

AGAINST STEREOTYPES: PROMINENT LIBERALS FAVOUR STATE INTERVENTION

Abstract

This paper identifies and highlights Mill and Raz's perfectionist reasoning with respect to the state's role in fostering freedom, which is simultaneously praised as an accounting of (what I see as) their successful reasoning on liberalism. By giving prominence to Mill's widely overlooked perfectionist stance concerning the educational, cultural, and moral role that he attributed to the liberal state and by delineating, among others, Raz's ideal of a state charged with the duty to enable citizens and authority's conformity with reason, I demonstrate the theoretical proximity between a prominent liberal (Mill) and an advocate of perfectionism (Raz) whose theoretical 'models' aim to cogently advance and defend the ideal of freedom by ascribing a proactive and enhanced role to the state, thus rendering it an efficient vehicle for the flourishing of self-development and autonomy.

Keywords: liberal state, neutrality, autonomy, the notion of authority

'Political liberalism' and its representatives have gained prominence in the contemporary context of liberal theory (Kelly, 2005) with Rawls, its most distinguished advocate, arguing that liberalism should not be defended as a perfectionist doctrine. His theory of 'justice as fairness does not seek to cultivate the distinctive virtues and values of the liberalisms of autonomy and individuality' -unlike Raz and Mill as I argue here— as it would cease to be a form of political liberalism (Rawls, 2001, p. 157). Predictably, the neutrality principle has engendered a particular ideal of the state's role within liberal societies: one that does not allow it to interfere with the citizens' moral and aesthetic decisions as doing so is considered potentially harmful and authoritative. The political translation of the nearly hegemonic anti-perfectionist sentiment that liberalism should necessarily avoid commitment to a comprehensive conception of human flourishing is that the liberal state should not pursue moral ideals. If it does, it is a perfectionist and not a liberal state. The idea that the state should remain non-aligned among possible

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conceptions of the good has prevailed to the extent that the predominant impression given by the literature is that a commitment to neutrality is definitive of a liberal state (Richardson, 1990). This depiction of liberalism is accepted by most of its adherents and critics (Gardbaum, 1991). Such an unintentional alliance has contributed towards the conjectured incompatibility between the liberal ideology and political theories that envision better ways of life by entrusting the state with the mission to touch upon issues of moral development.

Yet, the perfectionist camp, in an effort to dispute the reigning status of its antipode as offering a better account of liberal ideas, has never seriously and persistently attempted to claim the allegiance of one of the most famous representatives of liberal theory, John Stuart Mill. Showing that a celebrated liberal like Mill consistently advocated the educational and welfare-oriented function that a liberal state should have, following the reasoning that resembles that of Raz – a proclaimed perfectionist whose rationale is often contested as

illiberal—can enhance the case for a perfectionist state being able to serve liberal ideals. Thus, the comparison between Mill and Raz is meant to reinforce the argument for compatibility between a state charged with moral values and liberal ideology by highlighting their (Mill and Raz's) common comprehensive understanding of liberalism. They can consistently claim that combining self-development and liberty is not contradictory, but if the latter is to genuinely promote autonomy, it is imperative for the state to undertake the mission to foster and guarantee the former.

In this paper, Mill and Raz's accounts of how they envisaged the liberal state's role are provided separately. In the final section, their points of convergence are underscored, manifesting the support they furnish for a morally active role that should be attributed to political institutions and (manifesting) their belief that a state deemed as an extension of society and not inimical to it, can be conducive, among other things, to the maintenance of a responsive-to-reason, constructive, and transparent relationship with authority.

I. MILL'S VISION OF THE GOOD AND THE STATE'S ROLE IN PROMOTING IT

When Mill said that for experienced and knowledgeable people, a life developing refined skills is more desirable than one that attains contentment through simplistic pleasures (Gaus, 1981), he epitomised perfectionism. The mere fact that something is desired, through habit or nature, offers no ground for its intrinsic value (Berger, 1984). Mill's belief that some forms of life are superior to others (Haksar, 1979) grounded his willingness to defend, instigate, and support them. As habit and nature are not enough to substantiate the intrinsic value of something, Mill's view accentuated that the needs generated by distinctively human capacities must be provided for if people are to be happy (Berger, 1984). For the provision of specific needs and promotion of a particular form of human development, Mill did not hesitate to implicate the state. He opposed Dworkin (1978, 1985) and Rawls' (1988) argument that a liberal state should remain neutral on different conceptions of the good. In contrast, and as one can extrapolate from the following, Mill did not stand for a neutralist state:

The first element of good government, therefore, being the virtue and intelligence of the human beings composing the community, the most important point of excellence which any form of government can possess is to promote the virtue and intelligence of the people themselves. The first question in respect to any political institutions is how far they tend to foster in the members of the community the various desirable qualities...moral, intellectual, and active. The government which does this the best, has every

likelihood of being the best in all other respects, since it is on these qualities, so far as they exist in the people, that all possibility of goodness in the practical operations of the government depends (Mill, CW, xix, 1977, p. 390).

