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Citizenship, Solidarity, and the Common Good

Abstract: Despite the liberal democratic insistence on citizenship and solidarity, we see a sharp rise in divisive politics, aggressive posturing, and social and political fragmentation in many countries. Moreover, it has been argued that the commitments regarding social solidarity in democratic states have either not fully materialized or have been replaced by "mutual hatred and resentment" (Mishra 2017, 14) in the general populace. Addressing the above challenges necessitates a fresh reflection on democratic priorities and principles. A meaningful realization of liberal democratic citizenship and solidarity, I contend, requires an agile notion of the common good, encouraging citizens to come together in the pursuit of their collective goals and projects, making necessary accommodations for the welfare of not only their compatriots but also noncitizens, immigrants and marginalized individuals who inhabit the same social and cultural space. To the above end, I draw upon liberal universalism and egalitarianism, emphasizing the principles of equality and human dignity, to show that any formulation of the common good must be consistent with well-known democratic ideals. Accordingly, I suggest that the social and cultural commitments of democratic citizens should be reimagined to adjust to liberal values of citizenship, solidarity, and the common good.

While the common good is ideally supposed to regulate the formation of all social and political associations in some ways, my focus in this paper is going to be primarily on its manifestations in the context of citizenship and solidarity in liberal democratic states. Unlike autocratic states, liberal democracies are normatively and ideologically committed to advancing the interests and welfare of their citizens. A meaningful realization of the above goals, I contend, requires two things. On the one hand, it necessitates a cultivated conception of citizenship which accords equal rights and obligations to all citizens, without discriminating against them on contingent grounds of race, religion, ethnicity, and caste; on the other hand, it also demands a strong sense of solidarity among its people. However, even a perfunctory look at the contemporary global realities shows that if anything the ideals of liberal democratic citizenship and solidarity have not fully materialized and that they have come under severe strain in the past decades as "there is pervasive panic [regarding their efficacy], which doesn't resemble the centralized fear emanating from despotic power. Rather, it is the sentiment, generated by news media and amplified by social media, that anything can happen anywhere to anybody at any time".[1] The above sense of intensified contingency, Pankaj Mishra shows, is accompanied by failed liberal politics and promises of universal rights, opportunities, economic growth, and personal advancement – or an overall realization of the common good that can bind citizens together, and has led to "tremendous increase in mutual hatred and somewhat universal irritability of everybody against everybody else or resentment".[2] Building on Mishra's articulation of the liberal democratic failures and their implications for democratic theory and the common good, I argue that one way to overcome this challenge could be perhaps to look at the democratic priorities and practice in a historical and cultural context, situating them within liberal democratic states such as India, Canada, the US – and other democracies too, without subordinating them to intense aspirations and theoretical insurgencies that question, even discredit, the very core of democratic egalitarianism, replacing it with an animated view of ideological politics. More strongly, even in the age of anger, rage, and resentment, I hope to

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[1] Pankaj Mishra, *Age of Anger: A History of the Present* (New York: Picador, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2017), 10.
[2] Ibid., 14.

show that the classical virtues of social solidarity and citizenship can still bring citizens together and infuse a renewed vigor in the pursuit of the common good.

The paper is divided into four sections. In the first section, I discuss the nature and scope of the common good in the liberal democratic states, arguing that traditionally they have assumed a broad political and cultural consensus among their citizens and sought to address their differences in procedural terms.[3] However, Black Lives Matter (BLM) in the US, No One Is Illegal (NOII) in Canada, protests against Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) 2019 in India, and similar social movements in other parts of the world have shown that people are getting more and more impatient and divided over their collective goals and projects, and that their understanding of the common good is turning out to be much differentiated, even fragmented, reflecting their race, gender, ethnicity, marginalization, immigration status, and overall lived experiences.[4] Next, I analyze how immigration and radical religious and cultural diversity associated with the arrival of newcomers is causing a moral panic in a segment of Western society, and its impact on the construction of the common good.[5] Given that globalization, social media and technology have intensified the movement of people from one place to another, I ask specifically if immigration can be viewed as an integral and constitutive part of the emergent notion of the common good; and also how do we stop pathological mistrust and revulsion among some native citizens against immigration, easing, if not completely addressing, the "swamp of fear and insecurity"[6] among them. Insisting primarily on egalitarian rights, equity, and justice for all people in a given society, I argue in the third section that social solidarity must not only mediate relations among citizens, but also between citizens and noncitizens, communities of color and 'locals', and natives and immigrants.[7] Going beyond its political formulations, I envision solidarity in the sense of a complete and compassionate engagement with fellow citizens where one is willing to make some reasonable accommodation for the welfare of others, including noncitizens and immigrants. Finally, I conclude in the fourth section by emphasizing the value of cultural and ethnic commitments in the making of a citizen, arguing that such commitments should be recognized in public policymaking and aligned with liberal egalitarianism and social solidarity, and not treated with distrust and hostility.

1. The Nature and Scope of the Common Good

Although there are deep divisions in the philosophical formulations of the common good, and its nature and scope, some thinkers have emphasized the distinction between private and public spheres to elucidate the above issue.[8] The vast array of things that human beings desire and want to possess in our social world, they argue, can be categorized under the broad categories of public and private good, corresponding to the two spheres of human life and action. The things that belong to the public sphere must be pursued in association with others while all private pursuits are left to the individual's own choices and preferences. That is to say, in their private sphere, individuals have full freedom to act as

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[3] Ibid., 133-134.

