The Democratic Theory of Immigrant Enfranchisement

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Abstract: Immigrants without citizenship are usually excluded from democratic participation. It is often argued that this is a grave injustice that calls for redress; immigrants should be enfranchised whether they have citizenship or not. Most arguments for this claim hold that immigrant enfranchisement is justified by immigrants' interest against being ruled by the receiving state. In this article, I argue that this view fails to explain why immigrants should be enfranchised. I offer an alternative view according to which immigrant enfranchisement is justified by a shared interest of immigrants and citizens in relating as mutually serving agents of justice by participating in the common undertaking of ruling the polity justly together.

Keywords: collective autonomy, democracy, enfranchisement, immigration, mutual service, relational equality

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In most contemporary democracies, immigrants lack full democratic participation rights on the national level unless they acquire citizenship. Since naturalization is often a costly and cumbersome procedure, unavailable and unattractive to many, this leaves growing immigrant populations without a voice in democratic decisions in host societies. This is often said to be a grave injustice that calls for redress; immigrants should be enfranchised in receiving states independently of citizenship. But what theory of democracy and democratic participation is presupposed in arguments for immigrant enfranchisement? In this article, I argue that most arguments in the literature rely on implausible principles about the normative role of democratic participation and therefore do not provide strong reasons for the democratic inclusion of immigrants. I propose rethinking the democratic theory underlying the case for immigrant enfranchisement. While most arguments for immigrant enfranchisement appeal to immigrants' individual interest against being ruled as the basis for their democratic inclusion, I suggest that it is instead a shared interest of immigrants and citizens that justifies immigrant enfranchisement, that is, a shared interest in participating as equal partners in the common

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undertaking of ruling the polity justly together for the sake of relating as mutually serving agents. The structure of the article is as follows: the first section defines key terms and introduces the Core Argument for Immigrant Enfranchisement together with its Standard Interpretation. The second section critiques the Standard Interpretation. The last two sections present and defend my alternative view.

The Core Argument for Immigrant Enfranchisement

Let me begin by defining some key terms. I use the term "immigrant" to refer to individuals who have migrated into the territory of a state but have not acquired citizenship there. The term is meant to exclude foreign-born citizens who naturalized as well as transients, for example, tourists, who are merely passing through, but it is not meant to be restricted to permanent residents or individuals who intend to settle. Thus, the category includes, among others, long-term resident non-citizens, temporary workers, foreign students, irregular migrants, and refugees. There are obviously gray areas, for example, foreign exchange students who usually spend more time in the state's territory than tourists, but we can set these cases aside in the following discussion.

By "immigrant enfranchisement," I mean granting immigrants full voting rights and rights to participate in democratic deliberation on a par with citizens on the national level. Although in contemporary democracies immigrants usually have the right to participate in public deliberation to some extent, for example, they can freely voice their opinions on political matters, and in many places immigrants are also granted voting rights on the local level (Arrighi and Bauböck 2017), only a handful of states, for example, New Zealand, allow all legal residents to vote in national elections after a period of residence, and even these states usually exclude irregular immigrants. "Immigrant enfranchisement," then, means abolishing all these forms of democratic exclusion and granting immigrants democratic participation rights that are, for all intents and purposes, equivalent with those of citizens.[1]

I distinguish the problem of immigrant enfranchisement from the problem of access to citizenship. It is often argued that some or all immigrants should have straightforward and easy access to citizenship in their host countries (Buxton 2021; Rubio-Marín 2004), and naturalization, in liberal democracies at least, involves enfranchisement. But democratic participation rights and citizenship rights, while often intertwined, are separable both conceptually and in practice, as the case of New Zealand and similar countries show. The question of whether immigrants are

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owed enfranchisement, then, can be separated from the question of their access to citizenship. Indeed, those who argue for immigrant enfranchisement often do not do so as part of a larger argument for granting immigrants access to citizenship.[2] Rather, they believe that there is a separate, specifically democratic worry about not enfranchising immigrants, which is independent of their citizenship status. Sarah Fine formulates this worry in the following way: "According to democratic theory, the governed must have access to participate in government, and as long as outsiders, non-citizens, are governed, they too may demand a say in the relevant processes and policies" (Fine 2011: 637).

I will call the argument suggested here the Core Argument for Immigrant Enfranchisement:

1. Those who are ruled must have a say in how they are ruled, that is, must be enfranchised.[3]
2. Immigrants are ruled.
3. Immigrants must be enfranchised.

