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# The Value of Personal Autonomy

by

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## **Declaration**

I, the undersigned, Perica Jovchevski, hereby declare that this dissertation contains no materials accepted for any other degree, in any other institution. The dissertation contains no materials previously written and/or published by any other person, except where appropriate acknowledgment is made in the form of bibliographical reference.

Vienna, March 31, 2023

Perica Jovchevski

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## Abstract

This dissertation presents a comprehensive examination of the value of personal autonomy and its role within liberalism. It consists of a theory of personal autonomy instantiated in a hybrid ideal and conception of personal autonomy, an account of its values and elaboration of the implications which those values bear for the design of substantive liberal political institutions. The theory of personal autonomy I present builds upon the role of autonomy within partially comprehensive anti-perfectionism, offering at the same time a defense for this form of liberal political morality.

The dissertation consists of five chapters. In Chapter One I defend the commitment of anti-perfectionists to the principle of state neutrality and to an ideal of personal autonomy and its value as necessary suppositions of a sound liberal morality. These two commitments together with the commitment to a modified or “relaxed” version of the liberal legitimacy principle, make the character of the liberal morality I defend throughout this dissertation, a partially comprehensive, anti-perfectionist one. In Chapters Two and Three, I propose and defend a hybrid ideal and conception of personal autonomy, composed of internalist and externalist requirements for autonomy, which I claim to fit the value of personal autonomy within partially comprehensive anti-perfectionism. The hybrid ideal of autonomy conceives of autonomous individuals as persons who instantiate two features: they are self-determinate, in that they form their conceptions of the good for themselves, and they exercise self-control over the pursue of their autonomously formed conceptions of the good, in that they use an access to adequate means and live according to those conceptions. The conception based on the hybrid ideal I propose is non-hierarchical, ahistorical and procedural in character and specifies five necessary conditions which in their conjunction are sufficient to account for the global autonomy of individuals: the possession of cognitive and practical capacities, a validation condition,

independence conditions, a performative condition and an epistemic condition. Chapter Four “zooms” into the value of the ideal of personal autonomy and presents two arguments, one from abduction and the other transcendental, for its personal and impersonal final value, respectively. Both arguments are based on the close relation which, I claim, personal autonomy bears with personal values or “values-for”. In Chapter Five, I deal with the conditionality of the personal value of autonomy. In opposition to perfectionist accounts on its value and its conditionality of the good, I defend the view that the personal value of autonomy is conditional on the just. Moreover, I demonstrate that partially comprehensive anti-perfectionists should conceive of the value of autonomy as being of interlocked nature with the principles of justice. To the end of this chapter, I explain the content of the interlocking relation between the value of autonomy and justice. First, I specify the constraints which justice sets on the value of autonomy as being of distributive and relational nature. Second, I specify the constraints which the value of autonomy sets on the content of the principles of justice. These result in requirements for a complex of sufficientarian and egalitarian principles to govern the distribution of the adequate means for autonomy, as well as relational egalitarian principles governing vertical and horizontal interpersonal relations in a society committed to the hybrid ideal of autonomy.



## Introduction

In their everyday interactions people rarely talk about the “autonomous life”. Perhaps many don’t even have a clear idea what that means. But nevertheless, they all seem to believe or behave in a way that communicates clearly the message to others, that they, *themselves*, have or should have, the authority of what they make out of their lives. Liberal political theory takes this intuition at its heart, holding that personal autonomy, understood generally as referring to self-government, is valuable and is something to be protected or promoted in our everyday interactions with other people and political authorities. However, there is a wide disagreement about what exactly those claims amount to, what conditions autonomous persons satisfy, what grounds the value of their autonomy and how much should we value it.

A first disagreement within political theory arises on the ontological reference of personal autonomy, which gives the bearer of its value. Namely what is it that we value about autonomy: is it having capacities for autonomy or enjoying the status or presumption of being an autonomous person, or perhaps the living of an autonomous life? Does the reference of personal autonomy requires understanding it as a metaphysical notion<sup>1</sup>, as a moral claim or right<sup>2</sup>, or perhaps as an ideal of character<sup>3</sup> or a predicate to the individual pro-attitudes such as desires or preferences of persons<sup>4</sup>?

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<sup>1</sup> Immanuel Kant, *The Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, 1785, in *Practical Philosophy*, translated and edited by Mary J. Gregor, in *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant*, edited by Paul Guyer and Allen Wood, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 37-108 and Immanuel Kant, Immanuel, *Critique of Practical Reason*, 1788, in *Practical Philosophy*, translated and edited by Mary J. Gregor, in *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant*, edited by Paul Guyer and Allen Wood, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 133-272.

<sup>2</sup> Stephen Darwall, “The Value of Autonomy and Autonomy of the Will,” *Ethics*, Vol.116, No.2 (January, 2006): 263-284.

<sup>3</sup> John S. Mill, *On Liberty, Utilitarianism and Other Essays*, edited by Mark Philp and Frederick Rosen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015); Joseph Raz, *The Morality of Freedom* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986) and Steven Wall, *Liberalism, Perfectionism and Restraint* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

<sup>4</sup> John Christman, “Autonomy and Personal History,” *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* Vol.21, No.1(March, 1991): 1–24.

A further normative disagreement arises on the question of what conditions the autonomous persons should satisfy. Proceduralist and substantive theories of personal autonomy clash on the question of whether the ideal of autonomy should be seen as a content-neutral ideal, or it should include certain value commitments among its conditions, such as for instance that one cannot autonomously enslave one self. Another disagreement arises on the question whether there are conditions for autonomy coming from the external environment or autonomy is purely a psychological notion?; if there are such conditions, are they constitutive or causally relevant for one's autonomy? Relational and individualist theories are divided on this last question, the first opting for the former, while the second for the latter option.

On the other side, some aspects regarding the value of autonomy enjoy a wider consensus in the literature. Namely on the question of what kind of normative consequences follow from valuing personal autonomy, there seems to be an agreement that its value imposes limits to the permissibility of the actions of others towards us and of our actions towards other people, who have capacities or status of autonomy. Being committed to the value of autonomy is claimed to protect individuals from paternalistic actions by others. A commitment to its value is also commonly taken to limit the coercive actions of political institutions, such as the state, outside the private sphere of an individual, where the authority to make decisions about oneself should belong to the individual itself. There are those who think that autonomy as a value is even in tension with the existence of political authority<sup>5</sup>, although most political theorists believe that legitimate political authority, in fact, presupposes personal autonomy as a basis for the consent of autonomous individuals.

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<sup>5</sup> On the incompatibility between autonomy and authority see Robert P. Wolf, *In Defense of Anarchism* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970).

Although there seem to be a higher level of agreement about the normative consequences of the value of personal autonomy rather than its conditions, the more detailed specification of what is it that grounds its value, how this value is “nested” within our broader political morality and how much should we value it opens again an arena of wide disagreement. The controversies between the anti-perfectionists and perfectionist about the value of autonomy within a liberal political morality and the commitments this value establishes, best illustrate this point.

In this dissertation I aim to propose an ideal, conception and an account on the value of personal autonomy, for the actions of political institutions, such as the state, committed to a partially comprehensive anti-perfectionist morality. Taken as a whole, they constitute a theory of autonomy which I claim to give the foundation of the basic partially comprehensive liberal commitments and in reference to which we can establish a plausible defense for partially comprehensive liberal anti-perfectionism, as the most attractive form of liberal political morality. Thus, in Chapter One, I define the “terrain” on which the investigation of the value of personal autonomy in this dissertation will be settled, namely on the ground of liberal political moralities, broadly conceived. In the first part of the chapter, I introduce the varieties of liberal political moralities, perfectionist and anti-perfectionist and defend the anti-perfectionist commitment to the principle of state neutrality on the basis of the entitlement of citizens to equal respect for their autonomy. I raise two objections through which I reject perfectionism: one from paternalism and the other from what I call “outcome-independence”. In the second part of this chapter, I investigate the role which the value of personal autonomy plays within anti-perfectionism. Since my conclusion is that it plays an indispensable justificatory role for the principles of justice, I reject *political anti-perfectionism*, as an implausible liberal morality based on apparently self-standing principles of justice. In the last part of this chapter, I determine my

commitments as being of partially comprehensive anti-perfectionist nature and distinguish them from the commitments a fully comprehensive anti-perfectionist morality has.

However, while formally separated, the substantive line which distinguishes comprehensive (fully or partially) anti-perfectionist positions from some perfectionist positions based on the value of autonomy, is a thin one, and securing an anti-perfectionist position requires working out such ideal which does not include any kind of perfectionist pre-commitments. In Chapter Two, I take upon that task and defend a “hybrid ideal” of autonomous persons as being both self-determining and self-controlling individuals. The hybrid ideal proposed, I claim, is able to overcome the difficulties that which internalist and externalist ideals of autonomous persons separately encounter in relation to the broader partially comprehensive anti-perfectionist commitments grounded in the respect for the autonomy of individuals. Both the possibility and the plausibility of the hybrid ideal I propose rest on a reconceptualization of the external requirements for autonomy and their relation to the internal ones, which relation in internalist ideals is either under-constructed or completely absent, while in the externalist ideals is tied to value pre-commitments either on the side of the individual or on one’s environment as constitutive of one’s autonomy, which brings these ideals in tension with the principle of respect for the autonomy of individuals.

Chapter Three presents a procedural conception of autonomy based on the hybrid ideal proposed in Chapter Two, by defining and defending the conditions which autonomous persons should satisfy according to this ideal. Using Rawls’ formula, I claim that autonomous persons satisfy two types of conditions: for formation and for pursue of a conception of the good, none of which should include substantive requirements for autonomy, which, as I argue in Chapter Two, are incompatible with the principle of respect for autonomy to which partially comprehensive anti-perfectionists are committed

to. While the conditions I propose, with exception of the outcome-independence condition, have all been already introduced within various other conceptions of autonomy, the conception I offer, due to the structure and the features of the hybrid ideal, gives distinguishable guidance, not only in respect of alternative substantive conceptions, but from rival procedural ones, as well. It is distinct from purely procedural hierarchical ones in that it does not contain a requirement for coherence nor preference ordering within a hierarchical psychological structure as a condition for autonomy. With them on the other side shares the ahistorical character which differentiates my account from historical purely procedural accounts in that there is no requirement for reflecting nor endorsing the development of particular pro-attitude but what matters is that one retains a disposition to validate one's commitments to a conception of the good, implicitly or explicitly. Ultimately, in the conceptualization of the pursue conditions for autonomy my conception is distinct from procedural relational accounts which do presuppose external conditions of some kind into their conceptions, but which do not have the functional character incorporated in the hybrid conception. To the end of this chapter, I offer eight hypothetical cases on which I demonstrate the distinctive features of the hybrid conception as well as its more robust explanatory capacity in respect of alternative and rival conceptions in accommodating our intuitions on the cases discussed.

Chapter Four gives substance to the suppositions of the value of personal autonomy within partially comprehensive anti-perfectionism, discussed in Chapter One. Based on recent insights into the normativity of personal values - or values-for - I develop two substantive arguments for the value of personal autonomy which understand its value in close relation to the creation and instantiation of personal values: the first one from abduction, the second one transcendental, which establish autonomy as personally and impersonally finally valuable, respectively. The personal final value of autonomy supervenes on the living of an autonomous life, and is valuable for the person who lives it,

as a way of instantiating personal values in one's life, and ultimately, instantiating one's own life as of personal value. The impersonal value supervenes on the capacities for autonomy in a narrow sense, understood as capacities for formation of a conception of the good, and as such it is valuable as grounding the respect for the autonomous pursuits of individuals. Both final values are conditional. The impersonal is intrinsically conditional on more basic capacities which constitute the dignity of a person. The personal, as I claim throughout this dissertation, is conditional on the just.

The last, Chapter Five, zooms into the conditionality of the personal final value of autonomy and maintains that this value of autonomy forms an interlocking relation with the principles of justice. On the one side, its value is subsumed under the principles of justice, hence autonomy is valuable to the extent that it is pursued within the limits of the just; on the other side, the value of autonomy shapes the content of the principles of justice. In this respect autonomy imposes certain constrain on the distributive and the relational principles of justice. I demonstrate in this chapter that its value requires two types of distributive principles, sufficientarian and egalitarian ones, to govern the distribution of what I term as “generally” and “particularly adequate means” for autonomy, respectively. In addition, such value also requires the establishment of relations as equal as facilitating self-control over the access to adequate means and as constitutive of self-respect as a pre-condition for autonomy.

In the Conclusion I recap the main argument of the dissertation, point out to some of its limitations, as well as, to the possibilities for further development.

# Chapter 1. The role of the value of personal autonomy within liberalism

## Introduction

In his seminal work “The Theory and Practice of Autonomy”, Gerald Dworkin claims that the value of a particular conception of autonomy is always relative to the set of problems and questions it tries to treat<sup>6</sup>. As this dissertation is primarily concerned with personal autonomy as a political ideal for liberals, I will take Dworkin’s claim as requiring us to base the starting point of our investigation of the value of autonomy, at the functions or the roles which autonomy plays within a liberal political morality and the aims we purport to achieve by ascribing these roles to it. I conceive of a political morality as a set of consistent fundamental principles which are used by liberal political institutions, such as the state, in justifying other principles that guide its actions or the actions themselves. Political moralities through their basic commitments give us the broadest platforms for specifying and weighing moral and political values, determining their relation with other values, constructing trade-off principles among them etc. Within specifically liberal political moralities - which are the objects within which my investigation of the value of personal autonomy will be settled - Dworkin states, the value of personal “autonomy is used as a basis to argue against the design and functioning of political institutions that attempt to impose a set of ends, values and attitudes upon the citizens of a society”<sup>7</sup>, more specifically he concludes, “personal autonomy is used to oppose perfectionist and paternalistic views”<sup>8</sup>. While throughout this dissertation I will share to a great extent, although for different reasons,

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<sup>6</sup> Gerald Dworkin, *The Theory and Practice of Autonomy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 10.

<sup>7</sup> Dworkin, *The Theory and Practice of Autonomy*, 10.

<sup>8</sup> For different conceptions of paternalistic practices compare Gerald Dworkin, “Paternalism,” *The Monist* Vol.56, No.1 (January 1972): 64–84 and Gerald Dworkin, “Defining Paternalism,” in *Paternalism: Theory and Practice*, edited by C. Coons and Michael Wal (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013):25-39 with Quong’s account in Jonathan Quong, *Liberalism without Perfection* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 73-107.

Dworkin's convictions, it is surprising to find such a strong general statement about the value of autonomy within liberalism at the start of this foundational work in the field of personal autonomy, when only two years before its publishing, another masterwork in the field of political philosophy, the "The Morality of Freedom" by Joseph Raz, was considered to demonstrate completely the opposite, setting the value of autonomy at the center of one of the most influential articulations of a perfectionist political morality.

In the first section of this chapter, I will start with some definitions of the basic commitments and features of the varieties of liberal political moralities: anti-perfectionist and perfectionist ones. In the second section, I will justify and defend the truth of the anti-perfectionist commitment to the neutrality principle as grounded on the entitlement of citizens to equal respect for their autonomy. Anti-perfectionism, thus, gives the basic platform on which I will base the theory of autonomy I will propose throughout this dissertation, comprising of an ideal and a conception of personal autonomy, an account of the values of personal autonomy and their implications for the design of liberal political institutions. In the third section I will defend the view that one of the two basic commitments of political anti-perfectionists - a competing anti-perfectionist view – namely, the claim that the state can be neutral towards the justification of the neutrality principle itself, is implausible. In addition, I claim that political anti-perfectionism cannot properly account for our concerns with the value of personal autonomy as presupposed by the neutrality principle. If anti-perfectionists are to respond properly to its value, we must assume a more or less comprehensive position and defend our liberal morality not as a neutral point on which other comprehensive doctrines might converge, but as a more or less comprehensive doctrine among other such views. In the fourth section I make a distinction between fully and partially comprehensive anti-perfectionist accounts, and maintain that given the constraints on the promotion of controversial conceptions of the good and given our commitment to the value



of personal autonomy, the most plausible account of a liberal political morality is the partially comprehensive anti-perfectionist one. To the end of this section, I specify and defend my understanding of the commitments of the partially comprehensive anti-perfectionist view.

## 1. Varieties of anti-perfectionist and perfectionist liberal moralities

Liberalism encompasses a wide variety of views which are rooted in different understandings of the fundamental values to which liberals are commonly committed, within the same or across different types of liberal moralities. The task of situating the value of personal autonomy within a liberal morality, shall thus, start from a specification of the distinctive features of the varieties of liberal moralities, as the broadest platform which “hosts” the value of personal autonomy and where its functions or roles are assigned. Following Mulhall and Swift’s categorization, we can distinguish two general types of liberal political moralities, anti-perfectionism and perfectionism, each having a political and a comprehensive version<sup>9</sup>, which subject to different interpretations of their fundamental claims,<sup>10</sup> might, in turn, generate further different conceptualizations of these political moralities within these four basic types. For the purpose of my task here I need not present a detailed overview of each of these variations: it suffices to stipulate my understanding of the basic commitments of anti-perfectionism and perfectionism, in their comprehensive and political variants, on which the argument about the value of personal autonomy I advance, will rely. Only where necessary for the purpose of

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<sup>9</sup> Stephen Mulhall and Adam Swift, ed., *Liberals and Communitarians* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1996), 251.

<sup>10</sup> On proposals of further variants within these four basic types and their features see Joseph Chan, “Legitimacy, Unanimity, and Perfectionism,” *Philosophy and Public Affairs* Vol.29, No.1 (Winter, 2000): 5-42, Steven Wall, “Neutrality for Perfectionists: The Case of Restricted State Neutrality,” *Ethics* 120 (January 2010): 232-256, János Kis, “State Neutrality.” In *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Constitutional Law*, edited by Michael Rosenfeld and András Sajó (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 318-336, and Alan Patten, “Liberal Neutrality: A Reinterpretation and Defense,” *The Journal of Political Philosophy* Vol.20, 3 (September 2012): 249-272.

the argument, I will talk about more specific conceptualizations of each of the variants of these moralities.

So called “political anti-perfectionists” are committed to the following two fundamental claims. First, that any state policy leading to promotion or discouragement of some conceptions of the good, should not be *justified* in reference to the value of controversial conceptions of the good.<sup>11</sup> The acceptance of this claim, also called a “principle of state neutrality”, gives a liberal morality the feature of being “anti-perfectionist.”<sup>12</sup> The second claim which gives anti-perfectionism the feature of being “political” is that the principle of state neutrality should not be justified in reference to the value of controversial conceptions of justice. “Comprehensive anti-perfectionists” unlike political anti-perfectionists claim to be committed only to the first claim<sup>13</sup>.

The neutrality principle to which anti-perfectionists are committed has been highly contested and debated. Before I proceed in the next section with its justification, I would like to first highlight the features of the principle as formulated above. These include the following: (1) subject to the principle are justificatory reasons for a state policy; (2) these are reasons that lend themselves in favor of a justification of a policy; (3) justificatory reasons are neutral if they do not refer to the value of controversial conceptions of the good; and (4) the principle is applied to all state policies, not only to those concerning constitutional essentials.

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<sup>11</sup> Including ideals of the worthwhile life, conceptions of human flourishing etc.

<sup>12</sup> My focus in the determining the scope of state neutrality in the dissertation is on policies in particular, however I reckon that we might have good reasons to extend the focus to political speeches of state official or political communication in general. However, for the present purposes I will treat the principle as referring to state policies in particular.

<sup>13</sup> More on the distinction between political and comprehensive anti-perfectionism see in Mulhall and Swift, *Liberals and Communitarians*, 251-258, and Quong, *Liberalism without Perfection*, 15-21.

I stressed the term “justified” in the formulation of the principle above, because the neutrality principle can be understood along different lines as well. Some understand it in the sense of *neutrality of the effects* of state’s actions. According to this understanding, the state should “make sure that its actions do not help acceptable ideals more than unacceptable ones, (and should) see to it that its actions will not hinder the cause of false ideals more than they do that of true ones.”<sup>14</sup> The state acts neutrally when the effect of its action has equal impact on the life of all its citizens, whatever conception of the good they might pursue. Others understand *neutrality as equality of opportunity*. According to them the state should “ensure for all persons an equal ability to pursue in their lives and promote in their societies any ideal of the good of their choosing”<sup>15</sup>. So, the state acts neutrally when its actions allow each individual equal opportunity to pursue their conception of the good, whatever that may be. In my understanding of the neutrality principle above, I aim to avoid these readings as implausible. The latter, because it seems to be unfair, as it entails subsidies for people with expensive tastes, while the former because it seems to be too costly for both, the state and the citizens. On the one side, it requires compensation by the state to everyone whose situation changed due to a policy (for which the state should find in addition a compensatory base which will probably be simply arbitrary). On the other side, to know the effect of a policy the state needs to have insight into all the preferences of citizens which aside from being impossible, seems morally undesirable, as it would probably involve objectionable intrusions into their lives. In contrast to these readings, my justificatory understanding of the neutrality principle implies restrictions on the reasons which the state can use to justify its public policies, rather than their effects. For instance, in my understanding of the neutrality principle it is permissible for the state to enact a policy of reforestation, if the justification for doing so is not that a life “in harmony with nature” is better than an urban life, but that this is a necessary measure to

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<sup>14</sup> Raz, *The Morality of Freedom*, 111.