[4] Drawing attention to these omissions regarding the contemporary notions of the common good, Michael J. Sandel remarks: "Today, the common good is understood mainly in economic terms. It is less about cultivating solidarity or deepening the bonds of citizenship than about satisfying consumer preferences as measured by the gross domestic product. This makes for an impoverished public discourse". For details, see Michael J. Sandel, *The Tyranny of Merit: Can We Find the Common Good?* (New York: Picador, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2021), 29.

[5] Liav Orgad, *The Cultural Defense of Nations: A Liberal Theory of Majority Rights* (Oxford: Oxford U.P., 2017), 72-73.

[6] Mishra, *Age of Anger*, 19.

[7] Peter A. Hall, "The Political Sources of Social Solidarity", in Keith Banting and Will Kymlicka, eds., *Strains of Commitment: The Political Sources of Solidarity in Diverse Societies* (Oxford: Oxford U.P., 2017), 219-223.

[8] Amitai Etzioni, *The Common Good* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2004), 1-6.

per their will, but in the public sphere, they must respect the common good. Castle and Davidson illuminate this issue thus:

> The modern citizen who emerges from the French Revolution – unlike his Greek forebear – divides his life into a public and private realm, the second being most important. 'Freedom from' exists in the private realm. The public is a collective space where he unites with others as a people in designing laws for the common good. Unity is only expected in that public space of the republic.[9]

Acknowledging that it may not be always easy to draw a clear line between the two spheres and that their boundaries may overlap at times, we should not miss the core point. The common good deals with those issues and ideas that impact the interest and welfare of all citizens and that are not individual-specific in a private sense. In other words, all matters of collective importance constitute the common good in some sense as per their merit and strength. Such matters may take the form of building roads and bridges in a city, enhancing police and community services, improving air and water quality, adjusting fiscal policy, raising awareness regarding employment equity, social justice, and fairness, or something else, but in their different manifestations, all of them symbolize the common aspiration to serve everyone's interest. In other words, "It [the common good] connotes those goods that serve all of us and the institutions we share and cherish – for instance, national defense, a healthy environment. The common good is much more than an aggregate of all private or personal good".[10] Etzioni is saying that the common good encompasses the good of community as a whole and that it is more than the sum total of all private goods put together. The good of a community, as Etzioni conceives of it, symbolizes a comprehensive understanding of all relevant issues and public policies, including much needed goods that a flourishing human life requires. These goods are social, economic, cultural, moral, religious and spiritual, and even non-religious and non-spiritual as a community is marked by diversity of commitments and conflicting values. Recognizing that normative strains can lead to social tension and conflict, Etzioni, along with other communitarians, anchors them in a historically rooted political tradition and culture that sustains them.

Moreover, the common good is more than the sum total of all goods because political community represents intergenerational interests, building on collective accomplishments, history, culture, and tradition, going into posterity. It is a mistake, communitarians argue, to view citizens in the sense of raw and excessive individualism where one is willing to pursue one's interests even if they run counter to broadly understood common good. More strongly, the synching of personal interests with the common good requires a fundamental shift in the outlook of citizens such that they come to view their collective interest as more important than their personal good. Etzioni remarks: "Membership and participation in community is at once fundamental to human functioning and essential for the development of identity and character and human flourishing, from which emanates a moral obligation to nurture and sustain community and the particularistic obligations without which it cannot exist".[11]

The view that political community plays a crucial role in human flourishing has critical implications for any theory of solidarity as well as the common good. If a political community shapes the identity and character of citizens, it will have a far reaching impact on their lives and sympathies, and also on the goals and projects that they may want to pursue or set aside. In this view, citizens will be naturally as well as morally obligated to care for the community that creates them in its own image. Etzioni cautions that this thick engagement should not be construed in an excessive sense which can compromise the universal liberal democratic commitments to freedom and equality of all people, but

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[9] Stephen Castles and Alastair Davidson, eds., *Citizenship and Migration: Globalization and the Politics of Belonging* (New York: Palgrave, 2000), 37.

[10] Etzioni, *The Common Good*, 1.

[11] Ibid., 12.

in a non-excessive sense that respects liberal values and constitutionalism, human rights, global solidarity, and dignity of person.[12] However, even a non-excessive thick sense of collective identity can have far reaching implications for citizenship and solidarity.

The non-excessive thick sense of identity and character runs counter to the dominant liberal view that sees society as a contractual or mechanical device to deliver justice and fairness in the public arena. Against contractarian tradition, communitarians emphasize the role of culture, language, moral values, and common social and political heritage of citizens; contending that the public life and institutions should be formed on the basis of some ethical unity and the common good. To put it concretely, while the obligations of solidarity are more manifest in the context of citizenship, they acquire a different and somewhat contrived connotation in immigration, impacting negatively ethnic minorities as well as the 'communities of color'.[13] When it comes to taking immigrants or excluding them from entering a particular political society, i.e. the state, elected governments alone can make those decisions: "Admission and exclusion are at the core of communal independence. They suggest the deepest meaning of self-determination. Without them, there could not be *communities of character*, historically stable, ongoing associations of men and women with some special commitment to one another and some special sense of their common life".[14] A successful immigration to such societies would probably require complete assimilation, accepting prevalent norms and values and adopting them as one's own. Walzer supports citizenship rights and states' control over immigration on the grounds of 1) cultural distinctiveness and 2) distributive justice, arguing that they either assume or involve the idea of an enclosed political community. Interestingly, both of the above reasons have been lately used to demand more rights and justice for immigrants in their adopted countries; and Walzer himself seems to be very supportive of such demands. Cultural distinctiveness has been defended across political spectrum on different grounds. Indeed, communitarians believe that culture is intrinsically valuable and that once you remove cultural elements, a lot is removed from human personality, social theory, solidarity, and citizenship. Culture shows us what is common and valuable for a people, how they live their lives, and what are their regulative ideals and realities. In other words, the constitutive core of human personality may be contained in an individual's (or society's) primary source of self-image, i.e. its culture. Given this mirror image, it is not surprising that people would naturally want to protect and enhance their cultural distinctiveness, opening the doors of immigration and citizenship to those who share in their cultural narratives and not closing it for others. Moreover, this decision can be supported on the grounds of self-determination of a people; however, the ethical justifications of the above mirror image remain deeply questionable, needing more thinking and reflection.

