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Citizenship revocation: a stress test for liberal democracy

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ABSTRACT

On the basis of the case studies collected in this special issue, the paper analyses what is philosophically at stake in public discourses and policies about citizenship revocation, and why the latter currently acts as a borderline case with regard to liberal democracy. Firstly, we ask whether, beyond an intensification of internal tensions, the destabilizing effects attached to the revival of citizenship revocation conjure up dilemmas which imply a possible exit from liberal democracy or, at least, a decoupling between liberalism and democracy. Investigating this possible shift from tensions to dilemmas, we underline that the liberal dimension of citizenship, based on individual rights, has lost importance in setting out the conditions of access to the political 'us'. Conversely, both the republican and communitarian claims, based on civic virtue and collective identity, respectively, have gained prominence and have converged on a primary interest for a 'thick' common bond. Finally, we examine two specific issues of key interest in understanding how citizenship revocation puts liberal democracy to the test: the challenge to cosmopolitanism as posed by the return of patriotism, and the state promotion of shared values as a means to secure national identity, thus expressing an ethicisation-cum-ethnicisation of citizenship.

Introduction

Promoted by public authorities as a means to ensure the primary good of security and to fight against Islamist terrorism, citizenship revocation appears to be both 'exceptional' and 'pragmatic' since it is part and parcel of the discourse and practice of an emergency regime in search of effective and lasting solutions. It is worth taking some distance from this 'framework of exception, suggesting a practice reserved for the most dangerous and undesirable of citizens' (Troy 2019, 304) and of political pragmatism (Fargues 2019; Boeckstein and de Groot 2019), as all the papers collected in this special issue invite us to do. Based on a variety of combined approaches – legal, political, sociological and historical – and of case studies – Australia, Canada, France, the Netherlands, the United-Kingdom – they all highlight the depoliticisation process of the narrative of emergency policies and, more specifically, of counter-terrorism which is used in support of denationalisation measures. Operating in the name of national security, such process makes it difficult or illegitimate to debate citizenship revocation

as a matter of political choices among different visions of justice. With a view to unveiling what is obscured by these depoliticising effects, the papers in this volume explore the historical continuity and socio-political frames underpinning what is investigated here as the ‘revival’ (Fargues 2019; Winter and Previsic 2019) of citizenship revocation.

In the same vein, and with a similar purpose, this afterword belongs within a field of enquiry explicitly focused on the theoretical issues raised by the current controversy surrounding deprivation of citizenship. While the collected papers all provide a fascinating glimpse of these issues, we will address them more directly by clarifying what is philosophically at stake in the controversial revival of denationalisation. More precisely, we will analyse what this renewed interest in citizenship revocation suggests about the challenges posed to liberal democracy. As shown by the papers collected here, the contemporary public and academic debate over the deprivation of citizenship reveals how the latter questions, and indeed destabilizes, liberal democracy. The core ideals of liberal democracy as well as the public institutions and policies dedicated to putting these ideals into practice are the principle objects of such destabilisation. All of these elements are being tested for internal consistency and for relevance to citizens and the larger society.

In the remainder of this afterword, our aim is to shed some light on why and how citizenship revocation currently acts as a borderline case with regard to liberal democracy. On the basis of the papers in this special issue, we will first consider how citizenship revocation affects liberal democracy both from within and from without. We will look at whether it results not only in the intensification of a number of internal tensions but also in the creation of dilemmas which imply a possible exit from liberal democracy or, at the very least, a decoupling of liberalism and democracy. To analyse this potential shift from tensions to dilemmas, we will return to the three dimensions of citizenship – namely: rights, participation, identity – mentioned in the editors’ introduction (Fargues and Winter 2019) and investigated by Winter and Previsic (2019) in relation to Canada. We will then examine how these dimensions relate to each other in terms of a normative priority for setting out the conditions of access to citizenship. Finally, we will focus on two specific issues which the collected articles show to be of key interest in investigating such a possible shift: on the one hand, the challenge to cosmopolitanism as posed by the return of patriotism and, on the other hand, the promotion of common values as a means to ensure national security and, by the same token, strengthen the ethical-cum-cultural integrity of national identity.

Citizenship revocation as a borderline case

In their introduction, the editors of this special issue refer to Brubaker (1992) and Nyers (2009) in order to remind us that citizenship as such can be approached ‘as a mechanism of “social closure”’ which provides an ‘exclusionary function’ (Fargues and Winter 2019, 297). In this view, citizenship is about delineating the boundaries of the political ‘us’ by defining who is – and who is not – subject of the benefits and burdens, the rights and duties attached to being a citizen, what conditions must be satisfied to this end, and by what procedure this is achieved. These are pillars of any concept and practice of citizenship which justify analysing deprivation of citizenship through the prism of exclusion, as all the papers collected here do brilliantly. At the

same time, two elements of reflection must be added and considered in order to better understand why and how citizenship revocation acts as a borderline case which puts liberal democracy to the test.

