, metaphorically mapped onto one another via concerns to secure their (different) territorial boundaries' (Thobani 2019: 13).

Following the rally, the RHC produced the Ab Ki Baar Trump Sarkar ['This time a Trump government'] video advertisement[3], modelled after Ab Ki Baar Modi Sarkar ['This time a Modi government'] from 2014. Combining footage from the rally, and a clip of Trump speaking in Hindi, '*Ab Ki Baar Trump Sarkar*', to a camera, the advertisement focuses on Trump's remarks to 'defeat radical Islamic terrorism' and his approval of Modi. It also includes a clip of Trump at the rally declaring 'We love the Hindus, we love India' to much applause. The advertisement went viral on social media, and received coverage in news media articles in India, the UK, and the US.

The Brexit and Trump campaigns thus directed efforts to appeal to Indian diaspora voters, utilising resources and air time. In the UK, the Leave campaign focused on EU immigration as an unfair burden to Commonwealth migrants and the spectre of the Muslim refugee; in the US, Trump stressed favourable US-India relations, particularly on cooperation against Islamist extremism. Consequently, the Brexit and Trump campaigns crystallised the ideology of diasporic *Hindutva* with Anglo-Western radical right agendas articulated through forms of civic nationalism. In response, the emergence of pro-Brexit and pro-Trump Indian diaspora social media accounts in 2016 signified a new medium of expressing support for these platforms (Leidig 2019). We thus address in this article how Twitter

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[2] For whole speech see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bz51FYfHV2M
[3] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IzZVhLdtLV8

became a means for Indian diaspora users to consolidate and mobilise around radical right civic nationalist frames.

Methodology and Research Design

We employ a mixed quantitative and qualitative approach to explore how Indian diaspora Twitter users employ digital communications to position themselves within a radical right political agenda through the latter's deployment of civic nationalist discourse and networks, focusing specifically on supporters of Brexit and Trump. Twitter was the chosen social media platform of study based on its prominence in the Brexit (Usherwood and Wright 2017; Howard and Kollanyi 2016) and Trump campaigns (Kreis 2017; Wang et. al 2016), as well as for the radical right more generally who depend on its infrastructure for communication and dissemination of propaganda (Froio and Ganesh 2018; Hartung et. al 2017).

This article draws on the key findings of a qualitative study of the same data. In the previous study, from April 2017 to April 2018, NVivo's NCapture software was used to scrape entire timelines of thirty-nine Indian diaspora Twitter users which express pro-Brexit and pro-Trump views, providing the first to most recent tweet of each user.[4] Table 1 details the type of user, for which two and seven are organisations in the UK and US, and thirteen and seventeen belong to individuals, respectively. The number of tweets for each user type is given rounded to the nearest thousandth, as is the number of followers.

[Table 1 here, see p. 30]

Throughout a year of data collection, a total number of 185,580 English-language tweets were manually coded to result in 59,769 tweets included in the categories of the coding scheme. All tweets were categorised into a coding scheme with five categories, and were further broken down by subcategories. Table 2 breaks down the category/subcategory and includes the number of tweets in parentheses. Tweets were coded to one or more category/subcategory, depending on the content of the tweet. The codes were selected partially by data-driven material, but also in reference to themes prevalent in radical right literature (see Rydgren 2007, 2005; Kallis 2015). In other words, rather than

[4] The earliest tweet scraped was from 2010 and the last tweet scraped was from 2018.

employing NVivo software to algorithmically determine codes, the coding scheme was inductively developed by assessing tweets in the preliminary stage of data collection. Given that users tweeted about local political context and/or issues, e.g. refugee crisis in Europe or CNN coverage of Trump, a qualitative coding manual was created to reflect users' topical interests.

[Table 2 here, see p. 31]

The three categories/subcategories that include the highest number of tweets include in descending order: 'left/liberal', 'Islam', and 'Clinton'. Other codes with a high number of tweets include in descending order: 'Muslim', 'immigration', 'terrorism/extremism', 'media', and 'Obama'. This qualitative approach resulted in findings which support the notion that this sample of pro-Brexit and pro-Trump Indian diaspora Twitter users reinforce radical right tropes of anti-Muslim anxiety and anti-establishment sentiment. These users importantly emphasise their Hindu, Sikh, and Christian Indian diasporic identities in order to reproduce the conviction that Muslims are a problematic 'other'. The political and media establishment is subsequently targeted for favouring pro-Muslim policies at the expense of non-Muslim communities in order to promote 'political correctness'. As active users in political conversations within the Brexit and Trump Twittersphere(s), these users help shape ideas and narratives within the online milieu of the radical right. Significantly, by tweeting support for both Brexit *and* Trump, this indicates that these Indian diaspora users make use of Twitter to participate in trans-Atlantic networks of discursive exchange.

In this secondary analysis of the data, we employ quantitative approaches in order to explore a few dynamics raised in this previous research that require different methods and scales of analysis. First and foremost, we are concerned with the participation of these diaspora users in the key themes of radical right discourse. Second, we provide evidence that illustrates the centrality of civic nationalism in the connections between Indian supporters of Brexit and Trump. Third, we explore discursive subcommunities and measure the extent of their exchange with others, giving more granularity to our understanding of the broader network that these Indian diaspora users are engaged in. We selected three metrics to address the questions we propose in this report on our secondary analysis of this data: 1) the probability of particular word collocations, 2) retweet connections between users, and 3) keyword analysis of all tweets. Combining word collocations with network and keyword analyses

allows us to focus further on the key themes previously identified in the dataset and explore dynamics of interaction between these Indian diaspora users and the radical right.

Our approach is particularly valuable in understanding Indian diaspora Twitter users in support of Brexit and Trump as it starts with the entire timelines of these users rather than keywords. This allows us to focus on how these users take advantage of the platform, position them in specific discursive subcommunities, and evaluate *who* they seek to engage with. It provides significant depth on these users at the expense of no data to compare against a baseline sample of the radical right to compare between the two in the given date range, which may have been afforded with a keyword-centred method. This allows us to construct and study their interactions, but we cannot authoritatively demonstrate their deviance or coherence with the rest of the radical right on Twitter at that time. This neither prevents us from measuring the centrality of civic nationalism nor from advancing evidence to substantiate our answer to the study's proposed research questions. We cannot make claims, with the data presented, on the deviance or coherence of these users with others in the radical right that do not belong to the Indian diaspora.

By gathering word collocations of all tweets, this provides insight into how these Indian diaspora Twitter users articulate and frame key themes related to the radical right agenda. Based on prior qualitative analysis of this discourse, four key issues central to radical right agendas are identified and explored in more detail using word collocations. These collocations demonstrate that civic nationalist discourse is highly salient to how Indian diaspora users reconstruct boundaries against 'others' that betray the values of the nation in which they have settled (cf. Halikiopoulou, Mock, and Vasilopoulou 2012).

Retweets, on the other hand, allows us to explore the ways in which *Hindutva* and radical right strains of nationalism are connected and complementary. First, we use network analysis techniques to position our set of users based on their retweeting activity. By studying *who* our users retweet, we can situate them in specific discursive subcommunities, represented in different colours in the graph. As we illustrate in Table 5, these subcommunities tend to be formed of users in the same country, though a specific few tend to attract users that tend to retweet other users in both the US and UK. Using retweets as a way of situating users into discursive sub-communities allows the relationships between

Indian diaspora users and radical right networks to shed light on the centrality of civic nationalist discourse in the structure of this transnational network.

Lastly, we build on network analysis by exploring in-depth a keyword analysis of four communities identified by retweet activity. We explore more substantively how these Indian diaspora users deploy civic nationalist frames as a basis for engagement with members of British and American radical right networks online.

Word collocations

We decided to quantitatively explore word collocations of the codes 'immigrant', 'left', 'Islam', and 'Muslim', on the basis that these codes not only receive high numbers of tweets, but are also prevalent themes in radical right rhetoric (see Table 2). We do so with a metric that explores the words that are most likely to appear adjacent to the words representing the codes. While much attention is focused on how Muslims are framed as a threat to the civic values of the nations that our users have settled in or been born into, these users are also focused on the threat of the left, and its proximity to the 'establishment'. Thus, there is a significant homology between the cultural racism and anti-establishment views identified by scholars of the radical right in European countries (Froio 2018; Rydgren 2017; Mudde & Kaltwasser 2017; Caiani and Conti 2014).

Here, we expand on these codes to explore at a macro level the role of civic nationalist framings around these key issues for both the selected Indian diaspora accounts and the radical right in the UK and US. For each of these codes, we present in table 3 the ten most probable collocates (measured by their log-likelihood value of co-occurrence within four words of the code, see Baker 2006). Word collocations allow for an overview of the frames most likely to be attached to these codes. The collocations are sorted in descending order of their log-likelihood score. The higher the log-likelihood, the more likely those two terms are to appear within four words of one another. Below, we focus on each code and its corresponding collocates.

Table 3: Word Collocations for Immigrant, Left, Islam, and Muslim by Log-Likelihood

Immigrant		Left	
Collocation	*Log-Likelihood*	*Collocation*	*Log-Likelihood*
illegal, immigrant	815.1	left, wing	448.6

legal, immigrant	273.2	the, left	291.1
compassion, immigrant	156.0	far, left	172.5
immigrant, import	135.6	alt, left	155.0
pretending, immigrant	130.0	regressive, left	100.8
immigrant, goal	107.1	left, right	36.0
immigrant, their	103.1	tolerant, left	35.9
lying, immigrant	90.2	caucus, left	34.9
immigrant, deportation	34.0	left, winger	32.0
million, immigrant	29.5	left, rig	24.8
Islam		**Muslim**	
Collocation	*Log-Likelihood*	*Collocation*	*Log-Likelihood*
radical, islam	381.9	muslim, brotherhood	245.1
islam, religion	162.7	muslim, gang	160.6
convert, islam	109.0	moderate, muslim	114.8
untold, islam	94.4	british, muslim	107.6
islam, peace	74.6	muslim, country	98.8
islam, ideology	67.7	muslim, grooming	97.6
converted, islam	45.3	muslim, woman	86.1
islam, muslim	40.4	muslim, ban	67.9
islam, incompatible	39.0	muslim, refugee	67.4
islam, political	36.0	non, muslim	63.1

Note: when the collocate precedes the code, the collocate is more likely to appear *before* the code. When it follows the code, the collocate is more likely to appear *after* the code.

The overarching finding across the word collocations of these codes demonstrates that immigrants, Islam/Muslims, and the left are constructed as out-groups that are threatening to national values and the security of 'well-integrated' minority groups, which is how these Indian diaspora users situate themselves. This construction of identity by distancing from impinging others, using essentialisms to define them, is framed according to civic nationalist rhetoric.