Next, for Walzer, distributive justice constitutes one of the most important functions of a political society. When people live together in a shared social space, conflicts arise regarding the just distribution, needing clarifications regarding what is just and what is unjust, and what mechanism should be adopted to ensure justice and to address the grievances arising out of injustices. In order to answer these questions though, every society must determine first who belongs to it and who does not belong; or more precisely, who is an insider and who is an outsider? In this sense, the membership of a society itself becomes most prized primary good; and the society must distribute it in a purposive way to safeguard its own interests and continuity: "The idea of distributive justice presupposes a bounded world within which distribution takes place: a group of people committed to dividing, exchanging, and

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[12] Ibid., 24.
[13] In *The Lies that Bind: Rethinking Identity* (New York: Live Right Publishing Corporation, 2019), Kwame Anthony Appiah illustrates the historicity of communities of color on an international level, tracing it to Du Bois's work: "One reason race continues to play a central role in international politics, is the politics of racial solidarity that Du Bois helped to inaugurate in the Black world, in cofounding the tradition of Pan-Africanism" (132).
[14] Michael Walzer, *Spheres of Justice: A Defence of Pluralism and Equality* (New York: Basic Books, 1984), 62.

sharing social goods, first of all among themselves. That world ... is the political community, whose members distribute power to one another and avoid, if they possibly can, sharing it with anyone else".[15] Membership of a democratic society opens the doors for the exercise of power over all citizens in a collective and participative way, has meaningful implications for its formulations of the common good; and for these reasons, it can be constrained according to the principles of mutual aid and political justice.[16]

On an individual level, the obligation of solidarity toward others in need is widely recognized. The weight of this obligation is strongly felt towards near and dear ones, one's family, friends, relatives, and religious and cultural institutions, but it gets weaker with diminished familiarity and increased distance. However, the obligations regarding mutual aid for aliens, including potential immigrants and refugees, are to be located in the political community and/or public institutions that make decisions regarding extending residency rights and citizenship to them, and not necessarily in the individuals who happen to occupy an office. A democratic state is in some way obligated to help the necessitous strangers, particularly if they are living under torturous conditions and badly need support, such as refugees, asylum seekers, and victims of internal strife, cruel economic deprivation, and war. Recognizing that we live in a deeply unequal world, and that there will always be millions, even billions of people, falling in the category of necessitous others, lacking in political freedom and economic opportunities in their home countries, Walzer does not press the obligation of mutual aid strongly. Instead, he prioritizes the principle of self-determination over mutual aid on a theoretical level, making sure that helping necessitous others does not overtake the core interests of a political society.[17]

Respecting the reasoning that a political community must secure its interests prior to accommodating others, one may still argue that recent social movements, such as Black Lives Matter in the US, No One Is Illegal in Canada, and protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act 2019 in India, draw out its weaknesses, highlighting the mistreatment of poor and marginalized, as well as communities of color and religious minorities in different countries. The Black Lives Matter movement started in the aftermath of the killing of Trayvon Martin in 2013 and acquired a new force and momentum after the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis on 26th May 2020, soon engulfing the whole of the United States. Floyd's death due to a long chokehold by police officer Derek Chauvin became a rallying cry against police brutality and violence against African Americans in particular, giving rise to renewed solidarity and fellowship among Blacks in America. However, on a deeper level, BLM protests signify a massive failure in the realization of the common good in the US, insisting that even though African Americans are full-fledged Americans in terms of citizenship rights and law, they have not been able to obtain the same levels of equality, parity, and respect as their white compatriots.[18] Likewise, No One Is Illegal and the protests against Citizenship Amendment Act 2019 in India raise similarly troubling questions in the Canadian and Indian contexts, demanding a more symbiotic relationship between the obligations of citizenship and the realization of the common good involving the Indigenous communities, immigrants and the communities of color. Starting as a network that supported the rights of migrants having no legal status in Canada, NOII has evolved into a social movement that champions the rights of poor, vulnerable, and stateless individuals and

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[15] Ibid., 31.

[16] Ibid., 45-63.

[17] Ibid., 51.

[18] While recognizing the mistreatment of African Americans by police, some have also raised questions over the controversial tactics adopted by Black Lives Matter to silence its critics and undermine the common good on a more fundamental level. Mark Lila argues, for instance, that "there is no denying that movement's [BLM] decision to use Mau-Mau tactics to put down dissent and demand a confession of sins and public penitence (most spectacularly in a public confrontation with Hilary Clinton, of all people), paid in the hands of the Republican right". See Mark Lila, *The Once and Future Liberal: After Identity Politics* (New York: Harper Collins Publisher, 2017), 129-133.

sympathizes with the suffering of the Indigenous peoples in Canada.[19] Much of the Canadian history has been marked with the oppression of the Indigenous in Canada, and now it is widely recognized that the Canadian state might have engaged in the cultural genocide of the Indigenous. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015) has shown beyond any doubt that the established policy of the Canadian state, for a century or more, was to eliminate the Indigenous culture, forms of life, and modes of governance, forcing the Indigenous peoples to assimilate and conform to the European culture and value.[20] NOII seeks justice for the Indigenous, working for the realization of equity and fairness against the oppressive structures of state power, colonialism and painful legacies of the past.