Aiming to achieve the abovementioned diversity and quality of beliefs and actions justifies the Millian state's affirmative duty of fostering rationally superior ways of life. Mill's conviction to employ the state for the development of people's intellectual and moral abilities does not indicate a scarcity of ability or talent, but rather the lack of adequate education and 'self-culture' to produce a 'developed' individual (Thomas, 1985). Mill was predisposed to see society offering young people higher and/or rational morality in the hope that in educating them, it could replace customary morality (Haksar, 1979). As Valls put it, the Millian state is not conceived of in opposition to society but rather as a means to facilitate the accomplishment of particular objectives (Valls, 1999).

Mill assimilated the view that 'at the political level, we shall have to make judgements about what forms of life are good for the coming generation' (Haksar, 1979, p. 233). He also persistently argued against an utterly controlled state education that could result in excessive uniformity and establish 'mental despotism'. 'That the whole or any large part of the education of the people should be in State hands, I go as far as any one in deprecating... [[T]he importance of individuality of character, and diversity in opinions and modes of conduct, involves [necessarily]...diversity of education' (Mill, CW, xviii, 1977, p. 302). The danger of 'self-development' instructed by a moralistic state authority imposing its own 'right values' can loom if human interests are not promoted carefully (Donner, 1991).

Mill allowed for diversity that he ensures with the active role of the state as the market could not guarantee a decent level of education, especially for the poor (Valls, 1999). Informed by Mill's test of value, the active role of the state in providing education gained importance. 'The uncultivated cannot be competent judges of cultivation...Education, therefore, is one of the things which it is admissible in principle that a government should provide for the people' (Mill, 1965, pp. 947-948). While Mill allowed the co-existence of public and private schools, 'his state' requires private teachers to pass government exams (Mill, CW, iii, bk. v, ch. xi) and 'public examinations extending to all children' to begin at an early age (Mill, CW, xviii, 1977, pp. 303). Summarising the role of his state in this respect, Valls noted that by emphasising the usefulness of education for self-development, Mill endorsed state-mandated and state-supported, and some state-provided education. While preoccupied with an exclusively state-run education, the existence of private educational alternatives sufficed to dispel his worries (Valls, 1999). Of primary importance for my purpose here is that Mill's test and criterion of

value, expressed in the preference of competent judges, consistently applies to state-supported education as 'the culture which each generation purposely gives to those who are to be its successors...[Its] object is not to make skilful lawyers or physicians or engineers, but capable and cultivated human beings' (Mill, CW, xxi, 1984, pp. 218). Mill believed that making capable and sensible people through education has value as it implicates a liberal spirit that allows students to develop in ways in which their teachers could not have anticipated (Flathman, 1996).

Mill emphasized the educative role of political participation for human development, while highlighting the important role of the state in the political formation of its citizens. This was realised through their participation in its local administrative units, in the state itself, and through state policies ('Repr. Govern.', CW). Mill asserted that the 'discussion and management of collective interests is the great school of that public spirit, and the great source of that intelligence of public affairs, which are always regarded as the distinctive character of the public of free countries' (Mill, 1965, p.9 44). Mill considered political participation linked with state activity vital for self-development. It often constitutes the sole chance for many people to develop their rational capacities and an interest in matters that incentivise others to participate. Political participation as identified in Mill's *Principles of Political Economy* is analogous to a refuge for many manual workers engaged in tedious labour. Such participation helps people expand their horizons and use their higher abilities in sharp contrast to their workplace.

Gardbaum (1991) portrayed Mill as a liberal perfectionist who explicitly posited the necessary educational and moral role of political institutions. This was vindicated by Mill's statement that the 'organic institutions and [the] general forms of polity...must be viewed as the great instruments of forming the national character; of carrying forward the members of the community towards perfection, or preserving them from degeneracy' (Mill, CW, x, 1985, pp. 9). Mill's conception of the state as a vehicle of mutual assistance stemmed from his non- negatively defined (in Berlin's terms) morality. An active state involved in securing negative and positive goods derives its function from his concept of society, where individuals owe each other more than not actively causing harm. The state also owes its citizens more than mere security (Valls, 1999). Mill considered as 'criterion of the goodness of a government, the degree in which it tends to increase the sum of the good qualities in the governed, collectively and individually' (Mill, CW, xix, 1977, p. 390). While Mill shared some of

Humboldt's worries that there was a tendency for state action to produce uniformity and passivity by not respecting the priority of 'higher' over 'lower' pleasures (Humboldt, 1993), he believed that these concerns could be met through carefully planned policies. As Valls noted, for Mill, the absence of positive state action was worse than the risks it posed. This was

demonstrated in Mill's evaluation of policies redistributing income. Despite being aware of the dangers they involved, he considered them absolutely necessary to foster self-development. Mill was particularly concerned about people living at or near subsistence level because they could hardly develop their higher faculties. He believed that state policies can encourage the disadvantaged by structuring their incentives to elicit activity and thus development (Valls, 1999). 'A government cannot have too much of the kind of activity which does not impede, but aids and stimulates, individual exertion and development' (Mill, CW, xviii, 1977, p. 310). 'It is even more fatal to exertion to have no hope of succeeding by it, than to be assured of succeeding without it. When the condition of any one is so disastrous that his energies are paralysed by discouragement, assistance is a tonic, not a sedative' (Mill, 1965, p. 961). Mill's human development sets specific material and institutional prerequisites as meaningful development is not feasible under any circumstances. Thus, the Millian state's task is to ensure that favourable conditions exist (Valls, 1999). According to Mill, the merit of political institutions depends considerably on how much 'they promote the general mental advancement of the community...in intellect, in virtue, and in practical activity and efficiency...A government is to be judged by its action upon men...[and] by what it makes of the citizens...; its tendency to improve or deteriorate the people themselves' (Mill, CW, xix, 1977, p. 392). As Donner noted, such passages clearly dispute efforts towards a neutralist interpretation of Mill (Donner, 1991).

