

Rethinking Multiculturalism with (and against) Raz

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A brief autobiographical note

I think of this paper as a long overdue *mea culpa* to Joseph. Let me explain. Joe supervised my thesis at Oxford between 1986 and 1991. The thesis was greatly influenced by Joe's discussions of individual autonomy in *The Morality of Freedom*, which was published around the time I got to Oxford. Like many (but my no means all) of my Oxford cohort, I was hugely inspired and challenged by the breadth, but also by what I can only describe as the philosophical *relentlessness* of the arguments on display in the book. I wrote what I now think of as a very Razian thesis, articulating what I then took to be a different way of characterizing autonomy, as well as the ways in which it connected with a (non-perfectionist) liberalism.

When I returned to Canada, and more specifically, to Quebec, in the early '90s, I was swept up both intellectually and politically with academic and political developments there. Academically, the work of figures such as Charles Taylor and Will Kymlicka was defining a new agenda for political philosophers, one that devoted more attention than (broadly understood) Rawlsian political philosophy had to the importance of culture and identity. Politically, the successive failed attempts at amending the Canadian constitution so as to secure the assent of Quebec, and the ensuing 1995 referendum on secession (which came within roughly 1% of setting in train a sequence of events that might very well have resulted in the secession of Canada's second most populous province) gave rise in my generation of Canadian political philosophers to sustained reflection on multinational federalism, the conditions for justified secession, language justice, and of course, the justification scope and limits of multiculturalism. I spent the first ten or fifteen years of my academic career fully immersed in what some would come to refer to (sometimes somewhat derisively) as the "Canadian agenda" (Barry 2002).

Needless to say, we didn't really resolve any of the many philosophical puzzles raised by these issues. Many of us drifted away to work on other, sometimes related, sometimes unrelated themes. That is in many ways a shame, in particular with respect to the unfinished philosophical business surrounding multiculturalism. Multiculturalism has come under sustained attack both from politicians who have, among other things, dismissed it as giving insufficient importance to what they have claimed to be the legitimate prerogatives of historically established majorities, and from political philosophers, who have worried that it eroded the empirical conditions that need to be in place in order to support generous policies of redistribution (Miller 2013). And while it would be the height of philosophical arrogance to claim that the plight of multiculturalism is due to philosophers not having provided it with a robust philosophical foundation and articulation, the relative disarray in which the theory of multiculturalism finds itself has certainly not helped matters.

It is in this context that I have returned to a topic that I had largely set aside at least in my recent research (e.g. Weinstock 2023), and that I realized I owed Joe a philosophical *mea culpa*. His 1992 essay on multiculturalism formulates many of the questions that those of us who are concerned with firming up multiculturalism's philosophical *bona fides* must address (Raz 1994). Though I don't think that the answers that he provides in the essay are successful, there is no doubt that the essay is agenda-setting in ways that those of us who have been writing about multiculturalism have not appreciated. This essay is an initial attempt at setting the philosophical record straight. And as I will try to show in at least a tentative manner in this essay, the rest of Joe's work is replete with philosophical arguments that could be put to use in refurbishing multiculturalism's philosophical foundations.

The Plan

The paper will be divided into three sections. The first will argue that Raz identified one of the problems that multiculturalist theorists must face that has, somewhat surprisingly, been neglected by some of the theory's main protagonists. Briefly stated, that problem has to do with the presence within (for the most part) the urban centers of many modern societies of distinct cultural groups whose presence results from the mass migratory movements that have marked the modern era, and that a) do not occupy a distinct territory, b) are not "encompassing" (in a sense to be defined below) and c) cannot be expected simply to assimilate into the majority culture of the broader society. The second will show that despite his correct identification of what is arguably the thorniest and most urgent problem that multicultural theory and practice must face today, Raz does not provide us with a satisfactory argument as to *why* just societies should provide multicultural accommodations to the groups designated by this correct identification. I will argue that Raz's error consists in misunderstanding the importance that the groups that he has identified as objects of particular philosophical concern, and which I will here term "migration minorities", have relative to the kinds of groups that have been at the center of much of the early discussion of multiculturalism, namely, "encompassing groups". The third part of the paper will argue, in a tentative and speculative mood, that the elements needed in order to construct a more satisfactory view are present in some of Raz's other writings, in particular in the writing on particularism scattered throughout subsequent works, such as *Engaging Reason*, *Value, Respect and Attachment*, and *The Roots of Normativity*.