Turning to collocates of the code 'immigrant', it becomes clear that the differentiation of 'legal' from 'illegal' immigrants builds on an existing discourse of civic nationalism which stresses the rectitude of 'legal' immigrants and the illegitimacy of 'illegal' ones. The construction of boundaries here signifies these Indian diaspora users as 'good' migrants that contribute to the society in which they have settled, whereas the 'lying' immigrants are seen as a detriment. That immigration is discussed as immigrants

who must abide by the legal process according to legal traditions of Western culture makes this a distinctively civic nationalist framing.

Yet, it is not just the selective immigration attitudes which characterise these users, but their strong anti-Muslim attitudes as revealed in the collocates for 'Islam' and 'Muslim'. Islam, of course, is used to reference the religion as a whole, while Muslim tends to be focused on the followers of that religion (hence we report collocates of both). Both sets of collocations once again show how civic nationalism is articulated by these Indian diaspora users to distance themselves from threatening others impinging on the nation. As Simonsen and Bonikowski (2019) note, conceptions of civic nationalism can correlate strongly with anti-Muslim, and not simply anti-immigrant, attitudes. Here, civic definitions of nationalism, when interpreted on the basis of culture, can promote exclusionary views on the assumption that Muslims are incompatible with Western values (see also Luong 2019).

For these Indian diaspora users, concerns of Islam as a 'radical' religion which upholds an 'ideology' that is 'incompatible' plays into radical right narratives and tropes that promote the idea that Islam is a threat to Western societies. This has been a key theme that has emerged in research on the radical right (Froio 2018; Allen 2016; Törnberg and Törnberg 2016; Ekman 2015; Awan 2014). Framed by these users in civic nationalist rhetoric, it positions Islam as fundamentally at odds with the "tolerance" and "liberalism" of Western countries. The assumption is that Islam is antithetical to the cultural and social "values" of the UK and US. The word collocation for 'Muslim' also complements the word collocation for 'Islam' in as much as Muslims are viewed according to radical right tropes such as a 'terrorist' threat, as secretly extreme rather than 'moderate' in their religiosity, as hypersexualised deviants engaged in 'grooming' and 'rape', and as 'refugees' and 'migrants' who pose a danger in spreading "their" intolerant way of life upon "our" tolerant values. By framing Muslims in this manner, these Indian diaspora users employ civic nationalist discourse which targets Muslims not on the basis of race but rather through the lens of culture. Signifying Muslims as culturally incompatible reinforces the radical right narrative that essentialises a vast and diverse group of people who observe a religion as a supposedly "culturally backward" monolith.

Word collocations for the term 'left' additionally reveals how these Indian diaspora users describe those with left-wing ideological tendencies as a monolith with radical, emotional, 'regressive', and extremist views. Myriad terms such as 'far' and 'alt' left are used to construct this group as

homogeneous and extreme. This essentialisation of the left advances an underlying argument in which those with 'left' views constitute part of the political and media establishment which seeks to undermine "us" and "our" values in favour of "them", i.e. immigrants (in this case, illegal immigrants) and Muslims. Again, what Halikiopoulou, Mock, and Vasilopoulou describe as 'identifying these values as the unique patrimony of the nation, threatened by an influx of outsiders who do not share and are unable or unwilling to adopt them' (2012: 109), this framing sustains its civic nationalist focus in the sense that those with a left-wing ideology do not preserve the cultural values of the nationalist imaginary, instead making affordances to "others" who threaten to erode the social fabric of Western societies.

By focusing on word collocations on the terms 'immigrant', 'Islam'/'Muslim', and 'left', we identified that the linguistic features of these Indian diaspora users demonstrate an association with civic nationalist frames. Whilst word collocations provide insight into the discourse of these users, it does not consider the ties between users in these groups, nor is it adequate for differentiating and partitioning the users. We thus turn to network analysis in the following section, which allows us to make significant advances in understanding the different groups that these users engage with and situate themselves in. Moreover, understanding the connections between groups is necessary to ascertain the degree to which the commitment to civic nationalist discourse is involved in the enactment of transnational linkages between users.

Network analysis of retweets

We are aware that there are specific partitions that ought be drawn between these users as they are based in both the UK and the US. Previous qualitative analysis (in Leidig 2019) revealed that their tweeting patterns are primarily situated in the countries in which they live. Our quantitative analysis presented here reveals the centrality—as measured through connectivity in a comprehensive retweet network—of radical right framing of civic nationalism. We observe transnational associations that are highly specific and skewed towards exponents of civic nationalism within the radical right in the UK and US.

We begin with a visualisation of a directed network graph of each of our thirty-nine users' retweets and their targets in Figure 1. Of the 185,580 tweets in the dataset produced by the users, we extracted

102,606 retweets (55%). To compile the general structure of the graph and its most influential nodes, we measure the degree centrality of each node in the network, which represents a user in our dataset (whose names are suppressed) as well as other Twitter accounts whom they retweeted. Thus each node has a variable number of outgoing connections, signaling retweets "sent" to the targeted account (out-degree) and a variable number of incoming connections, indicating retweets "received" (in-degree). Each incoming or outgoing connection (an edge) increases a node's degree centrality by one. Thus, we can measure the most retweeted accounts using in-degree centrality, the total count of incoming connections. In the graph, accounts with the largest nodes (represented as circles in the visualisation) have the highest in-degree centrality.

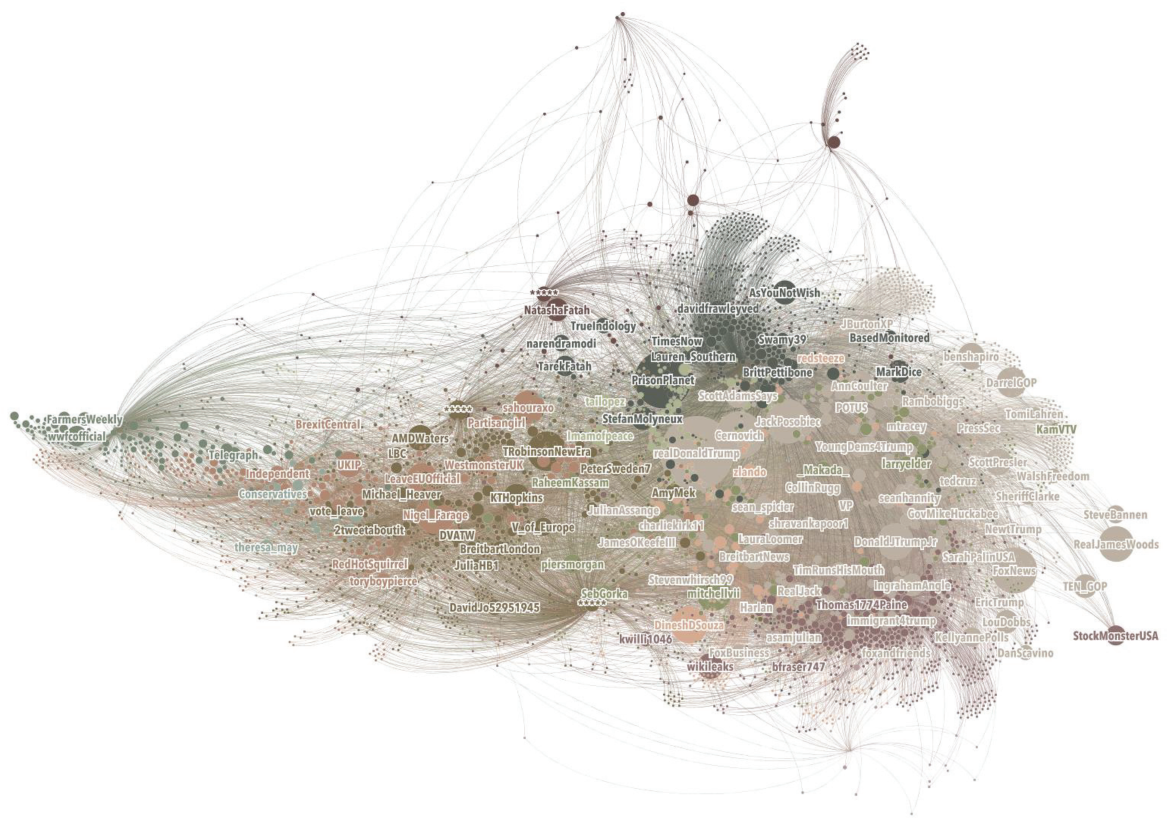


Figure 1: Network graph of twelve main communities

Note: Account handles designated with ***** are to protect identities of Indian diaspora Twitter users in the sample.

The top twenty accounts by in-degree centrality is reported in Table 4. Clearly, Trump's official Twitter handle is disproportionately retweeted by this sample of users. However, the table also provides insight into which Twitter accounts tend to absorb the attention of this set of Indian diaspora users. This highlights that these users are actively engaged within the British and American radical right Twittersphere.

Table 4: Top 20 accounts retweeted by Indian diaspora users

Account	In-Degree
realDonaldTrump	6127
PrisonPlanet	2060
Cernovich	1291
FoxNews	1228
JackPosobiec	1088
TRobinsonNewEra	882
Nigel_Farage	841
DineshDSouza	770
DonaldJTrumpJr	717
RealJamesWoods	706
mitchellvii	701
sahouraxo	618
LeaveEUOfficial	541
DarrelGOP	514
AnnCoulter	505
KTHopkins	409
ScottPresler	402
benshapiro	401
AMDWaters	376
wikileaks	375

In order to position each node into a subgroup of this network, we employ basic network analysis techniques to explore the connection between different groups. While Donald Trump is retweeted almost three times more than the second place account, @PrisonPlanet (the account used by alt-right personality Paul Joseph Watson of Infowars), in-degree centrality is heavy-tailed, and it is possible that individual users or sets of them (given that our sample has a number of UK and US-based users), may have retweeted one account significantly more than another. In order to position these users into specific clusters and identify such idiosyncratic behaviour, we use a modularity class algorithm that identifies communities in a network based on their connectivity to one another (Blondel et al. 2008). The use of the modularity class algorithm relies on parameters that can be tweaked relatively easily in order to adjust the number of communities. It would be possible for us to discern tens of communities,

or just a handful. Thus, we iteratively used modularity class to identify specific communities to produce a sufficiently granular set of communities without having too many that would make analysis too onerous. Twelve communities were identified after several passes of the community detection algorithm, and they are described in detail below. Note that the number of users in each community is uneven, which we show can be used advantageously to identify outliers.