Firstly, it is worth emphasizing that the debate at hand and the national cases investigated in this volume do not deal with just any form of citizenship but with liberal-democratic citizenship. Nor do they deal with any reading of the 'closure' and 'exclusionary' dimension pertaining to citizenship generally speaking: instead what is at stake is a variant of exclusion specific to liberal democracy. As a consequence, this form of exclusion must meet the basic moral, legal and political standards of liberal citizenship. This raises the issue of a particular version of citizenship through which democracy as the government of the people, by the people and for the people is conceptually and practically imbued with, and constrained by, the liberal principles and norms of the rule of law and the constitutional State. In that respect, when Patti Lenard (2016) is questioned (Cohen 2016; Herzog 2016; Miller 2016) on her thesis that 'the claimed power to revoke citizenship in democratic states [...] is incompatible with democracy', her concept of democracy equates, in fact, with liberalism, and even with justificatory liberalism. She indeed concludes that citizenship revocation is 'undemocratic' on the basis of a liberal principle of non-discrimination and equal treatment as well as procedural norms of justice such as transparent justification and proportionality of penalties. Such a form of liberal citizenship is informed by strong expectations that individual liberties and the fundamental rights of all human beings will be respected, regardless of their different and competing visions of the good and of the world. Liberal citizenship is – at least in principle – governed by a logic of openness and pluralism which is both universalistic and individualistic in nature. Democracy, on the other hand, focuses on collective autonomy and self-government, thus prioritizing the will and the sovereignty of the people, the pursuit of the common good and the flourishing of the political community as a whole. Consequently, liberal democracy, from the outset, is fuelled by a variety of diverging foundations, requirements and purposes which still need to be reconciled (Bobbio [1988] 1990; Graham 1992; Habermas [1992] 1996). Therefore, while embodying at its best the exclusionary aspect of any model of citizenship, deprivation of liberal citizenship is likely to exacerbate the inner tensions constitutive of liberal democracy. In a liberal state, citizenship revocation takes a paradoxical turn. Hence, the widely debated question (Fargues 2017; Joppke 2016; Macklin 2018) to which we will return below, as to whether denationalisation can be liberal at all, if it is at odds with the liberal principles of justice or if it represents a legitimate 'illiberal' means to secure a liberal regime.

This is all the more important now that the above 'paradox of liberal citizenship revocation' has emerged and is being intensified in a context of resurgent nationalism which manifests itself in worldwide pleas for a robust patriotism and in the public promotion of common values as a precondition of inclusion within the citizenry. The electoral successes of 'populist' parties in many parts of the world over the last decade illustrate a strengthening of the moral and cultural boundaries of citizenship. Similarly, the discourse of an 'open society', proud of its 'diversity' and in search of 'global justice', is dramatically declining and losing its political attractiveness. What is more, the formal requirement – even in a superficial, purely rhetorical manner – to justify state action in the liberal language of basic rights has also been dropped. As this decline in

‘justificatory liberalism’ increases, it may well be the case that the test of liberal democracy reflected by the contemporary discourse on and practice of citizenship revocation will go beyond the limited scope (and, as it were, conventional framework) of internal tensions. It may turn into a series of far-reaching dilemmas: universalism *vs* particularism, cosmopolitanism *vs* patriotism, pluralism *vs* homogeneity, neutrality *vs* partiality, etc., and of course inclusiveness *vs* exclusion.

Talking about dilemmas rather than mere tensions that liberal democracies are used to managing implies that a choice has to be made between one of the two alternatives. This is the second and ultimate reason why citizenship revocation should be considered as currently acting as a borderline case: the manner in which it is defended by some particular governments rightly or wrongly labelled as ‘populist’ (Freeden 2017; Müller 2016) possibly means a resolute choice for ‘illiberal democracy’. At this point, the question becomes one of determined illiberalism, and not of still emerging or indeed failed reconciliation between liberalism and democracy.

In sum, the above two considerations, once put together, contribute to making deprivation of liberal-democratic citizenship a borderline case in the sense that it raises the question as to whether a transition from tensions to dilemmas is taking place within liberal democracy. In what follows, we will focus on how such a possible shift presents itself within the concept of ‘conditional citizenship’ (Gibney 2013), thus analysing what citizenship revocation as investigated in this volume tells us about the (re)definition of the conditions for becoming and remaining a member of the political community.

Setting out the conditions: the common bond first and foremost

As previously stated, the tensions expressed by public and academic debate on citizenship revocation is particularly revealing of the multifaceted nature of citizenship writ large. Following a number of social and political theorists (Joppke 2007; Bellamy and Castiglione 2008; Bauböck 1994), the concept of citizenship is composed of three main dimensions around which the inclusion/exclusion dichotomy revolves.