<sup>15</sup> Raz, *The Morality of Freedom*, 115.

counter climate change, which poses serious challenges for the survival of its citizens. The first would seem wrong, not because justice prohibits reforestation, but because the development of some opportunities have already closed the opportunities of others by creating circumstances in which some options cannot be promoted, hence no one can have legitimate claims to them. Similarly, people who like to live like medieval knights do not have legitimate claim on adequate resources today to pursue their lives. Under this reading of the neutrality principle, sometimes the state through its neutral policies might not be able to avoid indirectly favoring or discouraging some conceptions of the good over others (for instance of those who do believe that such “life in nature” is better than urban life, in the example above), but this should not be taken as an objection that it is not neutral.

This example can serve us in highlighting two further features of the neutrality principle, as formulated: first, what matters is that the policy *lends itself to a justification* with neutral reasons; and second that what makes a justification neutral is that it does not rely on valuing the relative merits of controversial conceptions of the good held by the citizens. That a policy lends itself to a neutral justification is relevant because it guarantees the validity of that policy, even if the *actual* justification of the state is not-neutral. However, it seems that practically any policy can be justified with neutral terms. So what we need in order to specify when a policy lends itself to neutral justification is to accept at least the following two conditions: first, the justification should be plausibly linked to the policy in question, possibly with reference to an evidentiary base which is publicly available, and second, that those to whom the justification is addressed can plausibly be expected to invoke the given justification. For instance, in the case above even if the state actually justified its policy with the claim that life in harmony with nature is valuable, since its policy lends itself to be justified with reasons having nothing to do with the values of the conceptions of the good, which some of its citizens might hold, it should be evaluated as neutral. Sometimes, when the actual justification of the state is not neutral, even if the

policy is susceptible to neutral justification, one might rise objections to it and require its reformulation. However, the general rule is that what matters in evaluating a policy as neutral, is whether its justification can be reconstructed with neutral reasons under - at least - the two condition above, where these in addition include reasons that do not refer to the values of particular controversial conceptions of the good.

Lastly, the neutrality principle as formulated is applicable to all policies of the state, not solely to matters regarding justice or to issues concerning constitutional essentials. The reasons for not restricting this scope come from the reasons we find non-neutrality objectionable. Namely, what is objectionable about the state not being neutral in respect of controversial conceptions of the good is that such attitude implies discrimination and mistreatment of some of its citizens. Yet, discrimination and mistreatment can occur on any level of doing politics, irrespective whether is constitutional or otherwise.

Perfectionists<sup>16</sup> reject the neutrality principle, at least, in the form I proposed it above<sup>17</sup>. They endorse the claim that the state should take an active role in maintaining the conditions that best enable their subjects to lead worthwhile or good lives.<sup>18</sup> This basic perfectionist commitment, similarly as in the case of the basic anti-perfectionist commitment, can be interpreted in different ways. Some “extreme perfectionists”, might in principle maintain that the state should coercively promote the good life through policies based on the value of a particular conception of the good.<sup>19</sup> However, this seems to

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<sup>16</sup> We can talk about perfectionism as an ethical or political theory. Political perfectionism can be seen as an extension of ethical perfectionism. What is common is that both forms of perfectionism either presuppose as a base an ideal of human flourishing or an ideal of the good or both, where these two overlap, and then build an ethical or political theory on the value of such ideal. In this dissertation I will mainly talk about political perfectionism. See more on perfectionism as an ethical theory in Thomas Hurka, *Perfectionism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 3 and 16-17.

<sup>17</sup> Although some mixed or moderate perfectionists might find acceptable a perfectionism-based restricted versions of it.

<sup>18</sup> Wall, *Liberalism, Perfectionism and Restraint*, 10-11.

<sup>19</sup> More on different classifications on perfectionism see in Chan, “Legitimacy, Unanimity, and Perfectionism,” 5-42.

be a highly implausible understanding of the perfectionist commitment for liberal perfectionists to endorse. They produce more moderate readings of the perfectionist commitment which can differ in several respects. Some moderate perfectionists, acknowledging that there are limits to the ways one can bring about the perfection of others, amend the basic perfectionist commitment by limiting the means which are permissible for the state to use in order to promote the good life, only to non-coercive means. Aside from extreme vs. moderate we can also distinguish pure vs. mixed perfectionism. Mixed perfectionists, similarly to moderate perfectionists are also able to constrain the means for promotion of the good life on the base of acknowledging the weight of other values such as equality, respect, justice etc., which are integrated in understanding of the good.

Which of the variety of understandings of the basic perfectionist commitment seems most plausible? I believe Joseph Raz conveys perhaps the most elegant and plausible reading of the perfectionist commitments. According to him perfectionism is a term indicating “that there is no fundamental principled inhibition on governments acting for any valid moral reason.”<sup>20</sup> Steven Wall spells out further this reading by Raz into four claims to which perfectionists are committed. These present a combination of claims that perfectionist make in the realm of ethics and politics. According to Wall, perfectionists maintain “that (1) some ideals of human flourishing are sound and can be known to be sound<sup>21</sup>; (2) that the state is presumptively justified in favoring these ideals; (3) that a sound account of political morality will be informed by sound ideals of human flourishing and (4) that there is no general moral principle that forbids the state from favoring sound ideals of human flourishing as well

<sup>20</sup> Joseph Raz, “Facing Up: A Reply,” 62 *Southern California Law Review* (1989):1230.

<sup>21</sup> This implies according to Wall that: (1) All things considered, there is a reason to believe that X is sound; and (2) X possesses some property or set of properties which make it sound. Commonly, he believes, this amounts to claiming that “If a person had access to all relevant considerations and gave them proper weight in his or her deliberations then he or she would believe that X is sound”. See more in Wall, *Liberalism, Perfectionism and Restraint*, 9.

as enforcing conceptions of political morality informed by them, when these ideals are controversial and subject to reasonable disagreement”<sup>22</sup>.

I will base my reading of perfectionism on these two insights by Raz and Wall and understand by it a type of political morality which claims, in its comprehensive version that: (1) there are no principled moral reasons against the state basing its principles of justice in sound ideals of human flourishing, even if they are controversial and subject to reasonable disagreement and (2) there are no principled reasons against the state promoting the good life through its policies based on the value of sound ideals or conceptions of the good even if these are controversial and subject to reasonable disagreement. I maintain that political perfectionists would be committed only to the second of these claims.

Before I proceed with examining the plausibility of the anti-perfectionist commitment to the neutrality principle, let me just be clear about the modes of favoring or promotion which are available to the perfectionist state. Pure perfectionists, who are monist about the good, might hold that the state is justified in promoting particular sound ideal of the good life by coercive measure. Unless the good is defined in a way that it incorporates a requirement for non-coercion within the ideal to be promoted – for instance if the ideal of the good life is the autonomous life, where coercive promotion would be incompatible with the ideal – there are no principled objections to the pure perfectionists’ use of coercive means for promotion of the good. Others who might be pluralists about the good, might maintain that the value of developing human nature, or living a good life, should be constrained by other values such as liberty or equality, which would then set limit on the means we can use to promote perfection in others. In this case non-coercive means of promotion can be used which commonly

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<sup>22</sup> Wall, *Liberalism, Perfectionism and Restraint*, 8.

include for instance different forms of subsidies for goods which are expensive - so that they are made more available for the citizens – or tax reductions. Further, perfectionists are not just committed to the promotion of the good, but also to the discouragement of the bad. In fact, both are two sides of the same coin. The state can directly or indirectly discourage the pursue of certain conceptions of the good: directly, by means of fines, prohibitions etc., and indirectly, for instance, by lowering the costs of competing conceptions.

## **2. Defending the anti-perfectionist commitment to the principle of state neutrality**

The perfectionist commitment in the political context proceeds straightforward from the basic premises of perfectionist ethics:<sup>23</sup> there are objectively valuable goods, in the sense of being valuable for their own sake, and whatever is valuable in that sense, gives a reason to be favored in one way or another. Hence the state as an agent has at least one presumptive reason to favor these goods. But what justifies the neutrality principle to which anti-perfectionists hold?

I take the neutrality principle to be grounded in two related requirements: one is the requirement for the state to respond properly to the citizen's entitlement to equal respect for their autonomy, while the second is the requirement for the state to legitimize its use of coercive power. There are different justifications of the neutrality principle which are foundational and do not ground the principle in some more basic entitlement<sup>24</sup>. For instance, Bruce Ackerman claims that the reason why we should

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<sup>23</sup> Perfectionism in ethics distinguishes between human nature perfectionism and objective goods perfectionism. The first maintains that the primary moral duty of human beings is to develop their human nature. The second maintains that their primary duty is to lead a good or successful life.

<sup>24</sup> For different views on the normative status of the neutrality principle as non-derivative see more Charles Larmore, *Patterns of Moral Complexity* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 42-67, and Bruce Ackerman, *Social Justice in the Liberal State* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980), 11-12, 368-369.



endorse the neutrality principle is because no conception of the good can be known to be the best while Charles Larmore claims that the neutrality principle is required as a norm of rational dialogue in case of disagreement, where individuals are required to search for a neutral or shared ground. While I sympathize to some extent with Ackerman's position, I do not endorse in this dissertation ethical skepticism. The strategy I deploy, however, in arguing for the value of personal autonomy in the upcoming chapters, via the constitutive significance of autonomy for the existence of personal values, might partly resonate with his proposal. Unlike his view though, personal values are but one category of values and they are compatible, in my view, with there being values simpliciter. Hence no broadly conceived ethical skepticism will be implied by my defense of the neutrality principle.

Let me, now, return to the explanation of the two requirements grounding the neutrality principle. I will start with explaining the ground for the first. The state oath to treat its citizens as equal because they all possess to a requisite level the capacity for autonomy in a minimal and in a narrow sense<sup>25</sup>. By the first I understand a mere capacity to be self-directed which implies at the first instance that an individual sees oneself as "author of intentional changes in the world,"<sup>26</sup> namely, one sees that one's choices and actions proceed from one's deliberations. As a consequence, such person sees one self, as Rawls puts it, "as a self-authenticating source of valid claims" and is capable to have a conception of the good and to take responsibility for the actions he causes<sup>27</sup>. These are minimal internal requirements which constitute the capacity for autonomy in a minimal sense and which are sufficient

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<sup>25</sup> To treat them as equals the state oaths to show equal concern and equal respect for them. These two principles "act in concert." The state shows equal concern towards its citizens when it attaches equal importance to the faith of each individual when formulating and enacting its policies and it shows equal respect when it respects the exercise of their capacities for autonomy equally. See more in Ronald Dworkin, *Sovereign Virtue* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2000), 1. The state treats its citizens with equal respect when it recognizes them as agents capable to take responsibility for their choices.

<sup>26</sup> Stanley Benn talks about these capacities as capacities of the autarchic person. See Stanley Benn, *A Theory of Freedom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 177.

<sup>27</sup> John Rawls, *Political Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 30-33.

to grant the equality of citizens, but are insufficient to ground the neutrality principle, as having such capacities is compatible with having non-autonomous choices. The neutrality principle does not presuppose, however, that the pursuits of its citizens are non-autonomous, but rather autonomous. If this is so, then it presupposes that individuals possess broader capacities for autonomy which include not only capacities for self-directed, but for autonomous agency, as manifested in the formation of their conceptions of the good. I call these latter “capacities for autonomy in a narrow sense”. These capacities imply that citizens have requisite mental capacities, freedoms from particular types of interferences and some access to what I will term later as “generally adequate means”. In Chapters Two and Three I elaborate in details on these conditions. It suffices to state here that these are capacities for autonomy in narrow sense and the products of their exercise, the autonomously formed conception of the good, when pursued, mandates respect<sup>28</sup>. As equals and on presumption that their pursuits are autonomous, citizens are entitled to equal respect for their autonomy, a requirement which the state discharges by being committed to the neutrality principle. Hence the entitlement to equal respect for autonomy grounds the neutrality principle.

It is important to be explicit here about my particular understanding of what respect for a person’s autonomy requires, as that will prove important for the argument later. I maintain that respect for another person’s autonomy establishes two requirements: first, one should recognize appropriately that a person is capable to decide for oneself what is valuable and second, one should not interfere with the exercise of one’s capacities for autonomy, in the sense of manipulating or coercing one to accept as valuable something one does not consider so. Let these two requirements be respectively

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<sup>28</sup> Aside from the capacities for autonomy in a minimal and narrow sense I distinguish also the capacities for autonomy in a broad sense which is required by the particular ideal and conception of personal autonomy I will propose in the upcoming two chapters. The three different levels of capacities for autonomy correspond to three different degrees in being an autonomous person as well as to different normative responses by others. This last will become apparent in Chapter Four where I discuss the value of personal autonomy, where the three levels of capacities appear as bearers of different characterizations of the value of autonomy.

called, the “recognition” and the “non-interference” requirement for respect for autonomy. Paternalistic actions in the sense I understand them below - under the so called “judgement-view” - need not involve interference with the exercise of the capacities of an individual, and yet fail the first criteria of respect as they rest on a negative judgment about the capability of an individual to choose for oneself or to be a source of valid claims. One may ask further, when does one “appropriately recognize one’s capability for autonomy”? The answer I will defend throughout this dissertation is that one does so when one recognizes the other person as a legitimate source of personal values due to the possession of this capability. As I will talk in details in Chapter Four, where I specify the value of personal autonomy, that requires ultimately an acceptance of a claim which might seem uninterestingly and trivially true on first sight but which with some axiological qualifications can be given a more critical position in thinking about autonomy: namely that one might have good reasons to value something, which are of purely personal character or which are due to a different balancing between the values we commonly attach to a choice, etc. There are various different ways in which choices can be significant for a person, aside from having instrumental value, which supply one with different reasons for valuing an option and which add, to whatever other reason there might be for valuing something. In the history of ethics many expressed doubts whether the concept of “personal value” makes sense in the first place, but as I will show in Chapter Four, their views are unfounded and the very existence of personal values as a category in fact elucidates central features of the value of personal autonomy.

The second condition for respect for autonomy is, I believe, uncontroversial: one might recognize one’s capability to decide for one self and yet interfere with one’s freedom to exercise them in ways that one is either forced or manipulated in endorsing an option one does not value. There are different ways of understanding coercion and manipulation which will reflect differently on the conditions under which they threaten the autonomy of an individual. I will not venture in that direction now. For

understanding the second requirement for respect for autonomy here, suffices to say that they are such interferences which succumb the appropriately reasonable exercise of the capacities for autonomy. In Chapter Three, I will review in details the conditions under which manipulation and coercion threaten autonomy.

In “Political Liberalism”, Rawls stresses another way in which states should be neutral as well. In contemporary democratic societies citizens find themselves in pervasive disagreement about the values of different conceptions of the good, in good faith. If the state is not-neutral in its justifications, in the above-mentioned sense, towards the different conceptions of the good its citizens pursue, then it cannot pretend to gain the support for the exercise of its coercive power from those citizens who are disadvantaged by the discriminatory justification and enactment of such policies, as they cannot accept the reasons offered from within their comprehensive conceptions of the good. This ultimately brings into question the legitimacy of state power: if the state is to have legitimate power it must justify its use by reasons which all *reasonable* citizens can be expected to accept from whatever particular *reasonable* conceptions of the good they pursue. Hence the requirement for the state to exercise legitimate power, justify the neutrality principle as well.

Few qualifications on this second justification are necessary. I stressed on two places above the terms “reasonable citizens” and “reasonable conceptions of the good.” When they freely exercise their capacities for autonomy citizens form all sorts of conceptions of the good that can be claimed, following Rawls to constitute the “fact of pluralism” in a society: some of these conceptions can be claimed to be reasonable, while others not. In contrast to the fact of pluralism, the reasonable conceptions of the good only, constitute the “fact of reasonable pluralism”<sup>29</sup>. Unreasonable

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<sup>29</sup> Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, 63-66.

conceptions of the good are those which reject some of the fundamental values of a liberal morality, for instance, that citizens are free or equal. Citizens are unreasonable when they refuse to treat others as free and equal, refuse to propose and abide to fair terms of cooperation, and refuse to accept the burdens of judgment<sup>30</sup>. So, the claim above that the state's justification should be neutral due to the legitimacy requirement, should be understood as limited in scope, ranging only over the conceptions constituting the fact of reasonable pluralism. While this means that unreasonable citizens are not *owed* neutral justification because they are excluded from the constituency of the public justification, it does not imply that they should not be treated as persons,<sup>31</sup> nor that this is a sufficient reason to deprive them from having liberal rights<sup>32</sup>.

Perfectionists challenge both justifications of the neutrality principle: that equal respect for individual's autonomy entails neutrality in the above-mentioned sense and that it is plausible that one is neutral in the sense entailed by the principle of legitimacy. Aside from perfectionists, some anti-perfectionists do not endorse this second type of neutrality in the form specified above either, for reasons I will explain in the next section. Recall that perfectionists hold that there are no principled reasons against the state promoting the good life through its policies, even if these are controversial and subject to reasonable disagreement. If this claim of theirs is true, then perfectionism is true. If there is however

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<sup>30</sup> Accepting the "burdens of judgement" implies that one accepts the "fact that reasonable people can reasonably and fundamentally disagree about what is important and/or valuable in life" and that this "reasonable disagreement derives from a number of sources, including: the existence of conflicting evidence, disagreement over the relative weight of different pieces of evidence, the indeterminacy of 'hard cases', the effect of past experience on our interpretation of present experience, incommensurability of values". See Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, 56-57.

<sup>31</sup> Based on their possession of capacities for autonomy in a narrow sense, as discussed above.

<sup>32</sup> See more in Jonathan Quong, "The Rights of Unreasonable Citizens," *Journal of Political Philosophy* Vol.12, Issue 3 (September 2004): 314-335 and in Matthew Clayton and David Stevens, "When God Commands Disobedience: Political Liberalism and Unreasonable Religions," *Res Publica* 20 (2014): 65-84. This poses the problem of what is the right way to respond to those citizens. Some such as Quong argue for a non-engagement approach while Clayton advocates for engagement by addressing the falsity of the unreasonable claims one may hold from within their comprehensive doctrine.

only one principled reason why the state should not promote sound ideal of the good when they are controversial, then their modus tollens cannot hold: namely, it follows that perfectionism is false.

I present below two arguments based on which we can lay two separate cases for the impermissibility of the promotion of sound controversial ideals of the good: the first one claims that such promotions fail to satisfy the recognition requirement for respect for one's autonomy, while the second maintains that they fail on the non-interference requirement. In the first case, I rely heavily of Jonathan Quong's case against perfectionism, although I do not share his view about what is wrong with paternalism as construed under his judgement-based view. Here, I will mainly recap his discussion from "Liberalism Without Perfection" regarding the argument against perfectionist promotions from paternalism. The second argument is peculiar for the conception of personal autonomy I offer in this dissertation, as it naturally stems from the requirements of one of its constitutive elements, the condition for outcome-independence. Since this is my central argument against the perfectionist commitment as formulated above, I will devote to it more space than the previous one.

The first argument claims the following: promoting controversial conceptions of the good is paternalistic and paternalism is presumptively wrong because it misrecognizes the capability of individuals to decide for themselves what is valuable. This violates the recognition requirement for respect for one's autonomy. The second argument claims that promoting controversial conceptions of the good, even though through non-coercive means, has the necessary effect of pushing individuals into making involuntary choices. Such choices, which as I will claim below are not outcome-independent, are inimical to autonomy and consequently this kind of interference by the state is in violation of the non-interference requirement for respect for one's autonomy.

I focus on these two arguments against perfectionism because both of them in my formulation make a key reference to the value of personal autonomy, allowing us to elucidate aspects of its value on which anti-perfectionists and perfectionists disagree. I have to mention that the neutrality principle can be defended on other ground as well, in particular through the so called “social unity” argument. While this is an important argument for the defense of the neutrality as grounded on the legitimacy requirement, I will set it aside for the present purposes. I believe however that both arguments I present below offer sound reasons against perfectionism and are sufficient to indirectly justify the anti-perfectionist commitment to the neutrality principle.

## 2.1. Argument from paternalism

The first argument has been proposed by Jonathan Quong who maintains that state promotions are almost always paternalistic. Throughout this dissertation I will assume Quong’s judgement-based view on paternalistic actions although my account of what is wrong with paternalism differs from his. The judgement-based view holds that an action is paternalistic if the following two conditions are met: (1) an agent A attempts to improve the welfare, good, happiness, needs, interests, or values of agent B with regard to a particular decision or situation that B faces and (2) A’s act is motivated by a negative judgement about B’s ability (assuming B has the relevant information) to make the right decision or manage the particular situation in a way that will effectively advance B’s welfare, good, happiness, needs, interests, or values.<sup>33</sup>

According to Quong there is only a small portion of state promotions of controversial conceptions of the good which do not imply paternalism in the above specified sense. These include the cases where

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<sup>33</sup> Quong, *Liberalism Without Perfection*, 80.

due to lack of information citizens are impeded in experiencing certain valuable options and rare cases of promotion of unusual public goods in which it is impossible to exclude individuals from experiencing a good which has to take place in the public.<sup>34</sup> However, most instances of perfectionist promotions seem to be of a different character. Imagine that the state subsidizes new productions of the national opera with the justificatory reasons being the artistic and aesthetic values intrinsic to these productions. The key question for perfectionists, whose answers, according to Quong, reveal their paternalistic stand, is the following: why is state promotion necessary at all? Several answers are possible which with the exception of the cases I mentioned above - which are uncommon for perfectionists' promotion of sound ideal - all imply paternalism.