The Problem

In the opening pages of "Multiculturalism", Raz makes a seemingly innocuous, but in my view quite significant clarification about the scope of his argument. Engaging in what some might see as a somewhat stylized history, Raz argues that present circumstances require that we move beyond the initial phases of multiculturalism, which involved (in a first phase) toleration, and (in a second), non-discrimination. Modern societies are now marked by the presence in their midst of groups whose arrival results not from individual or family-based decisions to migrate, but from broader political and social phenomena such as decolonization. The situation that Raz is concerned with is one in which there are a number of distinct cultural communities sharing a territory, and which bear the following characteristics. First, they both wish and are able "to perpetuate themselves" (Raz 1994: 173). Second, "even though the communities may be disproportionately concentrated in different residential neighbourhoods, there is in the main no geographical separateness" (Raz 1994: 173 – 174). That ever greater numbers of societies are

marked by communities of these kinds, and by the territorial proximity of these communities, results in Raz's view from the "ever-growing migrations of the modern era".

To appreciate the distinctiveness of this way identifying the scope of theories of multiculturalism, it is worth comparing it to that put forward by Will Kymlicka, whose *Multicultural Citizenship* has arguably been most influential in setting the terms within which the discussion of multiculturalism among (broadly speaking) liberal political philosophers has occurred in the last 30 years, and certainly in the first 10 – 15 years following the publication of his most important book (Kymlicka 1995). For Kymlicka, a basic distinction that has to be kept in mind in order to develop a normative theory of multiculturalism is between involuntarily incorporated minority nations on the one hand, and groups that have emerged from voluntary immigration, on the other. Kymlicka's main concern is with the former category, of which the Québécois, the Catalan and the Basques are paradigmatic members. Though the particular histories differ, such cultural groups were incorporated into larger political spaces in which, but for the existence of group-differentiated rights, they would become (or have been) highly vulnerable to the benign neglect that characterizes multicultural political entities in which one politically dominant group gets to call the shots in virtue of their control over majoritarian democratic institutions. Why should liberals care about the fate of such minority nations? Why not simply accept cultural change as the regrettable but unavoidable cost of democratic decision-making? For two reasons, according to Kymlicka. One has to do with the dubiously voluntary nature of incorporation of such minorities, which often resulted from the downstream effects of military conquest and from the often quite culturally violent processes through which nation-building has occurred. The other has to do with the fact that prior to incorporation, these groups formed relatively institutionally complete "societal cultures", which provided their members with a full range of options across the full range of fields of human endeavour, and which in so doing were central to their members' ability to choose how to live their lives autonomously.

Groups formed through immigration in Kymlicka's view share neither of these traits. The paradigmatic immigrant is in his view one who, perhaps along with their family, chooses to move to a new society in order to improve their life prospects. They are thus in no way involuntarily incorporated into the host society. Second, they do not upon arrival constitute societal cultures. To the extent that their members are to flourish, it will be by integrating into the institutions – economic, educational, cultural – of the host nation. Kymlicka's theory nonetheless grants them "polyethnic rights", which are limited in scope to "help ethnic groups and religious minorities express their cultural particularity and pride without it hampering their success in the economic and political institutions of the dominant society" (Kymlicka 1995: 31. For criticism of this view see Carens 1999). But these rights have as their purpose to facilitate the process of integration, rather than to arrest it.

The result of this distinction has arguably left some of the most important phenomena linked to the fact of multiculturalism out of theoretical view. On the one hand, voluntary individual immigrants are granted a limited range of rights aimed at allowing them to express some aspects of their patrimonial cultures while integrating into the host society's main institutions. And on the other, territorially based "societal cultures" – minority nations – are granted broad powers akin to those that they would have as sovereign nation-states within federal or quasi-federal arrangements. Significantly, Kymlicka believes that it is perfectly appropriate

for minority nations to engage in nation-building within its borders, which has led him to be associated to the “liberal nationalist” current in contemporary political philosophy, alongside such theorists as David Miller and Yael Tamir. Kymlicka’s multiculturalism ultimately applies to territorially separated nations sharing political institutions, rather than to cultural groups which share common space, and which though they may not be institutionally complete, nonetheless matter greatly to people, and which in virtue of having resulted from mass migratory processes, possess critical mass sufficient to ground the expectation that they will be able to sustain themselves intergenerationally. Kymlicka’s view has been criticized for ultimately giving rise not to multiculturalism, but to side-by-side mono-cultures (Kukathas, 1992).

Raz’s focus on groups that share concrete political space and whose members aspire to perpetuate them clearly cannot be reduced to either of the categories viewed by Kymlicka as paradigmatic. Polyethnic rights as defined by Kymlicka fall well short of the claims made by such groups, whereas the kinds of group-differentiated rights that are granted by his theory to groups such as the Québécois and the Catalan are (as I will argue in greater detail below) inappropriate to their situation as groups that *matter* to their members but that are in no way institutionally complete.