That is, the same principles that commit one to enfranchising citizens also commit one to enfranchising immigrants.[4] Many authors have defended immigrant enfranchisement for some or all immigrants along these lines (Angell and Huseby 2017; Beckman 2006; Bender 2020; Duarte 2018; Lenard 2015; Pedroza 2014; Song 2009; Wilson 2022; Ziegler 2017). But is the Core Argument convincing? The conclusion, (3), certainly follows from (1) and (2), and (2) can hardly be contested regardless of how one understands "being ruled." Immigrants are under the jurisdiction of the receiving state, they are obligated to comply with the law of the land, pay taxes, and keep speed limits. They are also governed in ways citizens are not; they are subject to immigration control, often require visas and permits to engage in activities that citizens are at liberty to do. Many immigrants can under various circumstances face deportation, while citizens usually do not have to face the prospect of any kind of expulsion, save for extreme cases. Immigrants are, therefore, ruled. Thus, the crucial premise is (1). Of course, (1) is a foundational principle of democratic theory, one that anyone committed to the democratic ideal is bound to accept. One may argue, then, that it can be treated by advocates of immigrant enfranchisement as a given. Still, as we will see, how convincing the Core Argument is, depends greatly on how (1) is understood and justified.

Oftentimes the Core Argument is presented in terms of the so-called democratic boundary problem (Arrhenius 2005; Whelan 1983) whereby (1) is stated in the form of one of the well-known boundary principles, for

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example, the All-Affected Principle (Goodin 2007) according to which all individuals are owed democratic inclusion whose interests are affected in the right way by a certain decision, or the All-Subjected Principle (Beckman 2022) that suggests democratic inclusion is justified by subjection to coercive state power. Once one or more boundary principles are selected as plausible, it is argued that immigrants fall under their scope, and therefore should be enfranchised (see Angell and Huseby 2017; Beckman 2006; Bender 2020; Duarte 2018; Song 2009). Of course, selecting a boundary principle presupposes a democratic theory that justifies it. The question, then, becomes whether the democratic theory underlying a particular interpretation of (1), whether proposed in terms of a boundary principle or not, is plausible.

In my view, a standard assumption in the literature is that (1) is justified by individuals' interests against being ruled. It is argued that being ruled is of presumptive disvalue to individuals; whatever its benefits, it always involves certain costs that need to be, in some way, offset by democratic inclusion. Take, for example, the influential argument presented by Arash Abizadeh (2008) in defense of the democratic illegitimacy of unilateral border control. Here Abizadeh invokes the All-Subjected Principle to defend not immigrant enfranchisement, as I understand it here, but the democratic inclusion of immigrants in border control. Still, his reasoning is often invoked in arguments for immigrant enfranchisement, even by authors who otherwise do not rely on his version of the All-Subjected Principle (e.g., Song 2016).[5] Abizadeh argues that claims for democratic inclusion are justified by subjection to coercive state power which always implies a threat to individuals' autonomous agency. "Because coercion always invades autonomy, … coercive state practices – that is, practices that subject persons to coercion – must either be eliminated, or receive a justification consistent with the ideal of autonomy" (Abizadeh 2008: 40). Democracy is meant to be this autonomy-preserving method of justification that neutralizes the autonomy-invading quality of coercive state power, thus offsetting the presumed disvalue of being ruled.[6]

Another example of understanding (1) in terms of an interest against being ruled is provided by Patti Lenard. She writes: "since democratic citizens are coerced by shared institutions, as a result of which their autonomy is reduced, they are owed a kind of "compensation"; this compensation comes in the form of rights protection proffered by opportunities to participate in the relevant political institutions" (Lenard 2015: 127, see 2023: 35). For Lenard, at least one of the functions that immigrant enfranchisement fulfills is compensation for the disvalue of being ruled. Here again, the normative function of immigrant enfranchisement is to provide an appropriate response to individuals' interest against being

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ruled. Another recent example is J. L. Wilson's defense of the All-Affected Principle, which is meant to imply, among other things, immigrant enfranchisement (Wilson 2022: 169). Wilson argues that whenever others' decisions significantly "direct" or "implicate" our agency, that is, limit or constrain our options, or place burdens of responsibility on us, we have an autonomy-based claim to shared authority over these directing and implicating decisions. Since immigrants' actions are directed and implicated by virtue of being ruled by the receiving state, they have a claim to democratic inclusion. Although Wilson, unlike Lenard, insists that democratic inclusion "is not compensation for being coerced" (Wilson 2022: 186), it is still a way to appropriately respond to individuals' autonomy-based interest against being ruled.

I will call this way of unpacking (1) the Standard Interpretation of the Core Argument. In the Standard Interpretation, it is immigrants' claim against being ruled by the receiving state that underlies their claim to be enfranchised. Of course, being ruled by receiving states can have benefits to immigrants; an immigrant from a poor, war-torn country settling in a prosperous and peaceful one, may be better off, all things considered, under the rule of the receiving state. Still, the Standard Interpretation claims that whatever its benefits, being ruled by the receiving state brings with it a certain kind of disvalue against which the immigrant has a claim. If this claim is not addressed, that is, if the receiving state does not respond to it appropriately, it wrongs the immigrant. Only democratic inclusion counts as an appropriate response to this claim, the Standard Interpretation continues, and therefore, immigrants must be enfranchised. In the following section I will argue that this Standard Interpretation of the Core Argument is not plausible.