The first answer claims that state promotion is necessary because it is impossible to provide for the option based solely on individual contributions. But why is it impossible? A perfectionist might answer in the following way. "Because most of the people do not choose to support it and they do not support it because they do not have sufficiently refined evaluative capacities to respond to the value of opera. Since however it is a valuable form of art, the state is here to intervene, and secure the existence of this valuable option for its citizens". This answer is obviously paternalistic according to the definition of paternalism above and needs no further explanation.

A second answer why is promotion necessary might not directly cite as a reason the insufficiently refined evaluative capacities by the citizens, but that they are in some way weak willed and although they judge properly what is valuable and what not, fail to act on those better judgements, and support pop culture instead. This is again paternalistic, although in a different way, as it again makes a negative judgement about the capacities of individuals to act on their intentions and evaluative judgements.

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<sup>34</sup> Quong, *Liberalism Without Perfection*, 94-95 and 89-90.



The third answer is that the state promotes opera because it is expensive, and as such people who do not dispose with sufficient resources cannot afford it. So, by subsidizing these options the state makes a valuable cultural option accessible to all the citizens. But then we need to ask about the reasons why this option is so expensive? There are two possible answers. Either it is the case that it requires resources which are expensive, perhaps because they are genuinely scarce, or there are no such resources involved but since no one chooses to pursue it as an option the lack of demand makes the price of available resources to pursue it high. If this latter is the case in explaining the lack of demand, I believe it is unavoidable that the state falls back into a justification of the promotion of the option based on the paternalistic argument above about the incapacities of citizens to recognize the good or act on it. If the former is the case, then the issue is better to be treated as a matter of justice, requiring a redistribution, after which the citizens can be able to decide how to use their resources, rather than the state helping them to attain valuable activities by sponsoring the activities. But if one claims that seeing this issue as a matter of justice should not be preferred, but rather the direct sponsoring of opera, then we have good reasons to suspect that the justification for this answer would overlap with some of the paternalistic ones from above: namely, it is preferable that the state intervenes by subsidizing certain options directly because it distrusts that the citizens would “properly” use the redistributed shares in endorsing opera as an option. This distrust can be justified ultimately based on the supposition of their faulty capacities to evaluate the good or their weak will and incapacity to act on their better judgements.

To conclude: if we consider the reasons why a state does promote certain sound ideals we see that all of them, with exception of a small portion of cases mentioned above, imply paternalism<sup>35</sup>. Since paternalism offends against the first requirement of respect, as I mentioned above, we have one principled reason to object to the state promotion of sound ideals.

## 2.2. Argument from outcome-independence

Liberal perfectionists aim to limit the legitimate means which the state has on disposal in promoting sound ideals, due to their commitment to personal autonomy. They believe that the state should avoid using coercive or manipulative measures as in most of the cases they seem to be improper means to satisfy the second requirement for respect for autonomy above<sup>36</sup>. They also believe that they can promote sound ideals through the variety of non-coercive means the state has on disposal for promotion. These include taxing, subsidizing particular activities by giving grants or by offering tax incentives, public campaigns, educational programs, conferring honors etc. The above argument showed that such promotions in most of the cases are paternalistic and hence presumptively wrong. But those who reject the judgment-view on paternalism might not be convinced by the argument.

Can we offer another reason why promotion of sound ideals would be impermissible? I maintain that promotion of controversial conceptions of the good, even if done with non-coercive means, can have coercive effects on individuals, making them endorse involuntary a conception of the good, because they cannot bear the costs which the state intentionally incurs on the pursue on the conceptions of

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<sup>35</sup> I limit the argument here only to these three ways in which the state policies might imply paternalism as applied on the example of opera promotion. For additional ways in which state promotions can be paternalist see Quong, *Liberalism without Perfection*, Ch 3.

<sup>36</sup> As I mentioned above coercion cannot principally be rejected from all perfectionist moralities as a mean for promotion.

the good, which are discouraged through its act. To defend this claim, I will need to posit two building blocks for the argument to follow. The first is regarding the relation between the inherent features of a conceptions of the good and the costs of the adequate means for its pursue, within the process of forming a conception of the good. The second is about the role of individual responsibility in forming a conception of the good.

Let's start with the first. People commit to a conception of the good for features they value, which are inherent in the conception of the good. As I will explain in Chapter Three where I will propose the outcome-independence condition for autonomy, an individual fails to autonomously form a conception of the good when his commitment is undertaken for reasons which do not refer to the inherent features of that conception of the good, but refer, for instance, to the will of another person in a non-derivative way. If Tom doesn't miss any premiere in the national opera, with the reason being "Lucy told me that only people with great tastes go to the opera", we can't claim that Tom's opera visits are autonomous, if that's really the non-derivative reason why he goes there. Of course, it might be the case that he is autonomous aside from that being the reasons, if this reason is derivative from another commitment of his which is genuinely non-derivative: namely: "I like to follow Lucy's judgments, whatever they are." But other than that, such commitments which I claim not to be outcome-independent - in the sense that the reasons for them do not refer to any inherently valued features of the conception one is committing to non-derivatively - are sufficient to make one non-autonomous. In my conception of autonomy - as exposed in details in Chapter Three - the condition for independence for autonomy takes two forms: procedural and outcome independence. The virtue of the outcome-independence condition I propose, as formulated above, is that through the formal

features of the reasons for commitment it can track the voluntariness of the formation of a commitment to a conception of the good<sup>37</sup>.

So, when individuals autonomously commit to their conceptions of the good, they commit for reasons referring to inherent values of those conceptions of the good. However, they do not just commit to any conception of the good, but they form them with an eye on the adequate means which they can access: it is not the case that they form their conception of the good out of nowhere, or commit themselves to something they cannot usually find adequate means to pursue. This implies that when forming their conceptions of the good individuals take responsibility for the costs which an outcome-independent commitment will incur on them, which ultimately results in taking a responsibility for living autonomously.

Returning now to the argument. Suppose that the state decides to support new CD productions of the national opera, and it decides to do it indirectly, by discouraging foreign opera CD productions through taxation. Imagine, further, that Tom is a singing teacher and an opera fan, from a small town in which the only way he can access new opera productions is through a local music shop which luckily for him, only sells opera CDs: national and foreign. He is thrilled by the foreign one, but has quite a bad opinion about the domestic. Unfortunately for Tom, since the introduction of the taxes on foreign CDs he can't afford them. He has two options: he can become engaged with national opera or he can stop listening music, as he is not interested in anything else. He can do both, either autonomously or non-autonomously. To do them autonomously, he has to somehow be struck by the realization either of how valuable, in fact, national opera is, or by the value of any not-listening-to-music-activity for

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<sup>37</sup> Just to be clear: this condition cannot be claimed to threaten the content-neutrality of my account of autonomy. Note for instance that under my account if Tom autonomously endorses to follows “whatever” Lucy says to him, he retains his autonomy. In contrast virtually all substantive accounts would consider him non-autonomous.

whatever outcome-independent reason, and this somehow has to occur right after the price change of the foreign opera CDs. Considering how people form their central commitments in life, to expect this, seems highly implausible. Maybe if someone was hypnotized-like and, all of a sudden, a momentary change makes one realize the “true” values in life, he can be one such case. I don’t mean to deny that there are such change-of-life experiences but I don’t think this is the case with most individuals. Hence, whatever option Tom plausibly chooses it would mean loss of his autonomy: namely, he will not be autonomous if he stops listening music or starts listening national opera CDs, with the reason being that the foreign ones are too expensive! The outcome-independence condition above I believe accounts well for this judgment. This shows that actions of promotion/discouragement of conceptions of the good, even if done with non-coercive means, violate the second condition for respect for individuals’ autonomy and interfere with the exercise of their capacities for autonomy by making them involuntarily endorse options they do not consider valuable. Of course, as I mentioned, Tom may choose autonomously not to listen to music at all where the reasons for this choice is something like “I would rather not listen anything, than listen to national opera.” But that would be self-defeating for a perfectionist state: instead of enriching the lives of its citizens with perfections through its promotive acts, it contributes to impoverishing them.

One may ask: isn’t it possible that Tom in fact develops an autonomous preference for national opera in future? And since the national opera is, in fact, valuable, wouldn’t that make the state action permissible in the end? The answer is no: even if Tom develops an autonomous preference for national opera at a future time,  $t+1$ , that does not make the state act of pushing him into making an involuntary choice any less disrespectful for his autonomy at the time of taxation of foreign opera,  $t$ . Individuals who possess capacities for autonomy mandate respect for their pursuits which cannot be violated for the sake of the achievement of more autonomy in future.

But surely, one may object, Tom might have changed his preferences even in case the state did not impose taxes on foreign opera, but due to price change made by opera recording companies. It would be out of place to claim that the companies disrespected Tom because they raised the prices to a level he can't afford! The general point of this objection would then be the following: when we form our autonomous preferences, we do not form them with some maximal possible option set for choice, in which we first evaluate each conception of the good because of its "inherent values", but we kind of engage with what we have as an option in our social, cultural, political environment. That is what the claim about the relation between our preferences and the costs for pursuing them amounts to, in respect of the formation of our commitments to a conception of the good as mentioned in the building blocks for this argument. Why wouldn't the case after the state action of discouragement above be treated in a similar way, as simply amounting to another state of affairs in which Tom has to again revise his conception of the good in light of the newly accessible means? My response is that the analogy cannot hold because when we form our conceptions of the good autonomously, we do not form them involuntarily and without responsibility. The discouraging policy of the state does not say to Tom "why don't you give national opera a try?". It is not an invitation for him to revise his commitment to a conception of the good. On the contrary. It mandates that he does it or he has to revise it! And given Tom's conception of the good he cannot say "I would rather not" without stepping involuntarily into living an impoverished life. The effect of the policy is a *coerced revision* that undermines the responsibility of an agent for how his life goes, which responsibility, however, is necessary in the process of formation of conceptions of the good.

It is important to note, here, how my argument against state promotion of controversial conceptions of the good is different from a similar one given by Jeremy Waldron, which is vulnerable to the last

reply above. According to Waldron the reasons that make the state promotion wrong in the case above would have to do with manipulation rather than the involuntariness of the choice in the sense I deployed it. He believes that the decision whether or not to do a discouraged activity has to be taken “on the intrinsic merits” of that activity rather than on account of “artificially imposed consequences” by the state.<sup>38</sup> So, Waldron concludes that “taxing an activity in order to discourage it might be wrong, for it prevents people from refraining from it for the right reasons”. Raz’s objection to this is that the reliance of Waldron on a supposed “notion of intrinsic merit and demerit which is independent of social conditions”, is hard to sustain. Raz offers the following counterexamples: “If a multimillionaire buys all tickets to all London concerts and then offers them for sale at a twenty-five percent discount, his action does not differ much from governments offering a subsidy to music promoters in exchange for reducing the price of concert tickets. So presumably this multimillionaire is doing us a disservice and should desist. Now imagine that as a result of political persecution a large number of Hungarian musicians flee to London where they are willing to appear for lower wages, resulting in a 25% drop in the price of concert tickets. Is this also a distortion of the true price of music?”<sup>39</sup>

I believe Raz’s response to Waldron is successful, aside from Waldron’s well-founded intuition that there is something wrong with individual’s autonomy in not deciding whether to do or not an activity “on the intrinsic merits” of that activity. The problem with Waldron’s argument is that he wrongly locates the wrong inflicted on autonomy through the discouragement policy as lying in the manipulative effect of the policy and that the manipulative effect can be demonstrated by claiming that the state policy incites individuals to revise their conceptions of the good on virtue of the costs rather than the merits of the conception of the good. But if we don’t have a claim against the

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<sup>38</sup> Jeremy Waldron, “Autonomy and Perfectionism in Raz’s ‘Morality of Freedom’,” *62 Southern California Law Review* (1989): 1145.

<sup>39</sup> Raz, “Facing Up”, 1234.

multimillionaire's interferences in disturbing the costs for doing music in London in Raz's example, as being manipulative, why would we have it against the state when it does it?

Unlike Waldron, I do not think that the discouraging policy of the state has to do with manipulation, namely with "interfering with the way people form their beliefs about value"<sup>40</sup> nor that the "imposition of the tax...is necessarily manipulative, for it influences a person's decision by distorting that individual's understanding of the merits of the choice."<sup>41</sup> The intention of the discouragement policy does not necessarily have to do with the way people form their beliefs about value as I don't think the state is not interested whether they will fall short of the ideal of belief formation, whether they will be "lead astray" from their beliefs in not engaging with their options.<sup>42</sup> The intention of the policy is people to engage with the favored option by the state irrespective of whether they would be manipulated or not: it raises the costs of the discouraged conceptions of the good, makes individuals fall short of adequate means for pursue and undermines their responsibility for the formation of their conceptions of the good. In the example above, Tom is not manipulated when engaging with the options remaining – it is not the case that after he can't afford foreign CDs he kind a started to believe that maybe national opera is not that bad after all - rather he simply involuntarily engages with them because he has no viable alternative left. So, while there may be no right reasons to engage with an option in the sense that Waldron think, we can account based on the formal characteristic of the reasons one offers for one's engagement whether one voluntarily or involuntary commits to an option which affects the evaluation of one's autonomy.

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<sup>40</sup> Jeremy Waldron "Autonomy and Perfectionism in Raz's 'Morality of Freedom' ", 1145.

<sup>41</sup> Jeremy Waldron "Autonomy and Perfectionism in Raz's 'Morality of Freedom' ", 1146.

<sup>42</sup> On defining manipulation see Robert Noggle, "Manipulative Action: A Conceptual and Moral Analysis," *American Philosophical Quarterly* Vol.33, No.1 (January 1996): 44.



To conclude: the argument above demonstrates that state promotions necessarily lead some citizens to involuntarily engage with an option, and thus interfere with their autonomy. Since this is in tension with the second requirement for respect for individual's autonomy, state promotions of controversial conceptions of the good should be considered impermissible. Since both arguments, from paternalism and from outcome-independence, point out to the impermissibility of state promotions of controversial conceptions of the good, I conclude that we have principled reason against the promotion of sound ideals by the state, as well as principled reasons to reject perfectionism.

### **3. The justificatory roles of the value of autonomy**

The arguments against perfectionism from Section Two, can be considered as indirect justification for the application of the neutrality principle in the political life of a society. Political anti-perfectionists, however, maintain that liberals should be committed not only to the application of the neutrality principle in the political life but also to its neutral justification. In this section I will argue that such requirement cannot plausibly be met because of the necessity to appeal to the value of personal autonomy in the justification of liberal rights, which we commonly grant through the principles of justice we endorse. Here, the value of personal autonomy, I maintain, plays a twofold justificatory role in an anti-perfectionist morality: we appeal to it as a basis for devising the principles of justice and we appeal to it as a basis for the legitimacy of the use of state power based on them.

I believe that the best - or most convenient - way to elucidate these justificatory roles of personal autonomy is perhaps with reference to Rawls' conception of justice as fairness in "A Theory of Justice". Rawls' conception of justice is worked out on the initial suppositions of two models: one about the well-ordered society of free and equal citizens and another one about the features of the citizens of that society conceived as moral persons. However, within a political culture there is

disagreement about what the freedom and equality of citizens imply and hence about the content of the conception of justice. So, Rawls introduces a third model within which this disagreement can be overcome. This is the model of the original position which mediates among the first two models, as well as, between the model of the moral persons and the principles of justice to be selected from the original position. The purpose of the original position is to model an ideal, fair situation between the citizens of a well-ordered society, who only on base of their features, as free and equal moral persons, would settle their disagreement over the way the basic institutions in a democratic society - as represented by principles of freedom and equality - are to be arranged, by agreeing on the principles of justice which are to regulate their fair social cooperation.

Where does the value of personal autonomy fit in such derivation? The brief answer is that we appeal to the value of personal autonomy when we posit the interest of moral persons, which shapes their deliberation within the original position about the principles of justice and which is reflected as advanced, or protected, in the agreed principles of justice.<sup>43</sup> I will make a small recourse into Rawls' theory to make this claim more explicit. The model of moral persons, which Rawls deploys, entails that citizens regard themselves as possessing two moral capacities: a capacity for a sense of justice and a capacity for a conception of the good. The first one is a capacity to "understand, to apply and to act from the public conception of justice which characterizes the fair terms of social cooperation" while the second is a "capacity to form, to revise and rationally to pursue a conception of one's rational advantage or good."<sup>44</sup> These two capacities of citizens, according to Rawls, ground their highest-order interests which are interests to exercise and to realize these two moral powers<sup>45</sup>. Since the second

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<sup>43</sup> Hence when I claim that personal autonomy plays a justificatory role in the derivation of principles of justice what I mean is that the interest in living an autonomous life, as expressed in a particular ideal of autonomy, serves as a basis on which these principles are devised.

<sup>44</sup> John Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, 19.

<sup>45</sup> See John Rawls, "Kantian Constructivism in Moral Theory: Rational and Full Autonomy," *Journal of Philosophy* Vol.77, Issue 9 (September 1980): 525.

moral capacity is coextensive with what we commonly call capacities for autonomy, the highest order interest based on this capacity can be characterized as an interest in developing and exercising capacities for autonomy. In addition to the moral power to form, revise and pursue a conception of the good, moral persons as representatives in the original position are also supposed to be – as Rawls calls them – “determinate persons”, namely ones which possess *a particular* conception of the good, although in the procedure they do not know what that conception of the good is<sup>46</sup>. Unlike the previous “highest-order interest in autonomy”, this stipulation is the ground for their “higher-order interest in autonomy” which can be understood as an interest in “advancing their conception of the good, whatever that conception might be”<sup>47</sup>. So, having into consideration their highest and higher order interests and being rational in their deliberations in advancing them – namely, being guided by principles of rational choice such as adoption of effective means to ends, balancing of ends according to the importance for one’s life plans, etc.- the individuals in the original position which is constructed in the above-described fashion, select or devise the principles of justice to govern the distribution of primary goods (all-purpose means or means to develop the two moral powers such as liberties, opportunities, income and wealth).

Based on this excursion into Rawls’ constructivism in “A Theory of Justice” we can note the following uses of autonomy within a liberal morality, on which we can base its justificatory role for the principles of justice. First, *capacities for autonomy*, are stipulated as a defining feature of moral persons. Second, based on these capacities for autonomy, individuals are ascribed two different *interests: interests in developing and exercising these capacities* – for the sake of forming, revising and pursuing a conception of

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<sup>46</sup> Rawls, “Kantian Constructivism in Moral Theory: Rational and Full Autonomy,” 525.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid. In addition to these interests, I have to mention that a supposition in the model of the well-ordered society is that its members are equal and free, and one of the senses in which they regard themselves as free is that they do not think that they are inevitably committed to the pursue of the conceptions of the good they pursue but that they also have capacity to change their commitments on rational and reasonable grounds. See Rawls, “Kantian Constructivism in Moral Theory: Rational and Full Autonomy,” 522.

the good - and an *interest in advancing the particular conceptions of the good they autonomously formed*. I take the conjunction of the highest and the higher order interests of individuals, who regard themselves as free (and equal), to correspond to an interest in global personal autonomy, understood as an *interest in living an autonomous life*. Based on these uses we can derive the role of the value of autonomy within a liberal political morality. This value as attached to the interest of individual in living autonomously (namely to the interest in the development and exercise of their capacities for autonomy and the interest in advancing a particular conception of the good) grounds – along with the commitment to fairness - the process of devising the principles of justice within the original position. If individuals do not possess such interest, it would hardly make sense to devise principles of justice in the first place. In this sense I understand the value of autonomy as having a *justificatory* role in the devising of principles of justice.

One may ask whether it is really the value of autonomy we presuppose in the process of devising the principles of justice. Can't we just claim it is just a stipulation we are making, as we clearly cannot derive the principles of justice from nothing? Can't it be the case that what we presuppose are the capacities for autonomy and not their value? This seems implausible, however. As Ronald Dworkin has pointed out<sup>48</sup>, we have many different capacities but not all of them are worth advancing. If from stipulation of the capacities for autonomy we derive highest and higher order interest, then we must take the interest in their exercise as valuable. So, we do presuppose the value of autonomy in the justification of the principles of justice, and not just the mere existence of such capacities in citizens.

It is important to stress that in Rawls' Theory of Justice aside from this justificatory role of the value of personal autonomy within the original position, the stipulation of the capacities for autonomy, as the second moral power, plays a key role in the legitimation of the principles of justice, albeit via the

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<sup>48</sup> Ronald Dworkin, "Comment on Narveson: In Defense of Equality, *Social Philosophy and Policy* Vol.1, Issue 1 (Autumn 1984): 26.

value of a different kind of autonomy, Kantian or moral autonomy. While the principles of justice are justified within the original position on the above-mentioned assumptions, we still need an argument for why citizens of a well-ordered society, who are not under the veil of ignorance but know and pursue diverse conceptions of the good, would accept and be motivated to govern their conduct in congruence with those principles of justice? In his argument on the basis for the stability of a society governed by his conception of justice, Rawls claims that the reason why they would do so is because the principles of justice as devised under the veil of ignorance are solely based on the nature of citizens as free and equal rational beings and because every citizen of the well-ordered society would have an effective desire to express their nature as a free and equal rational being,<sup>49</sup> they would all accept and act in accordance with those principles of justice. By claiming this, Rawls seems to suppose that citizens as having capacities for autonomy and seeing each other as free and equal, all have interests expressed in some shared particular ideal of Kantian or moral autonomy, which is the base on which they accept the justification for the principles of justice.