That Raz’s focus is an important one can be seen by simply listing some of the groups that correspond to his characterization, and that will continue to swell its numbers. Obviously, mass movements of populations due to wars, civil unrest and state-sponsored oppression have sent groups across the globe in search of decent living conditions, from the Irish and the Eastern European Jews who were processed at Ellis Island in their millions to the hundreds of thousands of Syrian refugees who were granted asylum in Germany in the mid-2010s, a wide range of social, economic and political events have caused entire communities to establish themselves far from their homelands. For the most part, they settled in already densely populated urban contexts, and often recreated the kinds of social arrangements that obtained in these homelands, as was the case for Eastern European Jews in urban areas such as the Lower East Side of Manhattan. As Raz himself indicates, colonization has been responsible for a great deal of migration between colonies and the colonial metropolis. Settler colonialism in Canada, Australia and elsewhere have given rise to large numbers of urban indigenous populations. And we should expect climate change to render entire regions of the world uninhabitable due to flooding, heat, fires, and loss of arable land, and thus to generate the movement of “climate refugees” in search of livable conditions, who will be forced to move *en masse* across borders (Lister 2014).

So far from pointing out a marginal phenomenon in the overall multicultural complexion of modern societies, Raz has identified a central dimension thereof. To reiterate, a central aspect of the (factual) multiculturalism of modern societies is that they are constituted by cultural groups that have moved *en masse* rather than individually, who are not geographically separate from other groups or indeed from members of the majority culture, whose members (at least very often) care about group survival, but who cannot ground any claim that they might have to assistance in this regard on the fact that they constitute “societal cultures”. It turns out that this is a central, rather than a peripheral case for a general theory of multiculturalism, one which Raz’s work alerted us to early.

If polyethnic rights on the one hand, and self-government rights on the other, are Kymlicka's political solution to the problems posed respectively by voluntary migrants and by territorially concentrated minority nations, what is Raz's proposed way of addressing the claims that might legitimately be made by the kinds of groups that lie at the center of his concern? At the end of the essay, he makes a series of rather *ad hoc* proposals, but they are underpinned by what he sees as a philosophical *gestalt* shift that in his view must be undertaken if we are to rise to the challenge posed by present-day multiculturalism. "We should", he claims, "learn to think of our societies as consisting not of a majority and minorities, but of a plurality of cultural groups" (Raz 1994, 189). Clearly, this requirement places a significant burden on erstwhile culturally dominant, and still numerically preponderant groups. They must on this view prescind from the prerogatives that they have historically claimed, and which can result not from any explicitly discriminatory set of attitudes or practices on their part, but simply from the normal operation of majoritarian democratic institutions. Even traditional multiculturalism is insufficient to the task, in Raz's view, as it still involves a cultural majority tolerating or bestowing rights upon minorities. It is premised upon the existence within society of a majority and of minorities, a way of looking at society that Raz's more radical vision seeks to erase. Although this won't be the central focus of this paper, the implications of such a view for multicultural policy are more far-reaching than Raz seems to realize. What could possibly ground such an ambitious multicultural policy agenda?

Why Protect Migration Minorities? A First (Unsuccessful) Pass

Part of the task of multicultural theory is descriptive. It is important that we come to an understanding of the different kinds of groups that make up the multicultural tapestry of modern societies. But normative questions are never far behind. Indeed, the kinds of groups we identify appear to us as particularly salient in ways that others do not because they matter in ways that other groups do not. We feel in particular that members of such groups are appropriately treated differently by policy because of the particular ways in which these groups matter, and in liberal theories of multiculturalism, matter to individuals. The kinds of policies that are appropriately addressed to multicultural groups vary widely. They span the gamut from symbolic recognition to limited sovereignty, and all points between, including exemptions and public subsidies (Levy 1997; Lenard 2022). But in all cases a justification is owed: *why* should we treat members of this or that group differently? What justifies departures from policies grounded in the idea, some would say the ideal, of universal, undifferentiated citizenship?

It is perhaps a philosophical temptation to come up with elegant, one-size-fits all answers to these questions. As I will argue at greater length below, this is a temptation that must be resisted. The groups that rightly figure within the ambit of multicultural theories are of quite different kinds, and they figure quite differently in the lives of individuals. Any attempt at articulating a theory grounded in one foundational principle risks implicitly taking one kind of multicultural group as paradigmatic, and in distorting the multicultural landscape either by redescribing all groups as if they were instantiations of the paradigmatic group, or by rejecting certain groups as lying beyond the scope of the theory (or both).

Liberal theories are traditionally divided into two sub-categories with respect to pluralism. On the one hand, theorists such as Chandran Kukathas and William Galston emphasize the importance of *toleration*. They argue that liberals should accept the presence

within their midst of illiberal minorities, as long as the members of such minorities are provided with (more or less) robust exit rights. If group membership does not appear to conduce to the good of all of the individuals that comprise it, they can nonetheless be taken on this view to have consented to membership if they possess exit rights that they choose not to exercise (Galston 2002, Kukathas 2007). Autonomy liberals, on the other hand, value the ways in which group membership contributes to individuals being able to leave autonomous lives. They focus on the fact that the kind of choice-making privileged by liberal theorists cannot occur in a social vacuum, but requires a stable social context (Raz 1986, Kymlicka 1995). Typically, autonomy liberals accuse toleration liberals of not providing individuals with sufficient protections against the harms that can be visited upon them by group authorities, while toleration liberals accuse autonomy liberals of undue perfectionism, which leads to the rejection of groups that, though they do not promote autonomy, narrowly understood, nonetheless instantiate important values.¹