We will now examine his account of liberty, the most proclaimed aspect of the Millian good. A considerable part of the latter, it combines the objectivity of goodness with its individually chosen content in a politically meaningful scheme. Mill did not see the need for a good state to be independent of a society where individual interest and autonomy can flourish. 'What was now wanted was that the rulers should be identified with the people, that the interest and will was the interest and will of the nation. There was no fear of its tyrannising over itself' (Mill, CW, xviii, 1977, p. 218). A good government should represent every citizen and thus no one should be afraid of its influence and policies. Mill's view was affected by Coleridge's stance that there was a need for institutions to help create a national culture that can morally help develop the citizenry (Coleridge, 1983). Mill seemed sceptical of the incentives of many in England who insisted on supporting state neutrality, claiming that in an opposite case, its action would be inimical to public and private interest. 'In England...there is a considerable jealousy of direct interference by the legislative or executive power with private conduct, not so much from any just regard for the independence of the individual as from the still subsisting habit of looking on the government as representing an opposite interest to the public' (Mill, CW, xviii, 1977, pp. 222-3). Mill was critical of the obsessive focus to restrain the government's ability to confine liberty of

action because it disregarded the question of whether or not the agent's desires and motives were his own (Devigne, 2006). Although he often argued forcefully against the state's direct and intrusive interference in private affairs, Mill maintained that there was enough space for society –within which a functional state operates in accordance with its directives– to mould the 'goodness and wisdom' of its individuals. 'If society lets any considerable number of its members grow up mere children, incapable of being acted on by rational consideration of distant motives, society has itself to blame for the consequences' (Mill, CW, xviii, 1977, p. 282). The state should assume an active role in trying to prevent such an event not only by participating in shaping 'all powers of education', but also by having a positive influence with its policies, 'the ascendancy which the authority of a received opinion always exercises over the minds who are least fitted to judge for themselves' (Mill, CW, xviii, 1977, p. 282).

In a rare direct intervention of a moralistic sense, Mill was willing to relinquish to the state the power to 'forbid marriage unless the parties can show that they have the means of supporting a family' (Mill, CW, xviii, 1977, p. 304). He suggested solutions for similar issues and did not resort to morally objectionable imposing measures like this one. The latter is another indication of the significance he attributed to the ideal conditions for mental advancement and self-development. Mental cultivation was a laudable goal for Mill that could even entail restricting some individual liberties to ensure that a good level of education is linked with the well-being of all families. Against the 'free-marketeers' of the time, Mill was in favour of legislative intervention towards ameliorating the context within which individual choices were made. The legislation to restrict the work week is an example (Skorupski, 2006). The limits imposed on free trade and rules enforced on employers by increasing the amount of public control to prevent fraud and ensure sanitary conditions and protect the workforce are other examples. 'Such questions involve considerations of liberty, only in so far leaving people to themselves is always better, *caeteris paribus*, than controlling them: but that they may be legitimately controlled for these ends, is in principle undeniable' (Mill, CW, xviii, 1977, p. 293).

This standpoint clearly separates Mill from many contemporary liberals who think that the state should not promote any conception of the good. He criticised a state that was sterile and neutral towards its citizens' mental expansion and questioned the value of the administration of justice perfecting its operating machinery while ignoring the task of moral education (Devigne, 2006). Mill contended that whether or not people become autonomous is contingent upon educational, political, economic, and psychological factors that can advance their capacity for autonomy. The Millian state plays an active role in ameliorating all autonomy-generating conditions. Thus, Mill's conception of

freedom as autonomy, presupposing the implication of means and the availability of opportunities for self- development and self-government, refutes the ostensibly oppositional relationship between freedom and power because the state's active intervention in favour of this freedom- autonomy often personifies power. The misfortune is that the same negative liberal tradition that assumes this permanent antithesis mistakenly perceives an active Millian state as inimical to freedom (Baum, 1998).

We can claim that the role of Mill's state in contributing towards the active promotion of liberty as autonomy stems from the same perfectionist basis inspiring the conception of the notion itself. Hurka's (1993) model for the liberal perfectionist state verifies this. Mill's state complies with all the criteria that the Hurkian perfectionist state puts forward. Respecting citizens' autonomy by promoting the good non-coercively favours education both in its strict sense and as a universal mental cultivation provided through taxation and subsidisation.