Against the Standard Interpretation

The Standard Interpretation of the Core Argument justifies immigrant enfranchisement by invoking immigrants' interest against being ruled. But given the kind of practice democracy is, I believe it is implausible to think that the right to participate in this practice is adequately understood in terms of such an interest. Enfranchisement allows immigrants to participate as equal partners in a political practice of collective self-rule, that is, it grants them ruling powers. But ruling powers, I will argue, are not to be granted to individuals for the sake of advancing their individual interest against the imposition of some disvalue. When public institutions threaten with imposing a disvalue on individuals, the appropriate response is to limit said institutions' power to impose this disvalue

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through institutional protections, that is, to shield the individual from the disvalue-bearing instances of institutional power. Not only does democratic participation perform this shielding function poorly, but this justification fails to account for a number of key features of democracy as a practice of collective self-rule as well. For these reasons, the Standard Interpretation is implausible.

Let me illustrate my point by considering an autonomy-based version of the Standard Interpretation, roughly along the line of the arguments of Abizadeh, Song, Lenard, and Wilson. This is, of course, not the only possible way to spell out the Standard Interpretation, but discussing this particular variant will yield important generalizable insights about the Standard Interpretation as such. The central idea of the autonomy-based version of the Standard Interpretation is as follows. Coercive state power necessarily invades autonomy, and individuals have a weighty interest against the invasion of their autonomy. This means that if state power is to be wielded legitimately, it must be wielded in a way that appropriately responds to individuals' claim against the invasion of their autonomy; for example, it must, as Lenard puts it, compensate or make up for, or restore lost autonomy, or, as Abizadeh claims, affirm individuals' autonomous status or, as Wilson writes, show respect to their autonomy in some way. Granting individuals democratic participation rights is the only appropriate response, or it is necessarily part of any appropriate response, to this claim against the invasion of autonomy. For this reason, all under the jurisdiction of the state, including immigrants, must be granted democratic participation rights. This is the autonomy-based version of the Standard Interpretation I will consider here.

Clearly, the autonomy-based argument just sketched can be further specified. One way to specify it is in instrumental terms. On this specification, democratic participation responds to individuals' interest against the invasion of their autonomy by serving as an instrument of controlling state power such that it does not excessively encroach upon their individual autonomy. It is a tool for individuals to protect their autonomy from the overreach of state power. In this view, enfranchisement is seen as one of the many ways to protect individuals' interests against the abuse of state power, similarly to the constitutional protection of basic rights, the division of powers, the rule of law, and so on. I would not deny that having a democratic say helps individuals and groups protect their interests against the abuse of state power, however, it should be mentioned that democracy as a tool for protecting interests has serious limitations by virtue of the simple fact that in a democracy one can always be outvoted.

Depending on the particular context, immigrants' interests and rights against the abuse of state power may be equally or even better protected

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through constitutional measures, human rights treaties, domestic and international courts, which are not directly accountable to majorities, or, indeed, by open borders. Exit and voice can be equally effective means to mitigate the risk of abusive state power. Indeed, observing the immense threat of state power to immigrants' interests and the cruelty and injustice of immigration control, many authors suggest, in the first place, opening borders, rather than immigrant enfranchisement (Kukathas 2021; Sager 2020; Sharp 2022). If the point of immigrant enfranchisement is to avoid abusive state power, it is unclear why enfranchisement, which potentially makes immigrants liable to such abuse by democratic majorities, is the right response, rather than some other measure, for example, constitutional protections or open borders, which shield immigrants directly from such abuse or allow them to remove themselves from the jurisdiction of the abusive state. Perhaps enfranchisement is the simplest or cheapest or the most effective of all alternative solutions to the same problem. But, I believe, this is not how (1) is meant to be understood in the Standard Interpretation; the idea here is that those who are ruled, regardless of such external circumstances as the cost or effectiveness of alternative solutions, are owed a say in how they are ruled. This leads us from an instrumental to a non-instrumental version of the autonomy-based argument.

The non-instrumental autonomy-based argument holds that even non-abusive state power necessarily invades autonomy in objectionable ways, such that democratic participation is owed to individuals under the jurisdiction of the state irrespective of how good an instrument of controlling state power it is. Enfranchisement is necessary for restoring or affirming or respecting the autonomy of individuals under state power. This seems to be the version of the argument that is most attractive to the aforementioned authors. What can we make of it? First, the fact that in a democracy one can always be outvoted retains some importance. Through enfranchisement one is recruited in a collective venture to rule the polity together; far from extending one's ability to shape one's life according to one's own judgment—a natural understanding of autonomy—it makes one's ability to shape one's life conditional on others' cooperation.[7] Once again, constitutional protections and open borders seem to make a more straightforward contribution to one's autonomy; they directly protect and expand one's ability to unilaterally shape one's own life, while enfranchisement subjects one to the collective will of the democratic community.