Table 5: Discursive communities engaged with by Indian diaspora users, based on retweets

Community	Count of Users	Percent of total nodes in this community	Top 5 Accounts by in-degree centrality
1. British Counter-Jihad	8 (UK based)	17%	TRobinsonNewEra; KTHopkins; AMDWaters; British Indian Twitter user in our sample*; V_of_Europe
2. Pro-Trump Commentators	2 (UK, US based)	6%	mitchellvii; piersmorgan; RaheemKassam; _Makada_; SebGorka
3. American Radical Right Apparatus	10 (US based)	13%	realDonaldTrump; Cernovich; FoxNews; JackPosobiec; DonaldJTrumpJr
4. American Right-Wing Pundits	2 (US based)	4%	DineshDSouza; zlando; redsteeze; The_Trump_Train; jihadwatchRS
5. South Asian Diaspora Activists	6 (US based)	4%	NatashaFatah; sciencerocks156; SocietySikhi; indianoutreach; iamshalabhkumar
6. Agriculturists	1 (UK based)	12%	wwfcofficial; WBG_Agriculture; CIMMYT; Telegraph; FarmersWeekly
7. British Conservative Party	3 (UK based)	1%	Conservatives; theresa_may; CCHQPress; BorisJohnson; Number10gov
8. Brexiteers	4 (UK based)	11%	Nigel_Farage; sahouraxo; LeaveEUOfficial; UKIP; WestmonsterUK
9. Alt-Right Influencers	4 (US based)	12%	PrisonPlanet; AsYouNotWish; StefanMolyneux; MarkDice; TarekFatah
10. Motivational Speakers	1 (UK based)	6%	Imamofpeace; GrantCardone; AJA_Cortes; IntThings; RobinSharma
11. Conspiracy Theorists	4 (UK, US based)	13%	wikileaks; StockMonsterUSA; kwilli1046; Thomas1774Paine; bfraser747

12. Michigan GOP Politics	1 (US based)	1%	MIGOP; GOPChairwoman; UMichFootball; ABTS10; yrnf

*Twitter handle is not disclosed to protect anonymity.

Table 5 helps to make sense of the network graph (Figure 1). While each community has its own colour in the graph, they are densely clustered together and it is challenging to discern who belongs to each community. In this table, we display each community, the number of users in each community, the percent of all nodes that belong within it, the top five accounts in each community by in-degree centrality (here, number of times retweeted), and the number of retweets from users within the sample that belong to that community going out of that community and those that stayed within it.

In this table, the first column gives the name applied to each community, which we selected based on the character of the accounts retweeted, with emphasis on the top-5 most retweeted in each group. The second column indicates whether the community of Indian diaspora users are based in the UK or US. This column also shows that there is an uneven number of users in each community[5]. In particular, the Agriculturists, Motivational Speakers, and the Michigan GOP Politics communities all represent only one user. Thus they are more the product of idiosyncracies of particular users rather than representative of the patterns in the network as a whole. Yet, they all have numerous edges targeting other communities and should not be discounted. We next measure the relationship between these different communities before introducing a keyword analysis of four prominent communities.

Interconnectivity between communities and (trans)nationalism

Having presented the twelve communities above, we analyse retweets with an exploration of the connections between these communities by visualising their outgoing edges in a heat map matrix in table 6. The matrix allows us to examine which communities receive the most incoming edges (i.e. those communities that get the most retweets from users *outside* that community) and which communities have the most outgoing edges (i.e. those communities that send the most retweets to *other* communities). The heat map illustrates which communities are at the core in building

[5] Note that the number of users reported in the table totals 47, despite reference to 39 earlier. This is because over time, some users changed Twitter handles or to entirely new accounts, thus resulting in 46 accounts scraped for quantitative data collection. Yet the number of individual users remained at 39.

transnational bridges via retweets. This allows us to examine the geographies of exchange within this network and develop a sense of the specific ways in which transnational exchanges are constructed by users.

[Table 6 here, see p. 32]

The American Radical Right Apparatus community receives the most incoming edges from the other communities by a significant measure. Members of this community were retweeted 8,785 times. This is followed by the Alt-Right Influencers community, which received 3,324 retweets, and the British Counter-Jihad community which received 3,114 retweets. That the American Radical Right Apparatus and Alt-Right Influencers communities receive the most retweets from other communities suggests that they are likely to be hubs where we can identify retweet relationships that are transnational (e.g. going from the UK to the US or vice versa). From the UK users, American Radical Right Apparatus community is the most retweeted (n=1900) by the Pro-Trump Commentators community, of which half are UK based, the second most retweeted by the Brexiteers community (n=446), and the third most retweeted by the British Counter-Jihad community (n=459). However, the British Counter-Jihad community has far more outgoing retweets to the Brexiteers community. Thus, the notion that transnationalism characterises this network of UK and US Indian diaspora users is not necessarily borne out in the data. Rather, we can identify key relationships that help us explore specific processes of transnationalisation within this network.

Following the Brexiteers community, the second most retweeted community by the British Counter-Jihad community are the Alt-Right Influencers community (n=463), closely followed by American Radical Right Apparatus community (n=459). Indeed, users that we identified as falling into the American Radical Right Apparatus or Alt-Right Influencers communities frequently connect with British users. For example, about a third of all of the outgoing edges from the American Radical Right Apparatus community's Indian diaspora users (all Americans) are to accounts located in either the British Counter-Jihad, Pro-Trump Commentators (which features influential British public figures such as Raheem Kassam and Piers Morgan), and the Brexiteers communities. A similar proportion is evident for outgoing edges from our users that were situated in the Alt-Right Influencers group. Thus, we can consider that about a third of outgoing edges from these two US-centred communities go to users associated with the UK. Looking at the outgoing edges of the UK-centred communities,

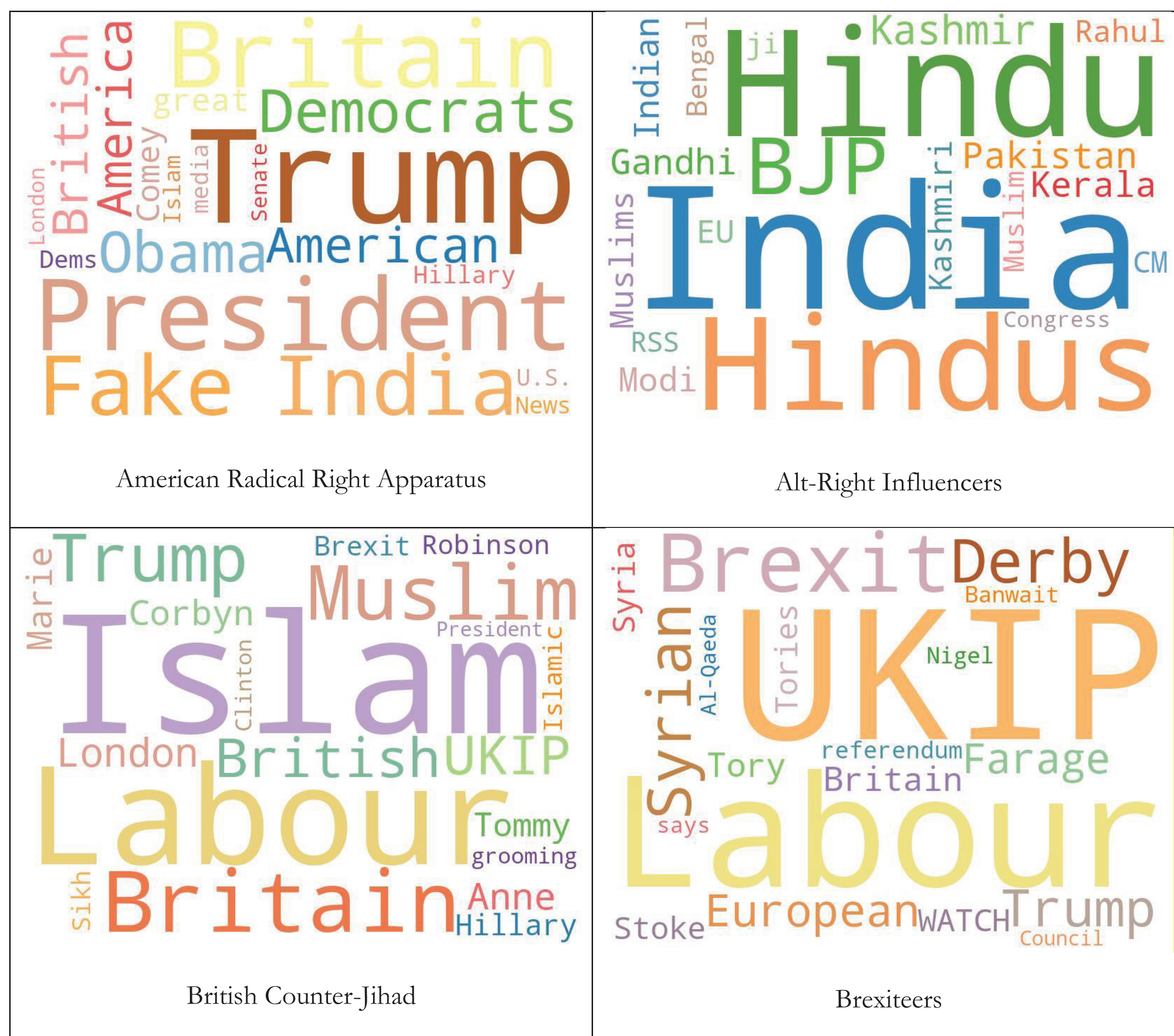
however, there is significant variance in how much they retweet US-centred users. The Pro-Trump Commentators, for example, have about 85% of their outgoing tweets to US-centred communities (likely a factor of some of the users being based in the US), while the British Counter-Jihad and the Brexiteers communities reciprocate with about one third of their tweets going to US-centred communities.

What the heat map matrix suggests is that the American Radical Right Apparatus community serves as a key attractor for transnational activity, and its US-based users are also quite likely to engage with users in the UK. Looking at the data overall, we see that most of these users are primarily engaged in information exchange and engagement with users in their own countries, yet specific political leaders and ideological groups, such as the American Radical Right Apparatus and Alt-Right Influencers communities, are key nodes in building a bridge for information exchange between American and British users engaging in the radical right. We next explore these communities using a keyword analysis of all tweets to position how civic nationalist framing is employed by the radical right in these exchanges.

Keyword analysis of discursive communities

Breaking down retweets into communities allows us to explore a particular discourse prevalent within each community. The prevalent discourses within each community are discerned with reference to the top five accounts by degree centrality (those who were retweeted the most) in each community, which gives a sense of which accounts are most influential in those communities. However, prevalent discourses can also be discerned by analysis of keywords. All of the tweets in each community were collected together into a corpus of documents, and turned into a frequency distribution of words. The frequency of each word in the community is then compared to the frequency of that word used across *all* the communities using a chi-squared test. This gives a keyness value that allows us to identify the words that are most peculiar to that community. We then visualise the top twenty words in a word cloud, where the words are sized by their keyness value. This provides a high-level overview of the main topics of discussion within each community. In other words, we can detect what kind of content resonates within each community. Here, we focus on four communities in table 7 that display word clouds for each.