II. RAZ'S VIEW ON THE STATE'S ROLE IN PERFECTIONISM

1. Extended Function and Classification

According to Raz, 'perfectionist ideals require public action for their viability' (Raz, 1986, p. 162). The term 'perfectionism' cogently indicates 'that there is no fundamental principled inhibition on governments acting for any valid moral reason' (Raz, 1989, p. 1230). Interested in a more socially functional and cohesive liberal society, Raz claimed that appealing to an anti-perfectionist state would make sense only if sufficient options available in a society are always available to all its members. As he noted, despite attempted social reforms to make opportunities open to all, this was neither the case in contemporary liberal societies nor in societies of the recent past. Raz avoided maximalist demands by clarifying

that there was no need for all options to be accessible to everyone but for enough options to be available to each person. For this to happen, according to Raz, the active facilitation of the state is indispensable. However, such supportive action in order to have any chance to fulfil its role should not be dominated by a general 'exclusionary rule' on morality, as 'the so-called neutralists' ask for (Raz, 1989). Such a rule would lead to 'a political stand-off from support for valuable conceptions of the good, undermining the chances of survival of many cherished aspects of our culture' (Raz, 1986, p. 162). Raz did not primarily talk about exquisite forms of human creation or art that could come under the threat of extinction without public subsidy in a quality-indifferent capitalist society. He talked about threats directed towards the very same essence of freedom; impending dangers that could not be avoided but with morally relevant and active participation of the state. In a

liberal context, the latter was for Raz more a potential source of autonomy than a menacing impediment to it. Preventing the denial of freedom is not the sole duty of the state; it should promote it by creating conditions for autonomy (Raz, 1986). This goes beyond the scope of many anti-perfectionist liberals whose primary concern is to trace potentially sinister side-effects of state intervention. 'The doctrine of limited government regards governments as a threat to liberty. Its protection is in keeping governments confined within proper moral bounds' (Raz, 1986, pp. 18-19). While Raz accepted that governments often pose a threat to liberty, he portrayed them as a potential source of liberty, too. 'They can create conditions which enable their subjects to enjoy greater liberty than they otherwise would...Liberty [is] sometimes threatened by individuals and corporations, not only by governments' (Raz, 1986, pp. 18-19).

If, on occasion, some governmental action displays coercive features, while it would profoundly affect the considerations that regulate it, it by no means justifies the exclusion of ideals from its range of action (Raz, 1986). Raz's conception of the state and the role he sought for it was in accordance with the promotion of the ideal of autonomy as presented above. 'The doctrine of autonomy-based freedom is not inimical to political authority...it looks to governments to take positive action to enhance the freedom of their subjects' (Raz, 1986, p. 427). Green construed this stance as genuinely adhering to the essence of liberalism founded on liberty's value and as contrasting the modern wave of 'revisionist' liberals treating it as a doctrine of justice or rights entailing a theory of limited government (Green, 1988). Green called the Razian defence of liberalism and the role it assigns to the state 'traditional' partly because a similar form of justification for such a role can be traced in (ancient) classical thought. A shared moral understanding directed towards a particular way of life formed the basis for the Aristotelian polis, defined as a tutelary community (Galston, 2002), nurturing social groups and political institutions to best promote the good life of its citizens (Chan, 2000). Barry and Raz's views are inspired by the systematic arrangement of liberal institutions that seek to foster the value of freedom. Barry affirmed that political theorists must hold that societies and their institutions should aim at the largest possible number of admirable characters among its members by taking a stand on the proposition that some ways of life are more admirable than others (Barry, 1973).

2. The Notion of Authority

Raz's perception of the liberal state and that of the 'neutralists' differ considerably not only because the former backs his theory of autonomy. In addition to serving his moral and political objectives, its perception stems from his deeper perfectionist philosophical analysis in general and his convictions on the idea of authority in particular. I begin with the second as it is a

cornerstone for Raz's work and demonstrates its direct contrast with the anti-perfectionist stance at a deeper level; or as Regan (1989) put it, the discourse of authority in Raz is central because his overall politics is perfectionist. Many contemporary neutralists have challenged the rationality of any account of perfection or of the good life resting their defence of the neutral state on the absence of knowledge of the good (Galston, 2002). It is not then only that they support a scrupulous position of priority of freedom over the good, as if the two were utterly separated; it is that they imply an arbitrary arrangement of convenience between the individual and any authority rather than a principled one. The absence of a theory of good, on which the construction of political arrangements can be based, deprives people of the chance of a structured 'responsiveness-to-reasons' relation with their authority, thus creating suspicions around its perception. A number of theorists representing the neutralist position have underestimated the ability of people in a liberal society to make reasonable predictions of and arrangements for the norms that can govern their relationship with authority. However, rationally or otherwise, no government avoids shaping or inducing its citizens' preferences. As all political arrangements do that, Sher rightfully wondered, why not do it in line with an approach that is responsive to reason. He reassures us that choosing autonomously based on the (potential) value would not be undermined. In contrast, if we trust the government to act in certain issues more effectively than us, thus 'submitting' ourselves in these areas to its rational judgement, the number of people who live in valuable ways can increase (Sher, 2002).

Raz followed a similar rationale in his account of authority, not based on fear of the abuse of its power, something that is commonplace in the neutralist position. He developed the basic components of the 'service conception of authority', where he emphasised that conciliatory personal reasons should have motivated individual action regardless of the presence of authority. He underlined the conditionally successful mediating service that authority provides between people and reasoned decisions and actions, as the task of the authority is to judge and pronounce what people ought to do according to right reason (Raz, 1979, 1986). He epitomised his position in two constituent theses of his service conception:

The dependence thesis: All authoritative directives should be based, among other factors, on reasons which apply to the subjects of those directives and which bear on the circumstances covered by the directives...