While I don't endorse Rawls's particular argument for the stability of a well-ordered society as based on the shared interest of citizens in Kantian autonomy, I do acknowledge his concern for legitimacy of the coercive power of the state in accordance with the principles of justice. I believe however such basis should be found, in analogy with the supposed interest in living autonomously within the original position, in some ideal of personal autonomy, rather than in Kantian autonomy. Moreover, I maintain that it is unavoidable to do so, if we are to grant the autonomy-protecting liberties we commonly grant as liberals.

Many political anti-perfectionists, including Rawls himself, in his "Political Liberalism", find such proposal about the value of autonomy as having implications that make one's account of a liberal

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<sup>49</sup> John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1971), Ch.86.

morality controversial, in the sense that they make liberalism yet another sectarian doctrine among others. The legitimacy principle mandates that the state justifies the exercise of its power in accordance with the principles of justice to its citizens with reasons they would be expected to share. The above proposed justification of the principles of justice - namely the justification of liberties, opportunities, a particular scheme of distribution - cannot meet this test of legitimacy, because it relies on the false assumption that all individuals share the same ideal of living autonomously. Political anti-perfectionists maintain, thus, that if they are to pass the legitimacy test, the principles of justice should be “self-standing”, based solely on the acceptance of specifically political values which unlike the ethical, comprehensive ideals (such as the ideal of the autonomous life), can plausibly be expected to be shared among all citizens. These are values that are implicit in the democratic culture of our societies such as citizen’s equality and freedom. The justification of the principles of justice would be legitimate, only when it appeals to reasons such as these which can be expected to be endorsed in an overlapping consensus, reached from the position of each person’s comprehensive doctrine. Of course, some people might find the principles of justice acceptable because they indeed endorse an ideal of living autonomously as constituting their good, but we cannot presuppose that this holds for everyone.

A problem for political anti-perfectionists who endorse this argument, however, is to plausibly justify the liberty rights we would like to grant with the principles of justice. As Matthew Clayton points out it is not clear why someone who lives a life committed to a comprehensive doctrine which does not value individual liberties would be motivated to agree on all the liberties which political anti-perfectionists such as Rawls would like to grant to individuals. Why would someone who, for instance, aims to live a devoted religious life far from all temptations, and who does not have an interest in revising his conception of the good would agree on such liberties? What reasons would he have to

advance these freedoms?<sup>50</sup> Rawls response is that such a person would agree on the distribution of those liberties as a reasonable citizen, as one who accepts the burdens of judgement and the basic liberal commitments to freedom, equality and fairness, but not as a “private individual”. There are two problems with this response: one regarding its empirical plausibility and normative desirability, the other regarding the motivational economy of such individual. First, as Levinson notes<sup>51</sup> there are good reasons to be skeptical that individuals can indeed psychologically detach from their most fundamental commitments and act on their compartmentalized identities as citizens. Moreover, it seems normatively implausible to suppose that they should do that, even if they can. In this direction Callan stresses that to “retain a lively understanding of the burdens of judgement in political contexts while suppressing it everywhere else would require a feat of gross self-deception that cannot be squared with personal integrity”.<sup>52</sup> Second, even if we grant that individuals can separate in their motivations and actions their public and private identity, one can still ask: why would such an individual be motivated to weight more the former identity rather than the latter? It is difficult to imagine that a sincerely devoted religious person who tries to avoid temptations because of a fear of eternal damnation in hell would give primacy to one’s political considerations. He seems to have more reasons to care for his survival, rather than for freedom<sup>53</sup>. If this is so, then it seems implausible to expect that we can meet the legitimacy requirement in the form political anti-perfectionists purport to and at the same time grant all liberties they intend to.

A more plausible option is to suppose that if in light of the fact of reasonable pluralism we are to justify the principles of justice through which we grant the liberties, we commonly accept as liberals,

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<sup>50</sup> Matthew Clayton, *Justice and Legitimacy in Upbringing* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 25-26.

<sup>51</sup> Meira Levinson, *The Demands of Liberal Education* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999) 17-18.

<sup>52</sup> Eamonn Callan, “Political Liberalism and Political Education,” *Review of Politics* Vol.58, Issue 1 (Winter 1996): 12.

<sup>53</sup> See Matthew Clayton’s discussion in *Justice and Legitimacy in Upbringing* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 25-26.

then we should be committed to the value of some kind of an ideal of personal autonomy and to some extent. If we are to remain anti-perfectionists, we need to take care of the type of ideal of personal autonomy we commit ourselves to, as some such ideals might imply perfectionism. If we do like to retain the legitimacy requirement in some relaxed form, we need to determine the extent to which it is permissible to appeal to such ideal. By meeting these two requirements we set the grounds for partially comprehensive anti-perfectionism, which I defend in the last section of this chapter.

Before I proceed with the argument, let me just note one further, equally important problem which political liberalism faces: namely, by dismissing a justificatory commitment to an ideal of autonomy in regard of the principles of justice, political liberalism seems to deal away with our concerns for personal autonomy for the sake of advancing an ideal of *political* autonomy. Citizens are politically, or fully autonomous, as Rawls claims, when they affirm the principles of justice devised in the original position and when they act on those principles, as their sense of justice dictates. This is a restricted version of the Kantian autonomy argument for stability which Rawls advanced in “A Theory of Justice”, applied not to moral persons in general, but to citizens and their political interest. But clearly, one may be politically autonomous without living up to the ideal of personal autonomy, constructed as a global ideal. Political autonomy does not factor out different forms of manipulation. But, at least under a plausible reading of what it means to respect the autonomy of individuals, it would be incoherent to claim that we ground our neutrality principle on the entitlement of citizens to equal respect of their autonomy and at the same time eschew concerns with the threats for autonomy coming from manipulation, oppression etc., from our political morality. If we are to properly respond to such concerns, we need to engage with personal autonomy in a more fundamental manner than political anti-perfectionism allows to.



#### 4. Justifying a partially-comprehensive account of autonomy-based liberal morality

By accepting the conclusions above about the justificatory roles of the value of personal autonomy within an anti-perfectionist liberal morality I step on a “comprehensive ground” regarding the liberal morality I defend. Two worries regarding this position appear, both challenging the plausibility of anti-perfectionist morality which is “comprehensive”. The first worry is that comprehensive anti-perfectionism collapses into perfectionism. The second worry is that comprehensive anti-perfectionism lacks tools to meet the legitimacy requirement, as its appeal to the value of autonomy is not something all individuals can be expected to share. Both worries are well-grounded, but not unavoidable. I will propose the following constraints on the value of autonomy and its appeals by the state which aim to respond to them respectively. First, the ideal of autonomy should satisfy what I call the two “no-pre-commitment requirements”, and second the appeal to the truth of the justificatory ideal should be partial, only in extraordinary circumstances in which the public justification of its substantive institutions is threatened. In these cases, liberals have to defend the truth of their basic claims and expose the falsity of those who think otherwise. By adding these constraints to the value of autonomy and the state’s appeals to it, I modify and establish my position as *partially comprehensive anti-perfectionist* one<sup>54</sup>.

Let me start with the two requirements on the ideal necessary to avoid perfectionism. The first requires that the ideal of living an autonomous life, does not constitute a particular autonomous way of life,

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<sup>54</sup> See Matthew Clayton on partially comprehensive anti-perfectionism in Matthew Clayton, *Justice and Legitimacy in Upbringing* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006) and Matthew Clayton and David Stevens, “When God Commands Disobedience: Political Liberalism and Unreasonable Religions,” *Res Publica* 20 (2014): 65-84.

with its specific constitutive rules, such as for instance the life of the self-made men, or the life of eccentrics, the Socratic life etc. Why these understandings of the ideal of living autonomously collapse into perfectionism I believe needs no further explanation, as they clearly favor the value of *particular* ways of being autonomous. While some of them seem to be quite common in everyday talk about autonomous persons,<sup>55</sup> none of them is fitting for the role autonomy has in anti-perfectionism, as specified above,<sup>56</sup> in grounding the neutrality principle.

The second requirement implies that the ideal of living autonomously does not impose certain value pre-commitments on individuals, which when realized in an autonomous life, make that life valuable. Some ideals of personal autonomy require that an individual has commitment to a particular norm, attitudes or beliefs in order to qualify as autonomously. Other ideals of personal autonomy require that an individual endorses a particular objectively valuable good, in order for one's autonomy to qualify as valuable. To these understandings of the ideal of personal autonomy and its value I dedicate separate sections in the following two chapters where I reject both views as incompatible with the requirement for equal respect for autonomy which grounds the neutrality principle. Here, it suffices to say that, if a comprehensive liberal endorses such ideal or conception of personal autonomy then it seems unavoidable that one's position collapses into perfectionism. The hybrid ideal and conception of autonomy I will propose in the next two chapters remain faithful to the role of the value of autonomy in anti-perfectionism and are neutral in regard of the value pre-commitments or the endorsed perfections of an autonomous individual.

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<sup>55</sup> See Friedman on the self-made man and Mill on the eccentric life, respectively in Marilyn Friedman, *Autonomy, Gender, Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 91-92 and Mill, *On Liberty, Utilitarianism and Other Essays*, 66.

<sup>56</sup> This constrain makes it also clear that the "caricature position" many commonly argue against when they think about liberals' commitment to autonomy, according to which apparently liberals conceive of autonomous individuals and isolated as self-sufficient can be set aside as implausibly attributed to anti-perfectionists. See Jenifer Nedelsky, *Law's Relations: A Relational Theory of Felf, Autonomy and Law* (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

As for the second constrain, we need to first clarify a distinction among the comprehensive doctrines: between partially and fully-comprehensive doctrines and their difference from the political ones. According to Rawls, one of the distinctive features of a political conception of justice is that it is presented as a free-standing without reference to a wider background, by which he means to values which are not solely in the domain of the political. For instance, a utilitarian conception of justice is not free-standing conception but part of a general and comprehensive doctrine which is dependent on a value of utility and which is considered to hold for all domains of human's life - not just the political – regulating thus personal relations, organizational relations etc. However, there is an important difference to be made among comprehensive conceptions which will prove to be relevant for the possibility to meet a modified version of the legitimacy requirement: a “conception is fully comprehensive if it covers all recognized values and virtues within one rather precisely articulated system; whereas a conception is only partially comprehensive when it comprises a number of, but by no means all, non-political values and virtues and is rather loosely articulated.”<sup>57</sup> When Rawls says “loosely articulated” what he means is that such partially comprehensive conceptions are not systematic, “leaving all values to be balanced against one another, either in groups or singly, in particular kinds of cases”<sup>58</sup>.

Now, political anti-perfectionists believe implausibly, as I demonstrated above, that they can justify their foundation without appeal to comprehensive or even partially comprehensive doctrines to non-political values. As we saw in the counterexample to Rawls above, to the extent that the liberty rights are autonomy-protecting rights – they facilitate the second moral power to form, pursue and revise

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<sup>57</sup> Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, 13.

<sup>58</sup> Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, 145.

conceptions of the good- they necessarily mirror the supposition of the value of living autonomously as attached to the interests of individuals who have capacities for autonomy. This requires that our principles of justice are grounded in some comprehensive conception of the good: the living of an autonomous life. However, considering the unavoidable commitment to the value of an ideal of living autonomously which remains faithful to anti-perfectionism - on condition on satisfying the first constrain on the ideal above - and considering the need for a modified version of the legitimacy requirement to be satisfied – contrary to some perfectionists and fully comprehensive anti-perfections accounts<sup>59</sup> – what stems as a requirement is that we should accept that there are principled limits to the state appeal to the truth of the variety of conceptions of the good its citizens hold<sup>60</sup>. The state should be permitted to appeal to the truth of conceptions of the good, only in extraordinary circumstances in which it is to defend its fundamental commitments.

This is then, a key commitment of partially-comprehensive anti-perfectionism which distinguishes this position from the comprehensive anti-perfectionist ones. Comprehensive anti-perfectionists maintain that if anti-perfectionism is true then the state should promote autonomy<sup>61</sup>. They support their claim by distinguishing autonomy as a second order value while maintaining that anti-perfectionism is committed to neutrality only regarding first order values. Consequently, they can be seen as committed to the claim – in analogy to the commitment of perfectionists- that there are no principled objections to the appeal to the truth *only* of the value of autonomy, as a second order value. A consequence of the comprehensive anti-perfectionist position of this kind, is that it is committed to the claim that the autonomous life is *always* more important than other values.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Some moderate perfectionist accounts do integrate a relaxed version of the legitimacy requirement. See János Kis' discussion in Kis, "State Neutrality," Section VI.

<sup>60</sup> See Clayton and Stevens, "When God Commands Disobedience: Political Liberalism and Unreasonable Religions," 65-84.

<sup>61</sup> Ben Colburn, *Autonomy and Liberalism* (New York/London: Routledge, 2010), 43-44.

<sup>62</sup> Quong, *Liberalism Without Perfection*, 23-24.

Partially comprehensive accounts should not endorse this consequence, as in contrast to comprehensive anti-perfectionists we set restriction on the appeals to the value of the autonomous life, not because of epistemic considerations regarding its truth but from political constraints related to the legitimacy requirement. However, since Rawls' legitimacy criteria as I claimed in the previous chapter is impossible to be satisfied, as no sound conception of justice can deal away with the value of personal autonomy, partially comprehensive anti-perfectionists need to accept a modified version of the legitimacy requirement. While there is much more to be argued regarding the content of such modified legitimacy requirement - and I do not have a work out proposal of how such modified legitimacy requirement should exactly be formulated - my intuition is that such principle should be grounded on at least the following convictions. First, that it is possible for reasonable individuals to reasonably agree on at least abstract principles, about equality and freedom, which although not sufficient to guarantee the consensus which legitimized the principles of justice offers a ground for mutually respectful deliberation and reflection. Second, such principle should be conceived as requiring application of different strategies that can help reaching political agreement on constitutional essentials and the basic implication of the principles of justice. As Rawls claims in discussing the partially comprehensive view: "we must be prepared to accept the fact that only a few questions...can be satisfactorily resolved. Political wisdom consists in identifying those few, and among them the most urgent. That done, we must frame the institutions of the basic structure so that intractable conflicts are unlikely to arise."<sup>63</sup> Reasonable people can reasonably be expected to agree on broad political ideals, which although not sufficient to guarantee political agreement on many of their specific implications, I think is plausible to suppose, that will ground, at least, civility and mutual respect manifested in the process of public deliberations and the justification of political decisions. If this is

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<sup>63</sup> Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, 200.

the case then we can have a respectful forum in which citizens seek common premises and based on those premises advance political agreements on as many issues as possible. In such a forum, it will be common that there are instances where out of political considerations, we might bracket our disagreements and not put forward argument that others are not able to accept. However, in some extraordinary circumstances, in which this type of disagreements appears in respect of illiberal tendencies which threaten the very abstract liberal ideals which are the base for a respectful deliberation, a state should appeal to the truth of the comprehensive doctrine in justification of the fundamental principles of the morality which governs its actions.

Lastly, my view on the partially comprehensive character of a political morality differs from Rawls' and Clayton's in few important respects that will be prominent throughout this dissertation. Rawls believes that for partially comprehensive accounts their "political conception can be seen as part of a comprehensive doctrine but it is not a consequence of that doctrine's non-political values". And he claims further that "its political values normally outweigh whatever other values oppose them, at least under the reasonably favorable conditions that make a constitutional democracy possible."<sup>64</sup>

This seems to be difficult to justify as I mentioned above. My interpretation of the relation between the political and the non-political as presupposed by a partially comprehensive anti-perfectionist morality is different. This relation seems to be more complex. As I will propose throughout this dissertation the value of living autonomously should be seen as interlocked with the principles of justice in the sense that the latter subsume it under it but at the same time presuppose it. Hence, I reject Rawls' view that partially comprehensive account does not see their conception of justice as a consequence of their non-political values: the principles of justice are in fact *in part* a consequence of

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<sup>64</sup> Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, 144-150.

the value we attach to the highest and higher order interest of individuals supervening on their second moral power, but not exclusively its consequence, as certain political values – such as fairness - also give the frame for their devising. But we do recognize that these principles, as a consequence of political and non-political value, subsume in normal democratic times the value of the non-political under them. This allow us to add another important distinctive feature of partially comprehensive anti-perfectionist accounts in comparison with political and comprehensive ones: while the former draws on ideas of the good which are purely political<sup>65</sup>, the latter draws on ideas of the good which are non-political. Partially comprehensive anti-perfectionism fits between the two, where the appeal to the non-political values although justificatory and fundamental is – with exception of extraordinary circumstances - subsumed and limited for the sake of the political values.

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<sup>65</sup> Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, 176-178.

## Chapter 2. Towards a hybrid ideal of personal autonomy

### Introduction

In the previous chapter, I offered an overview of the basic commitments of partially comprehensive anti-perfectionism and demonstrated that the role of the value of autonomy in the justification of substantive liberal institutions is indispensable if we are to grant the extensive autonomy-protecting liberties which anti-perfectionists are commonly committed to. A self-standing conception of justice, which deals away with this role of autonomy, is implausible to provide a framework which will respond in a satisfactory way to our concerns regarding the interest of citizens in living autonomously. I claimed there that the supposition of the value of personal autonomy as a comprehensive ideal operative in the derivation of the principles of justice should be such that it satisfies the two “no-precommitment requirements” if it is to keep our liberal position on the level of partially comprehensive anti-perfectionism, rather than perfectionism. The first of these requirements implies that the ideal of living autonomously should not constitute a particular autonomous way of life with its specific constitutive rules. The second requires that the ideal of living autonomously should not impose certain value pre-commitments on individuals, which when realized in an autonomous life, make that life valuable.

In this chapter I take on the task to work out an ideal of personal autonomy which on the one side will satisfy these requirements and on the other will be intuitively attractive, reflecting appropriately our concerns with personal autonomy. I will refer to this ideal as the “hybrid ideal of personal autonomy” as it will coherently incorporate internalist and externalist intuitions about what the living of an autonomous life amounts to. In the first three sections, I review several ideals of personal



autonomy, internalist and externalist, and conclude that without significant modifications none of them can fully fit the role of personal autonomy within a partially comprehensive anti-perfectionist morality. In Section Four I offer a functional conceptualization of the external component necessary for autonomy which allows for consistent incorporation within an ideal of personal autonomy, of both the internalist and the externalist intuitions about autonomy. In Section Five, I present such a hybrid ideal of personal autonomy which accommodates coherently the two basic intuitions that motivated the conceptualization of the internalist and the externalist ideals of personal autonomy: namely that both, the endorsement of certain desires or values, as well as, the capacity to act on those values and desires, as external conditions, are of constitutive relevance for autonomy. To the end of this last section, I point out to the features of the hybrid ideal of personal autonomy and its compatibility with the principle of respect for autonomy, which grounds the basic anti-perfectionist commitment.

### **1. Internalist and externalist ideals of personal autonomy**

Even if the argument presented so far in Chapter One regarding the role of the value of personal autonomy within liberalism is sound, it is not sufficient to secure my position as an anti-perfectionist one. The reason is that not every ideal and conception of autonomy can fit the value of the interest in living autonomously, which was presupposed, in a way that will be consistent with the principle of respect for individual's autonomy which grounds the anti-perfectionist commitment to state neutrality. So, the task that remains to be done by the end of this chapter and in the next one is to propose an ideal and a corresponding conception of personal autonomy that can fit the role autonomy plays in a partially comprehensive anti-perfectionist morality. To accomplish that I will first present and review the most prominent ideals of personal autonomy which I separate into two groups of externalists and internalist ideals. I will then evaluate them according to their fittingness within a partially

comprehensive anti-perfectionist framework. I will argue that the externalist ideals of personal autonomy reviewed are incompatible with the role autonomy is to play in such a morality, as they fail to satisfy the “no-precommitment” requirements on the ideal of personal autonomy. However, I would also argue that purely internalist ideal although fitting within the partially anti-perfectionist morality do not reflect sufficiently our intuitive concern with personal autonomy as stipulated with the interests in living autonomously.

But a question that naturally comes to mind at this point regarding the specification of the ideal of personal autonomy is the following: why not seek the best account of the ideal and the conception of personal autonomy on independent grounds, and then see if those can fit within the political morality as described? Why are the partly-comprehensive anti-perfectionist commitments a constraint on the ideal and the conception of autonomy? The reason for the approach I chart, rather than proceed with the standard way of investigating autonomy by laying down what is an autonomous person and which conditions one should satisfy is because ascribing autonomy to a person already implies serious normative, second-person, consequences in regard of how that persons is treated by others, what kind of rights and obligation it has, in regard of what kind of social practices etc. And in giving answers to these questions regarding our attitudes towards the autonomy of others, we find out that personal autonomy is not a self-standing value, but is already taking an interdependent role within a net of values that govern different social practices, including the ascription of autonomy and the treatment of autonomous persons. As Joel Anderson writes when elaborating on his “regimes of autonomy”: “if you don’t know what rights and obligations follow from appropriately attributing autonomy to someone, you don’t really know what it is to be autonomous. And knowing to what extent a person

is autonomous is necessary a matter of knowing how it is appropriate to treat her”.<sup>66</sup> But these are key normative issues which are appropriately dealt with within the framework of a political morality. Since the purpose of this dissertation is to determine the value and the weight of personal autonomy and what it implies for the actions of political institutions it is I believe required that we investigate its role in the normative net constituted by the values of a political morality. In Chapter One, I already elaborated on the indispensable role the value of autonomy plays in the devising of principles of justices. In Chapter Four and Chapter Five I will claim that this link between autonomy and justice is more complex one and that as liberals we should see the two values as interlocking or mutually presupposing and conditioning each other. Hence, I believe any investigation of the value of personal autonomy which disregards this relation between autonomy and central values of a political morality, is doomed to be implausible.