Given the choice between these two options, it is unsurprising that Raz situates himself within the autonomist camp. Such a view is after all on the face of it of a piece with the perfectionist view propounded in the most systematic statement of his political philosophy, *The Morality of Freedom*, according to which “the autonomy principle permits and even requires governments to create morally valuable opportunities, and to eliminate repugnant ones” (Raz 1986: 417). It also appears to be consonant with his view of human agency, according to which “a proper understanding of human agency [...] presupposes that there are widespread incommensurabilities of options”. (Raz 1999: 46), a view that seems to suggest that the more different groups there are from which to choose, the more one’s autonomous agency is promoted.

Consequently, it is unsurprising that value pluralism and incommensurability, and the importance of group membership for autonomy, figure centrally in Raz’s answer to the question of why the groups that he has identified at the outset of his paper are appropriate objects of normative concern from multicultural theory and practice. “Multiculturalism”, Raz writes, “arises out of a belief in value pluralism, and in particular in the validity of the diverse values embodied in the practices which constitute the diverse and in many ways incompatible values of different societies” (Raz 1994: 174). Also: “[I]ndividual freedom and prosperity depend on full and unimpeded membership in a respected and flourishing culture” (Raz 1994: 174), and that is because “[o]nly through being socialized in a culture can one tap the options which give life a meaning” (Raz 1994: 177).

As superficially appealing as this answer is to the question of why the kinds of groups identified by Raz ought to be granted pride of place, it is mistaken in at least two ways.

The first mistake has to do with the relationship of value pluralism to cultural pluralism. On Raz’s view different cultures instantiate the diversity of values, or perhaps more modestly, a diversity of values. (I will consider what the implication of this claim for individuals is below). Now, there is a possible world in which this is true. Imagine that individuals sort themselves into groups on the basis of their preferred (incommensurable) values, or value rankings. Over there would be a group that privileges loyalty, over here one that gives pride of place to individual entrepreneurial spirit. And so on. This would divide the world into groups in a way that might in some respects echo what economists call “Tiebout sorting”.

¹ I have waded into these debates, among other places, in Weinstock 2009.

One can question whether such world would be attractive (Somin 2020). Questions also arise as to its intergenerational stability. The point I want to make is that our imagined world, which would map groups onto values or value rankings, does not offer a plausible theoretical rendering of cultural pluralism. That is because cultures, or at the very least the kinds of cultures that are at issue in Raz's essay (and as we shall see, in others of his essays that deal with related questions in political philosophy) themselves encompass ensembles of values. What brings cultural groups of the kinds that are at issue here together has to do with common history and a common range of historical experiences, including a common history of migration, rather than a commitment to a particular and distinct set of values. While such common histories may affect the axiological center of gravity of such groups, it does not make it the case that cultural groups are best identified from one another on the basis of the different values that they incline towards (as opposed to such things as language, traditions, shared historical experiences, and the like). A member of a thriving culture has access to a wide range of options just in virtue of being a member of that culture. Indeed, it could be argued that a culture that actually *could* be taken to revolve around an easily identifiable set of values (as opposed to a plurality of incommensurable values) has become sclerotic (Glenn 2014). The same values recur in all migration minorities. They may be embodied in different practices, and receive somewhat different inflections, but it is simply not the case that to be raised in the Lower East Side of New York in the 1920s or in South Boston involves being raised in incommensurable value schemes. There is a lot of internal value diversity in both of those locations, and many ways in which given their value orientations members of one community may find themselves sharing more with members of the other than with members of their own cultural community (cf. Peters 2003: 207). As Jacob Levy has pithily stated the point, "[w]hatever the truth of moral pluralism, cultural diversity is not its march through the world" (Levy 2000). Multiculturalism has to do with the plurality of cultures, rather than with the plurality of values. If multiculturalist theory is to find a way to include migration minorities in its normative ambit, it will have to be by identifying ways in which cultures are good for people, without making the assumption that cultures embody distinct sets of values.