Table 7: Keywords of four communities



American Radical Right Apparatus | Alt-Right Influencers | British Counter-Jihad | Brexiteers

We selected a keyword analysis of these four communities based on the heat map matrix of retweet communities. To reiterate, the American Radical Right Apparatus and Alt-Right Influencers communities received the most retweets from other communities, and as such, are more likely to be hubs where we can identify transnational retweet relationships. Although the American Radical Right Apparatus community is most retweeted by another US-centric community (i.e. Pro-Trump Commentators community), it is followed by the Brexiteers and British Counter-Jihad communities, both of which are UK-based users. In addition, the British Counter-Jihad community received the

third most retweets from other communities, whilst at the same time, the Brexiteers community was the most retweeted by the British Counter-Jihad. Due to these relationships in retweeting activity, we decided upon a keyword analysis of these four communities. Similarly, given that the focus of this article is on Indian diaspora users that express pro-Brexit and pro-Trump views, this also aligns with the focus on these communities which promote a radical right agenda of these two political movements. Overall, we find that based on further qualitative analysis below, radical right civic nationalism plays a central role within these communities.

We first explore the keywords of the American Radical Right Apparatus community, which is clustered around Twitter accounts based in the US, with the top five most influential accounts including @realDonaldTrump, @Cernovich, @FoxNews, @JackPosobiec, and @DonaldTrumpJr (displayed to the right of the network graph). Interestingly, the word cloud of this community illustrates that countries such as Britain and India are prominently referenced by these users, thus indicating that these users are uniquely transnationally oriented within an otherwise US-centric cluster. A retweet that reflects this includes:

> 'UK spent more time harassing Tommy Robinson for saying this would happen than stopping this'-@JackPosobiec (23 May 2017) (with link to Sky News coverage of Manchester Arena bombing)

That events in the UK are attracting attention in the US on the basis of an Islamist terrorist attack is not exceptional, but it does highlight how American and British radical right actors are engaging with each other on the trope of a common threat of Islamist extremism to the UK and US.

More broadly, as indicated in the network graph, Trump's account is the central node across all the communities. We term this the Trump effect, whereby the President's tweets shape tropes and narratives within this apparatus of media commentators sympathetic towards the administration's agenda (however, only 1,939 of 8,785 retweets are to Trump; this community would still have the most retweets from others even if we exclude his retweets from the count). Retweets of the president often address issues such as illegal immigration, which can be situated as civic nationalist rhetoric. For example:

> 'Democrats are far more concerned with Illegal Immigrants than they are with our great Military or Safety at our dangerous Southern Border. They could have easily made a deal but decided to play Shutdown politics instead. #WeNeedMoreRepublicansIn18 in order to power through mess!' -@realDonaldTrump (20 January 2018)

Here, Democrats are viewed as prioritising illegal immigration at the risk of endangering 'our' nation in order to 'play' petty politics. By positioning the political left as unwilling to allocate funding towards Trump's promised Mexico-United States border wall during the brief government shutdown (from 20-22 January 2018), Democrats are willing to sacrifice the 'safety' the nation. Trump's tweet could be viewed in line with radical right civic nationalist framing given that the political left are portrayed as usurping 'our' values at the expense of threatening "others". Such rhetoric also holds true when violent events occur:

> 'New York terrorist used Obama's chain migration policies to bring in 23 like minded family members'- @Cernovich (2 November 2017)

Made in reference to the New York City truck attack committed by an Uzbek immigrant allegedly inspired by ISIS, this tweet highlights how the Obama administration's immigration policies supposedly allowed for the entry of Islamist extremists. This can be situated in a civic nationalist framing for it invokes the idea that Muslim migrants are taking advantage of the political left's immigration policies with the intent to undermine societies, and that the political left must be held responsible for undermining "our" safety and values.

Secondly, the Alt-Right Influencers community is based on users located in the US, who are the most extreme ideologically, and often tweet pro-*Hindutva* content. This community's top five accounts by in-degree include @PrisonPlanet, @AsYouNotWish, @StefanMolyneux, @MarkDice, and @TarekFatah (displayed in the top-middle of the network graph). This community of users poses the most interesting relationship in displaying the ideological similarities between *Hindutva* and the Anglo-American alt-right. For instance, one retweet highlights the threat of Muslim migration to the West:

> 'Moroccan activist: Most Muslims hope Europe will be an Islamic caliphate within 15 years.'- @PrisonPlanet (19 March 2017)

This tweet promotes the "Eurabia" and "Islamisation" theories whereby Muslims are alleged to be intent on spreading jihad by virtue of demographic warfare in order to eventually install an Islamic caliphate in the West (Lee 2015; Bangstad 2013; Carr 2006). Such conspiracy theories can be framed as civic nationalist rhetoric as it assumes that "our" cultural values are under threat from Muslim "others".

At the same time, the word cloud for this community is disproportionately centred on India, Hindu(s), and references to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, as well as South Asian politics more generally. This is best reflected by one retweet which highlights the threat of Islam to Hindu-majority India:

> 'What Islamic Invaders really did to India - A Muslim Historian writes in Hindustan Times' - @TarekFatah (24 March 2017)

Here, this tweet serves as a warning to Western societies about the threat of Islam, as was experienced by the subcontinent under the Islamic Mughal empire centuries ago. Given that this account is North American-based, this can be compared to the fact that 'the epicentre of Hindu nationalist forces is in the diaspora, and more precisely in the United States' by virtue of online activity (Therwath 2012, 567). Our findings indicate that this holds true amongst this community of users. We thus term these users *translators*, as they fuse *Hindutva* ideology into Anglo-Western radical right networks. Here, these users help bridge a shared ideological commitment to exclusionary nationalism in India with that in Western societies, albeit through the lens of civic nationalist rhetoric. They do so by portraying Muslims and Islamic "culture" as incompatible with "our" values.

The third community, British Counter-Jihad, is clustered around the top five most influential accounts @TRobinsonNewEra, @KTHopkins, @AMDWaters, a British Indian Twitter user in our sample, and @V_of_Europe (displayed in the middle of the network graph). As the word cloud for this community depicts, most of the words used by these accounts refer to the British context. This is unsurprising given that these accounts are UK-based. Users in this community retweet accounts that discuss Islam and Muslims as primary issues of concern. For example,

> 'Labour owns the Muslim vote Theresa. Don't prostitute Britain in the pursuit of it. #standstrong'- @KTHopkins (3 September 2017)

By signaling the Labour Party as 'owning' the Muslim vote bank, this invokes the notion that the party is "appeasing" the British Muslim community. This plays into the adoption of radical right civic nationalist rhetoric which upholds that the political left is willing to sacrifice "our" national values for cultural "others".

This rhetoric extends through several retweets concerning "Muslim grooming gangs", of which two are highlighted below:

> 'Sky News: Gang "systematically groomed and abused" nearly 300 teenagers in Newcastle and Gateshead'- @TRobinsonNewEra (10 August 2017)

> 'Live: 'Young girls led out of Derby house after police raid'- No prizes for guessing the religion of these "men"' -@TRobinsonNewEra (12 August 2017)

By linking Islam as the rationale for engaging in acts of grooming, this conflates a "culturally backward" religion with abusive behaviour assumed to be the practice of that religion. These retweets also account for the high probability of the word collocates 'gang' and 'grooming' with 'Muslim' reported in the previous section. What orientates this as radical right civic nationalist rhetoric is how "Muslim grooming gangs" are viewed as an issue of non-importance due to the leftist orientation, or "political correctness", of the political and media establishment seeking to "appease" Muslims in the name of multiculturalism (see Leidig 2019).

Lastly, the Brexiteers community is composed of users based in the UK who have retweeted Brexit-oriented accounts, the top five most retweeted being @Nigel_Farage, @sahouraxo, @LeaveEUOfficial, @UKIP, and @WestmonsterUK (displayed in the middle of the network graph). We designate this community as composed of Leave campaigners advocating a "hard Brexit" model. Much of the discourse within this community emphasises a radical right civic nationalism as it targets the EU and the political left as not representing "our" values. For example,

> 'Virtue signalling EU Leaders have welcomed ISIS into their cities. I'm 100% behind Trump's plan to Make America Safe Again.' -@Nigel_Farage (2 February 2017)

By equating EU politicians with an open border policy on immigration, this reinforces the narrative that freedom of movement poses the risk for potential migrants who sympathise with Islamist extremism to enter through Europe's borders and into the UK. As such, the leftist-oriented political establishment is portrayed as willing to endanger the safety of the nation-state for the sake of a pro-Muslim migrant agenda.

The British political left are similarly portrayed as radical and regressive, with the intent to disrupt the Brexit process:

> 'NUTTALL: Far-left protestors outside are the nasty face of Corbyn's Labour Party'- @WestmonsterUK (6 February 2017)

As then UKIP leader Paul Nuttall faced protests on the campaign trail, such protests were framed as the 'far-left' (confirming the word collocates for 'left) threatening the candidate. By linking these actors to the Labour Party led by Jeremy Corbyn, a figure who identifies as a democratic socialist, this implies that the political left is willing to sabotage the democratic electoral process. Consequently, this serves

as radical right civic nationalist framing as it positions the "intolerant" left-oriented political establishment against "our" "tolerant" values.

Overall, we find that a qualitative keyword analysis of these four prominent communities based on retweets—the American Radical Right Apparatus, Alt-Right Influencers, British Counter-Jihad, and Brexiteers—reveals how the radical right is employing civic nationalist discourse, often through the lens of faulting the political left for accommodating Islam and Muslims in the nationalist imaginary. In sum, by seeking to appease "others" who are culturally different to "us", this undermines "our" national values.

Conclusion

In this article, we take as our premise the notion that diaspora and migrant networks not only promote long-distance nationalism towards the 'homeland' through digital communications, but can equally serve to reinforce nationalism within their countries of settlement. We argue that such displays of nationalism can take an exclusionary, rather than inclusionary, stance.

We begin by situating how the Western radical right has come to adopt civic nationalist rhetoric as a means of articulating "our" national values on the basis of culture. We argue that this discursive shift has resulted in the rise of ethnic minority and immigrant supporters that favour radical right agendas in Western societies. Accordingly, boundaries of inclusion and exclusion do not have to be determined by ethnicity, and can instead be drawn along civic variants of cultural values. Thus, we aim in this article to highlight how Indian diaspora supporters of Brexit and Trump in the UK and US use digital communications to reconfigure the boundaries of who belongs in the nationalist imaginary as articulated by the civic nationalist rhetoric of the British and American radical right.

We explore how Indian diaspora supporters of Brexit and Trump use Twitter as a means of discourse and information exchange in order to embed themselves into the British and American radical right milieu. Using combined qualitative (content analysis) and quantitative (word collocations, network analysis, and keyword analysis) approaches, we find that these Indian diaspora users perpetuate and circulate tropes and narratives of the radical right. By discussing issues such as immigration, Islam and Muslims, and the left-oriented political and media establishment according to civic nationalist frames, these users engage with influential Anglo-Western radical right networks that promote exclusionary

nationalism on the basis of culture. Further, we find that despite these Indian diaspora users confined to national contexts, they engage with influential radical right Twitter accounts on issues that are cross-national. Thus, we argue that these users play a key role in reconfiguring transnational dynamics into nationalist imaginaries. Overall, we shed light on how individuals in diaspora networks employ digital communications to participate in exclusionary nationalist myth making according to civic nationalist rhetoric expressed by the Anglo-Western radical right.