The investigations which see autonomy as necessarily tied to other political values within a liberal political morality have given prominence to four different types of ideals of personal autonomy. The first refers to autonomous persons as self-directed individuals, the second as self-determining individuals, the third as “part authors of their life” and the last as “individuals who have practical authority over things of fundamental importance in their lives”. What the first two ideals have in common is that they both see autonomy as an internal feature of the agent. In distinction to them, both these last ideals, have in common that they see autonomy as partly a function of the external situation in which individuals live<sup>67</sup>.

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<sup>66</sup> Joel Anderson, “Regimes of Autonomy.” *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice*, Vol.17, No.3 (June 2014): 357.

<sup>67</sup> Not just partly, but primarily a function of the external situation in which individuals live. This can be seen in the conditions which these conceptions propose for the ideals they defend which lack endorsement conditions.

According to the first type of ideals an autonomous individual is a self-directed agent, one “who sees his actions as following from his own deliberations”<sup>68</sup> about what he should do. This ideal of personal autonomy is the thinnest of all four and implies, as Gerald Gaus proposes, an “ultra-minimal” ideal of personal autonomy. It falls within the family of internalist ideals because autonomy is seen as proceeding from one’s attitude towards the legitimate reasons for one’s actions, namely that it is the agent who decides what he is to do, and a special case needs to be made for letting another’s deliberations direct his actions.

According to the second type of ideals, which are also “internalist”, autonomous persons are individuals who develop *the right type* of attitude towards the desires, values<sup>69</sup>, or the processes in which these desires and values, which motivate their actions, were formed<sup>70</sup>, such as ones of identification, authentication, approval, non-resistance, or non-alienation. The stress within these ideals is mainly on three elements<sup>71</sup>: the possession of decision-making capacities, their deployment in a process of endorsement by an individual, in which one approves or rejects certain desires or values, and the independence of the individual within these endorsement processes from different influencing factors that are considered to undermine or make the process of the endorsement for autonomy void. Due to this way of conceptualizing autonomy, self-determination can be seen by many as a psychological property of individuals, one which is determined by satisfying certain internal psychological conditions by the individual.

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<sup>68</sup> Gerald Gaus, “The Place of Autonomy within Liberalism,” in *Autonomy and the Challenges to Liberalism*, edited by John Christman and Joel Anderson, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 293-295.

<sup>69</sup> Dworkin, *The Theory and Practice of Autonomy*.

<sup>70</sup> Christman, “Autonomy and Personal History.”

<sup>71</sup> Some such as Frankfurt consider only the first two. See Harry Frankfurt, *The Importance of What We Care About* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 11-26.

It is worth mentioning that the second type of ideals are not insensitive nor disregard the external, social circumstances in which an individual acts, as irrelevant for personal autonomy. On the contrary some of the motivations for the creation of these views come from the necessity to account for the difference between social influences that enable or enhance and influences that undermine self-government. Diana Meyers for instance offers a list of such influences that constitute the former. She stresses that autonomy depends on the development of coordinated skills of self-discovery, self-definition and self-direction that together make up the autonomy competency of an agent and which fall into the categories of communicative, imaginative and volitional competencies which provide for the integrated personality necessary for authentication of a pro-attitude.<sup>72</sup> The internalist ideals thus do consider the social environment as relevant for developing autonomy and propose various pre-conditions such environment should satisfy in order to be autonomy-enhancing but these social factors within this group of ideals are considered to be of causal and developmental, and not of constitutive importance for the conceptualization of the ideal of autonomy.

The third and the fourth type of ideals of personal autonomy can be claimed to be “externalist ideals”.<sup>73</sup> According to the third one, autonomous individuals are considered to be part authors of their lives, in the sense that they have power to control to a considerable degree their own destiny and fashion it according to their own decisions.<sup>74</sup> One can have this kind of authorship over one’s life or control over one’s destiny, only if in addition to having certain mental capacities and being independent from manipulation and coercion in the life choices that one makes, one has in one’s environment adequate options to choose from. A range of options is adequate according to Raz if: it

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<sup>72</sup> Diana T. Meyers, *Self, Society and Personal Choice* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), 52-3 and 269.

<sup>73</sup> Some externalist conceptions such as Wall’s explicitly reject endorsement as a condition, others such as Oshana, and Raz do not explicitly incorporate it and criticize it.

<sup>74</sup> Raz, *The Morality of Freedom*, 369.

includes options with long term pervasive consequences as well as short term options of little consequence, and a fair spread in between; there is a variety among the options, namely they are not just numerous and identical; the options are not dominated by the need to protect one's life; and the options are such that they are morally acceptable<sup>75</sup>.

The fourth type of ideals consider a person to be autonomous “when she has a kind of authority to govern her choices, actions, goals, especially those that are fundamentally significant to the direction of the life and when she has de facto power to act on that authority”.<sup>76</sup> “To be autonomous is to stand in a certain position of authority over one's life with respect to others”.<sup>77</sup> Oshana claims that one can have this kind of authority if in addition to satisfying an array of conditions of personal autonomy - which in her conception include having epistemic competence, rationality, control, self-respect, adequate range of options and being procedural independent - one is also substantively independent. To be substantively independent means that “a person who is in society must find herself within a set of relations with others that is such that all of the following is true”: the context in which a person determines how to live is one offering at least a minimal social and psychological security; the individual can have and pursue values, interests, goals different from those who have influence and authority over her, without risk of reprisal sufficient to deter her in this pursuit; the individual is not required to take responsibility for another's needs, expectations and failings unless doing so is reasonably expected of the individual in light of a particular function; the individual enjoys a level of financial self-sufficiency adequate to provide material capital to be independent from others; and the individual is not subject to misinformation about what she is able to do.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Raz, *The Morality of Freedom*, 374-379.

<sup>76</sup> Marina Oshana, *Personal Autonomy in Society* (New York: Ashgate Publishing, 2006), 73.

<sup>77</sup> Oshana, *Personal Autonomy in Society*, 94.

<sup>78</sup> Oshana, *Personal Autonomy in Society*, 86-87.

These external factors seen in particular types of options claimed to be adequate or in the particular types of relations a person should stand vis-à-vis others and the types of options that these relations should give rise to, are seen as constitutive of the ideal of autonomous persons, according to both externalist ideals. Both types of ideals have as an implication that autonomy is in part a function of the external circumstances in which one finds oneself, and not only a matter of “internal or psychological character”. As Raz claims “a person lives autonomously if he conducts himself in a certain way ... and lives in a certain environment, an environment which ... furnishes him with an adequate range of options. The autonomous life depends not on the availability of one option of freedom of choice. It depends on the general character of one's environment and culture.”<sup>79</sup> Oshana makes a somewhat narrower but similar point claiming that “persons cannot be autonomous unless the satisfaction of certain social conditions is guaranteed”<sup>80</sup> which are specified in her conjunction of condition, comprising also the substantive independence condition which is claimed to be necessary for personal autonomy.

The question we need to answer now is whether some of these ideals would fit coherently within the partially comprehensive anti-perfectionist morality? Which ideal can offer us resources for working out a conception of autonomy that can fit the presupposition of the interest in living autonomously presupposed in our liberal framework? Which ideal of autonomy can we reasonably expect to be accepted as worthy advancing in the substantive liberal institutions? In what follows I will argue that although the externalist ideals bring front an important environmental aspect which has to be conceptualized in the ideal of personal autonomy, they are incompatible with the principle of respect

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<sup>79</sup> Raz, *The Morality of Freedom*, 391.

<sup>80</sup> Oshana, *Personal Autonomy in Society*, 94.

for autonomy due to their perfectionist inputs. The internalist ideals, on the other side, with their focus on the psychological economy of the agent, either lack or simply presuppose an external or environmental dimension, which however has to explicitly be worked out as a complementary part of the ideal if we are to properly account for the interest of individuals in living autonomously. The feminist critic, to which I will point out below, has been crucial in indicating their insufficiency in this regard. In Section Two I will first elaborate on the lack of sufficient concern for autonomy which would ensue from the acceptance of any of the internalist ideals to fulfil the role of the ideal of personal autonomy within partially comprehensive anti-perfectionist morality. In Section Three I will demonstrate the tension between the externalist ideals proposed and the principle of respect for autonomy which makes them incompatible to fulfil the same role.

## **2. Internalist ideals and the insufficient concern for autonomy**

Although the internalist ideals of personal autonomy are consistent with the requirements of the principle of respect of autonomy they can be objected as being insufficient to answer properly to our concerns with personal autonomy. The ground of this objection is based on the lack of so called “environmental” conditions as constitutive of the autonomy of individual. In some internalist account this environmental component is completely lacking while in other, such as Gerald Dworkin’s ideal it seems to be presupposed but is not articulated as a condition and its relation to the necessary and sufficient conditions for autonomy is not clear.

According to Gaus, the central liberal commitment can be expressed in the fundamental liberal principle, which states that all interferences with agent’s actions require justification. This principle given a particular understanding of moral reasons presupposes that agents are morally autonomous.



However, this necessary presupposition of the moral autonomy of agents within a liberal political morality, builds up on a more basic presupposition of the morally autonomous agent as being also “personally autonomous”. What Gaus means by this is that the agent is self-directed namely he conceives of his actions as proceeding his deliberations. Unlike schizoid personalities for whom the deliberating self is alienated from the acting self or “role-playing” personalities for whom the actions are required by social scripts, the self-directed agents who are moral agents as well conceive of themselves as agents whose deliberations about what to do normally determines their actions. Hence, the answer which Gaus gives on the question of what kind of ideal of personal autonomy fits a liberal political morality is that it is an “ultra-minimal”<sup>81</sup> one, namely one of individuals as self-directed persons. Gaus’ purpose is to show that the fundamental concern with autonomy within liberalism is the one with moral or Kantian autonomy and that the concept of personal autonomy enters within a liberal morality only as a very thin necessary presupposition about the capacities of agents who are to be ascribed moral autonomy. Ultimately, liberalism is founded, according to Gaus, on an ultra-minimal conception of personal autonomy.

I believe Gaus’ ideal of personal autonomy, while it seems to be well-tailored to fit the theoretical role he purports to assign to personal autonomy in his version of liberalism, offers a completely unattractive vision of personal autonomy. It seems to me that his ideal is in fact much closer to being some kind of an ideal of agency or to what Stanley Benn calls autarchy<sup>82</sup> than to personal autonomy. The capacities for autonomy required by this ideal correspond to the capacities for autonomy in a minimal sense, as I explained them in Chapter One, but these are capacities we assign to persons rather than to autonomous persons. Mind that the ideal of autonomous individuals as self-directed is

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<sup>81</sup> Gaus, “The Place of Autonomy Within Liberalism,” 295.

<sup>82</sup> Benn, *A Theory of Freedom*, 177.

perfectly compatible with individuals being unreflective about the motivations for their actions or individuals being thoroughly manipulated in living particular ways of life. This, however, is incompatible with the interest of individuals in living autonomously as I depicted them in Chapter One, which interest supervenes on more robust capacities for formation, revision and purse of a conception of the good. In addition, the justificatory role autonomy played there in the devising of principles of justice presupposed that individuals possess a particular conception of the good they determined for one self, and not one which they can be manipulated in endorsing. Hence, I conclude that an ultra-minimal ideal of personal autonomy can not fulfil the role autonomy plays in a partially comprehensive anti-perfectionist morality.

The ideals of autonomous persons as self-determining individuals, build up on my criticism of Gaus' ideal. They do presuppose that individuals are self-directed but they consider that this is insufficient for them to be autonomous. To paraphrase Dworkin: a self-directed person may have a motivational structure, without that motivational structure being his own.<sup>83</sup> What personal autonomy requires is exactly the latter. The ideals of autonomous person as self-determined individuals come in a wide variety and refer to a person who either exhibits conformity between his desires of different hierarchies<sup>84</sup> or who possesses capacities to alter the desires operative in one's actions<sup>85</sup> or who does not feel alienated from one's operative desires when attending the process through which they came to be.<sup>86</sup> In each of these different ideals of autonomy as self-determination proposed by Frankfurt, Dworkin and Christman autonomy is rightly seen in the relation between the individual's acts of endorsement of his pro-attitudes and the actions based on those pro-attitudes.

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<sup>83</sup> Gerald Dworkin, "Autonomy and Behavior Control," *The Hastings Center Report* Vol.6, No.1 (February, 1976): 25.

<sup>84</sup> Frankfurt, *The Importance of What We Care About*, 11-25.

<sup>85</sup> Dworkin, *The Theory and Practice of Autonomy*, 16-17.

<sup>86</sup> Christman, "Autonomy and Personal History," 10-11.

However, in specifying the conditions for autonomy all ideals as self-determination suppose that the capacities to act are simply there and the conditions for autonomy they propose only confine to the internal features of the agent, disregarding thus the role which options, means or resources, which are necessary to act, can have on our capacities to endorse particular conceptions of the good and to act according to those conceptions of the good. As such these ideals remain insensitive to how material or environmental factors can impair one's autonomy. Persons who live in severe poverty, who are deprived from means to satisfy their basic needs can clearly exhibit conformity between their higher and lower level pro-attitudes or not feel alienated from the way their desires were formed but virtually no one would consider them as embodying the ideal of personal autonomy. The ideal of autonomous individuals as self-determining individuals has further been a target of intense criticism, especially within the feminist scholarship of personal autonomy where the ideal was claimed to be insufficient, due to its confinement to certain internal psychological structures when attributing autonomy, to account for various forms of non-autonomy which constitute oppression. If all that matters for autonomy is the analysis of the psychological features of the individual living in severe poverty above, then we seem to set aside important factors such as for instance material deprivation, which most of us would accept as having key role in contributing that individuals fall pray to various forms of oppression.

Hence, if we are not to "legitimize" oppression by attributing autonomy to oppressed individuals, accounting for the external conditions for autonomy, should be a necessary component of a plausible ideal of autonomy, a conclusion which also reflects coherently the value individuals attach to the interest in living autonomously and not simply in forming autonomously their conceptions of the good. This will have to be done in a way that is compatible with the anti-perfectionist commitment to

the principle of equal respect for the autonomy of individuals. As I explained in Chapter One, the equal respect requirement to which political institutions are committed goes hand in hand with the requirement that they show equal concern for individuals' autonomy. An anti-perfectionist state committed to the principle of equal respect should thus show equal concern for each individual that they are and remain in circumstances for autonomy which are the base on which individuals develop and exercise their capacities for autonomy.

Let me recap this section on the internalist ideals of personal autonomy by reclaiming the above reached conclusions. The ultra-minimal ideals of personal autonomy cannot properly be claimed to be ideals of personal autonomy and hence are not fitting for the role autonomy plays in a partially comprehensive anti-perfectionist morality, while the ideals of autonomy as self-determination although make a correct "diagnosis" of the internal psychological locus of personal autonomy, require the integration of a worked out external component, which can account for the environmental conditions reflected on the process of forming a conception of the good and which at the same time will allow one to act on that conception of the good.

### **3. Externalist ideals and the objections from paternalism**

Let us now turn to the evaluation of the fittingness of the externalist ideals of personal autonomy. What I term as "externalist" ideals of personal autonomy seem to be motivated primarily from the requirement that the state shows concern for the autonomy of each and every individual. I will start with the ideals of personal autonomy as self-authorship. Joseph Raz is the most prominent defender

of a conception of autonomy that includes adequate options as constitutive external components of the ideal of autonomous person. What are adequate options is a question to which Raz does not offer an analytical and complete answer although he does enlist several criteria such options should have, which I stated above. From the examples of inadequacy that he offers we can conclude that having insufficiently diverse options with only short-term impact, or having only trivial options to choose can put one in a position of having inadequate options to live an autonomous life and hence make one non-autonomous. Adequate options have to be morally acceptable as well, meaning that choosing between two options one of which is morally non-acceptable constitutes a forced choice, according to Raz. A key aspect in the conceptualization of the external component of the ideal of personal autonomy as self-authorship comes from the value which Raz ascribes to autonomy. According to him autonomy is valuable only if it is directed at the good, so valuable autonomy presupposes an environment in which there is some form of at least a weak value pluralism, implying that there are different worthwhile or good options one can pursue in an environment. These options, as I will explain in Chapter Four, are not worthwhile or good merely because an agent desires them, but they are in some way “intrinsically” good.

Marina Oshana is proponent of the fourth type of ideals of autonomous persons, which constitutively include certain external conditions in the form of adequate options as well as in the form of enjoying “substantive independence”, this later being understood in terms of particular types of relations an individual stands vis-à-vis others. What is distinctive about Oshana’s ideal of personal autonomy in the conceptualization of the external component of the ideal is that she goes further than Raz, and identifies an additional factor of relevance for individual’s autonomy: namely the social relations in which individuals find themselves in their environment. As she points out, unless the adequate options

are “had by one who is socially autonomous, they will be moot”.<sup>87</sup> When an individual does not stand in particular egalitarian relations vis-à-vis others, then one is prone to lose the necessary counterfactual control over things of fundamental importance in one’s life as that individual becomes prone to interference and different forms of domination. To be substantively independent implies that an individual has a “counterfactual power or influence across a range of neighboring possible worlds wherein others are able to intervene capriciously in a person’s affairs”.<sup>88</sup>

Can any of the two externalist ideals perhaps fit the supposition of autonomy within the partially comprehensive anti-perfectionist morality? On the first look it might seem as if a negative answer of this question can be given only on conceptual ground: of course, they cannot fit because they are perfectionist ideals after all! Against externalist accounts of the type Oshana defends, John Christman argued, for instance, that including certain external conditions, such as aspects of the social and interpersonal environment as constitutive of the ideal of autonomy is in tension with the respect for autonomy, which liberals, attribute to persons who competently reflect and endorse certain conceptions of the good no matter the content of these conceptions.<sup>89</sup> The reason for this tension which Christman notes is that both types of externalist ideals imply different forms of paternalism which as I noted in Chapter One are impermissible within the partially comprehensive anti-perfectionist framework of a political morality.

In the case of Oshana’s ideal the paternalism follows straight forwardly from the substantive independence condition which does not leave any space for autonomously endorsing oppressive

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<sup>87</sup> Oshana, *Personal Autonomy in Society*, 86.

<sup>88</sup> Oshana, *Personal Autonomy in Society*, 88.

<sup>89</sup> John Christman, “Relational Autonomy, Liberal Individualism, and the Social Constitution of Selves,” *Philosophical Studies: An International Journal for Philosophy in the Analytic Tradition* Vol. 117, No. 1/2, Selected Papers from the American Philosophical Association, Pacific Division, 2003 Meeting (January 2004), 143-164.

conceptions of the good. It implies that aside from being competent, persons who endorse oppressive life-styles in a non-impaired reflective process should still be considered non-autonomous. As Christman notes, this has troubling implications as it implies that for instance paternalistic intervention towards a woman who has chosen a situation in which “her husband makes all significant decisions” is permissible because of her non-autonomy. Hence in principle coercive institutions might have reason to intervene in one way or another in order to restore her autonomy<sup>90</sup>. But this stands in tension with the respect for people’s autonomously formed conceptions of the good within belief system that are different than egalitarian ones which Oshana’s substantive independence condition makes constitutive of personal autonomy. Although the motivation for the externalist ideals of personal autonomy of the type Oshana proposes have a legitimate source in the varieties of oppression which undermine individual’s autonomy it seems to me that it conflates the questions regarding the pre-conditions and the conditions for autonomy and the questions regarding the value of autonomy. Individuals can, and some autonomously do choose to live in oppressive circumstances. As such they do suffer self-imposed freedom deficits, which to the extent that they are not below the threshold that makes interventions permissible, as specified in Chapter Five, their autonomous choices should not be interfered with.

Raz's conditioning on the adequate options as ones which are delivered by the existence of a competitive value pluralism where different worthwhile conceptions of the good need to be promoted by the state also has paternalistic consequences. Unlike in Oshana’s case where “choosing non-autonomy” makes you non-autonomous, in Raz’s conception choosing non-worthy lifestyles is compatible with autonomy. As he says, even choosing morally bad options are compatible with

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<sup>90</sup> Christman, “Relational Autonomy, Liberal Individualism, and the Social Constitution of Selves,” 157.

autonomy. What they are not compatible with, is autonomy's value. For Raz autonomy is a necessary component of the flourishing life in modern democratic societies and as such the perfectionist state should promote the conditions for autonomy. However, autonomous acts are valuable only when directed towards the good which imposes an obligation of the state committed to the value of autonomy to deliver, create or promote such options which are in some way "good simpliciter" or good in themselves. As for the existence of non-worthy or bad options Raz is committed to the claim that the state might have an autonomy-based duty not only to discourage but to eliminate them, in case there are such ways of doing so, which will be non-coercive and which will only prevent the individual from choosing the bad but leave him with all the capacities and options for choosing the good. I should mention that this is however a weaker formulation of Raz's opinion about what follows from the state's autonomy-based duties. A stronger interpretation would stress that Raz does not really have a principled objection against coercion either, just that in the way we can exercise it today, it is too blunt of a tool for achieving our purposes, causing more bad than good. The limits for the intervention are mere technological. So due to this rather pragmatic reason he opts out for non-coercive ways of promotion and discouragement of good options.