An argument to this effect can be found in Raz's article, but in my view it ultimately fails as well. For Raz, as we have seen, belonging to this kind of group is central to having access to a wide range of options on the basis of which to exercise one's autonomous agency. This claim seems to me to be mistaken, and to rest on a conflation of the kinds of groups that are at issue here with the "encompassing groups" that Raz describes elsewhere, in his essay on national self-determination co-authored with Avishai Margalit (which is akin to the "societal cultures" that Will Kymlicka placed at the center of his theory of multinational multiculturalism). The kinds of groups that Raz is concerned with occupy a kind of midway point between, on the one hand, immigrant groups that form adventitiously as a result of the uncoordinated decisions of a number of individual migrants and their families, and on the other, the kinds of minority nations that Kymlicka is principally concerned with. They result from mass migratory processes, tend to engage in patterns of residential clustering, and tend to attempt within such residential clusters to reproduce aspects of the lives that they left behind. For example, they may tend to encourage the continued use of their mother tongue, to take part in distinctive cultural activities, and the like. But they do not, and do not aspire, to constitute "institutionally complete", quasi-autarkic societies. They are in many other important respects fully integrated with the broader society. Typically, their members travel from their residential enclaves to access options that are only

available to them given their being part of the broader, encompassing society. (This pattern is nicely described by the great novelists that have chronicled the lives of members of such communities. For example, the “one foot in, one foot out” existence of Diaspora Jews from Eastern and Central Europe has been at the center of the works of such novelists as Philip Roth and Mordecai Richler). But while these communities (unlike the communities that form out of the uncoordinated immigration decisions of individuals and families) are marked by the willingness to sustain themselves in some ways, they in and of themselves do not provide their members with the wherewithal with which to make all important life choices.

To see the problem in another way, consider Raz’s own argument (developed with Avishai Margalit), referred to briefly above, on national self-determination. I don’t want to rehearse the totality of Raz and Margalit’s argument in that important text, but simply to point out the characteristics that they cite as qualifying groups for self-determination. On their view, candidate groups for self-determination are “encompassing groups” that possess a number of characteristics, the joint effect of which is to make it the case that “membership of such groups is of great importance to individual well-being, for it greatly affects one’s opportunities, one’s ability to engage in the relationships and pursuits marked by the culture” (Raz and Margalit 1994). In other words, encompassing groups that are plausible candidates for self-determination, and thus, in certain circumstances, for full sovereignty, come to acquire this status for the same kinds of reasons that undergird Raz’s account of why the kinds of groups he is concerned with in “multiculturalism” matter. Now, whatever else can be said about them, it is clearly not the case that such groups are candidates for self-determination.

However, the fact that Raz takes the multicultural defence of encompassing groups to be justified by their capacity to provide people with a wide range of valuable life options upon which to exercise their capacity for autonomous choice does not mean that migration groups do not also possess this capacity. After all, many migration groups are quite large, and while they do not occupy territories in ways that might qualify them for self-determination, nor possess a full range of social and political institutions, some of them are quite large. I remember attending a lecture by a prominent Canadian political science who noted that some migration minorities in Canada (Chinese in the Vancouver area, Punjabi in Toronto) had grown and developed to the point where it was now possible for their members to lead complete lives within them – professional, personal, and cultural. This is surely true of many migration minorities in other parts of the world as well. If this is the case, then the line between migration minorities and minority nations begins to blur, most notably as concerns the ability of such communities to perform the functions in the lives of their members that are privileged by autonomy liberals such as Raz and Kymlicka.

Nonetheless, if the defence of the stability and viability of migration minorities through appropriate multicultural policies were to rest on what some of them (but not all) share at least to some degree with minority nations, then they would face what we might term the *substitution problem*. The substitution problem refers to the fact that if we justify the defence of group A by reference to the performance by A of some function better performed by group B, and if assimilation into B is a live option for members of group A, then absent some *further justification* for the defence of A, it could be argued that it would actually be better for members

of A that they be encouraged to assimilate, and that at any rate the state should prescind from any measures that might retard that assimilation (Buchanan, Pogge).

In order to avoid the substitution problem, something more must be said on behalf of migration minorities than that they provide agents with a set of meaningful options, a defence which would place them on the back foot, normatively speaking, when compared to encompassing groups (at least in standard cases). In the final part of this paper, I will identify ways in which to integrate migration minorities into a broader theory of multiculturalism, one which I hope will be able to claim at least to some degree a Razian pedigree.

Why Protect Migration Minorities? Two Further Paths

A first way in which to integrate migration minorities into the normative framework of a multicultural theory refers to the function that we have been discussing thus far, namely, that of providing members with adequate range of options. But rather than seeing such minorities as being in *competition* with encompassing groups to which members also belong in virtue of facts of political citizenship, a conception which, as we have seen saddles the defence of migration minorities with the substitution problem, the defence in this case would view migration minorities and encompassing groups as engaged in a (necessary) *division of labour* relative to the provision of these options. To anticipate, membership in migration minorities provides agents with shared meanings which confer intelligibility relative to these options, and which make choices among them less intractable than they might otherwise be.

Let me put forward three claims made by Raz that would seem when taken together to argue strongly for the division of labour claim.