The normal justification thesis: The normal and primary way to establish that a person should be acknowledged to have authority over another person involves showing that the alleged subject is likely better to comply with reasons which apply to him (other than the alleged authoritative directives) if he accepts the directives of the alleged authority as authoritatively binding, and tries to follow them, than if he tries to follow the reasons which apply to him

directly (Raz, 1995, p. 214).

It is perhaps not difficult to infer from these positions that the active role of the Razian liberal state comes as a natural extension of his view on authority. It is intended to depict the institutionalised expression of independently existing concepts of moral duties and the good as endorsed by individual interest. Mitigating the widespread liberal fear that the state often functions in a de facto domineering fashion, Raz's idea of government 'reveals that much of the good that [its] law can do does not presuppose any obligation to obey' (Raz, 1995, p. 344). It is to be fostered, and to a certain extent advanced, by the agents' initiatives. Under Raz's (1995, p. 346) concept of authority, governmental intervention in the market or elsewhere provides the 'morally unscrupulous or misguided with self-interested reasons to do that which they ought to do, but which moral reasons fail to make them do'. By separating the authority's enforcing power from its moral justification, Raz sought to 'dispel the myth that denying the existence of an obligation to obey the law amounts to denying the possibility of a just government' (Raz, 1995, p. 346). He made a good point as these two are often excessively and mistakenly interwoven. As Chan (2000) noted, several liberals believe that if the state occasionally compels people to assist in an objective that they cannot be given adequate reason to share, the state does not treat them as ends in themselves. In their

evaluation of the state, they overrate the part any enforcing obligation can play in its operation. The existing functions of a just government, Raz argued, should not be misinterpreted as necessarily supposing the existence of a general obligation to obey the law, 'for those functions can be discharged by governments independently of such an obligation' (Raz, 1995, p. 346).

Raz corroborated his position on the possible separation of the enforcement of law and the obligation to obey it on the one hand and the moral reasons that can independently back up the authority's role, on the other. What about the inevitable cases where the will of authorities has to be 'imposed'? What if people demand 'sharing' an adequate reason to comply with state enforcement? Is authority justified in proceeding with law enforcement? Would it not violate people's autonomy? The first part of Raz's answer to these questions would be his pre-emption thesis: 'The fact that authority requires performance of an action is a reason for its performance, which is not to be added to all other relevant reasons when assessing what to do, but should replace some of them' (Raz, 1995, p. 214). The pre-emptive force of authority is morally justified because of the previous two theses of the service conception: First, that the subject under authority would better conform to reasons that apply to him anyway; and second, that the nature of the matters on which the first condition applies is such that it is better to conform to reason than decide on them alone, without any help from the authority. This is why people can often comply willingly with authority. The other part of the answer

is that Raz accepted the potential difficulties in some cases where two concerns may be radically different in order to be incommensurate: one satisfied by conformity with reason and the other by acting on one's own judgement. They may be radically different and thus undermine the decision between independence from and conformity to authority (Raz, 2006). He recognised the 'special character of authority', claiming that it could not be functional without the possibility of its directives leading us to act differently than we would

have done without them. He conceded that there is some truth in the opinion that 'in accepting authority we surrender our judgement to authority' (Raz, 2006, p. 1019). However, special cases aside, the main point Raz continued to highlight in his treatise on authority was that conformity with the legitimate authority improves one's conformity with reason. His overall conclusion was that his 'service conception' with the necessary amendments, still remained valid (Raz, 2006). Authority is meant to aid capacities of ours, whose function is to ensure abidance with reason. Authority can continue to mediate between reason and people's conduct, enabling them to fulfil their extant capacity to think and act rationally. In the process, authority serves to facilitate people's inherent capacities, because 'we value the ability to exercise one's judgement and to rely on it in action, but it is a capacity we value because of its purpose...to secure conformity with reason' (Raz, 2006, p. 1017). Such remarks run counter to a whole strand of liberalism which argues that any use of force against someone, employed to serve even an ends like one's own good, treats that person as a mere means. By extension and given the coercive character of the state, its restraint becomes a condition of political legitimacy (Nagel, 1991). However, the liberal perfectionist state does not seek to advance 'its own view of the good'; rather, it aims to promote ideals of good as deriving from the truth (McCabe, 2000). Chan argued that such neutralists should answer to perfectionists on 'why the state's enforcement of controversial decisions is problematic only in the case of conceptions of the good life and not in non-good-life issues like social justice' (Chan, 2000, p. 22). In attempting to answer Chan's question, Nagel appealed to people's 'reasonable agreement' on issues that suppose increased unanimity, as prescribed by practical necessity (Nagel, 1991). Behind this necessity, however, in the underlying foundations of Nagel's answer, we can trace a motive to find the most reasoned means to strive for a better, worthwhile life. A legitimate state with its potency for collective coordinated efforts often

provides the best means for such an aim, offering space for 'reasonable agreement' in many more issues than Nagel assumed (Chan, 2000).