My criticism of perfectionism in Section Two of Chapter One was a response against the Razian ideal of personal autonomy as self-authorship, hence I will not repeat here the two arguments from paternalism and from outcome-independence, which I defended there. I will simply restate the conclusion reached there that such an ideal implies infringements of the principle of respect for autonomy either on the side of the recognition requirement or on the side of the non-interference requirement. If this conclusion is true, then the Razian ideal and its external conditions stand no better than the ideal and external conditions proposed by Oshana in relation to the theoretical blank space that should accommodate an ideal and a conception of autonomy for the interest of individuals to live



autonomously. Both are in tension with the requirements that stem from the principle of respect of autonomy of individuals and both imply impermissible forms of paternalism. As such none of these ideals can fit the partially anti-perfectionist framework. Clearly, the ideals of personal autonomy and their external conditions proposed by Raz and Oshana, are only two instances of such ideals. The argument above shows that it is their ideals of personal autonomy that cannot fit this framework. This does not imply that one may not come up with an ideal of autonomy of one or the other kind that can fit the role autonomy is to play in a political anti-perfectionist morality. However, I am skeptical that such an account can be plausibly supplied without integrating elements from the internalist ideals and “unloading” the value-laden character of the external conditions<sup>91</sup>.

#### **4. A functional approach to the external component of the ideal of personal autonomy**

The criticism of the internalist ideals of personal autonomy above lead us to the conclusion that they are insufficient to express our concerns with personal autonomy precisely because they fully lack or because they presuppose but do not specify an external component necessary for one to pursue an autonomously formed conception of the good. On the other side the externalist ideals, while do seem to be concerned with this “pursue” aspect of personal autonomy and make their ideals sensitive to the environmental factors, proposed too robust conditions with perfectionist pre-commitments which imply impermissible forms of paternalism. Hence, none of these ideals can be claimed to fit properly

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<sup>91</sup> Ben Colburn for instance offers a conception of autonomy, based on the Razian ideal of self-creation but without the type of externalist component in Raz. See Colburn, *Autonomy and Liberalism*, Ch2.

the supposition of personal autonomy within a partially comprehensive anti-perfectionist morality. So, how do we move forward?

I believe that there is a way to integrate an external component within an ideal of autonomous persons as self-determinate individuals in a way that is consistent with the presuppositions about autonomy within partially comprehensive anti-perfectionism. First, we should point out to the limits of Christman's criticism regarding the externalist accounts. There seems to be nothing in the concept of external conditions for autonomy that implies *a necessity* in conceptualizing this condition in a "value-laden way" that will imply paternalism. As I stated above an ideal of autonomy should necessarily conceive of external conditions seen as means for pursue of a conception of the good, if it is to be compatible with the interest of individual in "living autonomously" and not just in forming autonomously conceptions of the good or being autonomous in respect of one's preferences. Second, I believe what gives us possibility to integrate an external component in the ideals of autonomy as self-determination and avoid the objection towards the above-mentioned externalist accounts, is the conceptualization of the external component as not being fully fixed prior or independently of the agent's autonomous formation of a conception of the good. If we can propose such conceptualization then we can come up with what I call a hybrid ideal of personal autonomy which can account consistently for both the internal and the external component of the ideal, the autonomous formation of a conception of the good and its pursue, namely the living of a life according to that conception.

To do this we should start from the following question: how can we keep the idea of having a range of external options as a constitutive component of the ideal of autonomous persons without including for instance Raz's view on why these options are valuable? One possibility is to endorse a functional understanding of the external component, based on the structure of the external component itself. It

is uncontroversial that in order to live autonomously individuals need what I call “generally adequate means” or all-purpose means which are not related to one’s preferences or conceptions of the good, but are based on general needs. For instance, these include having basic food ingredients, shelter, access to health care etc. It is important, as I will claim in more details in Chapter Four and Chapter Five, that the state provides these all-purpose means to a sufficient degree so that individuals find themselves in “circumstances for autonomy”. However, these are not sufficient for individuals to live autonomously and cannot account for the whole of the adequate means for autonomy<sup>92</sup>. Aside from having access to generally adequate means based on their needs individuals need to perform particular actions conducive of their particular conceptions of the good in order to be claimed to live autonomously. To do that they need access to “particularly adequate means” based on their autonomously formed conceptions of the good. This claim I believe is also uncontroversial. For example, for a farmer it matters for his autonomy whether he can produce particular crops and distribute them to a market, hence having access to such means is of relevance for the pursue of his conception of the good he pursues. They might not matter for an opera singer or a basketball player, however. The point is that in order to pursue their conceptions of the good individuals need particularly adequate means, whose adequacy should be understood as being fixed simultaneously with the formation of one’s conception of the good.

If this is so then the structure of the external component for autonomy – seen as the bundle of generally and particularly adequate means - lends itself for a functional understanding, which is necessary in order to synthesize the internal and the external component for autonomy within a hybrid

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<sup>92</sup> I believe that it is obvious that these generally adequate means are distinct from Raz’s options constituting weak value pluralism as they intend to respond to the basic needs of citizens and are insufficient for them to live autonomous life according to the hybrid ideal. In contrast, Raz’s options delivered by weak value pluralism respond to the interest of individuals in living autonomously: they do presuppose such options which aim to satisfy the basic needs of citizens but go further in integrating also additional options referring to cultural forms which perfectionists deem valuable.

ideal of autonomy without perfectionist pre-commitments. What the adequacy for autonomy requires is the availability of such options which can functionally fit the conceptions of the good people might pursue and not options which irrespective of people's preferences constitute some kind of a weak value pluralism. In contrast to Raz's and Oshana's views, then, the functional understanding of the external condition for autonomy ties the external component seen in particularly adequate means to a subjective rather than some objective component, and is determined by the valuing of the individual, namely one's conception of the good. On the other side, it also leaves the distribution of the generally adequate means or the all-purpose means - which also comprise the bundle of adequate means and account for whether one is in "circumstances for autonomy" - to be a function of the aggregated basic needs of citizens. Clearly the range of particularly adequate means which serves the autonomy of individuals will have to be somehow limited, if we are to plausibly envision their distribution and the generally adequate means we can suppose will be socially indexed. As I will claim in Chapter Five, the former will be subject to an egalitarian while the later to a sufficientarian test.

We can conclude here that considering that the external component seen in generally and particularly adequate means for pursue of a conception of the good, is in part subjectively determined – namely its adequacy is in part a function of the endorsement of a particular conception of the good- we can plausibly incorporate an externalist component in an internalist ideal of autonomous persons and avoid the charges for paternalism which I ascribed above to the externalist ideals proposed. Such integration of these components will lead us to the construction of a hybrid ideal of personal autonomy as self-determinate and self-controlling individuals which I propose in the following section.

## **5. The hybrid ideal of autonomous persons as self-determining and self-controlling individuals**

The hybrid ideal of personal autonomy which I would now like to propose takes its base in the broadly shared intuition that autonomous persons are persons who live their lives according to their autonomously formed conceptions of the good. As such they should be seen as exhibiting two features which correspond to the two components of the hybrid ideal: an internal one which gives autonomous individuals the feature of being self-determinate and an external one which gives autonomous individuals the feature of having self-control over the life in accordance with what they determine as a conception of the good for themselves.

### **5.1. Exercising self-determination in the formation of a conception of the good**

Autonomous individuals according to the hybrid ideal have the feature of being self-determinate in the sense that “they” and not someone else determines their commitments to conceptions of the good for themselves. As I will explain in more details in the next Chapter when I present the conception of autonomy based on the hybrid ideal, that an autonomous individual has this feature of being self-determinate, implies three things. First, the fact that a conception of the good is valuable simpliciter is not sufficient for a person to make a commitment to it. One needs to consider that conception of the good as “valuable for” oneself in order to commit to it. Second, it is the individual himself who has to undertake the commitment to a conception of the good one considers valuable for oneself. Lastly, that an individual is self-determinate implies that he validates, or has the disposition to validate, the commitment to a conception of the good, not because of someone else’s will, which he does not

accept, nor because he is manipulated into validating it, but because of whatever outcome-independent reasons he does it.

Thus, to form a conception of the worthwhile life is to validate for oneself life projects based on what one values. Contrary of forming a conception of the good for oneself is drifting through life without commitment to any conception of the good or being committed to projects one finds oneself with due to no reflectiveness or blind following of a tradition. Directly opposed to autonomy is the formation of conceptions of the good due to threatening or forceful subjugation to the will of others, prospectless options for committing oneself to something else or manipulation.

Forming a conception of the good for oneself can be understood as an act of self-determination<sup>93</sup>, more particularly a global act of self-determination, which ultimately allows for integration of the actions of the agent as having their origin in one source, which is the agent, from whose reasons they get a meaningful purposefulness. This is the source of personal value which is necessarily attached to all the life-projects we care about. Forming a conception of the good need not involve the creation of a conception of the good from scratch, but it should rather be seen as a “validation” of a particular conception of the good which one might be socialized with or might exist in one’s community or simply be accessible to an individual. What matters, as I would claim in the next chapter is that one validates or has a disposition to validate a conception of the good in circumstances of procedural independence, in an outcome-independent way. This does not exclude the cases in which some extraordinary people do create conceptions of the good, or experiment with existing ones and change some of their constitutive elements in a way that a conception is modified but not substantially

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<sup>93</sup> Self-determination is a relative act in respect to something and one can have local and global instances of self-determination. Forming a conception of the good is a global instance of self-determination.

different from an earlier created one. However, what is relevant for the autonomous formation of a conception of the good is the disposition to validate a conception of the good and not the creation of conception of the good. Validation as such is always an active process in which individuals confirm their commitment to a conception of the good - which might, but in most cases does not have origin in them - by either explicitly endorsing it upon reflection at some point of time or by already performing them through pursuing sub-commitments that ensue from those commitments.

## 5.2. Exercising self-control in the pursue of conceptions of the good

Forming a conception of the good for oneself is a necessary but not sufficient condition for being autonomous or living an autonomous life, according to the hybrid ideal of personal autonomy. In order to be autonomous, individuals must be able to relatively successfully pursue their autonomously formed conceptions of the good. To achieve this, they need to satisfy some external requirements, which allow them to perform actions constitutive of their conceptions of the good, and thus, have a reasonable level of control over their life going in accordance with their autonomously formed conceptions of the good. In a most extreme scenario, individuals who do not dispose with any means for pursue of a conception of the good, clearly, cannot be claimed to be living autonomously aside from having autonomously formed their conception of the good. This is the case because they cannot perform action which are constitutive of their conceptions of the good. On the other side individuals who do have access to such means, and autonomously formed their conceptions of the good, but do nothing to operationalize it or do not maintain their commitment to their conceptions of the good again cannot be claimed to be autonomous. Lastly, individuals who autonomously form conceptions

of the good but are internally mistaken about the means through which they can achieve it, also cannot be claimed to be autonomous.

The hybrid ideal of personal autonomy, thus, implies that autonomous individuals should be seen as exercising self-control in instantiating their life according to their autonomously formed conception of the good. One can exercise such control if one has a reasonably stable access to the external component for autonomy as comprised in part by the adequate means which allow one to perform actions constitutive of one's conceptions of the good, as well as to revise that conception of the good. Having such level of control over their pursuits, allows individuals to have de-facto authority – namely authority in translating one's conception of the good into action which is distinct from their “principle-setting” authority in determining what conception of the good to pursue- and to assume responsibility for the pursue of their conceptions of the good. In addition, in order for individuals to relatively successfully pursue the conceptions of the good they formed they need to have internally justified beliefs about the means and the actions which are constitutive of the pursue of a conception of the good. When I talk about “reasonable level of control” I don't mean to imply that the autonomous individuals are some sort of a “supermen”, able to control all aspect of the environment in which they pursue their conceptions of the good. Rather, what having authority over the pursue of their conception of the good implies, is that individuals have such access to adequate means allows them to make reasonable and relatively successful plans in regard of translating their autonomously formed conception of the good into action. As I will claim in Chapter Five securing this kind of control will require that such access in not subject to arbitrary interference by others which in turn entails obligation for the state to establish particular kinds of relations among its citizens which guarantee, for instance, non-domination.



From what I said above about the constitution of the adequate means, it can be expected that the test for adequacy of means will reflect the structure of these means and – as I will explain in Chapter Five – will have a sufficientarian and an egalitarian component. The sufficientarian component guarantees that individuals find themselves in circumstances for autonomy, while the equalitarian allows them to take responsibility for the purse of their own conceptions of the good. So as self-controlling individuals are capable to realize or instantiate in their lives their self-determined conceptions of the good.

To conclude, the ideal of autonomous persons I propose is one of self-determining and self-controlling individuals, ones who determine for themselves their good by forming a conception of the good and ones who exercise reasonable level of control, as manifested in having de-facto authority and responsibility over pursuing it.

### 5.3. The features of the hybrid ideal of personal autonomy

As formulated, the hybrid ideal of personal autonomy I propose exhibits several characteristics along the dimensions of autonomy which can be categorized according to personal autonomy's modality, extension, graduality, hierarchization and temporality.

First, the ideal of personal autonomy I proposed is an exercise ideal in a sense that one is not autonomous by virtue of possessing capacities for autonomy only, nor only when one determines for oneself a conception of good to be pursued but when one actually pursues that conception. It is important to treat autonomy as an exercise concept in order not to fall in psychologism about personal

autonomy, namely treat it as a psychological property of an individual, whose exercise of the capacities for autonomy ends with the autonomous formation of a conception of the good. To exercise one's autonomy includes not only the possession of capacities to form conceptions of the good, but the living according to the autonomously formed conceptions of the good for which some external conditions need to be satisfied. This is in line with our intuitions that a person who possesses all the capacities but who is unable to keep one's commitment to a conception of the good is not autonomous. Also, as I will explain in Chapter Four, having capacities for autonomy in the minimal, narrow or the broader sense implied by the hybrid ideal of personal autonomy and living autonomously according to the hybrid ideal has different normative consequences for the actions of the state towards its citizens.

Second, personal autonomy as envisioned within the hybrid ideal is treated in a global sense, as attributed to one's life in general, and not regarding particular actions of individuals. While some construct this global ideal of personal autonomy as an aggregation of the autonomy in regard of particular actions<sup>94</sup> or as an aggregation of locally autonomous actions, others think that personal autonomy is different in quality from local autonomy, as it concerns decisions about particular things which are objectively relevant for our wellbeing<sup>95</sup>. For instance, one of the arguments in support of the different quality of global autonomy is that one might not be autonomous regarding some act but still maintain one's autonomy: a person who lies once is not a liar because of that one lie! I propose however, that we have good reasons not to separate in quality global from local autonomy. Imagine that Jack likes to eat spicy food but his wife is hiding the extra spicy sauce from him, or does not give it to him, whenever he asks for it, because she thinks he consumes too much. I believe most people

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<sup>94</sup> Christman, "Autonomy and Personal History".

<sup>95</sup> Oshana, *Personal Autonomy in Society*.

would have the intuition that his wife's action shows disrespect for the personal autonomy of Jack, although eating spicy food is not something, we can suppose, significantly impacts his objective well-being. Hence, I consider the relation between global and local autonomy as one of aggregation of locally autonomous actions during the life of an individual. However, I don't consider the relation between local and global autonomy within the hybrid ideal to be a matter of simple aggregation. One might have many non-autonomous preferences or pro-attitudes but still retain one's global autonomy. For instance, I might be non-autonomous regarding many of my local preferences like eating spicy food or smoking cigarettes but retain my global autonomy according to this ideal because none of these locally non-autonomous preferences are connected to what I consider to be of central importance in my life. It is only the local pro-attitudes which are most closely connected to the central values I am committed to in my life, which are of relevance for the determination of the global autonomy of an individual.

Third, the argument that Oshana uses against constructing global personal autonomy as an additive property, in fact, points out to another dimension of autonomy, namely its gradual character. Although a person might be non-autonomous in many situations regarding different acts due to failures to satisfy the conditions for autonomy, what matters for the evaluation of his personal autonomy in different contexts is whether in most cases he acted autonomously. Some might think that as long as Ann who is a committed vegan eats her mother's vegetarian pie without being aware of it or mistakenly believing it is a vegan pie, that she fails to live autonomously. However, as long as most of the time she spends living the life according to her conception of the good, her life should be evaluated as autonomous, aside from the temporary disruptions. So, autonomy should not be seen as a binary property. Due to specification of the relation between the local and the global autonomy and the gradual character of

autonomy they imply it makes sense to say that someone is more autonomous than someone else depending on the extent to which the central projects in one's life are pursued or realized.

Fourth, the hybrid ideal of personal autonomy presupposes that individuals' global autonomy is based on complex hierarchical organization of commitments which might be differently balanced according to each person's preferences. Any ideal of personal autonomy which supposes that individuals have only one conception of the good whose value would be supreme and will order hierarchically all their other value commitments, seems to be implausible. Of course there might be such individuals, but most of us care a great deal about many stuff and our global autonomy might not be a simple function of the pursue of one single conception of the good, as our autonomy might depend on several conceptions of the good which we consider to be of central importance for how our life goes or which give in conjunction the meaning of our life. Sometimes these might not be the most compatible conceptions of the good one can hold and they will require much skillful balancing in order for the individual to retain one's integrity. Imagine for instance a moderate gambler who nevertheless is a very dedicated and financially supportive father. Imagine further that the only way this person gets thrills in his life is when he spends few hours a week in the casino. For him the most superb feeling in life is gaining money on casino games. If he didn't have this option, his life would be without thrills and excitement. However, he is very balanced in his gambling and never oversteps the limit out of consideration for his obligation to financially support his children. We can say that both commitments account for who that person really is and what he values in his life and his autonomy should be evaluated in respect of the extent to which he is able to pursue both of them, as that is what he values most. The hybrid ideal and conception of autonomy I propose and their value as presented in Chapter Four are sensitive to these hierarchies and balances of conceptions of the good individuals can have. In contrast, perfectionist accounts of autonomy would give different verdict on the autonomy of this

individual. Perfectionists are committed to the promotion of valuable and the discouragement of what they consider valueless options. Since I believe most of them would claim that there are no good reasons to value gambling, individuals would be better off if that option does not exist at all or is made somehow more costly for them to pursue it. Hence, even if the person has these two conceptions of the good, but has no access in life to gambling, the degree to which he will enjoy valuable autonomy, according to perfectionist ideals, would remain intact, because the conceptions of the good he cannot pursue in their view is worthless. I suppose to most this interpretation would seem implausible.

Lastly, the hybrid ideal of personal autonomy has a temporal dimension as well. It starts from the idea that the capacities for autonomy in the broad sense are not given but they have to be developed and that the state committed to the principle of respect of individual's autonomy has obligation to contribute to their development. As such the hybrid ideal presupposes that some resources for the development of the highest order interests of individuals in autonomy should be temporally appropriately allocated by the state throughout the life of individuals, such as for instance basic education as a resource during the process of development of capacities for autonomy.

Before I proceed with working out a conception of personal autonomy based on the proposed ideal let me just briefly state that the hybrid ideal proposed satisfies the two “no-pre-commitment requirements” formulated in Chapter One to which partially comprehensive anti-perfectionists are committed. According to the first requirement, the ideal of living an autonomous life should not constitute a particular instance of an autonomous way of life with its specific constitutive rules such as the Socratic life or life of the self-made man. The second requirement was that the ideal of living autonomously should not impose certain value pre-commitments on individuals, which when realized in an autonomous life, make that life valuable. As it will become clear from the conception on of

autonomy I will propose in the next chapter, the hybrid ideal does not presuppose any content of the autonomous life, or it is content-neutral, hence it does satisfy both of these requirements. Now, aside from these criteria which ensue from the commitment to a partially comprehensive anti-perfectionism a theory of autonomy, part of which is the hybrid ideal of autonomy, should also satisfy certain requirements that robustly accommodate our intuitions regarding autonomous individuals. Gerald Dworkin offers a list of such criteria which include the theory's: logical consistency, empirical possibility, value conditions, ideological neutrality<sup>96</sup>, normative and judgmental relevance<sup>97</sup>. We cannot come to a theory of autonomy that can simply fit the partially comprehensive anti-perfectionist framework but falls short on some of these criteria. In other words, even if I devise a theory that can fit the partially comprehensive anti-perfectionist morality it might be insufficient to explain some of our most common intuitions about autonomy, or it might fail to present a desirable ideal. Also, if individuals value their interest in living autonomously considerably more than partially comprehensive anti-perfectionism does, then maybe partially comprehensive anti-perfectionism does not itself convey an attractive understanding of liberalism and autonomy and maybe perfectionists offer an understanding that better serves our interests in autonomy. But evaluating the theory based on these criteria can be done only after we lay it down. To do that we need to offer first a conception that can fit the hybrid ideal which is the task I take on in the next chapter.

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<sup>96</sup> Dworkin considers this to be a weaker constrain which implies that the conception of autonomy should be such that it is compatible with various ideologies that might differ greatly in the value they attach to autonomy and its characterization.

<sup>97</sup> Dworkin, *The Theory and Practice of Autonomy*, 8-9.

## Chapter 3. The conditions for personal autonomy

### Introduction

The hybrid ideal of personal autonomy claims that autonomous individuals are self-determining and self-controlling individuals. But what conditions should be satisfied in order for individuals to attain these features and live up to this ideal? In Section One, I propose and defend three conditions for formation of a conception of the good which account for an individual being self-determinate. These include possession of cognitive and practical capacities, a validation condition and independence conditions. In Section Two, I present and defend two conditions for pursue of a conception of the good which account for an individual exercising self-control over the autonomous pursue of one's conception of the good: a performative condition and an epistemic condition. Taken together the satisfaction of these five conditions is sufficient for a life to be qualified as autonomous or derivatively, a person to be called autonomous, according to the hybrid ideal of personal autonomy proposed in Chapter Two. In Section Three, I specify the relation between the two types of conditions while in the last, Section Four, I present the distinctive features of the hybrid conception of autonomy in respect of other rival and alternative conceptions, through the evaluation of the autonomy of individuals in eight hypothetical cases.