The first one concerns the legal status with a focus on individual rights. From this perspective representative of political liberalism such as defended by Rawls (1971, 1993), Dworkin (1978), Larmore (1990) and Ackerman (1994), citizenship is defined by the following features: a universalist-cum-individualist conception of the ‘self’; moral and political egalitarianism based on the principle of equal concern for each human being; a contractualist approach to political society; and a politics of basic rights focused on both fundamental and distributive justice, whose aims are to guarantee equal liberties to each citizen, to prevent their infringement from the state or any particular group, and to reduce inequalities due to morally irrelevant differences among citizens. All of these features contribute to giving priority to the right over the good, and to the individual over the community (Rawls 1971, 1993). This liberal vision of citizenship is marked by what Walzer (1984) qualified as an ‘art of separation’. The individual’s beliefs and values cultivated in the private sphere are separated from the institutionalised range of norms and principles of justice according to which citizens are urged to act in the public sphere. A principle of state neutrality, which requires public institutions to be neutral or impartial towards the competing visions of the good and of the

world, follows from this; it also requires them not to endorse any of the controversial values in justifying state action and public policy.

The second dimension of citizenship consists of emphasising political participation as a civic virtue. It goes hand in hand with a (neo)republican approach which opposes a purely rights-based, procedural conception of citizenship for being too atomistic, passive and selfish. With a view to promoting an active vision of citizenship, civic republicans prioritize the exercise of the popular will over the individual defence of 'negative liberty', the pursuit of the public good over that of private interests, and the fulfilment of duties and responsibilities over that of individual rights and preferences. Be it granted an intrinsic (Pocock 1992) or instrumental (Skinner 1992) value, civic participation is here considered as a virtue, thus attributing moral strength to active citizenship and to the duties attached to it.

The third dimension, which is focused on collective identity, can be philosophically associated with a communitarian approach to citizenship. Despite their differences, communitarian thinkers (Sandel 1982; Taylor 1989a; MacIntyre 1981; Walzer 1983) assert that the identity of the self is inevitably situated and embedded in a framework of 'shared meanings' and 'common values' inherited from the community the self belongs to. In their view, it is neither possible nor desirable for any democratic state (even a liberal one) to be ethically and culturally neutral. On the contrary, the state cannot but be 'perfectionist': to be considered legitimate by the citizenry, its institutions and policies should express, promote and protect a core of 'thick'¹ values regarded as constitutive of 'our' collective identity. Taken in this third dimension, citizenship is a matter of providing visions of the good which give the political 'us' its cultural-cum-ethical authenticity and, as a consequence, its *raison d'être*. As Etzioni (2007) asserts against the 'liberal view', a citizen 'has responsibilities not merely toward the political entity (e.g. obeying the state's laws), but also toward the national community (e.g. supporting its core of shared values)'.

The above three-fold philosophical outline, albeit sketchy, allows for a better understanding of the role each of these dimensions of citizenship is playing in the tensions, or indeed the dilemmas of liberal democracy such as revealed by the controversial revival of citizenship revocation. This is because it helps to identify a change of emphasis in the very definition of the conditions posed by citizenship to become and remain a member of the political 'us'.

In their diagnosis of a 'return of the citizen' in the mid-90s, Kymlicka and Norman (1994, 353) observed that two previously neglected claims, pertaining to the republican and communitarian dimensions of citizenship, respectively, have been placed at the forefront of the theoretical literature on citizenship: 'namely, civic virtues and citizenship identity'. What is theoretically sound proves to be confirmed practically speaking, as far as citizenship revocation is concerned. The manner in which the latter is currently debated and enforced shows that the republican and communitarian claims have gained prominence. Furthermore, they have converged on a primary interest for a thick common bond, that would be robust enough to ensure the moral and cultural preconditions for the political community's survival. Conversely, as demonstrated by Boeckstein and de Groot (2019), this means the weakening of the liberal dimension of citizenship and of the practical importance of respect for individuals' rights regardless of their personal beliefs, values and allegiances.

From a philosophical point of view, this convergence can be illustrated by Taylor's account of the liberal-communitarian debate on citizenship (Taylor 1989b) where the republican and communitarian dimensions come together in an emphasis on the need to foster a sense of belonging and loyalty to a genuine community of citizens (Schnapper [1994] 1998), rather than a mere 'social union' *à la* Rawls. Sharing the language of the common good, they converge on the importance for all citizens to be committed to the political community's values and identity, for liberal democracy to overcome its viability problem. On both sides, priority is given to membership of a body of citizens whose sovereignty is anchored in a particular territory and whose collective identity is shaped by a particular way of life and historical legacy. This is where the republican and communitarian approaches intersect, thus promoting versions of patriotism that are more or less supportive of nationalism, and more or less hostile to rights-based liberalism (from Viroli 1995 to Miller 1995 and to MacIntyre [1984] 2002).