From Raz's perception of authority, we infer that complying with the state's decisions does not necessarily mean renouncing our judgement. The significance the latter has for us derives from our practical concern to conform to reason, and that concern can be met in various ways among which

complying with authority is one. Therefore, we can conform to both simultaneously. The foundation for Raz's perfectionist state is based on his view that its 'directives, just like promises, are binding because and where they improve our powers by enabling us to conform to reason better than we could without them' (Raz, 2006, p. 1020). His definition of authority clearly accentuated the liberal aspect embedded in his state, namely its obligation, under conditions of legitimacy, to act as a vehicle of the individual's reasoned capacity to act. It becomes a 'device' for people to achieve the telos of their capacity for rational action by not using it directly (Raz, 2006). While Morigiwa mentioned the abundance of ideal elements in Raz's perception of authority and may also be right that their presence is exaggerated, he acknowledged that Raz's view of authority comprises an attractive liberal version of it. He noted that its morally justifiable aspect reflects the public's general interest, embodying a democratic, liberal ideal of a civil servant, keen to express people's will (Morigiwa, 1989).

If this feature of authority is rarely revealed in liberal writings, it is virtually ignored in neutralist ones. Its significance, among other things, consists in contributing towards normalising a notion like state intervention, which is received with considerable suspicion among many (neutralist) liberals. 'The coordinated schemes of action that political authorities should pursue are those to which people should be committed' (Raz, 2006, p. 1032). Raz's explanation shows that legitimate authority should not be considered a threat to liberalism as it cannot be avoided. It must be accepted just as we accept other concepts - state intervention should not be perceived with excessive suspicion. He compared following authority to following advice, as it preserves ultimate self-reliance: 'For it is one's own judgement which directs one to recognise the authority of another, just as it directs one to keep one's promises, follow advice [and] use technical devices' (Raz, 2006, p. 1018).

III. MILL AND RAZ'S SHARED VIEW OF A PERFECTIONIST ROLE FOR THE STATE

By juxtaposing Mill and Raz's thoughts here, it becomes clear that they form a part of the same distinctive strand of liberalism, which opposes state neutrality. They firmly oppose the popular view among contemporary liberals that political decisions should be taken independently of any particular conception of the good life or of what is valuable in life. This anti-perfectionist stance suggests that as people differ in such conceptions, 'the government does not treat them as equals if it prefers one conception to another' (Dworkin, 1985, p. 191). Supporters of neutrality place strict limits on the justification of state action, restrictions not necessarily stemming from its potentially coercive power, but also from its (possibly benign in its liberal version) intention to

promote the good. Whereas citizens in a liberal regime should be free to pursue their own view of the good, the state should not regulate what, according to this standpoint, should remain exclusively a matter of personal conscience. As we can infer from their positions on the role of government, Mill and Raz took the state as not only having a right but perhaps also a duty to promote valid ideals of what is good in life. They held that legislators may consider what is valuable and what is depraved in life when they draft laws and contemplate the appropriate framework for social and personal relationships (Waldron, 1989). Raz challenged the state neutrality precept by calling it a 'chimerical' ideal. 'It is not that the state should not be neutral; it cannot be so' (Sadurski, 1990, p. 122). For Mill, the optimum government has to effectively ameliorate people and democracy to improve a sufficiently advanced people. This distinguished him from

instrumental arguments for democracy and from today's liberals who consider the state's detachment from people's conceptions of the good appropriate, as he thought that it should be energetically seeking to improve people (Skorupski, 2006). 'Mill's perfectionist liberalism' claims as due, if people are to be autonomous, 'certain positive conditions, such as health, education, a decent minimum standard of living, and fair opportunities for self-realisation' (Mill, CW, v, 1967, p.714). It is committed to secular and democratic political institutions, property rights and market economy, equal socio-economic opportunities, and various civic liberties. Yet, it is not Laissez-faire liberalism and by justifying liberal essentials, it promotes the common good (Brink, 2007). Even if he does not share many socialists' view for an ideal capitalist-free world, Mill's criticism of capitalism, scorning its mass poverty and wage-slavery, is a socialist inspiration that highlights that without state intervention, its injustice is magnified. 'The very idea of distributive justice, or of any proportionality between success and merit, or between success and exertion, is in the present state of society so manifestly chimerical as to be relegated to the regions of romance' (Mill, CW, v, 1967, p. 714). One can only imagine his reaction to the magnified wealth inequalities observed in contemporary societies (Burtless, 2007; Korzeniewicz & Moran, 1997). The fear of such inequality that he saw as often being imminent in a capitalist system motivated Mill to argue in favour of an interventionist state. Limited market competition between large enterprises justifies regulating production and its public takeover. Some proposals to ameliorate capitalism are workers' profit-sharing schemes, declaring land the property of state if its ownership is not the product of human labour, and inheritance taxes to eliminate unearned fortune (Skorupski, 2006). By encouraging the state's intervening role in the economy and rejecting pure Laissez-faire liberalism, Mill attached a significant moral aspect to the function of the government. The government can contribute towards 'a just distribution of burthens, by holding up to every citizen an example of morality and good conscience applied to difficult adjustments

and an evidence of the value which the highest authorities attach to them, tends in an eminent degree to educate the moral sentiments of the community' (Mill, CW, xix, 1977, pp. 386-7).

For Mill, while society with its institutions should not impose on people what it considers better for their own good, ethical questions on the good life should be part of the political discussion of policy. Along with some 19th century liberals who connected political and civic freedom to pursuing an objective ideal of human self-realisation and against much of 20th century liberalism, Mill's liberal state legitimately promotes conceptions of the good, but does not enforce them (Skorupski, 2006). Telling on this issue are the similarities between Mill and TH Green on the one hand (Brink, 2003), and their differences from contemporary neutral liberals (Ryan, 1998) on the other. In contrast to liberals like Dworkin (1985) and Rawls (1993), the Millian state has a cardinal role in the development of its citizens and their opportunity to advance their generic capacities. While cognitive, emotional, and social faculties can develop in various ways, the state should not overstep its jurisdiction and dictate the exact form; yet by supporting different developmental experiments, it should seek to carry community members together towards perfection and forming national character (Mill, CW, x, 1985, p. 9).