The first claim, call it, the *thick meaning claim*, is made *en passant* in “Multiculturalism: A Liberal Perspective”. After having mounted what he takes to be the main case for multiculturalism, to do with the provision by migration minorities to their members of adequate sets of options, Raz makes an observation, which he takes to provide further support for multiculturalism, and which he limits to intergenerational relations within groups, but which arguably has broader implications. He refers to “the fact that sameness of culture facilitates social relations, and is a condition of rich and comprehensive personal relationships” (Raz 1994: 177) Raz’s main concern is to show that rich intergenerational familial relationships presuppose the sharing of a cultural world. If children are made to acculturate into a culture different from that of their parents and grandparents, much of the intimacy that is a precondition for the achievement of goods of family life will be made impossible, since they depend upon the sharing of cultural references, of traditions, of (often unspoken) ways of looking at the world which form the backdrop against which we engage with our children and with our parents.

Why is this observation relevant to the matter at hand? It is because one of the things that we talk about in this “thick” manner within migration cultures has to do with what we are to do with our lives. The cultures we belong to, and the relations we form within them, both with family and with friends and acquaintances, provide us with a repertoire of meanings and significance which allow us to view the professional, personal, leisure-related options that are presented to us by the broader culture to which we belong as more than just an undifferentiated

set. They render some options salient in ways that they might not be were we to access them in a manner unmediated by the meanings, stories and intelligibility grids that we come to possess in virtue of our memberships in cultural groups. They provide us with grids of intelligibility which facilitate meaningful deliberation and choice. It is after all no part of the conception of autonomy that Raz defends (or that any sensible theorist defends for that matter) that autonomous authorship of one's life preclude the contribution of others, and perhaps most significantly of others with whom we share some degree of cultural intimacy. That cultural belonging provides us with ways in which to discuss our options with intimates and fellow members of a culture is fully compatible with the moral individualism that underpins Raz's view.

The division of labour claim I am trying to make at least plausible out of Razian materials is further buttressed by a shared institutions claim. Raz sketches a view about how the cultural groups to which we belong interact with the broader culture. In responding to those critics of multiculturalism who worry that too radical a set of multicultural policies might erode the bases for inter-communal solidarity, Raz notes that it is no part of his intention to deny that groups within the same polity will also belong to a common culture. But that culture will on his account be thinner. The main elements will in his view derive from the fact that all cultural groups will share educational, economic, and political institutions. In particular, they will "tap the same job market, the same market for services and for goods" (Raz 1994:188). It is in Raz's view neither attractive nor plausible to suppose that a multicultural society will give rise to autarkic sub-communities in which not just meanings but also opportunities and options are supplied by the broader society's component cultural parts. Raz acknowledges in other words that though thinner in terms of the cultural repertoire that it affords us, the broader culture matters as a source of options, and as a forum within which to exercise our choices about these options.

A division of labour seems to emanate from these two claims. The shared institutions claim is to the effect that all members of society will be drawn to sharing a set of institutions the combined effect will be to constitute a common culture. They will learn about each other's cultures in shared educational institutions, make decisions on issues of common concern in shared political institutions, and interact (and compete) within shared economic and professional institutions. The thick meaning claim suggests that members will deliberate about the choices that they make within these shared institutions on the basis of meaning- and intelligibility-conferring cultures.

While this way of thinking about the division of labour between a "thin" shared culture and a set of thicker sub-cultures provides us with a reason to support such sub-cultures that does not rest on the latter's (limited) ability to provide members with options, but rather on their rich capacity to place these options against a backdrop of intelligibility, it does not do away with the substitution problem which was mentioned above. In fact, it merely displaces it. That is because the dominant culture within a society also possesses frameworks of meaning toward which members of smaller cultures can migrate. From the point of view of the individual member, there is no cost to assimilating into the dominant culture, as it too will provide them with ways in which to interpret and to evaluate the options that are offered to them by the economic and cultural institutions of the broader society, without any obvious drawbacks, and with some potential benefits derived from being part of a larger and presumably more powerful cultural group. To be sure, cultural transfer will involve costs in terms of intergenerational intelligibility,

within families and beyond, but these, one might argue, will be one-shot transition costs rather than permanent ones, and they are likely over time to be more than offset by the benefits that come from being part of a broader communicative network.

There are two ways in which this challenge might be met. The first of these is what I termed above the “radical thesis”, namely the claim that a truly multicultural society is one which “recognize[s] the equal standing of all the stable and viable communities existing in that society [...] A political society, a state, consists – if it is multicultural – of diverse communities and belongs to none of them”. (Raz 1994: 174) This is a radical thesis in that it requires of the factually dominant cultural group that it prescind from the exercise of any powers and prerogatives that might stem from its (historically, numerically, symbolically) dominant status. Multiculturalism on this view is not a matter of how a dominant group treats minorities within its midst, but rather of society’s members, including members of the erstwhile dominant group, viewing themselves as being on an equal footing for all but the barest numerical matters (where numbers may bear for example on the fair distribution of resources).