#### 1. Conditions for autonomous formation of a conception of the good

The ideal of autonomy I stipulated above implies that living an autonomous life requires that one forms a conception of the good for oneself and relatively successfully pursues that conception. Hence there are two types of conditions which autonomous persons satisfy: conditions for autonomous

formation and conditions for pursue of a conception of the good. I understand forming a conception of the good for one self, as committing oneself to the pursue of some, more or less comprehensive and hierarchically structured aims or objectives because one considers them valuable for oneself or good for oneself. According to the hybrid ideal of personal autonomy there are three conditions for autonomous formation of a conception of the good: (1) a cognitive and practical capacities condition, (2) a validation condition and (3) independence conditions.

### 1.1. Possession of relevant cognitive and practical capacities

The first condition for autonomous formation of a conception of the good is the possession of a complex of cognitive and practical capacities that enable individuals to respond to reasons, to act for a reason, and to engage in evaluations of conceptions of the good. These include sets of capacities to think logically, to adopt basic principles of rationality and to act on practical reasons.

There is a wide and inconclusive debate within the philosophy of action of whether agency can be explained with what has been known as the “standard conception,” according to which one is an agent only in case one has capacities for intentional actions which are identified as capacities to act for a reason or with an alternative conception, according to which, agency cannot be reduced to intentionality and acting for a reason, as agents might spontaneously act and without intention or reason<sup>98</sup>: for instance, when we tap our fingers on the table, or when we whistle a song. The ideal of personal autonomy, however, is in some sense narrower than the ideal of agency and it supposes that

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<sup>98</sup> See Donald Davidson, *Essays on Actions and Events* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), 3–20; Alfred Mele, *Springs of Action: Understanding Intentional Behavior* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992) and Alfred Mele, *Motivation and Agency* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), Carl Ginet, *On Action* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), Edward J. Lowe, *Personal Agency: The Metaphysics of Mind and Action* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).



individuals are not acting spontaneously in forming their conceptions of the good, but that they are committed to their conceptions of the good for particular reason.

Aside from being capable to commit and act for a reason, the complex of cognitive and practical capacities which autonomous individuals possess should also include the capacities for logical thinking and for rational behavior. Clearly all of us might hold contradictory beliefs at some deeper level, but what is relevant for autonomy is that one has capacities to spot them and to correct them upon indication. In addition, autonomous persons should be capable to adopt and act on basic principles of rationality for instance “to adopt the most effective means” to their ends, to “select the more probable alternatives, other things equal”, to “prefer the greater good” or to “order their objectives by priorities when they conflict” etc.<sup>99</sup>

Lastly, our capacities for practical reasoning develop in particular cultural context within which we learn about valuable practices and conceptions of the good which we consider worthy. As Kymlicka claims, cultures give the context in which decisions about which life is valuable or what conception of the good it is valuable to pursue are made.<sup>100</sup> What kind of ambitions we develop and what courses of action we take also depends on what we consider to be valuable and this is in many cases influenced by and adopted within the cultural setting in which we live. Hence cultures have at least an instrumental value for liberals as they provide a background on which we develop our evaluative capacities as well as a context, as a precondition, in which autonomy is exercised.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, 83.

<sup>100</sup> See Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995).

<sup>101</sup> Cultural diversity can be instrumentalized for other purposes as well, rather than just being a precondition for autonomy. As Macedo claims, diversity might be necessary for the development of toleration as well: liberals are committed to the fact of pluralism and the right way to respond to it is by being exposed to diversity. See Stephen Macedo, *Liberal Virtues* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990) and Stephen Macedo, “Liberal Civic Education and the Case of God v. John Rawls,” *Ethics* Vol.105, No.3 (April 1995): 468-496.

While most individuals do satisfy the cognitive and practical capacity condition of the hybrid ideal of autonomy, there are some categories of citizens which cannot be claimed to possess these capacities and hence remain excluded from the ideal of autonomy. These include infants, people with very severe mental disabilities, some categories of psychopaths, schizophrenics and insane, comatose individuals. Being excluded from the hybrid ideal of autonomy implies that the state is justified in subjecting these categories of citizens to some forms of paternalistic treatment, which however has to be conducted in light of their dignity as humans.

## 1.2. Validation condition

The second condition for autonomous formation of a conception of the good is the validation condition. This condition is a conjunction of the following two requirements: (1) one has transparent reasons for one's commitment to a conception of the good; and (2) one has a disposition to validate the commitment to a conception of the good as valuable because of the transparent reasons.

I will start with the later sub-condition. Aside from the possession of capacities for intentional action, forming a conception of the good understood as commitment to a set of integrated comprehensive goals that one values also requires an act of validation of that commitment to a conception of the good undertaken by the person for whom something is a conception of the good. This might be an explicit act, taken on reflection regarding the values of that conception or implicit, by pursuit of actions that are instrumental or constitutive of a conception. What matters for the autonomous formation of a conception of the good according to this condition is that the reasons for the commitment to a

conception of the good are transparent to the individual and that based on those reasons one is *disposed to validate* the commitment to that conception of the good.

It is important to stress that this dispositional requirement in the second sub-condition makes it obvious that the ideal of the autonomous life I proposed should not be thought of as something reflective in essence: namely, that one constantly thinks and questions one's commitments to conceptions of the good in order to validate them or not. That kind of attitude, as many have noted, might even have an autonomy undermining influence of one's autonomy. Whether one validates a commitment to a conception of the good for a reason depends on whether one is disposed to accept that commitment for that transparent reason.

We can think about the transparency sub-condition in two senses: a strong and a weak one. In the strong sense the transparency requirement would imply that an autonomous individual has insight and validates one's commitment to a conception of the good for a causally effective reason, while the weak one implies that one justifies one's commitment for some normative reason which can plausibly be related to the value of the conception of the good one is committed to, but which might differ from the one which in fact motivated one's act of commitment.

Clearly, in some cases conceptions of the good are formed intentionally, while in others they are not. In the first cases, one's commitment to a conception of the good is explicitly undertaken for a particular reason – which reason might motivate the commitment. Hence, in these cases there might be a causal relation between the act of commitment and the reasons for the commitment. In other cases, individuals might form conceptions of the good without such intention or they might not even be aware about the causally effective reasons for their commitment to a conception of the good. Imagine two persons, A and B, who are committed in living a devoted religious life. Person A used to

live in an atheist environment with practically no contact to anything religious while B was exposed to the life of his religious community since he can remember. A can trace the first sparks of interest in religions back to his philosophy of religion classes at the university, when after some reading, he decided to pursue that particular religious life because he thinks that it is the only path to salvation and earning your way to salvation is what matters most in this life. The second person cannot recall of such explicit decision to commit to his religious life, but whenever he is asked about the reasons why he is committed to the life he pursues, he refers to the same reasons due to which person A explicitly undertook his commitment to such life. Both satisfy the transparency condition in the weaker sense and it is this sense that is presupposed as a condition by the hybrid ideal of personal autonomy. What matters thus for autonomy, is that individuals have justificatory reasons for their commitment which they endorse as explanations of their commitment. Of course, there might be instances in which there is an overlap between the reasons which motivate the commitment and the reasons which justify it – as it in the case of person A - but I do not presuppose this as a necessary requirement for autonomy.

As we develop our capacities for autonomy, we find ourselves already entangled within different commitments towards particular values, whose origin we might not be even able to trace correctly in our past. While there is nothing in following commitments, we grew up with which is incompatible with autonomy according to the hybrid conception of autonomy, following those commitments for no transparent reason in the weaker sense is incompatible with personal autonomy.

When an individual lacks a transparent reason for a commitment to a conception of the good it might be the case that either one is blindly acting on commitments one finds oneself entangled with in one's social environment without ever reflecting on the reasons for one's actions or one acts on opaque reasons. When the first is the case an individual is simply "mimicking" what others do. If person B

above was to justify his commitment with the reason that everybody around him lives such a life he would fail to offer a transparent reason in the weaker sense for his commitment as the reason offered is merely descriptive and has nothing to do with the value of living a devoted religious life. Regarding the second, one way in which an individual can act on opaque reason is when one is self-deceiving oneself. There are various forms of self-deception with different features<sup>102</sup>. For the purpose of illustration, let us take the cases of so-called “straight self-deceptions”. In cases like these people falsely believe things which they would like to be true. Imagine a person C, who is a committed philanthrope and who claims the reason for this commitment of his to be his deep concern with alleviating as many poor as he can from poverty. Helping the establishment of a world without poverty is what is a central project in his life. C believes he is pursuing his generous philanthropic life because of this reason and can indeed point out to several humanitarian actions which he supported. However, he extracts from his deliberation or overlooks the hundreds of calls for assistance he refused, due to the advices of his PRs not to participate in actions which have a poor media coverage, as they are practically useless for his public philanthropic recognition. C would be an example of a person who is self-deceiving and whose reasons for commitment to philanthropy is opaque.

Some forms of what has been known in the literature as “adaptive preferences<sup>103</sup>” also fall within this category of examples in which the transparency requirement is not satisfied, as they involve commitments for opaque reasons. The difference between the cases of self-deception and of adaptive preference is that the latter are considered to be unconscious while the former need not be.

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<sup>102</sup> See more in Alfred R. Mele, *Self-Deception Unmasked*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2001.

<sup>103</sup> See Jon Elster, *Sour Grapes: Studies in the Subversion of Rationality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983) and Natalie Stoljar, “Autonomy and Adaptive Preference Formation,” in *Autonomy, Oppression and Gender*, edited by, Andrea Veltman and Mark Piper (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 227-252.

It should be stressed that circumstances of oppression most commonly contribute to obscuring the transparency of the reasons for commitment to a conception of the good and result in self-deception or adaptive preference formation. Oppressed individuals would use opaque reasons in justifying their oppression. Think, for instance, of an individual who is in an abusive relationship but who nevertheless justifies the abuses by accusing oneself as provoking them, or is self-deceiving oneself by believing that the abuser, as every other person, has “bad days,” but is otherwise a “truly nice person”.

### 1.3. Independence conditions

The capacity and the validation condition as specified are insufficient for autonomous formation of a conception of the good. What is additionally required is that one’s validation is (1) outcome independent, namely that the reasons offered for a commitment to a conception of the good are independent of evaluative factors external to the conception and that one’s validation enjoys (2) procedural independence.

#### *1.3.1. Outcome independence*

The outcome-independence sub-condition implies that the reasons for the commitment to a conception of the good should not refer to factors or features extrinsic to the conception of the good to which one is committed. The introduction of the sub-condition of outcome independence is justified by two reasons: first, it gives further formal criteria for the legitimate reasons for autonomous commitment to a conception of the good, and second, its satisfaction signals the voluntariness of the commitment.

Being disposed to offer just any reason is not sufficient for validation of a commitment to a conception of the good. The outcome independence sub-condition specifies thus a further formal requirement on the disposition according to which one should offer such reasons which are independent of factors extrinsic to the valued conception of the good. For instance, person A cannot be claimed to satisfy the outcome independence sub-condition if his genuine reason for commitment to his conception of the good, of let's say being a tailor, is that person B tells him to do so. Nor does he satisfy the outcome independence sub-condition, if his reason for commitment is that, for instance, he could not be a carpenter, so being a tailor is the only thing he could do, but otherwise he does not see anything valuable in being a tailor. It is important to stress here that this is not a requirement on the content of the reasons. Although the content of the reasons, according to my conception of autonomy, does not matter for the validation process what is of relevance is this formal characteristic of theirs, namely that they refer or are plausibly related to the genuine features of the conception of the good endorsed rather than to the will of others or to environmental features such as the lack of any valuable option to pursue.

So, according to this sub-condition one way to fail to validate the commitment to one's conception of the good in an outcome-independent way occurs when the reasons for a commitment to a conception of the good ultimately refer to the will of another person. When this is the case then the failures to satisfy the outcome-independence condition might be due either to coercion, or to deference and subjugation to the opinion of others. Imagine that Bob threatened Adam with a gun: "your wallet or your life!". In case Adam decides to give Bob the wallet one cannot consider the act autonomous, as validation in the above specified way did not actually occur. The reason why Adam gave the wallet to Bob was because through the threat Bob altered the preexisting disposition of Adam

to keep his wallet, making his act of giving the wallet involuntary and explainable only by reference to Bob's forceful act and will<sup>104</sup>. The second type of failures includes cases in which one is committed to a conception of the good because another person is committed or values that conception of the good, hence again the ultimate reference is to the will of another person and not to the conception of the good in question. Here autonomy is undermined only in case the commitment is non-derivative: I go to opera because John goes to opera. It matters for autonomy whether the ultimate reasons for the commitment to a conception of the good – going to the opera - refers to a conception of the good which is central in one's life, to one which is rather peripheral or to one which is derivative. In case it is derivative I am not autonomous if my central conception of the good is to be an opera fan and the reasons are that John loves opera. On the other side I retain my autonomy if the central conception of the good is that I like to spend time with John and loving him is the things that fulfils my life. In this case my validation is not void because it is derivative from my central commitment of being in a valuable relationship with him which itself does not refer to his will.<sup>105</sup>

Aside from the cases in which the reasons for one's validation of a conception of the good find ultimate reference to the will of another person, another form of failure to satisfy the outcome independence sub-condition occurs when one undertakes a commitment to a conception of the good not because of some genuine property of that conception of the good which one values, but rather because that conception is ranked highest among all unvalued conceptions. In these cases, one will fail to satisfy the outcome-independence sub-condition because one's reasons for commitment will

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<sup>104</sup> See more on the analysis of coercion in Robert Nozick, "Coercion," in *Philosophy, Science, and Method: Essays in Honor of Ernest Nagel*, edited by Sidney Morgenbesser, Patrick Suppes, and Morton White (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1969), 440-472.

<sup>105</sup> Christian Piller, "Content-Related and Attitude-Related Reasons for Preferences," in *Preferences and Wellbeing*, edited by Serena Olsaretti (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 172 and Ben Colburn, "Anti-perfectionism and Autonomy," *Analysis* Vol.70, No.2 (April 2010): 247-256.



ultimately refer not to the values of the conception validated but to the devaluing of other conceptions, hence it will be insensitive to the content of the conception “validated” and sensitive to the circumstances or the choice-situation one faced in which one did not have valuable options to choose. As I claimed in Chapter One not satisfying the outcome-independence sub-condition in this way need not necessarily have full autonomy-undermining effect although it will always have an effect of decreasing the level of one’s autonomy. Hence such valuing are inimical to autonomy.

### 1.3.2. *Procedural independence*

According to the procedural independence condition, “one’s validation or disposition to validate a commitment to a conception of the good should not occur or should not be subject to manipulation, indoctrination, hypnosis or the influence of psychotropic substances which impair the evaluative judgement of an individual”. Procedural accounts of autonomy tend to obscure the difference between the validation or authentication condition and the independence condition. I believe Oshana is right when she distinguishes these two conditions along the following lines. Independence – or “procedural independence“, as Oshana terms it, following Dworkin and Christman- is a condition that pertains to the *process* in which evaluation of beliefs and values occurs. Authorization or authentication, on the other side, is a characteristic of the *product* of that process, such as beliefs, values, conceptions of the good.<sup>106</sup> Clearly, being procedurally independent is not a guarantee for satisfying the validation condition as defined above. The condition of procedural independence intends to guard the validation process or the development of a disposition to validate a commitment to a conception of the good

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<sup>106</sup> Oshana, *Personal Autonomy in Society*, 79-80.

from these forms of “external” influence which are such that they either bypass the rational deliberations of an individual, as in the cases of hypnosis or lead the agent astray of the ideals governing the formation of beliefs or desires in the cases of manipulation or they affect the physical aspects of sensory capacities and consequently our rational deliberations in the case of psychotropic substances.

Cases of hypnosis are the most extreme example inimical to autonomy due to violation of the procedural independence condition. A person who validates or has a disposition to validate a conception of the good because one was hypnotized cannot be considered procedurally independent, as hypnosis bypasses the rational deliberations of an individual. The influence of psychotropic substances can also undermine the independence requirement. This is the case because they affect the physical aspects of capacities to perceive, sense, feel, know thus distorting our rational deliberations.

Cases of manipulation has been claimed to constitute paradigmatic examples of infringement of the procedural independence condition. According to Noggle there are various instances of manipulation such as deception, conditioning, tempting, inciting, playing on emotions etc., which can be classified into three different types of manipulation: manipulation of beliefs, manipulation of desires and manipulation of emotions<sup>107</sup>. What is common to all these different forms is the attempt to get someone astray in one’s beliefs, desires or emotions, or more particularly it is the attempt to get someone fall short of the ideals governing them, for instance of truthfulness in the case of manipulation of beliefs or subjective rationality and conformity to beliefs about reasons for action in the case of manipulation of desires. Consider for instance parents conditioning their son to prefer doing master in law rather than arts, although their son considers law to be boring and utterly incompatible with his character. The purpose of the conditioning action is to instill a desire in an

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<sup>107</sup> Noggle, “Manipulative Action: A Conceptual and Moral Analysis.”

individual which desire does not otherwise conform his beliefs. When an individual is manipulated in this way it acts on motivating reasons which if it was not for the manipulative action, one would not act upon. Hence, as it interferes with the way in which the person validates the reasons for one's action – namely it instills motivating reasons for x-ing, aside the negative judgment of the individual about x-ing- conditioning as a form of manipulation is a violation of the procedural independence condition for autonomy.

## **2. Conditions for pursue of a conception of the good**

It follows from the exercise dimension of the hybrid ideal of personal autonomy that autonomous individuals do not only determine the principles that will govern their actions but also exercise de-facto authority, and take responsibility for the “translation” of those principles into action. If this is so then we need to introduce pursue conditions which aim at grasping the second part of the hybrid ideal of autonomous persons referring to their self-controlling, which will complement thus the formation conditions.

As I claimed in Chapter Two, the internalist conceptions of the ideals of autonomous persons as self-determining individuals lack such conditions, which makes these theories unable to properly account for the necessary self-control which autonomous individuals should exhibit in pursuing particular conceptions of the good. Fairly speaking, John Christman does say that some options are always already present there in the preference-formation process, and Dworkin also stresses that it is important that an individual makes effective his plans, but they do not offer more specification to what these claims would amounts to in terms of conditions. Since we do not value autonomy only for the decisions one makes about which conceptions of the good should inform one's actions but we

value the living of autonomous life in which such conceptions of the good are pursued, the specification of the pursue conditions for autonomy is an unavoidable requirement of a plausible theory of autonomy.

What does it mean to pursue a conception of the good? To pursue a conception of the good is to maintain a commitment to a conception of the good over time, where I understand maintaining a commitment to a conception of the good as conducting actions constitutive or central to the conception of the good one is committed to. The pursue conditions aim to tie one's actions to a conception of the good. This is important because, in accordance with the global and hierarchical dimension of the hybrid ideal, it distinguishes the actions relevant for evaluation of one's autonomy from other actions an individual performs based on other intentions and commitments. Consequently, we should distinguish the following conditions for pursue of a conception of the good: (4) one performs actions constitutive of one's autonomously formed conception (performative condition) and (5) one is internally justified in taking one's actions as constitutive to the conceptions of the good one pursues (epistemic condition).

## 2.1. Performative condition

To satisfy the performative condition an individual is required to (1) exercise one's will to perform an action constitutive of one's autonomously formed conception and (2) use adequate means to do so.

The first obvious reason why someone might fail to live autonomously by failing to satisfy the performative condition is that one may autonomously form a conception of the good without ever operationalizing it. Imagine a person who autonomously decides every beginning of the month to start living a healthy lifestyle but who finds every possible reason to give oneself to junk food and postpones

the operationalization of his plan for the beginning of the next month. The reasons for this kind of failures can be various and they are more common regarding local autonomy. It might be the case for instance that the agent exhibits weakness of the will or *akrasia*. I follow Richard Holton in distinguishing these two in the sense that the latter refers to actions voluntarily undertaken by the agent against one's better judgement, while the former's central cases are best characterized as cases in which people fail to persist in their own resolutions<sup>108</sup>. What is common to both is that in both cases the agent fails to perform actions which are constitutive of one's autonomously formed conception of the good. In addition, empirical psychological studies have also pay special attention to the relation psychological states such as depression have with the lack of willingness to act, as well as the autonomy undermining influence of burnouts.

Another way in which one might not count as living autonomously aside from autonomously forming a conception of the good is because one was deprived from means to pursue that conception. For instance, one might have formed a conception of the good to be a world traveler but since he is prisoner, he cannot be claimed to be living autonomously at the moment simply because one lacks adequate means to do so, in the first instance, freedom of movement. Hence in order for individuals to be able to perform actions constitutive of their conceptions of the good they need to have access to and actually use adequate means for the pursue.