This underlines why two, and not three, dimensions of citizenship are indeed at stake in the controversy over citizenship revocation, and why the republican-cum-communitarian dimension not only conflicts with the liberal one but also prevails over it in setting out the conditions for having political rights (and obligations). As we shall see now, the public justifications put forward in support of deprivation of citizenship as an antiterrorist measure are in line with the promotion of a thick concept of membership, whether republican or communitarian, which originates in a critical stance towards the primacy of individual rights, denounced for its fragmentary effects on the political community as a whole. On that point, Irving (2019, 383) rightly argues in this special issue that 'the heavily normative understandings of citizenship that have been advanced in political theory since the 1980s' have greatly contributed to spreading the idea among law-makers that citizenship should be invested with thick 'qualities', such as the country's values and a sense of civic commitment to the polity. Thus, the primary focus has been placed on preserving the unity and indeed integrity, if not homogeneity, of 'our' political community, notably through protecting the shared meanings and conceptions of the good publicly declared to unite the citizenry. Very interestingly, the cultural and ethical thickening of citizenship is not unique to revocation for anti-terrorist purposes. This is the key point made by Fargues (2019): such a process has proven to be so prevalent that it occurs even in revocation measures based on fraud grounds that appears highly procedural, i.e. culturally and ethically neutral, at least at first glance. As demonstrated by this author, the neoliberal standards, pertaining to individual performance and merits, can easily combine with communitarian – and here we add republican – conditions for citizenship. The (very republican-style) 'duty to behave as a virtuous and responsible political subject' – Fargues argues (2019, 367) – serves as a rationale for a 'governing strategy of renationalising citizenship' that culminates in 'the moralising and responsabilising function of deprivation'. As a result of its exclusionary and homogenising effects, such a thickening of citizenship has paved the way to 'the idea that the allegiance of citizens should be fostered, or even tested by the state', and that the 'attachment between the citizen and his or her country' must be 'single and undivided', a notion which appears to (Irving 2019, 383) 'both anti-cosmopolitan and illiberal'.

This is where the tensions within liberal-democratic citizenship could evolve into dilemmas: once conceived of and endorsed as a prerequisite for being included in (and not at risk of being excluded from) the political ‘us’, do commitment to national community and compliance with its so-called ‘common values’ still play in favour of the fostering of liberal-democratic citizenship at a time when it proves to be highly vulnerable, or do they translate into its being subverted by another vision of citizenship?

The return of patriotism: cosmopolitanism under challenge

The above question is of topical resonance in light of the widespread calls for patriotism that are currently being made. In a great number of democratic societies – including those usually considered as champions of liberalism – and from all sides of the political spectrum, both the concept and the practice of patriotism is reviving. After decades of disgrace due to the fact that patriotism has been associated with nationalism as well as the wars and crimes perpetrated in its name (Tolstoy [1896] 1987), patriotism is undergoing a dual rehabilitation. The idea of patriotism, defined as a ‘special concern for our country and compatriots’ (Primoratz 2001, 10), has benefited from renewed interest among a variety of political theorists and philosophers since the 2000s, with a view to demonstrating its moral relevance. The political reinstatement of patriotism through explicitly patriotic policies manifests the practical side of such renewal. From both perspectives, the current return of patriotism is justified by its proponents as a way to remedy the ills of liberal democracy, especially in terms of fragmentation, disaffiliation and disengagement towards the common good and the citizenry. In this regard, the converging communitarian and republican emphasis on a thick political bond goes hand in hand with a weakening of cosmopolitanism.

In the aftermath of World War II, the development of the international order was structured around the aims of universalising human rights and realising global justice and peace. These purposes were almost inescapable if states were to be recognised as legitimate both internally and externally. As shown by electoral results in the USA, Brazil, Italy and Hungary, or by the debate on Brexit, this apparent consensus has declined with the rise in patriotism. In many other countries, nationalist movements have gained ground among the electorate and in public discourse, and have unsettled traditional political arrangements, in particular with regard to immigration policy and acquisition/revocation of citizenship. As illustrated by the papers in this special issue, naturalisation and revocation policies epitomize the return of patriotism and the related undermining of cosmopolitan calls for human rights and global justice. Public justifications and the legal treatment of denationalization, particularly when it comes to ensuring national security and fighting terrorism, tend to show that little remains of the imperative that the rule of human rights, and humanitarian law be strictly observed. As explained by Boeckstein and de Groot (2019, 321), what remains is ‘the well-accepted prohibition of statelessness’. Nevertheless, the strength of this support should not be overestimated. Indeed, the British case, analysed by Fargues (2019, 362), gives an example of how public authorities consider that ‘deprivation resulting in statelessness is legal’. For their part, (Boeckstein and de Groot 2019), together with Irving (2019), warn about a deflationary (and somewhat self-defeating) interpretation of the prohibition of statelessness. As prescribed by the 1961 UN Convention, the reduction of statelessness

currently has the effect of limiting the application of denationalisation measures to dual-nationals. In contrast with Joppke's defence of citizenship revocation and his idea that the creation of two classes of citizens by such measures is merely an 'unavoidable consequence of abiding by international law' (Joppke 2016, 745; Boeckstein and de Groot 2019, 327) point out 'the prohibition of statelessness does not justify either form of discrimination [since] it is simply a legal limitation on the personal scope of denationalisation'. Instead of being 'invoked as an excuse' (2019, 321) which allows to distinguish between citizens, the avoidance of statelessness should be replaced within its normative framework: the international protection of human rights, and its key principle of equality. The authors bemoan the undermining of the force of equality which 'not only constitutes a fundamental principle of citizenship, but a binding *human right* guaranteed through the prohibition of discrimination' (2019, 321).