A society that truly cleaved to this vision would have to take steps to positively counteract many of the ways – inscribed in policy and in long-standing practice – through which historical ethno-cultural majorities have inscribed their preeminent status. Rainer Bauböck has for example argued that a truly culturally neutral multicultural state would have to do away with anything like an “official languages” policy that saw the state as responsible for protecting and promoting a national language, seen as the carrier and expression of an historical narrative that gives a particular ethno-cultural group pride of place (Bauböck 2001). Many other steps would have to be taken in order to neutralize the very many official and unofficial ways in which the historically dominant culture in a multicultural society comes to occupy the kind of standing that makes it an attractive pole of convergence for members of cultural groups possessed of lesser cultural capital. Even then, the fact of mere numerical supremacy might make the dominant culture an attractive one for members of migration minorities to move towards. Sociolinguists have shown that there is a natural tendency for rational agents to choose the language within their environment that connects them with the widest network of communicative partners, a fact which places tremendous pressure on minority languages, even in the absence of any symbolic weight attached to the numerically dominant language or of any coercive policy requiring of members of linguistic minorities that they use the language of the dominant group (Laponce 1970).

The radical thesis would lessen the problem posed by the substitution problem by removing some of the incentives that might otherwise move people to switch from their culture of origin to that of the dominant group because there would no longer be a dominant group in anything but the barest numerical sense. It is however highly implausible, particularly in the radically non-ideal setting into which Raz sets his reflections on multiculturalism. Indeed, Raz insists that his reflections are not articulated in the spirit of “utopian hope”, but rather, “[i]t is the spirit of pessimism nourished by perception of conflict as inevitable, and its resolution as less ideal, regardless of who wins” (Raz 1994: 175). Societies marked by pluralism are in his view inevitably marked by conflict. According to Raz, “[w]hen valuable alternatives we do not pursue are remote and unavailable, they do not threaten our commitment to and confidence in the values

manifested in our own life. But when they are available to us and pursued by others in our vicinity they tend to be felt as a threat". (Raz 1995: 180).

It is surprising that Raz in the context of his reflections on multiculturalism did not realize that the radically non-ideal spirit in which he couched his arguments should have put to rest the ideal that he puts forward for multicultural societies, that of societies in which no one group is able to claim for themselves the mantle of dominant culture. The members of cultural majorities have in particular been particularly prone to feeling threatened by the increasing diversification of the population of the societies in which they were once able to claim supremacy. The growth of conservative nationalist populism is in significant measure due to the manipulation of this feeling by cynical politicians, from Orban in Hungary to Trump in the United States.

Empirical doubts about the radical thesis notwithstanding, it isn't clear that it is at the end of the day normatively appealing either. Liberal nationalists such as David Miller (1993), Will Kymlicka (2001), Yael Tamir (2019) and others have argued that the sustainability of multiculturalism at a global level depends upon historical majorities in the countries that have been affected by mass migrations being able to continue to shape the culture of their society (whilst of course cleaving to liberal strictures in doing so). There is evidence moreover that Raz himself was torn between the radically anti-nationalist position that he espouses in "Multiculturalism" and a conception more akin to that which has been put forward by liberal nationalists. Indeed, in his essay on national self-determination, he characterizes the kinds of "encompassing groups" that are "serious candidates for self-determination" as marked by such characteristics as "national cuisines, distinctive architectural styles, a common language, distinctive literary and artistic traditions, national music, customs, dress, ceremonies and holidays, etc." (Raz and Margalit 1994: 129). This is a much thicker account of encompassing groups than the one that he puts forward in "Multiculturalism".

Finally, there is always the risk of self-deception in any attempt at defending the kind of vision of society that eschews any significant role for a dominant culture. Many have for example argued that the universalist Republican model that is part of the official ideology of countries such as France actually shields from view the continued impact of quite distinctive religious and ethno-cultural traits of the historical majority. Better, it might be thought, to acknowledge the presence and impact of the dominant culture and to seek ways in which to regulate it to prevent it from lapsing into intolerance, then to pretend that a universalist, culturally neutral model of citizenship has been put in place, one in which the domination of the majority culture occurs by stealth.

Let me briefly take stock. I've argued that the conflation of migration minorities with encompassing groups risks opening the door to what I have called the substitution problem. I considered the possibility that pointing out the division of labour that might be seen as occurring between the role of encompassing cultures in providing agents with options and that of migration minorities in providing grids of intelligibility on the basis of which members of these cultures can deliberate about and discuss these options, both *in foro interno* and between themselves, might be a way out of this difficulty. I suggested however that this position was unstable, because it merely displaced the substitution problem. I argued finally that one way of getting

around it, the “radical claim”, was implausible for both empirical and (perhaps also) for normative reasons.

Raz’s writings scattered throughout work that he published subsequent to his main writings in political philosophy point the way forward in what might have been a more compelling, and certainly more novel way. Briefly stated, the argument would be grounded in the connections that Raz makes between attachments and duties, and between duties and agency.