The role that Mill expects the state to play in a liberal democracy rejects the doctrine of state neutrality as expressed in different formulations. This is so even if we closely scrutinise the distinct nuances of the arguments that neutralists employ to justify their stance (Wall, 2008). The absence of a possible societal consensus or the appeal to a presence of reasonable disagreement on a good-contributing process implicating the state, seems, from a Millian point of view, more a pretext for neutralists to use their particular interpretation of liberal ideology because such an interpretation is based on a chimerical consent-based account of political legitimacy, which de-contextualises the source of many problems in liberal societies, be it of an economic, educational, health, or opportunity-related nature.

For Mill, the alleviation of such problems asks for state intervention, which inevitably touches upon moral grounds. As such problems have both a context and history, addressing them with state neutrality unavoidably implicates a particular moral stance, too; only that in this case, and from a perfectionist Millian perspective, it may be more disputable. An ideology bolstering a neutral state reiterates – consciously or otherwise – the existing socio-economic status quo (Chan, 2000, p. 40). State intervention that is justified on the grounds of social justice (moral grounds) can be more effective in tackling inequality than state neutrality (Chan, 2000). When compared to, for example, unfettered market forces, state action can be the least controversial means through which a liberal democracy can make a difference in people's lives. There are serious arguments indicating that state neutrality

does not meet its alleged objectives. As Sher (1997) put it, state neutrality is not necessary for stable social cooperation or for preventing the abuse of state power. It is also evident that its proponents –without managing to fortify arguments for social cooperation– selectively overvalue the goods associated with an abstract consensus and undervalue other goods (Wall, 1998).

According to Raz it is not at all indispensable to embrace state neutrality to favour value-pluralism and defend a plurality of good, but incommensurable, forms of life fully worthy of respect. His combination of state perfectionism and value-pluralism responds cogently to liberal neutralists who believe that the latter is compatible only with the government's abstention from issues involving the good (Wall, 2008). Gardbaum verified this by asserting that perfectionists can consistently claim that the diversity of beliefs is precisely why the state's affirmative duty to foster rationally superior ways of life has to be assumed. State assistance and guidance are necessary if people must lead the variety-filled valuable lives available to them. As Gardbaum (1991) noted, this perfectionist approach was endorsed by Mill and Raz. The argument to support plurality by positing the necessary educational and moral functioning of political institutions is explicit in Mill and Raz, who

made an analogous claim for the state's fundamental role in enabling people to live valuable lives (Gardbaum, 1991). This is while liberals like Nagel (1991) by supporting state neutrality attempted to convince us that their stance was the only one to secure the allegiance of people who hold very different conceptions of the good. This conclusion counters both Raz and Mill's claims. 'Certainly it is no principle of Mill's that the liberal state should not have a conception of the good among its core allegiance-inspiring values' or 'that the state should be ethically or aesthetically neutral' (Skorupski, 2006, p.104). Another example of this is Mill's position to ensure necessary government revenue by taxing 'depraved' pursuits or commodities more and before others. 'It is...the duty of the State to consider what commodities the consumers can best spare' (Mill, CW, xviii, 1977, p. 298). Taxation is essential for the functioning of the government, but taxes on narcotics and stimulants, for example, are to be approved of a fortiori because of their depraved nature. L Green highlighted the similarities between Mill and Raz vis-à-vis the role of the state (CW, ii, iii, 1965). With the use of the harm principle (as interpreted above) restricting how the state may go about issues that involve morality, they exhaust the stipulations for such involvement. In principle, they do not see any reason in expecting governments to abstain from playing an active role in issues that touch upon moral grounds (Green, 1988).

It is intriguing to follow a couple of additional arguments that Raz used to justify his common position with Mill for an active perfectionist state and the reasoning through which he arrived at this conclusion. The normative character of Raz's liberalism required an adequate range of valuable options that depend on certain social forms, for the attainment of autonomy. He

therefore defended a liberal theory sensitive to the social factors and forces that delineate individual autonomy. Raz cannot be blamed for grounding his liberalism in the asocial individualism to which communitarians object (Mulhall & Swift, 1996). Unlike many liberals, he was aware of the inevitable 'embeddedness' of the individual life in

its surrounding environment. Therefore, the importance of a desirable public culture and good society is a *sine qua non* for his liberalism. As Mulhall and Swift (1996) noted, as the state through its policies can undoubtedly exercise an influence on social forms, the interplay among the individual, society, and state is emphatic in Raz's liberal theory. In addition to the provision of basic public goods like health and education, and social security and policies of economic redistribution secured by funds raised via compulsory taxation, Raz proposed many other ways in which state action can be involved in offering valuable options: 'to form a family of one kind or another, to forge friendships, to pursue many of the skills, professions and occupations, to enjoy fiction, poetry, and the arts, [as well as]...common leisure activities' (Raz, 1986, p. 247). His position linking the creation of an appropriate means for the autonomy of social forms to flourish with a perfectionist state reminds us of the way Wilson depicted Millian liberalism. For Mill, the best person is the individual responsible for her beliefs and actions; and as individuality as autonomy is good, it is essential to foster social institutions that contribute to it. Mill defended his representative government as the best form to encourage individuality and a more active and intelligent form of social participation. In a context-sensitive approach where social institutions adapt to the time and place in which they operate, Mill opted for a form of government in which the members have the maximum feasible education (Wilson, 2007) because this can define the political and social context, facilitate political decisions, and prepare an environment within which individual autonomy can flourish.