But even if one rejects this objection and maintains that shared democratic power can advance autonomy-based interests, as Wilson (2021, 2022) does, for example, it remains unclear if this is an appropriate basis

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for claiming such power. In a democracy, not only can one be outvoted, but one can also outvote others, thereby imposing binding rules on them, backed by coercive state power, potentially against their preference. The democratic inclusion of immigrants, for example, means empowering them not only to advance their own interests, but also to shape what political obligations the rest of the citizenry is subjected to. Importantly, those subject to the democratic power of both immigrants and citizens include individuals who lack reciprocal power over them, for example, minors. It is unclear if such power over others can be legitimately claimed for the sake of affirming one's autonomy. That is, it is far from obvious that because my autonomy is infringed by subjection to coercive state power, I should get a say in political decisions determining what policies other people are subjected to. Even if I have a weighty interest in being autonomous or having my autonomy affirmed, this obligates no one to, as Niko Kolodny puts it, "lend themselves" to that kind of activity, that is, be recruited as participants and subjects liable for the costs and benefits of the activity, through which our autonomy is expressed or affirmed (2023: 317).

But even if one resists this line of argument and holds that sometimes we do have to lend ourselves to others' pursuit of autonomy, one must still acknowledge the specificity of the context of political rule. A claim to enfranchisement is a claim to participate as equal partners in collective self-rule, that is, to share in the ruling power of the demos. People lend themselves to this practice, among other things, as subjects to political rule, vulnerable to the ruling power for their most fundamental interests and standing as free and equal persons among others. Even if sometimes we have to lend ourselves to others' pursuit of autonomy, it is highly questionable if in the specific context of political rule, we must occupy this extremely vulnerable position of subjects to political rule for the sake of affirming others' autonomy. Of course, in a democracy one is always both ruled and a ruler; but as we have seen, as one democratic ruler among many others, one has limited ability to reduce one's vulnerability to ruling power. These considerations have implications that go beyond the autonomy-based version of the Standard Interpretation. At this point we can make some general comments on why the Standard Interpretation is not plausible.

Since a claim to enfranchisement is a claim to share in the ruling power of the demos, such a claim is hard to justify in terms of one's interest against being ruled, whether those interests are autonomy-based or not. For it is questionable whether a claim to ruling power is appropriately justified in terms of one's interest against a certain disvalue.[8] Generally, ruling power should not be justified in terms of the interests

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of the ruler alone, but should also invoke the interests of the ruled. If we ask why one should be granted ruling powers, it does not seem to be an appropriate answer that ruling would be good for the would-be ruler or that they have an interest in ruling. One may reply that the Standard Interpretation does not appeal to immigrants' interest in ruling. It appeals to their interest against being ruled, that is, their interest in avoiding the disvalue of rule; their interest in ruling is derivative upon this latter, more fundamental interest. In the case of autonomy-based arguments, for example, the claim is that individuals have, in the first instance, an interest in being autonomous, and only derivatively an interest in sharing in the ruling power of the demos. Such derivative interests, one may argue, can appropriately ground claims to ruling power (see Viehoff 2017).

I remain unsure about this response, however. Even if what justifies enfranchisement is not an interest in ruling, but rather, in the first instance, an interest in avoiding a disvalue, this still does not appear to be an appropriate reason for granting ruling powers. For example, people should not be granted public office to ensure that some disvalue does not befall on them. One should not be made a member of parliament or a criminal judge to avoid suffering material loss, status harm, or suchlike.[9] But a member of the demos is no less a public official, wielding public power, than a judge or a member of parliament (Kapelner 2023: 8). If so, then invoking one's interest in avoiding a disvalue is not the appropriate justification for granting them a share in public power, and the Standard Interpretation fails. Democratic participation rights are unlike civil liberties, for example, freedom of speech, association, conscience, rights to a fair trial, and so on, which protect individuals from the disvalue of being ruled; for it is a practice of political rule, albeit a collective one. Thus, to justify democratic participation rights for immigrants, we must turn to a different kind of democratic theory.

Shared Interest Accounts of Immigrant Enfranchisement

The Standard Interpretation of the Core Argument offers an individualist justification for immigrant enfranchisement. In the Standard Interpretation, it is because immigrants as individuals possess a self-serving interest against being ruled that they ought to be enfranchised. But since a claim to enfranchisement is a claim to a share in ruling powers, and ruling powers are not to be justified solely in terms of the interests of power-holders, this interest against being ruled proved to be an inadequate basis for immigrant enfranchisement. Immigrants' claim to enfranchisement cannot rest on their individual interests alone; the interests of those who

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will be ruled by immigrants as members of the demos must count as well. Thus, I propose that immigrant enfranchisement is best justified not by immigrants' individual interests but by the shared interests of immigrants and citizens.

