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Anti-Immigrant Regulations, Demographic Engineering, and Abolishment Activism in A. Naomi Paik's *Bans, Walls, Raids, Sanctuary*

Soon after Donald Trump was sworn in as president of the United States in 2017, he issued three executive orders that targeted foreign-born persons. The "Muslim Ban," which prohibited the entry of individuals from Iraq, Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen from entering into the United States. The executive order for the construction of a wall along the US–Mexico border, which tightened security to prevent migration. And the order that expanded Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) powers to organize raids, enabling the easy deportation of unauthorized migrants. These executive orders—the Ban, the Wall, and the Raid—expose the ideology of those who claim to own the land territorialized as the United States: they perceive foreign-born persons—in this instance, Muslim and Latinx individuals—as essential threats to their country. In A. Naomi Paik's words: "Together, [these orders] enact the escalation of state power. The ban declares a threat: you will be excluded and kicked out if you try to enter. The wall backs up this threat with its physical barriers and accompanying border guards. The raid reinforces the threat with the physical action of forced removal."[1] By blocking migration on the basis of religion and birthplace, the administration established a reactionary demographic policy aimed to shore up the president's base. Trump's three executive orders of border control were meant to make America White again.

In her book *Bans, Walls, Raids, Sanctuary: Understanding U.S. Immigration for the Twenty-First Century*, Paik makes two basic arguments in response to these orders. First, by showing the long and troubling history of anti-immigration policies in the United States, she argues that the problem neither begins nor ends with Trump, but lies at the core of the United States' self-definition. The United States is deceptively praised as an "immigrant country," but it has deported almost fifty-seven million people since 1882—

[1] A. Naomi Paik, *Bans, Walls, Raids, Sanctuary: Understanding U.S. Immigration for the Twenty-First Century* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2020), 3.

more than it has legally allowed in to become permanent habitants in the last century.[2] Second, after diagnosing the deep roots of anti-immigrant policies, Paik offers what she names as abolitionist sanctuary to build solidarity among those who are kept outside the border of American Whiteness.

The Muslim Ban was not the first but rather only a recent episode in the long history of immigration bans in the United States since the mid-nineteenth century. While it might look like the federal government welcomed migration for its first hundred years, the 1790 Naturalization Act reserved immigration for "free white" persons, and the path to citizenship was closed to Indigenous and Black individuals. Immigrant bans, in this sense, were extensions of the foundational citizenship law that defined the United States as a country of White settlers. Paik foregrounds the 1875 Page Act against "immoral behavior" that targeted Chinese women; the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act, which degraded the labor of Chinese workers; and the 1924 Johnson-Reed Act, which banned Asian immigration and restricted the entry of individuals from South and East Europe as a reflection of rising anti-Semitism. Despite the reforms of the 1960s, such as the 1965 Hart-Celler Act, it seems that the ruling elites in the United States never abolished the idea of race- and religion-based immigration bans to exclude those they deem undesirable. The Muslim Ban was the convergence of the long-standing hostility toward foreign-born persons and the "clash of civilizations" narrative.

In his second executive order discussed in the book, Trump mandated that a wall be built along the US–Mexico border to prevent "unlawful entries." But, as Paik points out, he was hardly the first to demand closed borders. She demonstrates how this order builds on and escalates existing laws of border security. She foregrounds the Chinese Exclusion Act again as the starting point of policed US borders. While in the early twentieth century, Mexican immigrants were exempt from quotas, to enable the opportunistic use of cheap farm labor, Congress designed laws that targeted Mexican migrants in order to control demographics soon after the 1920s. Paik also exposes the hypocrisy of enforced borders and closed paths to citizenship during the era of neoliberalism, which otherwise relies on the fluidity of borders for the movement of capital and commodities: "The border embodies a paradoxical relationship between the state's efforts to exclude unwanted migrants and the economy's reliance on the labor of undocumented people."[3]

The third executive order addressed in Paik's book, Executive Order 13768, permitted sudden raids against undocumented migrants—a new bolt in the long-standing deportation machine. While border bans and walls prevent the penetration of unwanted foreigners or turn a blind eye to their "illegal" entry for the sake of their temporary usefulness, raids and deportations constitute a "second line of defense" to perpetuate White America as a project. Paik underscores the 1830 Indian Removal Act and the 1850 Fugitive Slave Act as the forerunners of this exclusionary policy, and the 1891 Immigration Act as the first regulation that made the deportation mandate explicit. With the 1892 Geary Act, Chinese workers were no longer simply excluded at the border but also deportable from anywhere in the United States; after the 1924 Johnson-Reed Act was passed into law, mass deportations reached unprecedented heights; the 1929 law criminalized unauthorized entry; and deportation "reached its frightening maturity in the era of neoliberalism"

starting with the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act.[4] The list goes on. Contrary to assumptions, the Obama administration did not reverse the course of deportation policies ushered in an accumulative way by previous presidents or implement softer regulations. In fact, Obama ended up removing more immigrants than any president before him.[5]