Table 1a, 1b: Breakdown of Twitter account users by type of user, country, number of tweets, and number of followers, and descriptive statistics

Type of User	Country		Tweets				Followers			
	UK	**US**	**0 - 1,000**	**1,000 - 5,000**	**5,000 - 10,000**	**10,000+**	**0 - 1,000**	**1,000 - 5,000**	**5,000 - 10,000**	**10,000+**
Individual	17	20	9	6	7	15	18	12	3	4
Organisation	2	8	4	3	1	2	6	4	0	0
Total	19	28	13	9	8	17	24	16	3	4

Mean Followers	4,024.75
Mean Tweets	13,666.66
Median Followers	861
Median Tweets	6,037
Standard Dev. Followers	8,877.57
Standard Dev. Tweets	23,761.07

*Note: 5 accounts (1 organisation and 4 individuals) were deleted in the period following data collection and the collation of the table. The number of followers for these accounts is unknown. Some users in this set created more than one account.

Table 2: Number of Tweets per Category/Subcategory

Category	Subcategory	Subcategory	Subcategory	Subcategory	Subcategory	Subcategory	Subcategory	Subcategory
Immigration (3890)	Illegal (1496)	Refugee (811)	Rape (1130)	Multiculturalism (178)				
Foreign Policy (0*)	EU (3177)	India (1947)	Modi (1096)	BJP (464)				
Establishment (651)	Clinton (5290)	Obama (3674)	Democrats (3875)	Labour (2205)	Left/Liberal (5828)	Media (3743)	BBC (864)	CNN (2078)
Islam (5314)	Muslim (4075)	Terrorism/Extremism (3883)	ISIS (1783)					
Indian (784)	Hindu (1533)							

*Note: Foreign policy has zero tweets as this code ended up serving as a category of analysis rather than a term used in tweets. Nonetheless, we keep it as a parent category as it illustrates how these Indian diaspora users discuss foreign policy issues such as the EU, and government relations with India, Modi and the BJP.

Table 6: Heat map matrix of communities based on retweets

Community	British Counter-Jihad	Pro-Trump Commentators	Conspiracy Theorists	Michigan GOP Politics	American Radical Right Apparatus	American Right-Wing Pundits	South Asian Diaspora Activists	Agriculturists	British Conservative Party	Brexiteers	Alt-Right Influencers	Motivational Speakers	**Total of Outgoing Edges**
British Counter- Jihad		297	231	2	459	180	39	182	211	1115	463	174	3353
Pro-Trump Commentators	303		352	2	1900	228	42	31	6	150	308	137	3459
Conspiracy Theorists	191	510		12	2313	263	20	19	4	110	372	34	3848
Michigan GOP Politics	4	7	3		28	1		4		1			48
American Radical Right Apparatus	463	1157	1438	23		724	46	18	4	219	1044	306	5442
American Right-Wing Pundits	233	263	299	1	1678		17	2	5	55	466	141	3160
South Asian Diaspora Activists	42	33	16	2	109	6		24	6	27	111	22	398
Agriculturists	163	33	9	2	15	4	25		38	481	16	31	817
British Conservative Party	76	6	6		14	1	2	47		74	17	1	244
Brexiteers	879	204	141	1	446	17	34	379	131		103	12	2347
Alt-Right Influencers	516	249	333	7	1238	232	74	9	12	330		184	3184
Motivational Speakers	244	169	107	2	585	123	30	17	5	88	424		1794
Total of Incoming Edges	3114	2928	2935	54	8785	1779	329	732	422	2650	3324	1042	28094

Note: Increasing red tint in each cell indicates a higher frequency of incoming edges to that community from others. Thus those shaded in off-white have low frequency, and those in red have a high frequency of incoming edges from others.

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Looking back, looking forward: Nationalist imaginaries of Indian diaspora supporters of Brexit and Trump

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Unpublished manuscript

Abstract

This article explores how British Indians and Indian Americans negotiate long-distance nationalist and nationalist attachments when articulating their support for Brexit and Trump. Based on interviews, it finds that British Indians express nostalgia for Empire and the Commonwealth, compared to Indian Americans who convey narratives of hope for promising US-India relations, as separate manifestations of long-distance nationalism. On the other hand, these interviewees reveal nationalist sentiments as equally significant in their identity formation when describing experiences of immigration and settlement. This article further considers disparities in outlook, class, and generation between the UK- and US-based diaspora, arguing that such differences are united by the construction and maintenance of boundaries which define a diasporic subjectivity. Overall, this article proposes a methodological transnationalism approach towards understanding and explaining Indian diaspora support for the exclusionary nationalist agendas of Brexit and Trump.

Introduction

In the wake of the Brexit referendum and Trump's election in 2016, much scholarly analysis has been devoted towards understanding and explaining the success of these phenomena. The resulting analyses posit the figure of the 'left behind', or the 'losers of globalisation', as a catch-all term in describing protest voters seeking a change in the status quo promised by the campaigns. However, as noted by Bhambra (2017a), scholarship on 'left behind' voters of Brexit and Trump tends to conflate economic precarity with the racialisation of whiteness, resulting in the narrative that these campaigns appealed to white working class grievances. By positioning such grievances as 'legitimate' concerns, the consequential backlash of these voters is justified by academic inquiry as white majority attitudes towards immigration and integration, economic deprivation, and the effects of de-industrialisation and globalisation. Bhambra consequently terms this 'methodological whiteness', arguing that "a class analysis focusing on white workers (rather than all workers) effectively argues for the resumption of racialized *privileges*" (S227). This article does not dispute the implicit Eurocentrism of such analyses, and urges scholars to assess the intersectionality of class and race constituting the left behind. Rather, it takes Bhambra's claim as a starting point to explore the under-researched phenomenon of ethnic minorities who support exclusionary nationalist narratives of the Brexit and Trump agendas.

The Brexit and Trump campaigns made deliberate appeals to British Indians and Indian Americans, respectively, articulating key issues such as immigration and connections to the Commonwealth/India in order to build on pre-existing sentiments within these communities. This article thus focuses on Indian diaspora supporters of Brexit in the UK and Trump in the US. Based on semi-structured interviews, it provides a comparative analysis of not only how these interviewees embody transnational entanglements, but shows the equally important ways in which they articulate their support of Brexit and Trump through nationalist imaginaries.

This article explores how interviewees negotiate between long-distance nationalist and nationalist sentiments when justifying support for Brexit and Trump. It analyses long-distance nationalism as expressed in relation to the Commonwealth amongst UK interviewees, and in the form of US foreign policy relations with India amongst US interviewees. Similarly, it analyses nationalist attachments as expressed through experiences of immigration and settlement in both countries. Lastly, this article compares similarities and differences between the UK- and US-based Indian diaspora, focusing in particular upon temporalities in outlook, the role of class, and inter-generational shifts.

Diasporas and methodological (trans)nationalism

Previous research on the Indian diaspora in the UK and US emphasises practices and processes of long-distance nationalism as a means of understanding minority identity formation (see Therwath 2012; Jaffrelot and Therwath 2007; Kamat and Mathew 2003; Bhatt and Mukta 2000). However, Thobani makes a key point when highlighting that scholarship tends to disproportionately focus on how diaspora communities engage in long-distance nationalist activities towards the homeland:

> Equally important, yet too often overlooked, is diasporic engagement with the host society in which long-distance nationalists are located, and which also provides the context for their activities… Not only are long-distance nationalists active members in political projects "back home" but […] they are dynamic participants in furthering nationalisms rooted in their countries of settlement as well (2019, 5-6).

This is a significant gap and one in which this article expands upon. There have been recent attempts to situate diaspora mobilisation as unique phenomena within countries of residence, recognising how local contexts have a deep, impactful, and equally important role on identity building (Anderson 2015; Zavos 2010, 2008; Kurien 2016, 2006; Mathew 2000). Such literature challenges Thobani's implicit assumptions here, namely the categorisations of a 'host society' and 'long-distance nationalism'. Yet,

these same studies tend to primarily situate diaspora mobilisation as bolstering a vision of the homeland.

This article calls for a combined approach, which views long-distance nationalist and nationalist attachments in the creation of diasporic subjectivity as interconnected 'across scales—often simultaneously and multi-directionally—from the transnational through the national to the local' (Alexander 2017, 1549). It does not undermine the importance of actors in the diaspora as long-distance nationalists, but argues that simply viewing such actors as long-distance nationalists prevents us from conceptualising their full potential as *nationalists*. In other words, this article looks beyond the role of long-distance nationalists in their countries of settlement, towards recognising the generational shift of diasporic formation, namely nationalists in their countries of residence. It entails a full reconceptualisation of diasporic experiences in present nationalist imaginaries.

At the same time, it does not necessitate limiting our conceptual framework to practices of methodological nationalism amongst diaspora communities. Doing so would insufficiently recognise how diaspora networks can play a vital role in shaping and adapting long-distance nationalism towards the creation of new nationalist narratives. Consequently, this article builds upon the notion of methodological transnationalism as conceptualised by Low, which "implies that diaspora is not only about the binary of home/host land" (2016, 842), but equally defined by the spaces in which the diaspora occupies. Actors in the Indian diaspora can simultaneously promote long-distance nationalist and nationalist agendas. This article considers how British Indians and Indian Americans negotiate complex, and at times contradictory, transnational entanglements with the exclusionary nationalist imaginaries of the Brexit and Trump agendas.

Methodology

The data analysed for this article include thirteen semi-structured interviews, encompassing six UK-based respondents and seven US-based respondents, conducted from February to October 2018. Of all interviewees, two are women and eleven are men. The age spread of the interview sample is estimated between mid-20s to late-50s. Amongst UK-based interviewees, half are born in India and half in the UK; for US-based interviewees, five are born in India and two in the US. Interviewees are additionally similar in demographic attributes (discussed further below). Further, most interviewees

are private citizens, but a few have public profiles, either as consultants for political parties or candidates for public office.

Interviews were conducted through various mediums of interaction: Twitter Direct Messenger (4), over the phone (2), via Skype video (1), or in person (6). These mediums affected the type of information obtained from interviewees and the length of the interview. For those who preferred to respond using Twitter DM, the number of questions were limited and interviewees could reply at their convenience. These interviews were straightforward in manner and didn't allow for much flexibility to gather information about personal background (although these came across in the responses) and tended to focus more on political issues. Interviews conducted through other mediums, however, allowed for a more flexible approach. These provided a mix of personal narratives and broader discussion of issues. Key to this approach were grounded theory interviewing techniques that involved open-ended questions, which allowed informants to articulate what was meaningful to their lives (Charmaz 2006, 26). Interviewees hence had significant leeway to discuss a range of topics that mattered to them.