By the term "shared interest" I do not simply mean an interest that multiple people happen to have in common, for example, when employees of a firm all have an interest in getting a raise. Rather I understand a shared interest of parties P_1, P_2, . . . P_n in X such that for any $P_{1 \leq i \leq n,}$ they have an interest in X, and this interest is advanced only if it is also advanced for all other parties. Any employee's interest in a raise can be advanced without giving any other employee a raise. They may think their privileged salary is unfair, and this may taint their enjoyment of it, but their interest in a better salary was nonetheless advanced. Contrast this with two friends' interest in their friendship going well. Friends' interest in a good friendship can only be advanced by advancing it for both of them because it is an interest not in each enjoying a good friendship separately but them sharing a good friendship together. This interest in a good friendship can only be communally advanced not simply because of the non-excludability of the good in question, but because each party's interest in the good constitutively involves advancing the other party's interest in the good.[10]

My proposal then, is to avoid the problem of the Standard Interpretation by justifying immigrant enfranchisement in terms of immigrants' and citizens' shared interests. But what are these shared interests exactly? I will consider three possibilities, namely, collective autonomy, relational equality, and mutual service, defending the last one as the most plausible. Let me begin with relational equality. Although the interest in relational equality is sometimes spelled out in individualistic terms, for example, in terms of an individual claim against inferiority (Kolodny 2023), it can also be understood in terms of shared interests; just as friends have a shared interest in improving their friendship in terms of the goods that make friendship valuable, so too individuals more generally may have a shared interest in improving their interpersonal relations in terms of equality.[11] Recently, it has also been argued that relational equality, at least in the political realm, requires democracy in one way or another (Anderson 2009; Kolodny 2023; Schemmel 2021; Wilson 2019). Thus, those who relate have a shared interest in relating as equals, and since relating as equals requires democracy, those who relate, at least in the political realm, should all be democratically included in decision-making within their relations. This equal relations principle, which has recently been defended by Andreas Bengston (2022) as a principle of democratic inclusion, seems to imply immigrant enfranchisement on the assumption that immigrants are related to citizens in the relevant sense.

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The main difficulty this proposal faces is that it is not at all obvious that relational equality between immigrants and citizens requires democratic inclusion. The most straightforward argument for why non-democracy is incompatible with relational equality is that non-democracy implies an asymmetry in power, for example, between the enfranchised citizenry and the non-enfranchised immigrants, which generates objectionable hierarchies and corrodes egalitarian social relations. But, first, not all power asymmetries generate objectionable hierarchies – think of power asymmetries in hospitals or fire departments. Whether power asymmetries are incompatible with a claim against inferiority greatly depends on how they are justified (Viehoff 2019). But suppose that the political realm is qualitatively different from hospitals and fire departments such that power asymmetries cannot be justified and must be corrected. Even this does not necessarily imply immigrant enfranchisement. Power inequalities can be mitigated both by empowering the powerless party or disempowering the powerful one. Let me illustrate.

Suppose that a significant number of state *A*'s citizens are immigrants in state *B,* and *A* and *B* sign a treaty granting special protections, privileges, and immunities to citizens of *A* in *B* and deferring important decisions affecting *A*-ers in *B* to an external body *C.* Now, not only has *B*-ers' power to unilaterally impose their preference on *A*-ers been significantly curtailed, but *A*-ers have been officially designated as bearers of a special status in *B.* Granted, *A*-ers are still marked as having a different status than *B*-ers in *B,* but this status, much like that of foreign diplomats, need not be considered inferior. *B*-ers may, of course, still harbor negative attitudes toward *A*-ers despite their official status, but the same can be true were they enfranchised. Thus, it is not immediately clear that there remains an objectionable relational inequality between immigrants and citizens in *B* that can only be addressed through immigrant enfranchisement. Note that this is compatible with saying that among citizens, in whose case such protection by treaty and decision-externalization is usually not a live option, relational equality requires democracy.

The argument for immigrant enfranchisement must invoke a shared interest that can only be advanced by empowering immigrants, rather than disempowering citizens. The concept of collective autonomy might be thought to offer a solution. One may argue that the autonomy-based arguments considered in the previous section fail because they focus on the wrong kind of autonomy. The sort of autonomy that matters for democracy is not individual autonomy, the invasion of which is against our individual interests, but collective autonomy. After all, we have interests in autonomous self-determination not only as independent individuals, but also as interdependent members of collectives (Stilz 2016). As a

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member of a sports club or an orchestra, I have an interest in this group governing itself according to its own collective judgments, for example, that it plays a certain style of game or performs certain pieces of music according to members' judgments. This is a shared interest and the only way to advance it is to make the whole group itself self-governing. In addition, unlike relational equality, collective autonomy so understood cannot be advanced without empowering group members; it is through such empowerment that the group becomes collectively autonomous. For this reason, democracy uniquely advances this interest in collective autonomy by rendering the collective self-governing (Lovett and Zuehl 2022).