Similarly, protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act 2019 in India show that when the public policy of a democratic state does not keep pace with its political philosophy and constitutionalism, citizens feel compelled to challenge it in their own way. The CAA accorded citizenship rights to the refugees and migrants who belonged to Hindu, Sikh, Christian, and Buddhist religions and had come to India from a list of countries where religious persecution was high, including Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Bangladesh but remained silent regarding assigning similar rights to the Muslims coming from these countries. Even though the mentioned three countries are Islamic states, their oppression of minority Muslim sects is well known. This is particularly true of Ahmadiyyas who constitute 0.22 percent of the whole Pakistani population and were declared as non-Muslims in 1974 by a constitutional amendment and their faith was criminalized in 1984 by Ordinance XX issued by President Zia.[21] Insisting that CAA 2019 has a historical context, going back to the partition of India in 1947, the Indian government has so far refused to accommodate persecuted Ahmadiyya Muslims, arguing that they can also apply for Indian citizenship if so desired and that their applications will be reviewed as per the process laid out in law. While the legal basis of the CAA has been challenged in the Indian courts, its moral and humanitarian claims have been discredited by the anti CCA protesters.

2. Citizenship and the Common Good

Champions of privileged citizenship have used the communitarian arguments regarding communities of character, human flourishing, and distributive justice in a bounded political society to justify the restrictions of immigration, arguing that culturally divergent immigrants can in some cases cause a dislocation among people and undermine their rights of self-determination and citizenship. Needless to say that, for some, the character of community is meant to be embedded in the character of citizens, almost like an accent, and that a community and its citizenry must mirror each other in significant ways. More strongly, citizens can only flourish in a political society that provides them with optimal conditions for their moral and material fulfillment. Beyond theoretical stipulations, it is extremely doubtful if any liberal democracy, including the US, the UK, India, and Canada, can defend such an extensive involvement of citizens on constitutional grounds. Moreover, John Rawls has shown that contemporary liberal conceptions of citizenship are political and that they avoid, even resist, any comprehensive engagement among citizens, underscoring the importance of reasonable pluralism and deep diversity over communities of character.[22] Reinforces the above elements of Rawlsian differences, Gerald F. Gaus writes: "Comprehensive and general doctrines cover a wide range of

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[19] Harsha Walia, *Undoing Border Imperialism* (Oakland, CA: AK Press/Institute of Anarchist Studies, 2013), 208-222.
[20] Scott Hamilton, "Where Are the Children Buried?", *NCTR*, www.nctr.ca.
[21] Ewelina U. Ochab, "Life Could not be More Difficult for Pakistan's Ahmadi's?", *Forbes* (2018), www.forbes.com.
[22] John Rawls, *Political Liberalism* (New York: Columbia U.P., 1993), 36.

topics, values, and ideals applicable to various areas of life while, in contrast, the scope of the political is narrow".[23]

When we look at the functioning of liberal democracies in the past some decades, we notice a growing emphasis on individual freedom and autonomy, moving away from the collectivist cultural constructions of the common good and citizenship. This is not to deny that collective conceptions can add meaning and value to the lives of many citizens who share in such goals and projects, but to say that for many others they can have a corrosive and provocative impact. Consider, for instance, the right wing characterization of immigrants in many countries in extremely pejorative terms, calling them underserving and lazy recipients of welfare or even worse "rapists and murderers".[24] Once we portray a section of society so negatively, we excuse ourselves from any potential moral burden to show solidarity towards them or simply to engage with them: "Fear of bushy bearded activists continues to motivate in the West to shun them, even when they are democratically elected".[25]

Freedom, as Kant has shown us, consists in a voluntary and rational determination of one will without any external persuasion or hindrance. In other words, collective involvement may not be necessary to build moral character or develop positive social solidarity. On the contrary, it runs the risk of stifling an individual's own initiatives and vision regarding her life. If I want to become a good citizen and act in a just and honorable way, full of genuine solidarity, the best way to do that would be probably to draw upon the available personal and social resources in agreement with my freedom and autonomy.[26] Moreover, time has shown that an individual's freedom is consistent with lesser collective involvement and that many collective responsibilities performed by citizens earlier have been parceled out to non-citizens now, particularly in the field of military and security, raising questions against the communitarian notions of privileged citizenship and the common good as well: "To the degree that recruitment for battle and participation in war has disappeared as a general citizen obligation in the West, and to the degree that the professional soldier has replaced the citizen soldier, the historical engine of citizenship rights and of strong citizenship identities has irretrievably died, luckily so one must add".[27] The substitution of citizen soldier by professional soldier has led to the recruitment of immigrants and undocumented in the armed forces of developed countries, making a stronger case for their political and social inclusion and citizenship rights.

A decline in citizenship rights and identities, Joppke is saying, has weakened the links of distributive justice in the bounded political communities as well as the claims of solidarity associated with them. Moreover, citizens of Western liberal democratic states rely on immigrant labor in different sectors of economy and social life, making it difficult for them to think of themselves as a closed community of compatriots. This dependence on immigrant labor has been a point of appreciation and contention at the same time, depending on the empirical and philosophical standpoint of the participants. Different states have taken different measures to tackle the new reality of documented and undocumented workers within their territories. While some states accord some social and economic rights to undocumented immigrants, others emphasize full solidarity, while some still practice exclusion. In any case, they have to manage the presence of immigrants on their territory who may or may not be bona fide but are crucial to their workforce and productivity. Walzer has argued that when immigrants live in a country on a long term basis, they must be given appropriate rights and

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[23] Gerald F. Gaus, "Reasonable Pluralism and the Domain of the Political: How the Weakness of John Rawls's Political Liberalism Can Be Overcome by a Justificatory Liberalism", *Inquiry*, 42 (2010), 263.