Let me begin with the latter connection. In his Seeley Lectures, published as *Value, Respect, and Attachment*, Raz makes the claim, prefigured in an earlier article “Liberating Duties”, that duties are more central to our status as agents than are rights. Raz writes that “[w]e are passive regarding our rights, we are recipients so far as they are concerned”. Contrast this with our stance with respect to duties. “Duties”, Raz writes, “are reasons for action” (Raz 2001: 21). What’s more, the closer connection to agency makes it the case in Raz’s view that [d]uties and special responsibilities, not rights, are the key to a meaningful life” (Raz 2001: 21).

Where do our duties come from? In Raz’s view, at least one important subset of our duties come from our particular attachments. The world of value is complex and dense, especially for someone like Raz who by his own admission has a dense and non-reductive view of values. Our duties cannot possibly be triggered by value tout court. Rather, they become activated by our particular paths through life, and the way in which those paths connect us (in ways that vary greatly from one individual to another) with things and beings that instantiate different values. Raz’s view here is complex, and I will not pretend to provide a complete account of it at this last stage in the paper. The important point for my purposes is the way in which Raz attempts in his writings here and elsewhere to account both for the fact that our attachments as valid sources of duties embody values that are intelligible, and as such, universal, and that their universality does not entail attachments being fungible. Part of what gives them value is their uniqueness, a fact which is itself intelligible. The importance of uniqueness of attachment is universal, and as such “[t]he public domain can accord recognition to all such attachments impartially” (Raz 2001: 31).

If the meaning of our lives, and our sense of ourselves as agents, comes from our duties, and if some particularly meaning-conferring duties stem from our unique attachments, whence come our attachments? As features of our lives that express our agency to the highest degree, are they themselves the results of our agency? Do we choose the attachments that are to become the sources of our duties?

In a late paper published in *The Roots of Normativity*, Raz turns to the ways in which non-voluntary memberships can be sources of duties for their members, even for their recalcitrant members. As opposed to voluntary memberships which we can rescind at will, and with respect to which we can always contest this or that stricture that has been imposed upon us by an office-holder within whatever administrative structure the voluntary group has provided itself with, non-voluntary groups, the duties that flow from non-voluntary membership come in bulk, and derive from the bare fact of membership, and of being recognized as a member by others, rather than by the revokable decision of some group authority. Such groups “are of different kinds, but typically they have pervasive historical, cultural, and emotional

connotations” (Raz 2022: 267). The migration minorities that Raz was concerned with in his early essay on multiculturalism would seem to be paradigm cases of such groups. What’s more, they are duty-conferring. “[T]heir members share common knowledge, common traditions, and emotional ties. And in virtue of ties they share they have expectations of one another”. Can these expectations be rejected *in toto* by one who chooses to free himself from communal ties? Raz dismisses this possibility as untrue to life. “Cases where one belongs to such a group and it means nothing to one are more familiar from stories, including self-deceiving stories, than from life” (Raz 2022: 268). Significantly to our purposes, such obligations obtain even when the group is in some way deficient. “Membership may be a good for a person even if the group he belongs to is greatly defective. His loyalty to it may make him a campaigner for reform which he could only be as an insider, only as a member” (Raz 2022: 269). In other words, some of the most significant duties we bear come to us unbidden. They arise from our particular communal attachments, from the shared histories and understandings that we share with its members, presumably both synchronically and diachronically.

It’s time to take stock. Liberal political philosophy has tended to assume that a liberal theory of multiculturalism would somehow have to be rights-based. It would have to determine which groups matter, and once it had done that, what group-differentiated rights should attach to them. One way in which to determine which groups matter would itself be rights-based. Citizens of liberal democracies have a right to the conditions that allow them to exercise their autonomous agency, and thus, to a culture that provides them with valuable options in the absence of which the capacity for choice would be an idle wheel.

I don’t want to rehearse the problems and quandaries that such a view has gotten liberal theorists into (including Raz). I want simply to point out, by way of conclusion, that Raz provides us with the elements with which to construct a very different kind of argument, one which still places individual agency at its core, but which does so by focussing on our agency and meaning-supporting duties, duties that in turn derive from the valuable attachments that we form, attachments that are at least in some measure unchosen, but which rather result from our particular communal histories, and the relationships we form with others on the basis of our shared histories.

It’s not difficult to see how this way of constructing an argument for the importance of sustaining the communities to which people belong through multicultural policies avoids one of the problems which, I have tried to show, has bedevilled liberal attempts at grounding multiculturalism by reference to the capacity that cultural communities have to provide their members with meaningful options. The argument that could be quarried on the basis of these alternative Razian materials avoids this by making uniqueness and non-fungibility of attachments into one of the value-conferring dimensions of the relationships that we form, including within communities that may in significant regards be sub-optimal with respect to its capacity to provide us with options. Whether such an argument could withstand other possible objections is a question that will have to await a further iteration of this paper.

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