The idea of collective autonomy is a fascinating one that raises a host of questions. For example, is it really autonomy that is realized through collective self-governance; if so, how does this kind of autonomy relate to individual autonomy; and is democracy, in fact, best understood as a vehicle for collective autonomy? Let me set these questions aside, however, and accept, for the sake of argument, the viability of the concept of collective autonomy and its connection to democracy. The main problem this proposal faces is that it offers little help in explaining why immigrants specifically should be enfranchised, that is, why they share an interest with citizens in the autonomous self-governance of the polity. The idea of collective autonomy by itself tells us nothing about which groups should be collectively autonomous exactly. One may well argue that it is only the citizenry, rather than citizens and immigrants together, that constitutes a unit with valid claims to collective autonomy. Indeed, some authors, like Sarah Song in her more recent work, argue that it is precisely in order to maintain the value of collective self-determination, which is something very much like collective autonomy, that citizens should have the liberty to refuse to enfranchise immigrants despite their strong moral claims to democratic participation rights (Song 2019: 181). To avoid this conclusion and support immigrant enfranchisement, we need to invoke another interest in addition to the one in collective autonomy.

One may propose combining relational equality and collective autonomy,[12] for example, by supplementing Bengtson's equal relations principle with an account of collective autonomy so as to claim that exactly those individuals share an interest in collective autonomy via democracy who relate in the political realm. But such a principle cannot simply be stipulated without further argument. For while it seems clear to me why relating in the political realm implies a shared interest in relating as equals, it is far from obvious why the same relation would imply a shared interest in collective autonomy analogous to that of the sports club or the orchestra. Indeed, there are cases where shared interests in collective autonomy do not track political relations. For example, members of a

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colonized people share an interest in self-determination or collective autonomy, with one another but not with their colonizers despite the fact that qua imperial subjects, they do relate to them in the political realm (Stilz 2019). For this reason, I am unsure if relational equality and collective autonomy provide the best justification for immigrant enfranchisement. In the next section, I turn to what I believe is a more promising strategy.

Mutual Service

Elsewhere I have defended an account of the value of democracy that, I believe, can help us identify the shared interest underlying immigrants' claim to enfranchisement (Kapelner 2022). Let me summarize it briefly. Ruling power, as noted, must be justified, at least partly, in terms of the interests of the ruled. Rulers should serve the ruled, although they often do not. Rulers serve the ruled by establishing justice, however understood,[13] within the polity. This is the specific kind of service that rule is meant to provide. This service of rule has instrumental value; it advances the interests of the ruled in justice. But service, in general, also has non-instrumental value. Service establishes a valuable relationship with others, one in which people do not relate as agents indifferent to each other's good or as hostile agents willing to benefit at others' expense, but as agents concerned for and caring about each other (Kapelner 2022: 658).

People who participate in the system of social cooperation,[14] or social cooperators, for short, depend on and are vulnerable to each other for the protection and advancement of their fundamental interests. People in such relationships of dependence and vulnerability have a fundamental interest in relating not as indifferent or hostile agents, but in the mode of mutual service (Kapelner 2022: 661). There are many ways for people to serve each other; friends, family members, doctors, teachers, and good Samaritans serve others in different ways, and these can establish valuable relationships between them. But qua social cooperators, the appropriate kind of service is establishing justice, as it is social injustice we are primarily threatened by in our capacity as social cooperators. If so, then the kind of service we owe to each other as social cooperators is the service of rule, that is, establishing justice. If we are to advance our shared interest in relating as mutually serving social cooperators, then we must become co-rulers of the polity. And the form of government under which we are all co-rulers of our polity is democracy.[15]

One may object that we can contribute to justice even without being co-rulers of our polity as do, for example, social movements and civil

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society organizations. But while such agents advocate for justice, often effectively, they do not establish it; the institutional power to create and maintain a just system of public rules governing social cooperation remains with the co-rulers of the polity. Unless individuals rule their polity together, their agency remains problematically divorced from the justness of the polity; they can appeal to rulers to make justice but cannot themselves make it (see Kapelner 2022: 662). Such a differential allocation of the power to make justice together with others denies to the democratically excluded "that the labors of justice are theirs to complete" (Howard 2019: 181). This offends their fundamental interest in relating to others as fully fledged agents of justice.[16]

Thus, by recruiting individuals in the common undertaking of ruling the polity justly together, democracy allows them to relate in a uniquely valuable way, that is, as mutually serving agents of justice (Howard 2019: 178; see Schemmel 2021: 208) who assume institutional responsibility for creating justice for one another as democratic co-rulers of the polity. Being part of such interpersonal relationships between such agents of justice, similarly to friendship, is not simply good for the participants considered separately and in isolation; the relational value of democracy constitutively references the interests of all involved parties. In other words, individuals' interest in relating as mutually serving agents of justice is a shared interest underlying democracy.