[24] It has been recorded that collectivistic conceptions of the common good often lead to selective solidarity among a group, excluding marginalized others. For details, see Edward Anthony Koning, *Immigration and the Politics of Welfare Exclusion: Selective Solidarity in Western Democracies* (Toronto: Toronto U.P., 2019), 109-111.

[25] Mishra, *Age of Anger*, 130.

[26] Immanuel Kant, *Metaphysical Elements of Justice* [1797], trans. by John Ladd (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965), 76.

[27] Christian Joppke, "The Inevitable Lightening of Citizenship", *European Journal of Sociology*, 51.1 (2010), 17.

a path to citizenship.[28] Or the society will get divided into citizens and serfs, resulting in unacceptable modes of exploitation and harm.

However, the difficulty is not simply the lack of citizenship or legal rights for immigrants, even though these are mammoth challenges impacting millions of people without legal status in different countries, but also the practical realization of such rights once they are granted. Research shows that immigrants and racialized individuals suffer from many kinds of inequities and systemic challenges even after becoming citizens, and that the same problems persist in the subsequent generations. Conversations on systemic discrimination are uncomfortable and hard to have even with 'open minded' individuals in a given society. This is because a public awareness of such discrimination can go against the political image of a given society, putting a question mark on its historical foundations and injustices. As a result, the exposure to such discrimination is filtered and lacks in historical understanding and context. For instance, the US immigration law in the first half of the twentieth century encouraged immigration from Europe but discouraged it from other (colored) parts of the world. Now someone may want to justify such laws in the name of economic productivity, logistics or assimilation policy, but their ethnoracial underpinnings are too visible to put them under the rug. This law was reversed in 1965 with the passing of the US Immigration and Citizenship Act and removal of discriminatory quota system.[29]

It is also problematic to overemphasize the political and legal equality of immigrants in terms of actual equality or equality of opportunity realized. Nowhere the above discrepancy is more obvious than in the public sector employment in the developed countries. Public institutions and different layers of government tend to be an important source of gainful employment, providing more than 15% of total available employment. However, the representation of immigrants in such jobs is scant, and not reflective of their demographic make-up. There could be many reasons for this gap. Public sector hiring requires merit and specific skill sets, language proficiency, and availability of candidates at a given time and place. It is possible that many first generation immigrants do not possess all the required qualities and as a result their representation in the public sector jobs and government institutions suffers. Unfortunately, even the second generation immigrants continue to suffer similar disadvantages in the public sector employment, reinforcing the point that there may be something more to the underrepresentation of immigrants in the public sector jobs. The situation is much different in the private sector where immigrants excel in different capacities, and lead the rate of job creation in small businesses and entrepreneurship. For instance, Statistics Canada report in 2019 showed that immigrants excel against locals in job creation and small businesses: "With regard to gross job creation and gross job destruction, the results revealed that private incorporated immigrant-owned firms were much more likely than firms with Canadian-born owners to be job creators than job destroyers".[30] It is equally true that many immigrants have difficulty breaking the glass ceiling and are disproportionately caught up in low paying service sector jobs.[31]

Similar to their underrepresentation in the public sector jobs, immigrants lag behind in the political leadership roles. Electoral success of political candidates in democratic countries depends on multiple factors, including their work, credentials and likeability; but none of these factors matter if one does not get proper backing and support of party leaders and colleagues at the grassroot level. The inclusion of immigrants in political processes has been marked by politics of convenience in many countries

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[28] Walzer, *Spheres of Justice*, 60.
[29] Richard Alba and Nancy Fonner, *Strangers No More: Immigration and the Challenges of Integration in North America and Western Europe* (Princeton: Princeton U.P., 2017), 25.
[30] Garnett Picot and Ann-Marie Rollin, "Immigrant Entrepreneurs as Job Creators: The Case of Canadian Private Incorporated Companies", *Statistics Canada* (2019), *www150.statcan.gc.ca*.
[31] Silas Amo-Agyei, *The Migrant Pay Gap: Understanding Wage Differences between Migrant and Nationals* (International Labor Organization: Geneva, 2020), 50-58.

where political parties have calibrated their responses according to the voting pattern in a given electoral constituency. Rafaela Dancygier has shown that confronted with the reality of immigrant votes and politics, the first reaction of many parties has been that of exclusion, never mind the rhetoric of "equality and non-discrimination".[32] It is only when the population of immigrants in a given riding reaches a critical mass where their votes can have an impact on the election outcome, political parties take them seriously. Reaching such a critical mass is difficult, and even undesirable, as the formation of ethnic enclaves has its own drawbacks, resulting in regressive notions of the common good and citizenship.[33]

The relative absence of immigrants from the corridors of power deprives them from having a meaningful say in the understanding and formulation of large scale public policy. This is because the policies regarding the common good are adopted on a political level, and implemented on a bureaucratic level. Neither of them seems to have an adequate presence of immigrants. Every once in a while we have a success story in immigrant politics, highlighting the achievements of a particular candidate, but on an institutional level, immigrant candidates still face considerable barriers in finding jobs and electoral success: "Discrimination by party elites presents a significant hurdle for minorities seeking to enter electoral politics. Ethnic-minority office seekers, even when they possess very similar socioeconomic or educational characteristics to those of the majority population, face substantial barriers when trying to run for elected office, receiving lower returns on income and education than do natives".[34]