Another argument that can be related to the provenance of the endorsement of Raz's perfectionist state stems from his normal justification thesis. Raz accentuated the possibility that an organisation like a liberal state may better judge when there are sufficient reasons for social coordination to which its citizens should contribute, as very realistic. In a liberal society, the government should be free of bias and demonstrate greater expertise in achieving

coordination that is fundamental to satisfying social needs and achieving goals. This entails that 'within specified bounds', an individual is better off adopting a rule to follow instructions of the governing body and to consider it an authority. The obligation to obey the government and its rules is justified as it can motivate individuals to engage in coordinated social behaviour in more reliable ways than can individual actions (Raz, 1989, p. 1192). The link Raz established between authority and reason as a necessary legitimising factor for the former and as a prerequisite for its existence cannot be seen independently

from his intention to promote a normative perfectionist role that the state deserves. By postulating that authorities are legitimate only if they enable their subjects to conform better to reason, one can deduce that Raz recommended viewing the state not as a potential threat against rational people, but as a device helping them achieve the purpose of their capacity for rational action, albeit not through its direct use (Raz, 2006). Trusting the government manifests identification with society, revealed in a belief in an obligation to obey. This identification is conditional. 'It is misplaced...in an unjust legal system...This means that respect for the law is not the normal justification for the authority of the law. It is dependent on and derived from the normal justification being met to a high degree'. The aim is primarily a just and good government to pass laws and be in charge of their enforcement (Raz, 1989, p. 1198).

Such a rationale, with Raz's emphasis on the normal justification thesis, supports the morally active role he attributed to the liberal state. It does not have an exact equivalent in Mill, but there is a similarity worth noting in the way the latter envisaged the institutions of a good political society. For Mill, the value of an administration that deals with laws, justice, and social good comprises largely in its ability to perform as a moral educator and coordinator by matching appropriate standards. A good political society is expected to cultivate an inner conscience with values and practices that inspire obedience, and promote equality, moral development, and the health of the individual's character, through its liberal institutions (Devigne, 2006). Mill asked for proportional representation that introduces wisdom in its representative apparatus, because people do not have a rational will that is perfect, automatic, and omnipresent; thus for certain issues, to approximate reason more, the government's function must be trusted. This plays a role in the way Mill envisaged political institutions for the formation of which, consistently with his perfectionist liberal theory, he focused on the problem of reconciling wisdom and liberty. By maintaining that circumstances and experiences are crucial to shaping and realising free will, he anticipated that the government would play the role Raz (2006) assigned to authority and that Hegel (1952) expected from the state. 'As individuals recognise their own minds – their own conception of subjective freedom, realised in the constitution of the state—they come to view the state and its institutions not as mere instruments of their freedom, but as expressions of it' (Devigne, 2006, p. 230). As Mill noted, right politics aim at the good of people; thus, our objective should be not to compel but rather persuade them to exercise restraint for their own good over the immediate and unlimited exercise of their own will. 'One reason for desiring a popular government was, that men whom the people themselves had selected for their wisdom and good affections, would have authority enough to withstand the will of the people when it is wrong' (Mill, CW, xxiii, 1986, p. 502). Mill did not encourage passive acceptance of authority. Yet, paving the way for a perfectionist liberal polity,

he underlined that the role of a good state implies, on certain issues, some informed concessions on part of the individual to the government because of the (expected) expertise of the latter. This is strongly reminiscent of Raz's normal justification thesis where people's trust in the role and expertise of the state translate into conceding a part of their ability to decide on everything by themselves, to it.

IV. CONCLUSION

Far from being diametrically opposite, Mill and Raz supported a normative perfectionist role for the state on the ground that they identified the complexity and multiplicity of the conditions under which freedom can thrive. The recognition of individuals' embeddedness within their social and political environment exhorted them to argue in favour of an interventionist state, charged with the duty, among other things, to tackle inequalities by applying redistributive policies and regulating the market. In addition, their state has the duty to foster valuable forms of life over other, less valuable ones, by employing various taxation policies aimed at discouraging habits that are considered depraved and by favouring the citizens' self-development and advancement of their moral and rational capacities through state-mandated education. The state's role of mediating between people and reasoned actions is highly valued by the two theorists, constituting a cornerstone in their ideal models, leading Mill to argue for a state's educative mission and Raz to argue for his service conception of authority, where both theoretical suggestions aimed to enable people to make rational decisions at individual and political levels, thus attaining true autonomy. Mill and Raz's common context -this unique and sensitive comprehension of freedom- led me to the conclusion that they form part of the same perfectionist strand of liberalism, which seeks to break stereotypes stemming from the orthodoxy of liberal neutrality and introduce its support for state interventionism.

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