Similarly, in relation to the Australian case, (Irving 2019, 375 note 14) notices that 'the "loyalty" exception' to the prohibition of statelessness, as provided for in the 1961 Convention, 'has limitations that would make it difficult for Australia to rely on its revocation scheme'. And yet, the fact that 'revocation only applies to persons with a citizenship additional to their Australian citizenship' – as she underlines (Irving 2019, 376) – has been considered by the authorities as a mere 'concession to the international rule against creating statelessness (and a source of frustration to the Minister responsible for the law)', thus having no challenging effects on the 'principle of single allegiance' that underlies the very conception of Australian citizenship. On the contrary, what is challenged by this discourse of undivided loyalty is the cosmopolitan promotion of multiples identities, that is, in Waldron's words, 'a way of being in the world, a way of constructing an identity for oneself that is different from, and arguably opposed to, the idea of belonging to or devotion to or immersion in a particular culture' (Waldron 2000, 227).

In sum, these two papers illustrate that what has been lost with the decreasing importance of legal cosmopolitanism, as manifested by patriotic discourse in support of revocation laws, is the value attached to non-discrimination and the founding principle of equal concern and treatment at the core of moral universalism.

At the same time, Irving (2019, 373) emphasizes that the language of allegiance has deep historical roots and 'resonates in other legal systems'. And indeed, the image of a golden age of human rights and universalism that no longer exists because of the irruption of exclusionary forms of patriotism into a liberal democracy is misleading and should be made much more complex. It suffices to consider the slavery system, colonialism or the past use of 'cruder technologies such as convict transportation' (Troy 2019, 308) to acknowledge how fragile, and indeed questionable, is the normative coherence of many democratic regimes which have availed themselves of their charters of human rights, and have exported them in the rest of the world. Therefore, the above diagnosis has to be replaced, as Troy (2019, 305) does in her paper regarding the UK, in the longer history of a practice – i.e. revocation – which is not independent of citizenship but 'a part of it'. And she elaborates (2019, 305): "Tracing a narrative that extends beyond the nation-state and into Empire" allows to 'position revocation not as an exception to citizenship, but as a practice that represents the logic of citizenship – a logic that divides and codes subjects, categorising them as desirable or undesirable.' Hence, the historical link analysed by Troy (2019, 305) between 'an imperial strategy of

governing subject mobility' and the contemporary 'technology of national security' embodied by current revocation policies. In the light of this history (that may apply to the other national cases investigated in this volume), the transversal question as to whether the tensions of liberal democracy are shifting into dilemmas proves to be even more significant since such imperial echoes, and indeed continuity, aggravate the exclusionary effects of contemporary forms of renascent patriotism.

Here again, a philosophical detour clarifies what is at stake in the two hypotheses – i.e. mere tensions or real dilemmas, respectively – raised by the conflicting relations between cosmopolitanism and patriotism, which current debate and citizenship revocation policies have made explicit. From a theoretical point of view, the scenario that these are mere tensions opens a series of innovative combinations that aim to overcome the opposition between, on the one hand, the cosmopolitan openness, egalitarianism and impartiality attached to universalist morality and, on the other hand, patriotic concern and partiality underpinned by particularist rootedness. The literature of the last three decades is rich in formulas for reconciliation. Among them: the notions of 'cosmopolitan patriot' and of 'rooted cosmopolitanism' put forward by Appiah (1997); the tentative definition of a patriotism that respects liberal norms as illustrated by Nathanson's (1989) defence of 'moderate patriotism'; the strategy advanced by Richard Miller (1998) to make room for 'the duties of patriotic bias' in a reconceptualised cosmopolitanism based on a version of Kantian morality that focuses on 'equal respect', rather than 'equal concern'.

From a practical point of view, the tensions between cosmopolitanism and patriotism have nourished a philosophical debate on which one of these should have priority over the other in terms of moral and, more importantly, political obligations. At the core of this issue is the balance to be found between 'global duties' – i.e. what we owe to individual human beings – and 'special duties' – i.e. what we owe to our fellow citizens as compatriots and co-nationals. Here again, a variety of arrangements have been developed and discussed. Some of them state the unconditional priority of fundamental rights and/or global justice, while recognising that the associative ties and collective commitments pertaining to patriotism are worth cultivating. For instance, according to Tan (2004), it is not cosmopolitanism which should be 'restricted' by the moral and political strength attributed to patriotic ties, but patriotism which must be 'limited' and 'constrained' by the impartial principles of global justice. David Miller's strategy takes the opposite point of view. His starting point is what Tan (2004, 145) labels 'conventional patriotism', that is, the common-sense idea that 'nationality', including patriotic allegiance and partiality toward compatriots, has an 'intrinsic value' and 'is *one* of the human goods' (Miller 2005, 69). Based on this premise, he advocates 'patriotic partiality' which can be 'reasonable' provided it is 'balanced against recognition of the duties of global justice' (Miller 2005, 63).