The issues of discrimination, inequity, and exclusion arising out of liberal democratic societies pose serious questions in the context of immigration, citizenship, and the common good. Given that the common good is supposed to reflect the good of all members of a given society and that many Western societies have a significant immigrant population, it would follow that immigrants should benefit equally from the pursuits of the common good. It would not be an exaggeration to say that this has not happened and that racial and ethnic immigrants continue to suffer inequity and exclusion unknown to natives. While the marginalization of Muslims in Europe and elsewhere is well-known, other ethnic groups such as Mexicans and Asians have their own challenges. African Americans and Indigenous peoples have suffered a historical wrong and its harmful impacts are visible even today. These injustices, I will argue in the next section, have led to heated political argumentation, social activism and violent protests, questioning the ethical, and political foundations of democratic societies and their articulations of the common good as well.

3. Citizenship, Solidarity, and the Common Good

Even though liberal democracies tend to justify limited access to citizenship in the name of distributive justice and preserving social solidarity among citizens, their political, economic, and social configurations show that immigrant labor is essential to supporting the above goals.[35] Moreover, while democracies view every citizen as free and equal in terms of law and policy, when it comes to the practice of these ideals hardnosed political calculations take over. Indeed, under the impact of globalization, new technologies, multinational companies, and their ownership structures, many governments have felt compelled to open up their markets and transfer manufacturing and services to developing countries, increasing pressure on the 'locals' in developed countries, and causing further strains on the known modes of solidarity. Some political leaders and demagogues have capitalized on the problems confronting common people and the 'flooding of domestic market by foreign goods',

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[32] Rafaela M. Dancygier, *Dilemmas of Inclusion: Muslims in European Politics* (Princeton: Princeton U.P., 2017), 6.

[33] Doug Saunders, "Britain Has an Ethnic Problem: The English", *The Globe and Mail* (2013), *www.theglobeandmail.com*.

[34] Dancygier, *Dilemmas of Inclusion*, 81-82.

[35] Joppke, "The Inevitable Lightening of Citizenship", 13-16.

contending that local workers in developed countries are robbed of opportunities and that they are working for less. It's also true that the wage and living standard of these workers has declined in comparison to their parents' generation, causing pent-up feelings and resentments against immigrants.[36] Surveys show that a young American or Britisher is less confident about her future today in comparison to a young Indian or Indonesian who shows more exuberance thinking about her future and economic prospects.[37] Overlooking the complexity of causes responsible for the above decline, demagogues have created a backlash against immigration, undermining the much needed mutual solidarity among the natives and immigrants: "If local workers lose their jobs, and find their social security and environment declining, they blame the alien influences that are undermining the nation: hating immigrants helps maintain an illusion of national unity and pride".[38] One may say that hate is an extreme pathological response and that Castle and Davidson have overstated the tension between immigrants and local workers. Lost jobs can lead to a reassertion of ethnic awareness among the native population and sympathy for the people who are at risk economically. When ethnic awareness becomes a form of coping mechanism, systemic discrimination and racism are bound to occur. Moreover, it is impossible to escape such negativity if an individual's personal, social and economic narratives are grounded in racial prejudice, ethnicity, and blame. Moreover, Pankaj Mishra has shown that such biases are found in all ethnic groups to some extent, including Whites and non-Whites; but since institutional structures and demography in the West are still predominantly Caucasian, immigrants can be at the receiving end of social exclusions: "As globalized and volatile markets restrict nation states' autonomy of action, and refugees and immigrants challenge dominant ideas of citizenship, national culture and tradition, the swamp of fear and insecurity expands".[39] Clearly, globalization has accentuated perverse solidarity among a group of citizens.

Faced with institutional discriminations and biases – real and perceived, many immigrants turn to ethnic enclaves and religious groupings to find equality, acceptance, support, and genuine solidarity. Ethnic enclaves bring people with similar experiences together and help them in reconstituting the social world left behind in the country of their origin. This reconstitution of cultural norms and values of one society in another can be a matter of celebration as well as conflict. It reinvigorates immigrants' life by recreating their social groupings, interactions, language, and culture. However, it can also be a potential cause of conflict, not only between the natives and immigrants but also among progressive and orthodox immigrants themselves. Indeed, many cultural values that have been revised or abandoned in the country of origin continue to hold sway among many immigrants and expatriates in the West. This is especially true of orthodox religious and cultural beliefs that are said to be the glue among many immigrant groups in European cities, leading to their civic isolation and radicalization of some young men at the same time.

Confronted with the presence of immigrants on their territories and also their isolation and radicalization, Western governments have re-emphasized the importance of integration policies in the host societies, insisting that immigrants' refusal to integrate can diminish their job prospects, opportunities, and acculturation. The thinking is that once immigrants are fully integrated, social and economic gaps between the natives and racialized groups will be significantly reduced, strengthening the bonds of social solidarity among them. I have argued earlier that while second generation immigrants do better than first generation on the employment index, they too suffer relative

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[36] Mishra, *Age of Anger*, 108-114.

[37] Claire Cain Miller and Alicia Parlapiano, "Where Are Young People More Optimistic? In Poorer Nations", *The New York Times* (2021), *www.nytimes.com*.

[38] Castles and Davidson, *Citizenship and Migration*, 145.