What does this mean for immigrant enfranchisement? Immigrants participate in the system of social cooperation,[17] and therefore share this fundamental interest in relating in the mode of mutual service through democracy.[18] They too are vulnerable to fellow social cooperators on whom they depend through the system of social cooperation for their basic rights and interests, and they too are called upon to take responsibility for the justness of this system as democratic agents of justice.[19] Importantly, a share in ruling powers is not claimed here as compensation for, or indeed in any way as a response to the disvalue of this dependence or vulnerability. It is unclear if democratic inclusion would eliminate or ameliorate this vulnerability in any way. Rather, shared dependence and vulnerability within the same system of social cooperation merely marks out the domain where it is particularly important for us to relate to others as mutually serving agents of justice. It is within this domain of a shared system of social cooperation that those who are victims of social injustice acquire standing to demand justice from others, and those who are beneficiaries of social justice can expect others to help reproduce this just scheme, rather than erode or damage it for personal benefit. In my view, then, immigrants should be enfranchised not primarily because

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this protects them from state abuse or allows them to advance their individual interests but rather because they share a fundamental interest with all those to whom they relate within a shared scheme of social cooperation in fully relating as mutually serving agents of justice, that is, not as indifferent or hostile agents, but as mutually serving agents who are concerned for securing justice for one another.

This view has several advantages compared with the alternatives discussed above. Unlike the Standard Interpretation, it explains the value of immigrant enfranchisement in terms of a shared interest of both immigrants and citizens. Thus, it explains the value of extending democratic ruling powers to immigrants in terms of the interests of both would-be rulers, namely, immigrants, and those subject to rule, namely, immigrants and citizens. Like Bengtson's equal relations view and unlike the collective autonomy view, the mutual service view explains why immigrants share the relevant interest with citizens, namely, because they too participate in the system of social cooperation. But unlike the equal relations view, it explains why being related in this way necessitates the democratic empowerment of immigrants, namely, because it is an interest in relating as mutually serving agents of justice advanced only by democratic inclusion.

In the same way, my view can explain something that proved difficult within the Standard Interpretation, that is, why constitutional protections and open borders cannot adequately substitute for immigrant enfranchisement. Although constitutional protections may prevent egregious injustice and may even allow immigrants to voice their concerns about injustice, for example, through protecting free speech rights, without democratic inclusion they do not allow immigrants to take direct responsibility for justice within the scheme of social cooperation. In the absence of democratic powers, immigrants can at best advocate for justice but not directly create it as co-rulers of the polity. Exit similarly fails to advance this shared interest in relating as mutually serving agents of justice by only allowing immigrants to dissociate themselves from a system of social cooperation, rather than transforming it through democratic participation.

This argument can also further illuminate the normative function and significance of immigrant enfranchisement. I argued that the point of immigrant enfranchisement is not simply protecting or promoting immigrants' individual interests but rather establishing a valuable kind of interpersonal relationship between immigrants and citizens. This means that the point of enfranchisement is not so much about individual empowerment but rather integration. Of course, the word "integration"

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has problematic connotations (Schinkel 2018). It invokes the idea of a host society demanding cultural assimilation and economic productivity from immigrants as the price of the right to remain, requiring them to become "model immigrants" as a precondition of securing their basic rights. But there is perhaps a better understanding of integration according to which integration is a two-way process whereby both members of the host society and immigrants come to relate and act with each other as fully fledged partners in social cooperation (see Klarenbeek 2021). This involves relating as mutually serving agents of justice. This does not have to imply inclusion in citizenship – temporary workers who plan to return to their state of origin after a few years and have no desire to naturalize should not be excluded from these valuable interpersonal relationships.

Seeing immigrant enfranchisement as integration allows us to better understand its role within the demands of justice for immigrants and inform the criteria for its successful implementation. For example, if my argument holds, then in implementing immigrant enfranchisement, we need to go beyond merely formal inclusion and ensure that immigrants are equipped with the relevant participatory capabilities (Kapelner 2020) not only to advance their own interests but also to promote justice within their host society, including epistemic capabilities to assess policies and party platforms (Giavazzi and Kapelner 2024) that may pose specific challenges of language, unfamiliarity with local institutions, political history, social structures, and so on that do not similarly affect citizens.