This balance is achieved by 'weight[ing] duties according to whether they are local or global in scope' (Miller 2005, 72). The result of this exercise is as follows: only 'the negative duty to refrain from infringing basic rights by our own actions' has priority over local duties towards compatriots; the 'positive duty to secure the basic rights of the people we are responsible for protecting' depends on the degree of responsibility; local duties take precedence over the two global positive duties 'to prevent rights violations by other parties' and 'to secure the basic rights of people when others have failed in

their responsibility' (Miller 2005, 74). In this weighting, the crucial factor is to determine how far local standards in a particular state are met – notably, its 'national sovereignty', the implementation of 'a scheme of social justice among its citizens', and 'economic growth' (Miller 2005, 76–78). It is remarkable that Miller himself, a proponent of 'liberal nationalism', who is also considered to be a 'moderate anti-cosmopolitan' (Tan 2004) acknowledges that the enterprise of weighting leads to 'a genuine ethical dilemma' (Miller 2005, 78). This is confirmed by the application of Miller's position to the issue of citizenship revocation. The more limited 'citizenship rights' related to 'reasonable human rights standards' (Miller 2016, 269) and global duties are, the more decisive is patriotic priority and the state's responsibility to secure the national identity. 'For liberal states' – Miller (2016, 270) asserts – 'this is an opportunity to inculcate values and national loyalty.'

Ensuring national security through the protection of 'shared values'

As universal concern has weakened, patriotic concern has taken major precedence, thus emphasising the political bond and collective identity. Such focus expresses a loss in the legitimacy of two principles largely considered as constitutive of liberal democracy: pluralism and state neutrality. As pointed out above, the debate over citizenship revocation and the moral and political anxieties it voices, have reinforced the communitarian and republican need to inculcate and promote the values declared to be at the core of the ties that bind us together. The process of assigning a crucial value to 'shared values' has taken place in the context of a 'retreat from multiculturalism' (Joppke 2004). Indeed, multicultural policies have been criticized for aggravating division in society and suspected of perverting the sense of national belonging. With a view to answering these perceived threats and consolidating national identity, thicker integration and naturalization policies have developed under the label of a 'civic turn' (Mouritsen and Jørgensen 2008; Borevi, Jensen, and Mouritsen 2017). The revival of citizenship revocation is part of this process through which states renationalise citizenship 'by making inclusion harder and exclusion easier' (Fargues 2019, 357). In this respect, as shown by Winter and Previsic (2019, 341), it 'challenges the thesis of increasing citizenship liberalization' defended by Joppke (2010).

Such a framework marked by the 'return of assimilation' (Brubaker 2001) raises the question of what is left of the theoretical endeavours to accommodate ethnocultural diversity. Indeed, large sections of the literature on citizenship in the 1990s and 2000s have focused on the discussion of tentative reconciliations between integration and pluralism. The latter include Kymlicka's liberal multiculturalism (2000) and Laborde's critical republicanism (2008), both of which aim to overcome the tensions between the individual and the community, personal belonging and political membership, differentiated treatment and respect for equality, private beliefs and public norms. Beyond these tensions, they put forward a genuinely pluralistic model of integration which takes the fight against discrimination seriously, while aiming at building a common political culture that would be more hospitable to differences. However, echoing the public statements about the failure of multiculturalism and the dangers created by the politics of difference, such as those made by Angela Merkel, Nicolas Sarkozy and David Cameron from October 2010 to February 2011, the academic debate has moved on to

the conditions required to ensure unity. From the stability of public institutions to the survival of national identity, more or less robust conceptions of the commonalities to be fostered have been discussed.

Initiated by Barry (2001) and by Alesina, Glaeser, and Sacerdote (2001) in the philosophical and political economy literature, respectively, debate on the conflicting relations between multiculturalism, and the welfare state (Banting and Kymlicka 2006) has culminated in what has been qualified as a 'progressive dilemma' (Ascherson 2006; Goodhart 2004; Pathak 2007, 2008). In academia and in the public sphere, calls for pluralism and recognition of differences have been criticised for clashing with the very possibility of equality in terms of social and distributive justice. This clash exposes different concepts of equality and places the issue of categorization at its core. Within this framework, the paradoxical question of for and to whom equality should primarily be applied holds centre stage. From that perspective, the specific constraints created by the economic crisis and its moral and political repercussions justify the precedence of social justice over ethnocultural recognition and antidiscrimination policies. More often than not, this line of thought is complemented by the assertion that identity insecurities among the majority group must be taken into account (Bouvet 2015; Orgad 2015). These two arguments have fuelled nationalist discourses which demand that the benefits of distributive justice be limited to the national community, thus stigmatizing the 'non-national' as the source of danger to equality and its implementation. From this viewpoint, a certain degree of cultural homogeneity is deemed to be necessary to ensure trust and solidarity among citizens (Putnam 2007). Such analysis of the responsibility of multiculturalism for increasing inequalities in a neoliberal context, can paradoxically conjoin with recommendations to use neoliberal tools – public management, performance indicators, conditionality of public assistance – as a means of rescuing the welfare state or at least its redistributive aims. As the ideal of an open society recedes, and the divide between majority and minority groups grows, inequality becomes the object of various managerial strategies which, in lieu of examining its systemic causes, engage in various quick fixes and 'band-aid solutions'. In this special issue, Fargues's analysis of fraud-induced citizenship deprivation significantly illustrates this combination of neoliberal rationality and communitarian closure.