'Save Our Curry Houses'

Nostalgia for the Commonwealth

During the EU referendum in 2016, the Leave campaign reinforced the legacy of Britain's 'special relationship' with the Commonwealth in order to appeal to potential British Indian voters, whom are the largest ethnic minority group and the largest percentage of Commonwealth residents in the UK (Namusoke 2016, 470). Compared to the EU, it was argued, strong cultural ties unite the UK to its former colonies (Namusoke 2016; Bhambra 2017b). These views were echoed by then UK Independence Party leader and major Brexiteer champion, Nigel Farage, on the need to embrace the Commonwealth:

> I take a very strongly pro-Commonwealth view. I think it was very bad and wrong of us to turn our backs on the Commonwealth in favour of a European political project and we made a bad mistake. So now what we do is, if you've got a qualification and you come from India or if you come from parts of Africa, you now find it very, very difficult to get into this country despite the historical, strong [ties]… There is big support for this amongst the ethnic minorities in this country who know, that actually, our current open border policy is damaging all of our communities. And here's our chance, maybe our one and only chance as a nation, to get a grip on this issue.[1]

[1] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HFasUTvU-T8

Here, Farage's criticism of the UK's membership in the EU resulting in an "open border policy" is merged with the narrative that migration resulting from the EU's freedom of movement clause is unfair to "our" Commonwealth migrants. These claims are reinforced in interviews with British Indians who support Brexit when comparing EU migration to the experiences of Commonwealth migrants:

> 'EU immigration is unfair to the Commonwealth citizens'. (Kumal)

> 'I think many British people and Commonwealth migrants see the situation as highly unfair because it's very difficult for many of the migrants to get settlement rights in the country whereas EU citizens with no links to the UK can just walk in'. (Manish)

For these British Indian Brexiteers, their notion of fairness stems from ascribing the legacy of Anglo-Indian 'cultural' connections as a broader Commonwealth identity. Today's large British Indian community results from the history of migration to the UK. The British Nationality Act 1948 extended British citizenship to individuals within the Commonwealth with the right to immigrate to the UK. As such, a large wave of Indians immigrated to the UK following Partition of the subcontinent, with many fulfilling the demand for labour migrants who helped build a nation recovering from the collapse of empire and the Second World War. In the early 1970s, another wave of migration occurred with those coming from eastern and southern Africa, notably with the expulsion of Indians from Uganda in 1971. Termed 'East Asian Africans', these migrants carried twice-migrant status (of having first migrated from India to Africa, and then from Africa to the UK). And finally, during the 1990s, another wave of Indian migration brought forth students at British universities. Consequently, decades of migration and eventual settlement have fostered a sizeable community of British Indians, often encompassing second- and third-generations. This is in stark contrast to the relatively new arrival of EU migrants since freedom of movement was secured under the Treaty of Maastricht in 1992, with a migration boost to the UK following Poland, and Bulgaria and Romania's membership into the EU in 2004 and 2007, respectively.

Kumal, who worked directly with the Leave campaign to target British Indian voters, speaks at length about linkages to the Commonwealth, rather than the EU, as a primary motivation for British Indians to support Brexit:

> 'Nationalism was also within the Commonwealth community who had come here… a lot of British Asians really felt that they were no different than the British white who wanted a sense of nationality. They felt that they were losing a sense of nationality… So that was resonating to them because when you open up the Asian newspaper, they weren't talking about this three

> years ago, the front page was saying it's mango season, and the EU has put a ban on Indian and Pakistani mangoes. So then, that was most important because you are now interfering with my cultural diet. I don't want you to do that'.

For Kumal, the Commonwealth is a placeholder to signify India. In referencing the EU's ban on Indian mango imports from 2014-2015 (due to hygienic reasons), he expresses its impact on his "cultural diet" and upon the British Indian community more generally as not only a cultural loss, but an economic one as well. He continues:

> 'For an Indian shopkeeper… he gets his Tilda rice from Pakistan and India, all the spices come from India, nothing comes from EU, he is not selling wine… Even if it's a beer, it will be United Brewers Cobra. It won't be Heineken'.

Here, Kumal describes the perceived acute, everyday realities of shopkeepers and small business owners dependent on Commonwealth trade for goods. Given the EU's regulation on trade and commodities, he fears that continuous regulation on products stocked by British Indian shopkeepers will directly impact the availability and shipment of Commonwealth goods tailored towards British Indians. Kumal weaves in the narrative of economic livelihood with the loss of "a sense of nationality". Yet, for him, such experiences must be understood as emanating from long-distance nationalist sentiments, equating nationality with racialised constructions as indicated with his description of a white British nationalist imaginary (further explored below).

Indeed, this notion of loss was articulated by prominent Leave campaigner and current Home Secretary Priti Patel, who stated:

> Uncontrolled immigration from the EU has led to tougher controls on migrants from the rest of the world. This means that we cannot bring in the talents and the skills we need to support our economy. By voting to leave we can take back control of our immigration policies, save our curry houses and join the rest of the world (*Evening Standard*).

By signalling EU migration as "uncontrolled immigration", Patel invokes the narrative to "take back control" of the UK's borders and exercise sovereignty. Importantly, Patel refers to saving "our curry houses", an initiative launched within the Leave campaign in conjunction with curry industry leaders and stakeholders. The initiative responds to the alleged curry house crisis in the UK, with many Indian (despite primarily Bangladeshi and Pakistani-owned) restaurants being closed down due to labour shortages.

In referring to the curry house, a symbol of Anglo-Indian cuisine reflective of stereotyped colonial grandeur (see Panayi 2008; Maroney 2011; Zlotnick 1996), this invokes not only a reawakened nostalgia for empire, but a reclaiming of the imagined community, one in which British Indians, and by extension the Commonwealth, rightfully belong. This is not insignificant considering Foreign Secretary Robin Cook's statement in 2001 that chicken tikka masala, a mainstay of the curry house, is "a true British national dish" (*The Guardian*). As Buettner notes, "British society's familiarity with South Asian peoples and cultures became refracted through consuming hybrid dishes, largely in restaurant settings. By the late 1990s and early twenty-first century, such public dining establishments—often known as curry houses in Britain—could boast a history of attracting growing numbers of white customers spanning more than three decades" (2009, 206). Many of the newly arrived South Asian migrants during the 1950s to 1970s sought employment in the growing number of curry houses which catered to white Britons by virtue of late night, inexpensive dining options following a night of drinking at the pub (*ibid.*). Curry houses have gradually become mainstays of British social life, as 'going for an Indian' is synonymous with an enjoyable activity ritualised by curry house experiences.

Today, the decline of curry house operations—partly due to labour shortages of kitchen staff and largely due to Britons seeking cheaper supermarket options or increasing interest in cooking homemade, often more authentic, curry dishes—is felt as a loss of (cultural) national identity. Here, the image of the desolate curry house, which numbered 12,000 establishments in 2011, is now facing a 'crisis' in the industry as two to three restaurants close each week (*The Guardian*). The fraying, outdated décor and predictable, formulaic offerings of curry houses, once viewed as exotic in a diversifying Britain, are now bypassed as much as pubs, which are similarly facing mass closures (*BBC*). (That many curry houses are located in discursive proximity to pubs reveals changing preferences and norms of clientele opting for alternative social experiences.)

Such visceral losses of Britain's cultural identity, when contrasted with the emergence of central and eastern European shops on high streets in recent years, sparks a reactionary backlash in which EU migrants are scapegoated for fostering this decline upon a changing landscape. This reverence for a bygone era—encapsulated by curry house shutdowns—is felt as relative depravation. Patel links the condition of curry restaurant shutdowns to the government's immigration policy, which caps the number of workers from outside the EU—along with strict visa restrictions on salary requirements—claiming that "our curry houses are becoming the victims of the EU's uncontrolled immigration rules"

(*Buzzfeed*). By voting for Brexit, Patel argues, this will result in lower rates of EU migration and by extension, higher rates of Commonwealth migration to fulfil the demand of labour shortages in order to "save" the curry industry. Ultimately, the aim of controlling borders is about preserving nostalgia for a lost identity promised by a Brexit Britain.

This evocation of a Commonwealth 'family' is especially important when contextualising how the UK positions and defines itself in the world:

> This rather mundane event—of Commonwealth citizens moving within the bounds of the Commonwealth—has, subsequently, become foundational to mythologies of the changing nature (or, more accurately, face) of Britain—mythologies that continue to reverberate in the present and have taken on a renewed political vibrancy in light of the debates regarding [the UK's] continued EU membership (Bhambra 2017b, 95).

That Commonwealth migration, and especially British Indians, has helped shape the British national imaginary, embodied by the curry house, is heavily contrasted against the newer entry of EU migrants who are not only allegedly economic competitors (see Martin, Sobolewska, & Begum 2019, 3) but do not culturally belong to the mythology of Britishness. As Thorleifsson notes, such claims are articulated by "invoking kinship terminology to justify exclusion of new migrants… in which an imagined British home and work ethic is threatened by European and global integration… while nurturing nostalgia for the grandiose days of the Empire" (2016, 563-4). By expressing nostalgia for older times and the desire to maintain existing social order which is perceived as under threat due to EU migration, this indicates a desire to uphold traditional social hierarchies and culture of the past.

Preserving our way of life

For a majority of interviewees, however, conversations about British Indian experiences are described in terms of attachment to national belonging. Rather than employing long-distance nationalist narratives in relation to the Commonwealth, these interviewees prefer to address the concerns and needs of diaspora communities who have settled in the UK over generations. Many allude to metrics of socio-economic integration, such as professional and educational achievement, as well as high household incomes (see Dustmann and Theodoropoulos 2010; Heath and Cheung 2007; Office for National Statistics, UK Government 2019). Thus, interviewees describe demographic successes as evidence of their status in British society. EU migration, on the other hand, poses a threat to the existing social fabric. A frequent refrain amongst interviewees, Jasjit emphasises the necessity to exercise stricter border security:

> 'I think the public discourse has always been that Brexit has been about immigration. I don't think that's fair, because I think that leads to a quick and dirty conclusion of people who are for Brexit are anti-immigration. Actually it isn't about immigration, it's about who immigrates, it's about the levels of immigration, it's about exercising some *control* over immigration. So I think that was always a bit of a misdirection tactic to try to label the Brexit vote as being racist'. (emphasis mine)

And as Jai succinctly puts it:

> 'To *control* borders'. (emphasis mine)

The notion of 'control' was a constant refrain amongst Leave spokespersons such as now Prime Minister Boris Johnson, Michael Gove, and Priti Patel (as highlighted in the above quote). Here, the rhetoric of the Leave campaign merged with Jasjit and Jai's anxieties to restore a sense of security over the territorial boundaries of the island nation. By fostering the myth of Britain as an exceptional country which was never really dedicated to the idea of the European project on the basis of shared cultural attributes, but rather on the promise of political and economic cooperation, the idea of integration never took hold as a facet of belonging. For them, the EU symbolises an experiment in governance, not a shared European identity.