Finally, one may object that I falsely suppose that immigrant enfranchisement would bring about more justice. What if, in fact, it would only make achieving justice more difficult? What if it would increase social tension, fuel exclusionary populist sentiments, and erode social cohesion (Pevnick 2023)? What if in a particular country, immigrants' anti-democratic or illiberal attitudes would only undermine the polity's ability to establish justice (Joshi 2018)? My answer is that in my view, the goal of democracy is not strictly speaking justice as such. It is justice achieved through the common effort of individuals as equal co-authors of the political order under which they live. The value of democracy does not simply lie in justice itself, but in allowing us to achieve justice together, and thereby relating to each other in a particularly valuable way. So understood, there may very well be reasons for including immigrants, even if this creates backlash and instability. For even under such circumstances, democratic inclusion enables all participants of the system of social cooperation to relate as mutually serving agents of justice. It fulfills a necessary condition for just democratic self-government, even if other conditions remain to be satisfied.

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NOTES

1. I will not address here the question of democratic participation in supranational institutions, for example, the European Union (see Benli 2022). I will also not discuss the question of whether immigrants are entitled to other political liberties usually associated with democratic participation rights, such as the right to run for office or to form political parties and receive public funding for campaigns.
2. For a discussion on the disadvantage of relying exclusively on naturalization as a response to the disenfranchisement of immigrants, see Duarte (2018).
3. One may argue that having a say in how one is ruled may not imply full enfranchisement, but only what David Owen (2018) calls "discursive" and "editorial" inclusion or inclusion with less weighty votes, for example. I do not have space here to adequately assess these proposals, and therefore I will set them aside.
4. One may imagine arguments for immigrant enfranchisement that take another route and argue that there are distinctive reasons for enfranchising immigrants that differ from and are independent of reasons for enfranchising citizens. I will set this option aside here.
5. Note that Song's current position is somewhat unique in that she believes that while resident immigrants have strong moral claims for enfranchisement, the citizenry is at liberty to deny them democratic inclusion (see Song 2019).

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6. This may not be the only way to understand Abizadeh's argument. For example, in a footnote he invokes Jürgen Habermas's idea of the co-originality of personal autonomy and popular sovereignty. This view suggests that democracy is justified not as offsetting the disvalue of subjection to coercive rule, but as the fulfillment of the ideal of full autonomy in the private and the public realm as well. But since this view is not spelled out in greater detail, I cannot further discuss it here.
7. See Thomas Christiano's (1996) well-known arguments against autonomy-based justifications of democracy.
8. One may object that enfranchisement does not give people ruling powers; it only allows them to play a restricted role in the complex processes of exercising ruling power (see Beckman 2017). I disagree; I believe that democracy is best understood as a "mutual authority-constituting practice" (Ceva and Ottonelli 2022) wherein individuals are themselves final sources of public authority and exercise ruling powers (see Kapelner 2023). However, I cannot further explore this topic here.
9. One can, of course, imagine hypothetical scenarios where, say, for some unusual and convoluted reason the only way to save someone's life is to appoint them as a public official for a short period of time, but these cases hardly provide guidance on the present issue.
10. In other words, shared interests are aimed at what Jeremy Waldron (1987) calls communal goods.
11. For a discussion on the locus of the value of relational equality, see Miklósi (2018).
12. Lovett and Zuehl (2022) themselves suggest such a pluralist account whereby both values underly the value of democracy.
13. Here I do not presuppose any particular theory of justice. The view presented here is compatible with very minimalistic accounts where justice only requires a basic social order.
14. Here I assume that systems of social cooperation, as a rule, roughly correspond to single societies. There are also transnational systems of social cooperation, for example, the European Union, and in those cases the following argument applies mutatis mutandis. Whether more loosely organized transnational arrangements, such as ones characterized only by trade relations or labor exchange, also constitute full systems of social cooperation, what this implies for the democratic boundary problem, is a question I leave open here.
15. Individuals, of course, deeply disagree about what justice requires, but this is all the more reason why they all should have a say in how justice is established in society. That said, the view under discussion does not require any psychologically implausible altruism or concern for justice, only a kind of public mindedness that democratic citizens are known to exhibit (Kapelner 2022: 659).
16. For more discussion on this point, see Kapelner (2024).
17. Participation in a system of social cooperation should not be narrowly understood simply as "work." One can participate in the system of social cooperation, for example, by paying taxes, using public services, upholding its system of public rules through compliance, and so on. Note, however, that

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the criterion of participation rejects transients as proper claimants of inclusion. Tourists come to visit, not to participate in social cooperation as fellow cooperators.

18. The view developed here should be distinguished from Joseph Carens's "social membership" account (2013: 158–160). Social membership, for Carens, involves being embedded into dense networks of interpersonal relationships and networks in a given society (Carens 2013: 164). Participation in social cooperation does not require such associative ties. Although my view is compatible with Carens's theory of social membership, it is not equivalent with it.
19. This account may be seen as building upon and developing the "enlistment principle" of democratic inclusion introduced by Zoltán Miklósi and myself, where inclusion is based on the state's enlistment, rather than subjection, of individuals under its rule (Miklósi and Kapelner 2020). Compare also the "All-Affecting Principle" proposed by De Schutter and Ypi (2015: 243), not to be confused with the All-Affected Principle.

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