[39] Mishra, *Age of Anger*, 19.

disadvantages in comparison to their native peers.[40] In other words, enhanced linguistic skills and cultural adaptation of immigrants may not be able to resolve the systemic issues outlined in the integration paradox: many Western societies and governments demand integration from immigrants but frustrate concrete steps in that direction such as induction of qualified and willing immigrants in the public sector jobs and institutions. Yet the integration paradox should not be allowed to overshadow other predicaments.

A plausible solution to the above predicaments must recognize that the constitutional commitment to freedom and equality of citizens is not enough and that liberal democracies need to develop a more equitable and solidaristic understanding of the common good. Most restrictions on immigration and global movement of people were put in the last century and overlook, rather conveniently, colonialism and the European occupation of the world. In other words, the nation-state model of governance that staunchly protects the interests of sovereign states over others is relatively prejudiced and fails to take note of historical injustices and exploitations. Immigrants come to the West from different parts of the world now, only because their countries and resources have been plundered earlier. Colonial history can no longer be ignored and should be used as a tool not only to cultivate social solidarity with immigrants but also to illuminate our understanding of the common good. Or to put it another way: "while the common good can be considered for a single nation, the scope of the common good is ultimately larger than one nation. It is concerned with all people and is ultimately universal; thus any local common good must ultimately be referred to the universal common good".[41]

To overcome the divisions and rifts regarding citizenship and the common good, we need to build on their ethical potential and solidarity. Ideally, the local common good must be in agreement with the universal common good. Global problems require global solutions, but that is beside the point. The fundamental point of contention here seems to be the territoriality of states and moral claims regarding nation-states. Territorial boundaries of various states have been arbitrarily drawn and redrawn, and are reflective of global power relations, and may have little to do with the 'communities of character'. Given that the frontiers are arbitrarily constructed, one may say that it is immoral to use them to deny entry to precarious and vulnerable people who want to go to rich and prosperous Western states in search of a better life for themselves and their families.

Restrictions on the freedom of movement, it can be argued, put an excessive weight on the "solidarity from above" which excludes immigrants from the institutional benefits of a democratic society, forcing them to rely more on the "solidarity from below" which develops by "creating links and feelings of closeness between people from very different origins as well as with different interests and perspectives".[42] 'Solidarity from above' is inconsistent with core liberal values of freedom, equality, citizenship and should be rejected. While these arguments are theoretically strong, they seem to bypass the practical purposes and justifications associated with the functioning of modern nation-states.

Practical justifications of bounded political communities are to be found primarily in the distributive justice and welfare functions of states that allow citizens to benefit from their common associations and are crucial to the manifestation of social solidarity and the common good. Unrestricted membership is going to have a compromising impact on the welfare functions, and any argument to the contrary must be evaluated on empirical grounds. If a state does not assume welfare functions or keeps them to the minimum, it will have higher chances of having open citizenship and

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[40] Rosita Fibbi, Arnfin H. Midtbøen and Patrick Simon, *Migration and Discrimination: IMISCOE Short Reader* (Cham, Switzerland: Springer, 2021), 2.

[41] Ann T. Bedard, "Us versus Them? US Immigration and The Common Good", *Journal of Society of Christian Ethics*, 28.2 (2008), 118.

[42] Helge Schwiertz and Helen Schwenken, "Introduction: Inclusive Solidarity and Citizenship along Migratory Routes in Europe and the Americas", *Citizenship Studies*, 24.4 (2020), 409.

free movement of foreigners on its territory in conjunction with social and economic realities of the day. Indeed, libertarians and free market economists often support open borders and limited governments, ignoring the elements of social solidarity and redistribution. Limited government allows them to highlight the value of unimpeded human freedom, market economy, and individual endeavors. Yet such governments cannot deliver the social services and welfare functions that are also championed by the critics of bounded communities. This reinforces the merits of Michael Walzer's arguments regarding self-determination and citizenship.

It is undeniable that in the passing decades' immigration has become economically necessary and socially divisive in many countries and that pressure points are more visible now than ever before. On some occasions freedom of speech seems to clash with religious sentiments; but on other occasions, economic and social inequities and discriminations can have disruptive implications. Given that immigration is economically productive,[43] and economy seems to have a major say in the lives of modern citizens, one would think that democratic states should be able to forge a social consensus on this issue. Some states have done it more successfully than others. Canada, for instance, shows substantial support for immigration year after year, but Denmark's reaction is more guarded.[44] Despite the economic benefits, once the arrival of newcomers starts clashing with a society's self-image and culture, we see a blowback against immigration. To avoid this reaction, it is important to manage the friction between the natives and immigrants wherever it occurs, ensuring that fault lines are not aggravated and that social sensibilities of both are respected as much as possible. This implies respect for the cultural values of immigrants and multiculturalism on the one hand, and reinforcement of the liberal democratic values of freedom, equality, and dignity of persons on the other. Moreover, this respect must be marked with solidaristic mutuality and concern for each other's welfare that comes with living together in a given society or being an inhabitant of a state.

Any realization of the above goals would require a reconceptualization of the common good and citizenship to include the interests of immigrants on a core human and political level without predicating them on the sovereign rights of democratic states.[45] A political society cannot view itself as closed or bounded without inserting a strong notion of alien-others, i.e. immigrants, and excluding them from its conception of the common good and citizenship rights. Political perceptions of a community have an impact on the thinking, behavior, and collective self-image of its people. Given the composition of Western democratic states, it seems obvious that the idea of a strictly bounded community is problematic on empirical as well as theoretical ground. Most of these states are multicultural, multiracial, and politically diverse. It is essential then to ensure a fair and equitable inclusion of everyone, including the immigrants, in their conception of the common good.