Discussions about immigration expanded to other, interconnected areas of concern. This primarily includes grievances over job competition. As Jasjit states:

> '[British Indians] feel they're competing against recent arrivals who live differently… clearly their wage need is very different to someone who'd been established here. And it's funny, because now what you find is people like [my father] who own their own homes and want to sustain their families, but are still working class. They're finding their wage hit by the next wave of Polish immigrants. So it isn't about race, actually. It's about uncontrolled immigration where it leads wages. And it's easy to turn it into a race debate… uncontrolled immigration impacts on wage'.

By referring to 'uncontrolled immigration' from the EU as the cause of wage deflation, Jasjit describes the impact of Central and Eastern European labourers willingness to take less pay for working class jobs upon the livelihoods of settled communities. Such views are similarly supported by Manish in justifying voting for Leave:

> 'It was also clear that migration put downward pressure on wages'.

Such experiences of economic precarity are of course not confined to British Indians, but rather a result of structural de-industrialisation coupled with increasing neoliberalisation and privatisation of the labour market, which disproportionately affects the working class. But by vocalising its impact upon vulnerable ethnic minority communities, this lends credence to what Bhambra describes as the

need to shift the narrative from focusing on the white working class as the driver of the Brexit vote, and instead recognise that most of the 'left behind' comprise ethnic minorities who "fared worse during the recession because of higher non-employment, fewer hours worked, lower labour-market earnings, lower self-employment rates, lower self-employment earnings, lower investment income, and higher housing costs" (Fisher and Nandi 2015, in Bhambra 2017a, S216). Thus, despite the socio-economic success of British Indians as reflected in the social mobility of second- and third-generations, there remains a sizeable number within this demographic who are still economically disadvantaged and susceptible to precarious employment conditions. In facing competition from EU migrants, they are more motivated to ascribe market failures to EU migration policies rather than national austerity measures.

Indeed, interviewees further describe how EU migration has put a strain on social services such as infrastructure, ultimately affecting their standard of living:

> 'People don't have problem with immigrants here but [the] country has seen a huge rise in numbers recently and services are getting affected… There has to be a way to control mass unlimited immigration… UK has seen a sharp rise in the influx from Italy and Portugal recently'. (Vaibhav)
>
> 'The reason I voted Brexit is over the years the UK was getting too crowded. So it was a quality of life issue for me. The massive unplanned immigration put lot of stress on the infrastructure. Schools, hospitals, roads, trains all under severe pressure… It was very clear that the generous welfare system meant that the UK would be first choice of eastern European migrants'. (Manish)

Vaibhav and Manish express what is termed the ethnic competition thesis, in which "competition from immigrants over scarce resources such as in the labour market, housing, [and] welfare benefits" (Rydgren and Ruth 2011, 209) has been traditionally articulated by radical right parties to promote a nativist agenda. Here, these views are adapted towards the arrival of new EU immigrants, seen as posing a threat towards the status of settled immigrant communities such as British Indians. Anxieties over livelihood are not simply economic, however, but deeply ingrained as cultural. Representing first-, second-, and third-generations, they imagine their own positioning in a British society that is primarily exclusionist.

Although the basis of exclusion can be considered along racialised lines, these British Indian Brexiteers employ racial hierarchies in complex and situational ways. Race as construed through whiteness fails

to address the exclusionary attitudes held by these interviewees towards (white) EU migrants viewed as a threat to British identity and 'our way of life'. However, that these interviewees express such views does not undermine the fact that racial hierarchies are still implicit towards understanding who belongs to the nation (as indicated by the above interviewee's reference to the "British white who wanted a sense of nationality"). Rather, it reveals the inherent ambiguity in constructing nationalist attachments that comes across in contradictory ways as a result of Indian diasporic experiences. British national identity has always been defined in relation to Empire according to racial categories. By cementing a parochial nationalism within the legacy of decolonisation, this eventually reinforced the notion that British Indians can and do belong, but only within the confines in which citizenship was afforded on the basis of 'their' assimilation to 'our' way of life. After decades encompassing generational struggles, these British Indian interviewees reflect how they negotiate belonging within an exclusionary national imaginary envisioned by proponents of a Brexit Britain.

'An Ally in the White House'

Complementary Nationalisms

During the US election in 2016, the Trump campaign made a deliberate appeal to Indian Americans, most visibly when Trump delivered a keynote speech at a public rally hosted by the advocacy organisation Republican Hindu Coalition (RHC), just three weeks prior to election day. During his speech, Trump opened by stating, "If I'm elected President, the Indian and the Hindu community will have a true friend in the White House".[2] Trump continued his speech declaring his admiration of the Indian Prime Minister, stating "I look forward to working with Prime Minister Modi". This alliance between the US and India is frequently brought up by Indian American interviewees who support Trump. As Vivek puts it:

> 'I am excited that Trump is a big supporter of India because that's common sense… Vote for Trump, you have an ally in the White House'.

Indeed, such expressions of long-distance nationalism are intertwined in the form of promising favourable relations between Modi and Trump. Many view the two world leaders as having an amicable working relationship with shared attributes:

[2] https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=65&v=ZCdhsBfzCPk

'One good thing is there's a good chemistry going on, I'm very pleased to see that'. (Rahul)

'They [Trump and Modi] like each other, they're very similar'. (Mahesh)

Modi and Trump are frequently been compared in popular representations as two sides of the same coin (*BBC*). Indeed, when it was announced that Trump had won the election, Modi congratulated the president-elect by tweeting "we appreciate the friendship you have articulated towards India during your campaign"[3], thus highlighting Trump's outspoken admiration of Modi and overt engagement with Indian Americans during the RHC rally.

Given the positive reception towards Trump and promising bilateral relations with India, it would be expected that these Indian Americans would support increased immigration from India as a sign of long-distance nationalism. However, as Mahesh explains:

'I'm also in support of India, I want that country to do well. So if all the educated and brain benefit, everyone comes here right, so who's going to be there and at the institutions?'

This reveals the complex and varying degree to which long-distance nationalist attachment features in the everyday lives of Indian Americans. Although many had emigrated from India during a period of stagnant economic growth in order to seek opportunity in the US (the so-called brain drain), India today is experiencing a booming middle class under an increasingly global economy, one shaped in large part due to diasporic efforts. Modi's promise of India's future as a techno-economic powerhouse, exemplified by the 'Make in India' initiative, has shifted focus towards incubating and maintaining talent within the country. Thus, no longer is India looking towards the diaspora as a model of aspiration, in which previously "the NRI [Non-Resident Indian] has been inscribed in state discourse as the most authentic incarnation of post-colonial citizenship" (Chopra 2006, 192). Rather, the country is undergoing a massive transition towards cementing its own image as a global player.

Long-distance nationalism as expressed by Mahesh needs to be understood not as competing, but as a *complementary* nationalisms, in which transnational narratives help reconfigure nationalist imaginaries. During the 2014 campaign, Modi's slogan of 'Achhe din aane waale hain' (Good days are coming) meant to convey a promising future for India; on the other hand, Trump's 'Make America Great Again' during the 2016 campaign signaled a nostalgic return to a golden era of economic prosperity and a thriving middle class. The two slogans represent very different temporalities—one looking

[3] https://twitter.com/narendramodi/status/796270873636470789?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw

towards the future and the other towards the past—but both evoke a vision of a nationalist utopia which stands in contrast to the dystopian conditions of the present (see Gordin, Tilley, and Prakash 2010). The nation-building platforms of Modi and Trump, however, do not need to be antagonistic, but instead harmonious in achieving similar aims, what Thobani describes as "the productive synergy that exists between distinct nationalist projects in the transnational present" (2019, 3). Despite being complementary nationalisms, there is still an element of exclusion which persists in defining who belongs within these boundaries. As such, the following section explores how these Indian Americans negotiate belonging by affirming their status in the US.

Becoming a model minority

The most cited issue amongst pro-Trump Indian American interviewees is immigration, especially legal immigration. This is unsurprising given how strongly the Indian American immigrant experience has been defined according to 'merit' based immigration avenues. In particular, the first wave of Indian Americans benefited from the landmark Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, which favoured applications from skilled labour outside of Europe. As a result, many Indians who migrated to the US during the 1960s were professionals employed in universities or corporations to fulfill the demand in STEM fields at the advent of the Cold War. These middle-class suburbanites quickly assimilated into American society based on their elite positioning.

A further wave of migration in the 1980s and 1990s included those working in the growing IT sector or to study at universities, often with the aim to seek employment in the former. This was stimulated by the Immigration Act of 1990, which increased the number of permanent work-based visas and changes to temporary skilled workers regulations. These new policies preferred highly skilled and educated applicants. In particular, the H1-B visa was introduced, which allowed US companies to employ foreign workers in speciality occupations, including the IT sector. [In 2017, Indian IT professionals accounted for 70% of all H1-B visa applications (*India Today*).] Vivek discusses how the H1 visa system has directly impacted his life:

> 'I'm an H1 employer, I have people on H1 visas and that is why I started my business… If there is a shortage of IT people here, the government should have a policy of getting the people who has the merit to fill those positions… So what we need is quality, well-taught immigration… bring them, and give them a green card and path to citizenship as soon as possible… the meritocracy should be the guiding force'.

Hence, the shifting global economy towards the IT sector has benefitted the growing Indian diaspora in the US with their employment in this industry. Contrary to Mahesh expressing his hesitation of more immigration from India, most interviewees favoured the continuous migration track made possible by the H1 visa programme. As such, long-distance nationalist attachments can be simultaneously complex and contradictory amongst Indian American Trump supporters.

Today, Indian Americans constitute one of the highest household incomes and are employed in highly educated, highly skilled fields (Pew 2014). Their image as a 'model minority' (Balan and Mahalingam 2015; Saran 2015), which signifies a demographic with high educational achievement and income, has been an exemplar of obtaining the American Dream. It should thus come as no surprise when Trump proclaimed in his speech that "generations of Indian and Hindu Americans have strengthened our country… your values of hard work, education and enterprise have truly enriched our nation and we will be celebrating a Trump administration together". By acknowledging the status of Indian Americans as 'good immigrants' who contribute to American society, this contrasts against 'bad immigrants' who fail to integrate and adhere to the law.

The issue of illegal immigration is thus portrayed by interviewees according to tropes of criminality and non-law abiding. For example, Priya states:

> 'As a legal immigrant, I feel Trump is the only politician talking sense on immigration—making it a merit based system and punishing illegal immigration'.

She continues by describing her experience of immigrating to the US as a lengthy and bureaucratic process, but one which should be upheld for all immigrants:

> 'I am a US citizen, immigrated to USA 15 years ago, on student visa, got a job, paid all fees, waited in line patiently to be American, and I think Trump is the only politician who respects this process or respects legal immigration. As an American I would want America to stay "American"—a land of laws, where merit based success is possible for everybody regardless of their background'.