The dilemma between unity and diversity occurs through the demand to preserve not only the implementation of equality within the welfare state but also the pursuit of a core set of liberal values and virtues declared to be vital to a healthy liberal democracy. The issue then addressed is the possibility and desirability for the liberal democratic state to be neutral or impartial in terms of visions of the good life and worldviews. Considered a 'mirage' by Macedo (1992, 209), the principle of state neutrality is criticized by liberal perfectionists (Raz 1986; Sher 1997; Wall 1998) for undermining the moral foundations of liberalism, and thus the political stability of liberal-democratic regimes. According to them, there is no 'value-blind' state action (Raz 1986, 136) and 'the liberal must, in the end, defend his partisanship and not evade it' (Macedo 1990, 298). Following a perfectionist approach, it should be recognized that liberalism, far from being neutral, has on its own visions of the good life and of the good citizen. In this approach, the liberal values and virtues do shape a particular ethical life, and their public promotion, inculcation and reproduction are a legitimate and indeed crucial purpose of any liberal democracy. For, beyond 'reasonable disagreements', pluralism –

these thinkers underline – may occur through some morally ‘ugly’ and publicly ‘unreasonable’ forms which are incompatible with the liberal morality and culture based on individual rationality, autonomy and liberty. If diversity is to ‘remain a blessing rather than a curse’ (Macedo 2000, 6), then what Macedo (2000, 34) significantly qualifies as the ‘liberal Republic’ should adopt a forceful attitude towards illiberal beliefs in order to discredit them. If the liberal goods and their underlying culture are to survive – the argument goes – liberals must refuse the idea that fundamental rights be balanced by group rights, as expressed through Okin’s well-known ‘dilemma’ in relation to the debate on whether ‘multiculturalism is bad for women’ (Cohen, Howard, and Nussbaum 1999). Obviously, no liberal would deny the priority given to basic rights, including individual liberty and gender equality. But the perfectionist approach goes beyond this priority; it claims that, instead of supporting a politics of neutrality designed to respect pluralism, liberal democrats must enter the cultural battle of values, and assume ‘a certain boldness in the defense of liberalism’ (Macedo 1990, 294). ‘Confronting fanatics and grappling with divisiveness’ should remind us – Macedo (1990, 294) continues – that we, as liberal democrats, need to ‘preserve our ability to recognize and fight the good fight’. This is the meaning of Cameron’s plea for a ‘muscular liberalism’.²

As illustrated by the case studies analysed in this special issue, citizenship revocation constitutes a borderline case of the above dilemma between unity and diversity, and of the opposition between perfectionist and neutral state action. Citizenship revocation policies and their public justifications have contributed to establishing this dilemma as inescapable. What is more, they have also established the idea that the only way out of this dilemma is to opt for one side as opposed to the other. This is to say that the ‘good fight’ aims at nothing less than securing liberal democracy, and that this aim entails reaching thick unity through state partiality towards ‘our’ values. The papers collected here make it clear that such a choice does not only have homogenising effects, it also has exclusionary ones. Those citizens whose beliefs and behaviours are suspected of being incompatible with the values deemed to be the cornerstone of national identity are perceived as endangering social cohesion and political unity. In a context of terrorist threats, concrete security pertaining to the safety of people and property, evidently is a public concern of primary importance. What the collected papers reveal is that security as a public good has expanded into symbolic, identity-based security protected by means of perfectionist discourse and politics of shared values and good citizenship.

This dual process of homogenisation and exclusion, such as manifested by contemporary policies of revocation, result from both the ethicisation and the ethnicisation of citizenship. By ethicisation, we refer to a concept of integration consisting in the stabilization and reproduction of ‘the basic ethical orientations of the cultural form of life dominant in [a particular] country’, which contrasts with ‘political integration’ based on respect of the legal norms institutionalized through citizenship (Habermas 1998, 225–228). The case studies on citizenship revocation analysed in this issue demonstrate how strong the link between belonging to the citizenry and allegiance to national values is. Full and complete adherence to the nation’s value system thus constitutes a necessary condition for being legally and socially recognized as a citizen. As shown by Irving (2019, 378), this ethicisation lies in ‘the conceptualisation of citizenship as an indivisible and inalienable

relationship of allegiance between the citizen and the state', and this makes 'multiple citizenship [...] conceptually incoherent'. In practice, this conception of 'undivided loyalty' has exclusionary effects, even towards citizens who are not guilty of active disloyalty or treason. A very telling example of this is provided by the resignation of Australian MPs who hold dual citizenship.

While being obvious in policies explicitly based on the promotion of shared values, the ethicisation of citizenship is also part of seemingly thin and procedural measures, such as fraud-based revocation. This process of ethicisation is carried out through 'the moralising and responsibilising function of deprivation applied to specific categories of migrants, which turns them into second-class citizens' (Fargues 2019, 359). Thus, ethicisation of citizenship goes hand in hand with a process of ethnicisation. The line drawn between desirable and undesirable citizens overlaps 'the division between "accidental" and "essential" citizens' (2019, 359), thus involving ethnocultural categories in the definition of good citizenship. As underlined by Troy (2019, 306), not only is class at play in government policies of citizenship revocation but 'the revoked citizens' ethnicity' is also a key aspect. And indeed, it is significant that 'suspicions of fraud stem both from existing legal differentiations between categories of migrants (EU citizens vs. others) and from specific stereotypes (African migrants as more likely to attempt to deflect the family reunification process)' (Fargues 2019, 366).