A violent irony, of course, is that the US government implements these anti-immigration policies while being a settler colonial state whose originators migrated from overseas and stole land from Indigenous nations. In Paik's words: "The power of the state to forcibly remove foreign-born persons was established nearly from the United States' very origin. We are a nation-state defined by our territory, our borders, and our ability to determine who gets to be here. Indeed, the logic of excluding certain others stands at the core of our settler colonial society, which began pushing Indigenous people beyond its borders before the United States itself existed."[6]

Architecture was also a target of Trump's executive orders, when the president mandated that all federal buildings be built in neoclassical style—a perceived symbol of Whiteness and beauty. Moreover, as a historian of architecture who has worked on immigration in Germany, I am cognizant how architecture has often been weaponized as a tool of immigration control. In Germany, anti-immigrant architectural regulations included "bans on entry and settlement" that prohibited additional migrant families to move into immigrant neighborhoods where they could share social and cultural networks, and instituted "desegregation regulations" that put quotas on residential units that could be occupied by migrants.[7]

An additional concept that Paik could have employed in order to analyze the deep history of Trump's executive orders is demographic engineering, a term coined in 1997 by Milica Zarkovic Bookman, who explained ethnic conflicts as the "demographic struggle for power."[8] Demographic engineering can be defined as the "intentional pursuit by ethnic groups in conflict of strategies aimed at increasing their demographic strength either as an end in itself—thus ensuring the group's presence, persistence and proliferation—or as a means to military or political power."[9] Its methods abound, and include affecting fertility rates, manipulating push and pull factors of migration, population transfers, deportations, immigrant bans, resettlements, ethnic cleansing, selective tax policies, and renaming locations, among many others. It is possible to identify this state apparatus in various countries, not only in the United States but also in the Ottoman Empire and post-Ottoman nation-states, in Russia, China, Israel, and others—some of them employing demographic engineering quite foundationally during the determination of national borders and designation of core majority groups.[10] The concept and history of demographic engineering would have helped Paik's readers see the paradoxes of current citizenship regimes and anti-immigration policies in their global context. The underlying ideology of bans, walls, and raids is not restricted to the United States but governs power dynamics and extractive economies around the world. This realization could have led to the questioning of the nation-state as an international norm in the first place, as well as of the border regimes that divide the surface of the earth into fragments.

[4] Paik, *Bans, Walls, Raids, Sanctuary*, 86.

[5] Paik, *Bans, Walls, Raids, Sanctuary*, 98.

[6] Paik, *Bans, Walls, Raids, Sanctuary*, 100.

[7] Esra Akcan, *Open Architecture: Migration, Citizenship and the Urban Renewal of Berlin Kreuzberg by IBA-1984/87* (Basel: Birkhauser/De Gruyter Academic Press, 2018).

[8] Milica Zarkovic Bookman, *The Demographic Struggle for Power: The Political Economy of Demographic Engineering in the Modern World* (London: Frank Cass, 1997), 2.

[9] Paul Morland, *Demographic Engineering: Population Strategies in Ethnic Conflict* (London: Taylor and Francis, 2014), 3. Also see John McGarry, "Demographic Engineering: The State-Directed Movement of Ethnic Groups as a Technique of Conflict Resolution," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 21, no. 4 (July 1998): 613–638.

[10] As a scholar working on the transitions between the Ottoman Empire and its successor states, I would like to acknowledge the following scholars in introducing me to the concept of demographic engineering: Fuat Dündar, *Modern Türkiye'nin ifresi: Ittihat ve Terakki'nin Etnisite Mühendisligi* (1913–1918) (Istanbul: Iletiim, 2008), 194–248; Nedim Seker, "Forced Population Movements in the Ottoman Empire and the Early Turkish Republic: An Attempt at Reassessment through Demographic Engineering," *European Journal of Turkish Studies* 16 (December 2013).

How to build solidarity between those who are kept outside the border of a society that engineers demographics and excludes and removes persons in order to accumulate wealth and power? The final chapter, "Sanctuary," builds on the contemporary sanctuary movement in the United States that has provided protection to those who were denied asylum since the 1980s, and envisions a future where "the whole world [is] a sanctuary for all, everywhere."[11] Acknowledging that the current sanctuaries practice conditional hospitality, and therefore can only perform as temporary solutions against hatred and hostility, Paik asks what an abolitionist sanctuary might look like—one that would eliminate the need for a sanctuary. Building on W. E. B. Du Bois's and Angela Davis's abolitionist theories, as well as historical examples such as nineteenth-century abolitionists and Reconstruction advocates, Paik argues that a similar abolition activism is necessary to undo oppressive and entrenched anti-immigration structures. The abolitionist sanctuary "connects sanctuary's radical welcome, its judgment-free embrace of anyone, to abolition, defined as social justice organizing that seeks to tear down oppressive power structures like prison systems and build a just, equitable world in their place."[12]

[11] Paik, *Bans, Walls, Raids, Sanctuary*, 128.