Given that illegal immigration in the US often includes reference to the southern border, Trump's appeal of the infamous border wall with Mexico was met with applause during his speech to Indian Americans: "We are going to have strong borders. We are going to have strong walls. We are going to have a wall. We are going to stop drugs from pouring into our country. The wall will be built. Mexico is going to pay for the wall". Such rhetoric alluding to Mexicans and Central Americans as criminal illegal immigrants is reinforced by Rohit as problematic, who describes at length:

> ‘I think immigration should be merit-based. If you are a highly, an educated person coming to this country from a different country, say like an Indian coming to the United States to get educated, wants a job, and proves his or her merits but getting a great degree, then by all means, yes. You should have access. But I think if you compare that to someone in Mexico who, not to get too emotional, but when someone from Mexico is trying to seek refuge in the United States or what have you, crossing the border illegally, I think there’s something wrong with that… If you have an illegal immigrant who has been causing trouble, has a criminal record, that definitely has no place in our country… I support a merit-based immigration system. And not one where you’re just letting freely people across the border just to seek refuge or whatever. That needs to be solved cause it’s a big issue’.

Like other interviewees, Rohit’s emphasis on ‘merit’ based immigration implies a standard of fairness that all aspiring immigrants should ascribe to when seeking settlement in the US. As the child of Indian immigrants, Rohit differs from not having personally experienced the immigration process. Nonetheless, the idea of observing the immigration system is a salient, recurring narrative. The trope of illegal immigrants from Mexico crossing the border in order to seek “refuge” is considered an easy path by taking advantage of the system. This is compared to immigrants from India who enter the government lottery programme to secure merit-based visas. By decontextualising the mitigating factors leading to different paths of migration, this allows for pro-Trump Indian Americans to claim that they belong to the nation by virtue of having abided to the strenuous bureaucratic system of obtaining legal status.

Indeed, such stories of immigration experiences are common place. Harry, who was running for public office in a House of Representatives seat, describes how the process of applying for citizenship is a source of pride:

> ‘I resonate with all first generation Americans, or when I say first generation I mean people who themselves naturalized, who have experiences, who tell me of how they can relate at various levels. I can tell you when I was expecting my green card I would get up every morning and flip the computer to see if it came. And you know, that very act, I might have done it for two months till I got it in the mail, and I know for a fact that that’s something I share with many, many people who over the last 25 years have naturalized as Americans. And they love their country dearly, we love our country dearly’.

The notion of patriotism as a by-product of the immigrant experience is thus deeply ingrained amongst these Indian Americans. For Harry, becoming an American citizen is a process that can be ‘shared’ as a common point of departure in achieving the American Dream. By claiming that “they love their country dearly, we love our country dearly”, this signals a profound affinity towards an imagined community characterised by Anderson as “a deep, horizontal comradeship” in which “members…will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each

lives the image of their communion" (1983, 16, 15). By joining in this collective, Indian Americans such as Harry propel the nationalist myth of the US.

Diaspora Disparities

Despite similarities highlighted above between British and American Indian interviewees with regards to long-distance nationalist and nationalist narratives, there remains noteworthy differences with regards to situated local contexts, the role of class, and generational divides.

Looking towards the past vs the future

Most striking amongst interviewees is the differential articulation of temporalities. For British Indians, the Commonwealth serves as a placeholder for invoking nostalgia of Empire, in which collective identity is built on the basis of historical ties. Such expressions can be understood as a form of long-distance nationalism not confined to a single nation, but rather tied to a collective territorial identity constructed around new symbolic boundaries of belonging. This does not disregard the powerful imaginary of India as the ancestral home of these interviewees. Rather, it posits the Commonwealth according to ties of kinship that reveal the complexity of diasporic experiences, particularly of twice-migrant so-called East African Asians who constitute one-third of the British Indian population (see Peach 2006). As Manish explicitly states, 'I am from that community', signaling what Alexander describes as 'the complex engagements between "here" and "there", while recognizing that neither places of origin nor arrival remain unchanged through this process' (2017, 1553). It is the space in-between India and the UK which has shaped a specific group identity formed out of shared dispersive migration. By extension, the Commonwealth is constitutive of a broader identity marked by past power structures that construct the British national imaginary today. For these interviewees, the UK's postcolonial legacy manifests in their everyday lives.

In contrast, Indian American interviewees are future oriented rather than looking towards the past. Many voice how obtaining the American Dream is possible due to merit-based success, and express optimism towards building a promising future. Perhaps it should come as no surprise that immigrants to the US are in the quest towards achieving the American Dream, embracing the notion of upward social mobility and a middle-class lifestyle. Such processes of assimilation are best described as

> a shift from *transitive* to *intransitive* understandings of assimilation. The former see populations of immigrant origin as moldable, meltable *objects*; the latter see persons comprising such

> populations as active *subjects*… the processual tendency we call "assimilation" is not something done *to* persons, but rather something accomplished *by* them, not intentionally, but as an unintended consequence of myriad individual actions and choices in particular social, cultural, economic, and political contexts… (Brubaker 2004, 129).

For these Indian American interviewees, their shared patriotism of values such as hard work, meritocracy, and entrepreneurship, are not just imposed upon them but embraced over time. It echoes Harry's account of naturalization as an experience which can be shared with others. Understanding such processes can situate how diasporic formations interconnect with nationalist narratives.

Class differences

When it comes to demographics, both British Indians and Indian Americans constitute middle- to upper-middle or wealthy class backgrounds, often live in cosmopolitan urban areas, are highly educated with bachelor's and master's degrees, and are employed in professional occupations (a large number as entrepreneurs or in business/finance sectors). This reflects the literature on Indian diaspora communities in the UK and US as 'integrated' and a disproportionately successful 'model minority', respectively.

Despite many interviewees as highly educated and highly skilled, however, there exists more variation in the UK concerning class divisions such as references to shop keepers, factory workers, etc. Yet, such class divisions are described as not significant, according to Kumal: 'Asians don't want skiing holidays or somewhere in Malaga…We are still very much working class, middle. You know, there are a lot of rich Indians and then there are the rest of us…[but] we go on holiday we go to India'. By explaining the cultural ties uniting working class and wealthy British Indians in the form of homeland attachment, this sense of long-distance nationalism overrides socio-economic differences towards the preservation of a shared ethnic identity.

In contrast to the UK, Indian Americans are much more likely to occupy the middle and upper class, reflected by the interviewees, all of whom are employed in finance or as entrepreneurs. This does not mean, however, that class disparity is nonexistent amongst Indian Americans. Indeed, such stereotyping of Indian Americans as a 'model minority' neglects the complexity of intra-diasporic experiences. Rather, it signals how implicit perceptions of Indian Americans as high achieving and high income households constructs groupist dynamics leading to what Vivek describes as 'the way

Indian Americans live their life'. By portraying Indian Americans in essentialist terms, this reinforces a monolithic class-based narrative.

Generational shifts

As Brubaker notes, "[t]hat migrants themselves maintain boundaries is only to be expected; the interesting question, and the question relevant to the existence of a diaspora, is to what extent and in what forms boundaries are maintained by second, third and subsequent generations" (2005, 7). Indeed, interviewee responses reflect various practices of boundary maintenance across generations.

In the US, most Indian Americans are first-generation immigrants, with 87 per cent of adults born outside the US (Pew 2014). This is reflected by interviewees, most of whom were born in India. Consequently, one would expect long-distance nationalist ties to be stronger amongst these interviewees. However, as indicated above, such sentiments are complex given mixed reactions to immigration from India; whilst some favour more highly skilled immigration, others prefer limiting such immigration. More significant is that first-generation interviewees articulate a utopian vision of the US. To repeat Priya, 'As an American I would want America to stay "American"—a land of laws, where merit based success is possible for everybody regardless of their background'. Here, the US is viewed as a land of opportunity, a beacon of aspiration. As a result, interviewees perceive the US in an idealistic manner. This is best encapsulated by Vivek who explains, 'You don't come to this country to change this country. You come to this country because you love this country. You don't fix issues here'. Such attitudes resonate with first-generation interviewees who reconstruct the nationalist myth of the American Dream as an unwavering, static archetype. For these interviewees, boundary-making and boundary-maintenance—what Brubaker terms "a distinctive identity vis-à-vis a host society (or societies)" (2005, 6)—can erode during a temporal process of assimilation. As such, subsequent generations who enact boundary-maintenance is key towards understanding diaspora identity formation over time.

Compared to Indian Americans, just over half of British Indians are born in the UK (Office for National Statistics 2012a, 2012b), also reflected by the sample of interviewees. Perhaps it should come as no surprise, then, that for many of these interviewees, boundary-maintenance practices are thus displayed amongst second- and third-generations. Often this takes the form of "ethnopolitical entrepreneurs", who "may live 'off' as well as 'for' ethnicity—often have what Pierre Bourdieu has

called a *performative* character. By *invoking* groups, they seek to *evoke* them, summon them, call them into being" (Brubaker 2004, 10). For instance, Jasjit describes how his father's political activism led to him 'always [having] been exposed to politics', eventually taking a position in an All-Party Parliamentary Group with the aim

> 'to be a bit more focused and proactive in how they engaged with the British government… getting that down to four or five key issues that we wanted to work on, what's the position we wanted to adopt. And then saying what's the approach in strategy, who are the people we should target, and how would we go about getting involved'.

Thus, as an ethnopolitical entrepreneur, Jasjit participated in de-facto lobbying in government in order to influence policy agenda on the basis of community representation. By claiming to speak on behalf of an ethno-religious community on issues affecting their livelihoods, this reinforces processes of boundary-maintenance. Such inter-generational shifts indicate that diasporic individuals are proactively engaged in creating narratives of belonging which conform to their imagined positions within the nation.

Conclusion

Based on interviews with Indian diaspora Brexit and Trump supporters in the UK and US, this article illustrates how these individuals simultaneously negotiate long-distance nationalist and nationalist attachments when justifying support for these political phenomena. As such, this article calls for the necessity of methodological transnationalism as an approach which recognises the complex, and at times, contradictory nature of diasporic experiences. It compares articulations of the Commonwealth amongst British Indians with views of India amongst Indian Americans as forms of long-distance nationalism in which transnational entanglements are adapted towards local contexts. At the same time, interviewees express nationalist sentiments when referring to experiences of immigration and settlement, positioning their sense of belonging within the national imaginary. This article further explores similarities and differences between the UK- and US-based diaspora, including temporalities in outlook, the role of class, and generational shifts, as a means of situating disparities in the formation of diasporic communities. Despite contextual differences, the construction and maintenance of boundaries—whether nostalgic or future oriented, class-based, or generational—is enacted by interviewees in order to cement a diasporic subjectivity. Ultimately, this article argues that Indian diaspora support for the exclusionary nationalist narratives of Brexit and Trump manifests in multifaceted ways as a result of transnational and national linkages.

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