Fuelled by such ethicisation/ethnicisation dynamics, the closure function of citizenship runs not only by excluding revoked citizens from the national community but also by producing 'others' within it. As stated by Winter and Previsic (2019, 339), it 'is, above all, an official act of legally *and* symbolically "un-belonging"'. Moreover, the extension of exclusion applies not only to its scope but also to its target: 'While the legal effects only apply to (potentially few) dual nationals, the symbolic boundaries drawn by legislating citizenship revocation extend to broader social categories associated – in political and public discourse – with these individuals, such as dual nationals, immigrants, and members of certain ethno-religious minorities.' (2019, 342). As for which individuals and groups are the most affected by such exclusionary effects, the papers conclude that Muslims are the main target. With respect to Canada, Winter and Previsic (2019, 342) show how they are the most likely to be 'associated with' those deserving of citizenship revocation and then how they 'become guilty by association'. In a context of fundamentalist Islamic terrorism, Muslims pay the price of ascriptive membership of a group suspected of endangering national security. Examining how public discourse interprets and interacts with government policies, Winter and Previsic (2019, 349) explain that 'placing the "real" next to the "hypothetical" – and the frequent enumeration of Muslim individuals, groups, and events in the context of terrorism – contributes to the popular suspicion that Canadian Muslims are, at the very least, sympathetic to terrorism and incapable of truly belonging in Canada'. This is why they are targeted 'not as individual criminals but as a *group*' (Winter and Previsic 2019, 349). Here again, exclusion is carried out along an ethical-cum-ethnic line in so far as Muslims are perceived as pledging their allegiance to a value system which is not only different but also opposed to 'ours'. In short, they are framed as ethical dissidents, at odds with national values.

Conclusion

Moving from theory to practice, from the philosophical literature on liberal democracy's current challenges to the public debate on citizenship revocation, the diagnosis of dilemmas, and not mere tensions, is growing more tangible. What would now be worth investigating is the ambivalent role of law on such a slippery slope. According to Boeckstein and de Groot (2019), 'the legal analysis cannot provide a definite answer to the policy question of whether states should denationalise (certain) foreign fighters. Instead, it can only establish the human rights limitations to such policies.' Furthermore, as we have seen, the weakening of the liberal dimension of citizenship, associated as it is with cosmopolitanism and pluralism, has made international law and constitutional norms less effective in framing liberal-democratic citizenship. In a context of terrorist threats and growing patriotism, the convergence of the republican and communitarian dimensions and their conjoined impact on morally and culturally thickening citizenship have given increased power to government policies and democratic legislation in setting out the conditions for access to, and exit from, citizenship.

In such a context, the law has an essential yet uncertain role to play. It is crucial since its function is to institutionalize the basic principles of justice which, in a liberal-democratic framework, include equal rights, individual liberties and the 'right to have rights'. In that sense, the law offers a bulwark against political decisions that may be contradictory to human rights, even if they are in accordance with public opinion and the political preferences of democratic majorities. However, analysis of current discourses and policies on citizenship revocation reveals that the logic of liberal constitutionalism, with its related hierarchy of legal norms, has become highly precarious. As shown by case studies of Australia, Canada and the UK, the exclusionary use of revocation measures has been validated by a number of court decisions, including constitutional courts. Hence, this legal safeguard has proven to be vulnerable to democratic majorities, and even to their illiberal branches. Henceforth, what acts as umpire is no longer universal principles of justice, but legislation and governmental decisions resulting from electoral votes that express majoritarian opinions. The prospect that democracy – as the medium of both popular sovereignty and national identity – will be the final arbiter in debate on the nature, standards and boundaries of liberal citizenship, may represent a possible path to re-politicise this debate. Yet, such re-politicization can go two ways depending on the governments elected. As was the case in Canada (2019), this may lead to the repeal of revocation bills and measures in a spirit of reaffirmed liberalism. Conversely, as in Australia (2019), it may lead to an escalation of exclusionary use of the language of shared national values. But in any case, the 'return of banishment' (Macklin 2018) as an effective and legitimate means to draw the line between 'us' and 'them', the desirables and the undesirables, good and bad citizens will certainly continue to put liberal democracy to the test.

Notes

1. On the distinction between 'thick' and 'thin' morality, see (Walzer 1994, xi, note 1) where he qualified as 'thick' a 'kind of argument' which is 'richly referential, culturally resonant, locked into a locally established symbolic system or network of meanings', by contrast with a 'thin' argument which refers to 'universalist morality', including procedural principles of justice.
2. These are the words used by then Prime Minister David Cameron in his well-publicized speech at the Munich Security Conference, delivered on 5 February 2011 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pms-speech-at-munich-security-conference>).

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