[12] Paik, *Bans, Walls, Raids, Sanctuary*, 113.

In making the argument that Trump's executive orders were extensions of long-rooted policies in the United States, Paik demonstrates the importance of a historically conscious perspective. However, her own history of anti-Muslim racism in explaining the Muslim Ban flattens the centuries-long European and American Orientalism, conflates Arabs and Muslims without due precision, and reduces the hostility to a product of the 1973 Arab-Israeli War and subsequent oil embargo. She cites a number of "terrorist attacks" as triggers of racism, which, she implies, were consolidated after 9/11.[13] More-over, her section on "Sanctuary's Genealogy," which finds this institution's roots in the Greco-Roman world, Biblical traditions, and churches of medieval Europe, is wholly Eurocentric. More consequentially, Paik has no interest in understanding the complexities of cosmopolitan and collaborative moments in history, and she thereby hardens the essentialism of the "clash of civilizations" narrative that she criticizes. Historical moments that falsify the essentialist divisions between peoples and contest segregationist propaganda are precisely the ones that would strengthen Paik's theory of a new type of sanctuary.

[13] Paik, *Bans, Walls, Raids, Sanctuary*, 32–39.

That is also why architectural history can indeed build solidarities. When one compares the ubiquity of media coverage on the criminalization of migrants to the scarcity of architecture books about their countries, one remembers that ignorance about culture and failure in diversity reinforce each other. If perpetual wars and the "clash of civilizations" narrative rely on the conscious production of ignorance of the history of the world, historians can respond by writing more global histories of architecture, which connect communities and bring to the forefront peace-building steps. For instance, if we were to scrutinize American architects' relations with the seven banned countries from a historical perspective, we would have gathered a more layered understanding of the tensions between Orientalist, expansionist, and cosmopolitan currents. Examples such as the collaboration between Walter Gropius, TAC, and Hisham Munir in Iraq and the Persepolis Declaration promulgated at the Second International Congress of Architects in Iran, as well as the subsequent "Habitat Bill of Rights" penned for the 1976 UN Conference

on Human Settlements by a team of architects, including Nader Ardalan from Iran and Josep Lluís Sert then in the US, give us a much more nuanced account.[14] These projects, located in countries subject to the travel ban, exemplify multiple translations that shaped their architectural designs. These translations make evident the intertwined histories of the world and should serve as an antidote to the assumption that the planet is inherently divided into isolated and self-contained civilizations perpetually and essentially in conflict with each other. I define modern translation movements as those historical moments when individuals and countries open themselves to the foreign more consciously and effectively than before, and through translation enrich themselves, refusing to see the foreign as a threat. Directed toward cosmopolitan ethics as unconditional welcoming and peace-building, this approach calls for a new culture of translatability—from below and in multiple directions—so that the "clash of civilizations" theory does not become a self-fulfilling prophecy.[15]

If one were to hear Paik's call for an abolitionist sanctuary, one would also advocate for unconditional welcome and border abolition.[16] An abolitionist sanctuary would be possible when the idea of the nation-state, and along with it the territorial border, becomes a thing of the past. Only then would no human be considered illegal and we could speak of "the whole world [as] a sanctuary for all, everywhere." Only then could Paik's call be heard that "seeks to create a world where cages, removals, exploitation, and policing—whether of immigrants, migrants crossing national borders, people of color, gender nonconforming people or any person made into a criminal by the laws of the state—no longer exist."[17]

[14] My intention in a book also written as a response to Trump's Muslim Ban was precisely to understand the American architects' relationships with the seven banned countries in the context of the tensions among Orientalist, expansionist, and cosmopolitan currents. In this book, I contested the Muslim Ban and its racism through the lens of architectural history. See Esra Akcan, *Abolish Human Bans: Intertwined Histories of Architecture* (Montreal: CCA Singles, 2022).

[15] Esra Akcan, *Architecture in Translation: Germany, Turkey, and the Modern House* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012).

[16] The literature on cosmopolitan ethics as unconditional welcoming is indeed enormous. For basics, see: James Bohman and Matthias Lutz-Bachmann, eds., *Perpetual Peace: Essays on Kant's Cosmopolitan Ideal* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1997); Jacques Derrida, *Of Hospitality*, trans. Rachel Bowlby (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000); Jacques Derrida, *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness*, trans. Mark Dooley and Michael Hughes (London: Routledge, 2001); Pheng Cheah and Bruce Robbins, eds., *Cosmopolitics: Thinking and Feeling beyond the Nation* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998); Sheldon Pollock, Homi Bhabha, Carol Breckenridge, and Dipesh Chakrabarty, eds., *Cosmopolitanism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002); Steven Vertovec and Robin Cohen, eds., *Conceiving Cosmopolitanism: Theory, Context, and Practice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); and Kwame Anthony Appiah, *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2006). For my own views, see *Architecture in Translation* and *Open Architecture*.

[17] Paik, *Bans, Walls, Raids, Sanctuary*, 128.