Next, the idea of a bounded political society needs to be recast significantly to keep pace with the mobility of people in the age of globalization and related changes in citizenship rights. This means that liberal democratic states, in principle, should be open to accommodate more people on their territories if their resources allow such accommodations. Lack of resources coupled with the arrival of new inhabitants causes acrimony and friction and can be a source of potential tension and conflict. An open and welcoming attitude will cultivate a culture of respect and accommodation towards new immigrants and transcend many barriers associated with closed-historical communities: "Solidarity [for

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[43] Picot and Rollin, "Immigrant Entrepreneurs as Job Creators".

[44] Irene Bloemraad remarks: "As striking, Canadian public opinion has been supportive of immigration for a long time and support has been increasing over recent decades, a time of economic uncertainty and concerns over foreign terrorist". For details, see Irene Bloemraad, *Understanding "Canadian Exceptionalism" in Immigration and Pluralism Policy* (Washington: Migration Policy Institute, 2012).

[45] Kwame Anthony Appiah has carried this aspect of citizenship, emphasizing "what binds citizens together is a commitment, through Renan's daily plebiscite, to sharing life of a modern state, united by its institutions, procedures, and percepts". For details, see Appiah, *The Lies that Bind*, 103.

immigrants] could involve expanding one's horizon to the lived experiences of others as well as to reflecting on one's own social position, which could itself transform self-perceptions and subjectivities in the process".[46] It will also be consistent with liberal universalism that prioritizes freedom and equality of all people irrespective of their race, creed and ethnicity.

The justifications of the common good arising out of liberal universalism need to be celebrated and modified appropriately to respond to contemporary challenges, including the issues of bounded citizenship, increased immigration, racism, and a sense of anxiety and loss among the ethnically White working class. By taking individuals as the units of political calculations and decision making, universalism accounts for everyone's interests equally on a theoretical and philosophical level without differentiating between immigrants and natives on racial grounds, and practical challenges can be probably resolved by an honest and committed pursuit of theoretical aspirations.[47] Moreover, a refusal to engage in the politics of identity and/or 'communities of character' that emphasize the historical embeddedness of human life should not be confused with any lack of respect for citizens' identities and their cultural and religious attributes and mooring. Quite the contrary, modified universalism takes the issues of racial inequity and colonial exploitation seriously without submitting to their overarching narratives in opposition to the values of freedom, equality, dignity, and solidarity with all. The politics of contestation and differentiation does well in highlighting the failures of liberal universalism and its economic and cultural fault lines, and can be instrumental in cultivating an alternative conception of the common good in the spirit of universal solidarity with all people.

4. Conclusion and Public Policy Suggestions

Reflecting on the growing economic and moral tension – even panic – among a sizable section of the Western population, it has been argued that the failed promises of liberal universalism, diminished opportunities, and resentments against globalization and immigration are primarily responsible for the above phenomenon. Building on Michael Walzer's idea of 'communities of character' and Pankaj Mishra's thoughts on the ongoing political discourse regarding citizenship and solidarity, I have argued that the idea of the common good must not only include the interests of all inhabitants of a given state but also their egalitarian and solidaristic aspirations as well. Furthermore, I have shown that the pursuit of the common good is essential to liberal democratic citizenship even though opinions differ regarding its precise meaning and connotation. I have defended a historical, cultural, egalitarian, and universalistic understanding of the common good.

I contend that some of the problems that plague liberal democracies and their policymakers, causing resentment among many citizens, arise due to a contrived conception of the common good and social solidarity. To overcome this difficulty, it is essential, I suggest, to rethink our conception of the common good in such a way that it encapsulates the social and political realities of our times, including racial inequalities, discrimination against immigrants, and minority groups. This suggestion, if taken seriously, will have at least three important policy-making implications in the context of citizenship and solidarity First, while formulating their conceptions of the common good, liberal societies and governments need to be mindful of their historical encumbrances and ill-treatment of ethnic minorities, and should not attend to them as an afterthought or political proxy to advance an already established goal. A strong case can be made that such a historical awareness will strengthen social sympathy and solidarity, going much beyond the politics of accusation and blame that have

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[46] Schwiertz and Schwenken, "Introduction", 417.

[47] Binary formulations of the common good in terms of universalistic and culturally specified goods fail to capture its full potential. While defending cultural sensitivity and formulations, one must also recognize their limits. For details, see Brian Barry, *Culture and Equality: An Egalitarian Critique of Multiculturalism* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard U.P., 2001), 284-291.

become so endemic to democratic political processes and governance. Second, the public sensitivity toward marginalized groups and people needs to be ethical and contextual, recognizing their plurality and contradictions without imposing a binary view of political attachments and preferences. Some immigrants and minorities, for instance, have done well in education and engineering in the US, and this awareness can be used to frame appropriate policies to reward them and provide economic and social incentives to those who are currently lagging behind so that they too can catch up. Third, even though cultural commitments and economic benefits have become crucial components of the common good – and identity politics in the West, they should not be allowed to overshadow the virtues of citizenship and solidarity in the public policy-making process. I have shown that liberal egalitarianism is ethically and politically obligated to support the welfare of all citizens and groups, marginalized groups in particular, but it cannot privilege *per se* any group over an individual in its policy-making endeavors. More strongly, if liberal democracies want to overcome the pervasive resentment and anxiety among their citizens, they must revamp their understanding of liberal egalitarianism to support their notions of citizenship, solidarity, and the common good on a practical level.