As I claimed in Chapter Two, the granting of an access to adequate means for pursue should be understood in a twofold functional sense: as a function of the basic needs of individuals in general and as a function of the agent's autonomously endorsed conception of the good. So, we can distinguish two forms of adequacy or adequate means: generally adequate means which allows individuals to be in circumstances for autonomy and particularly adequate means which allows them to live

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<sup>108</sup> Richard Holton, "Intention and Weakness of Will," *Journal of Philosophy* Vol. 96, No.5 (1999): 241.

autonomously. The general adequacy requirement entails that individuals need general all-purpose means such as basic food ingredients, shelter, in order to be in a position to live autonomously. As I pointed out in Chapter Two, political institutions in distributing such means should work with a functional approximation based on the basic needs of citizens whose satisfaction allows them to perform basic roles or functions in their societies such as being able to work, to be politically active, to form and rise a family etc. By providing such means the state sets its citizens in “circumstances for autonomy”. The particular adequacy requirement on the other side entails that individuals need such internal and external means which contribute or facilitate or are constitutive of the pursue of the particular conception of the good they endorse. These means include external resources of material or environmental nature as well as internal resources (knowledge, skills, abilities to do something with those material resources). Within the internal resources necessary for autonomy, I do not include the talents. Talents clearly might be an important parameter for individuals when forming conceptions of the good, but they are not detrimental for autonomy: one can be autonomous even though one is not talented in pursuing a conception of the good one values, and aside from one probably – but not necessarily - not being successful in the realization of one’s project. Having a talent for something commonly implies that you have certain capacity to do certain things with much excellence, a degree which most other people can’t achieve. But excelling in something is a value which should be distinguished from autonomy. To require the possession of talents in this sense as a condition for autonomy means to confuse personal autonomy with the value of self-realization. Some might understand talents in a weaker sense, not as a capacity to excel in something but as a capacity to do something more or less successfully: you cannot be a figure skater if you don’t have talent to do spins and that is something that most people cannot do. But this seems to be more of an ability than a talent, namely one which is necessary in order to perform certain constitutive actions of one’s conception of

the good. Having certain abilities is something that I do account in the internal means necessary to pursue a conception of the good, but these should however be distinguished from talents.

In order to properly understand the particular adequacy requirement of the performative condition we must stress that individuals form their conceptions of the good with an eye on the available means for pursues in their social environment, namely they are responsible for the conceptions of the good they form. Thus, forming a conception of the good should not be understood as a phase prior to the insight in the access to available means one has, although the analytical way in which I present the conditions might give that impression. The insight into the resources available in my environment for the available pursues is always simultaneous with the process of forming a conception of the good. This being the case, it is sufficient to guarantee in most of the cases a congruency between the adequacy of the means for pursue of a conception of the good and the formation of particular conceptions of the good by individuals. However, where there is no such congruency the inadequacy of the means for pursue of a conception of the good might reflect on the non-autonomy of an individual in two ways: as a failure to satisfy the performative condition in case one remains determined to the conception of the good one formed; or as a failure to satisfy the formation conditions, in case the inadequacy or the lack of adequacy is a reason for which one forms a different conception of the good. If this latter is the case, then the inadequacy will be reflected on the formation conditions as a failure to satisfy the outcome-independence condition, because one would be committed to a conception of the good only because one would judge that there is nothing valuable to be committed to in one's environment; or in the case of lack of adequacy, because one would adapt one's preferences, namely be committed to a conception of the good which is the best from the available alternatives, but not the one which he values for some internal features of the conception. Now in some cases, the inadequacy of particular means for pursue of a conception of the good, can

be a reason for valid claims to autonomy by individuals. But what makes such claims valid depends on the value of the autonomy of individuals. I elaborate on this in specification of the conditionality of the value of personal autonomy in Chapter Five where I discuss the commitments of partly-comprehensive anti-perfectionists towards particular distributions for autonomy.

One may ask if access to adequate means for pursue is something which is reflected in the formation of the conception of the good, then why is this a separate condition? Satisfying the autonomous formation conditions already implies that the adequacy condition was satisfied as well! And if this is so how could it be possible that I lack such means to pursue an autonomously formed conception of the good? The performative condition requires in order for one to pursue a conception of the good that one performs actions constitutive of that conception of the good which does require the *use* of internal and external resources. Having *access* is not sufficient to guarantee that one will actually perform the action. This is the case not only because one might not exercise his will to act on one's commitments but also because what one had as an access in the time of formation of one's conception of the good might be lost during the pursue of that conception. Take as an example an imprisoned person who, although he might have had access to adequate means for pursue during forming a conception of the good, for whatever reason his imprisonment, he lost it. So, it is the actual use of such means in performing actions constitutive of a conception of the good that is stressed with the performative condition, while the access to the means for performing such acts functions as a parameter. The access to adequate means during forming the conception of the good does not guarantee the authority necessary for the individual to exercise self-control over one's pursues, let alone the success or the fulfillment of their plans. Hence the justification for having them as a separate condition. I believe this explanation is sufficient to point out to the distinctiveness of the hybrid ideal and the conception based on it in regard of the internalist ideals, which presuppose that agents



somehow effectuate autonomously determined conceptions of the good into actions, but do not offer any specification of pursue conditions.

The adequacy condition, as I already elaborated in Chapter Two, plays a key role in perfectionist conceptualization of personal autonomy, as well. So here, I would like to point out to the differences between the adequacy requirement as part of the performative condition I propose and the adequacy requirement in perfectionist conceptions such as Raz's. As we saw above Raz claims that having adequate ranges of options is necessary for autonomy. A range of options is adequate if it includes options with long term pervasive consequences as well as short term options of little consequence, and a fair spread in between; there is a variety among the options in which the number is not what matters but their diversity; the options should not be dominated by the need to protect one's life; and the options should be morally acceptable<sup>109</sup>. To point out to what having adequate options amounts to Raz gives two examples: a man trapped in a pit who has choices, but they are only about when to eat and sleep, and a women which finds herself on an island with a beast that chases her, who also has choices to make, but all of them refer to escaping the beast and saving her life. These have been taken as paradigmatic cases in the literature of personal autonomy whenever the adequacy requirement was taken as a condition for personal autonomy.

Opposite to Raz's value-laden characterization of the adequacy of options I argued above that the performative condition includes adequate means for pursue only in a twofold functional sense. This functional sense, in the case of the particularly adequate means, should be understood in the following way: A person P with a conception of the good C, can be claimed to have access to adequate means A for C, iff A are means to do actions constitutive of a conception of the good C, and P endorses

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<sup>109</sup> Raz, *The Morality of Freedom*, 374-379.

doing A as constitutive of C. Having a dial up connection is not adequate for a person who likes to stream videos. But having a dial up connection is neither adequate nor inadequate per se without further qualification, nor is it inadequate to connect to the internet in general. Hence the particular adequacy of means is relative to the endorsement of a conception of the good.

This view on the adequacy, seems to give us different guidance in thinking about autonomy in the paradigmatic cases that Raz's offers. It also throws light on some aspects in the evaluation of these cases which are present in our intuitions but which are silent in Raz's interpretation. I aim to show in what follows that if made explicit, these aspects challenge the conception of adequacy and autonomy with which Raz operates.

Let us start with an evaluation of these cases in terms of the adequacy criteria from the aspect of my conception of autonomy. While in the first example which Raz gives - the man in the pit - there is no purpose or goal concerned, and probably cannot be, hence no means can be claimed to be adequate or inadequate on my account, it is not clear that the hounded woman in the second example can be claimed to lack such means as well. This is because she seems to have a purpose and she seems to work on realizing that purpose constantly, namely her struggle to constantly escape the beast. It seems that all her maneuvers which she plans and executes by the use of internal and external resources in this regard can't be claimed to be non-autonomous because of a lack of adequate means for autonomy.

On Raz's view the woman is not autonomous due to the lack of adequate options understood as integrating certain perfections as criteria for adequacy. Namely she has no adequate options for autonomy because the requirement of adequacy mandates that the options are such that through them "persons can develop valuable human capacities or refuse to develop these" through engagement with

their projects. As Raz claims, “a person must have options which enable him to sustain throughout his life activities which, taken together, exercise all the capacities human beings have an innate drive to exercise, as well as to decline to develop any of them.”<sup>110</sup> Obviously the hounded woman does not have such options and in Raz’s view this makes her non-autonomous.

But I think it is possible to imagine a case with the same setting and where an individual has the same options as the hounded women, but in which most of us will share the intuition that the individual is autonomous, a conclusion also supported by my conception of autonomy. Imagine, for instance, that a reality showman agrees to lead the life of the hounded women for a long period of time: he lives alone on an island with animals of all sorts that are chasing him and the only purpose of his is to survive during the contracted period of one year for the “Survivor” reality show, which takes place in some jungle. Most of us would have the intuition that the one year life of that person is autonomous, and the reason would be because he validated the commitment to such a life, - I stipulate, hereby - in an autonomous fashion. Moreover, based on this conception of the good he in fact, has, adequate means for his endeavor: he can’t run from a beast in Central Manhattan, nor would it be much of a survival struggle for the audience to see him living in a city where he could find many different means and ways to survive.

Now, if we do accept that the showman lives an autonomous life then we have to locate the difference between him and the hounded women in the fact that the former had autonomously validated his commitment to that kind of life, while the women in Raz’s example we presuppose did not and does not have a disposition to do so. It is this factor that makes the normative difference in the two cases in regard of the evaluation of the person’s autonomy and not the alleged inadequacy of options they

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<sup>110</sup> Raz, *The Morality of Freedom*, 375.

face. Raz at some point claims that the hounded woman does have “adequate variety of options” (Raz: 1986, 376), but because she does not have the option to develop herself as an “unimaginative athlete” or “to become physically weak” and avoid caring about her survival she does not “fully meet” this condition. However, if one autonomously formed a conception of the good to survive the chase with the beast as our reality showman did, it is irrelevant for his autonomy whether he has option to become “chess player” or “ballet dancer”. Nor in his case would be desirable to have such options such as for instance becoming “physically weak”. Not having these options might be relevant if one does not endorse that conception of the good, or formed it in a non-autonomous way, but not when one already has autonomously formed that particular conception of the good.

This comparison shows two things: first, that it is not the “inadequacy” of options that renders one autonomous/non-autonomous in the Hounded Woman case but whether one will be autonomous or not depends on one’s validation of a goal in an outcome independent way; second, that options can be claimed to be adequate or inadequate, is in part, conditional on their conduciveness to certain purposes, not in regard to their conduciveness to human flourishing. This last note might also throw skepticism towards the completeness of Raz’s conception of autonomy. As the example with our showman survivor points out, autonomy requires that one has an evaluative attitude to one’s commitments and a validation or a disposition to validate our commitments to conceptions of the good.

Before I proceed with the last, epistemic condition for autonomy I want to disregard one possible confusion that might arise from the above reached conclusions. Namely one might interpretate the performative condition as implying that my conception of autonomy favors restrictions of options sets. That would be however incorrect and far from my intention. What my conception shows is that

there is not necessity in conceiving of adequacy in the way perfectionists such as Raz and Wall do and that autonomy might be compatible with restricted sets of options, in case they are the “right” ones an individual would endorse. But this last clause is important as it implies that a provision of a wider range of options is of derivative value under the hybrid conception of autonomy because it can serve as evidence that individuals do not form their commitments to conceptions of the good in a non-outcome-independent way and do not fall prey of adaptive preference<sup>111</sup>.

## 2.2. Epistemic condition

Lastly someone might fail to live autonomously aside from forming autonomously a conception of the good because one is not epistemically justified in taking particular means as necessary or constitutive in pursuing a particular conception of the good. The epistemic condition for personal autonomy is derived from two features ascribed to the autonomous agent. The first one is that the agent is rational, in a narrow instrumental sense, namely one is rational in the use of particular means as conducive to particular ends. The second one is regarding the effectiveness of this use of means. It is the requirement that the agent is relatively successful in the pursue of one’s conception of the good with the appropriate means. I understand this second requirement in a minimal sense that one’s actions are at least not sabotaged by one’s efforts based on overtly contradictory beliefs. The epistemic condition thus requires that one is internally justified in doing an action, as conducive to one’s conception of the good. The justification of one’s beliefs, that the actions one is performing are

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<sup>111</sup> So, anti-perfectionists can keep the idea of expansion without making substantive assumption about the value of options by simply taking as a criterion for how to expand the options what citizens want or prefer in particular society. In this case the expansion of options will follow as a function of the aggregation of the preferences or the conceptions of the good of the citizens.

conductive to one's conception of the good, I envision as internalist, requiring only coherence within the internal belief system of an agent. When one does not satisfy the epistemic condition, one exhibits a failure of rationality, which ultimately puts into question the maintenance of one's commitment to a conception of the good.

I believe, externalist conceptualizations of such justification are in tension with our common intuitions about autonomous agency in general. Consider the following case. Ann is in need for financial help and Conny would like to make a donation because she thinks she should help Ann. She believes that helping her is a thing she should do, because helping people in need is good. The only way she could do this is through Bob who is collecting money on her behalf. However, Conny believes – truly - that Bob is insincere in his efforts, and in general steals much of the money people donate. She believes this would happen to her donation as well. If Conny, aside from believing that Bob will steal her money, still makes a donation, she can be claimed to act on contradictory beliefs and hence her action fails to be autonomous. As long as she believes that she should help Ann, and she is committed to helping her, and at the same time believes that the only possible way to help her will fail because Bob will steal the money, her act of donating the money to Bob cannot be claimed to be self-governed or autonomous. This is because of the inconsistency of her beliefs: namely, according to her beliefs the means she is using are not conducive to her end. If she believes her act of donation of the money to Bob helps Ann, it must be because she believes, truly or falsely, that Bob will transfer the money to her. Irrespective of whether this belief of hers about Bob is true or false, in order for her act to be one conducive to her aim, namely to help people in need and Ann in particular in this case, she has to believe that Bob will transfer the money to Ann. But believing that Bob will not do that, and yet holding that she helped Ann is irrational, and consequently negates the status of her performed act (the donation) as conducive to her aim.

It is interesting to compare the status of the performed act following from contradictory beliefs with the already mentioned failures to pursue an autonomously formed conception of the good. One may claim that unlike the unwilling agent who does nothing about his autonomously formed conception of the good, and hence can't be claimed to live autonomously, the contradictory agent does have a motivational force to act, just he does not do the correct act, and hence fails to live autonomously as well. The important thing to note here is that the epistemic condition I propose does not make the correctness of the act sensitive to standards outside the doxastic economy of the agent. It is the coherency within his doxastic economy that determines the act as correct or incorrect one.

This requirement for coherence, determines at the same time the minimal success requirement of the actions of the agent which is necessary to be incorporated in a theory of personal autonomy. The intuition here is that the agents' efforts must be in some sense successful in the pursue of one's autonomously determined conception of the good although we should be careful here not to confuse here autonomy with other values. The success condition for autonomy should be considered as one of degree, and the more robust it gets the more it ceases to be applicable to autonomy and refers to other values. Whether one's act will be successful or not in a more robust sense, beyond the minimal one I stated above, does not reflect in any way the status of autonomy of that act. It is possible to act autonomously beyond the minimal success requirement and yet fail to be successful. To see that this is the case consider for instance the same outcome where Conny does not have contradictory beliefs. Let's take that Conny does not doubt the sincerity of the efforts Bob makes and she believes that Bob will help Ann. This clearly changes the status of Conny's act into one which is self-governed or autonomous. Namely she has no overtly contradictory belief in her doxastic economy and she acts on a principle she autonomously endorses. This is all that it takes for an act to be deemed autonomous.

It is not relevant for her autonomy that her belief that Bob will transfer the money is in fact false<sup>112</sup>.

The ascription of the autonomy of an act concerns the relation belief-desire-act, and beyond the minimal success requirement does not refer to the relation belief-desire-act-success of an act.

### 3. The relation between the formation and the pursue conditions

Another important task regarding the hybrid ideal and conception of personal autonomy I propose which I believe can save us from mixing other values such as freedom with autonomy, requires that we explicitly determine the relation between the formation and the pursue conditions for personal autonomy in my conception. One may ask the following questions regarding the two parts of the ideal and the conception proposed: is it possible to live an autonomous life without autonomously forming a conception of the good? Namely, can one simply be “pushed” into living autonomously? And second can one live autonomously without being autonomous in the pursue of one’s autonomously formed conception of the good? Here I will only give brief and very direct answers to these questions while in the next section, where I elaborate on the distinctive features of my ideal and conception of personal autonomy, I will show their consequences on particular cases.

Throughout one’s life a person can form conceptions of the good autonomously or non-autonomously, or not form at all. When one acts without any particular conception of the good, one

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<sup>112</sup> See more on the discussion of whether true beliefs are necessary for autonomy in Michael McKenna, “The Relationship Between Autonomous and Morally Responsible Agency,” in *Personal Autonomy: New Essays on Personal Autonomy and Its Role in Contemporary Moral Philosophy*, edited by James Stacey Taylor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 205–234 and Suzy Killmister, “Autonomy and False Beliefs,” *Philosophical Studies: An International Journal for Philosophy in the Analytic Tradition* Vol.164, No.2 (June 2013): 513–531.



is not autonomous in a global sense as there is no relevant reference for evaluation for the formation criteria. This can be the case if someone is wandering in life, for instance. When one non-autonomously formed a conception of the good one pursues, one is living a non-autonomous life. One can pursue a conception of the good autonomously or non-autonomously - depending on the status of the formation process - or not pursue a conception of the good at all. One pursues a conception of the good non-autonomously when one simply acts on non-autonomously formed conception of the good. There are no special conditions for autonomous pursue which if not satisfied makes one's pursue, non-autonomous. It is rather the status of the formed conception of the good that confers this attribute to the pursue. The conditions for pursue are the same irrespective of whether the conception was autonomously or non-autonomously formed. Thus, to autonomously pursue a conception of the good is to pursue a conception one formed autonomously. One does not pursue a conception of the good at all, when one is incapable of performing any action, when one performs actions that are not related as constitutive to any conception of the good, or when one does perform such actions but they are insufficient to count as a pursue because one cannot maintain a commitment to a conception of the good over time due, for instance, to frequent formations of different conceptions of the good.

To conclude: one lives autonomously if and only if one pursues an autonomously formed conception of the good. Autonomously forming a conception of the good does not imply that one lives autonomously. One might fail to pursue it. Pursuing a conception of the good does not imply that one lives autonomously. One may fail to form that conception autonomously.

It is important to mention here that one might be autonomous in the pursue of a conception of the good but not be free in doing so. This will not detract from him living autonomously as long as he formed his conception of the good autonomously and retains his disposition to validate it. Imagine

the case of a workaholic who develops a working habit after autonomously endorsing the life of hard work and a success-driven working ethic. This person after some time discovers that he changed so much that he simply cannot get rid of the desire to compete with others, even if he wanted to. However, he reflects on it and concludes that a life without competition with others is simply a boring life for him and one not worthy living. So he continues to pursue that direction of his life. How to think of the autonomy status of this person? Considering what was said above: if the person does perform the actions constitutive of his conception of the good the person does pursue that conception; if that conception was autonomously formed, namely the person has a disposition to validate his commitment to the conception of the good in an outcome and procedurally independent fashion, then that person lives an autonomous life. So, I believe the person in this case retains his autonomy. Other similar cases are for instance validated addictions. Some claim that in these cases the individuals are not autonomous because they do not anymore possess autonomously the desire which they formed autonomously in the past.<sup>113</sup> I think, however, that this opinion rests on a confusion of autonomy with freedom. Why do we think the individual does not “possess” one’s autonomously formed desire? Because he cannot do otherwise. But the impossibility to do otherwise although according to most of us can be considered an indication of lack of freedom, it does not necessarily imply a lack of autonomy as well. This is so because one may lack capacity to do otherwise because of the pursue of one’s autonomously formed conception of the good as in the case above, or because of some restrictions of freedom which are self-imposed for the sake of one’s autonomy. It is important to stress that what I claim is not that restrictions of freedom do not invade autonomy in general. On the contrary, this remains being the general principle, however the exception is when such restrictions

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<sup>113</sup> See Oshana, *Personal Autonomy in Society* and Alfred R. Mele, “History and Personal Autonomy,” *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* Vol.23, No.2 (June 1993): 271–280.

ensue from the autonomous pursue of one's conception of the good or are self-imposed from the start.<sup>114</sup>

#### 4. The distinctive features of the hybrid ideal and conception of personal autonomy

As I mentioned in the beginning of Chapter Two, two of the criteria according to Dworkin, which a plausible theory of autonomy should satisfy is to give us empirical plausibility and judgmental relevance and not simply fit in the theoretical role we ascribe for it. At this point, by concluding the construction of the ideal and the conception of personal autonomy it would be useful to see where does my theory construction stand so far and how it can be distinguished from other already existing theories of autonomy in regard of these two criteria stated by Dworkin. I construct below several hypothetical cases through whose discussion I will indicate the respects in which my theory is distinct from other rival theories from the same procedural theoretical provenance as well as from alternative substantive accounts. However, a theory of autonomy can only be completed with the explicit specification of the value of autonomy and its weights as much of our judgements and evaluation of particular policies that affect the autonomy of individuals depend on how much we should value

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<sup>114</sup> This is an important conclusion which I believe should play a significant role in context of thinking about the autonomy-based upbringing and schooling of children and the demands of illiberal communities in liberal democratic societies. From what was already said in this section it follows that some autonomous pursues can be free while others need not. Those that are not can only count as autonomous if the freedom restrictions were self-imposed in some of the two senses discussed above by an individual. Hence it makes no sense or it would be self-defeating for some groups who pursue ways of life with considerable restrictions of freedom to make autonomy-based claims for respect of their autonomy qua group. Although in principle such group claim can be grounded after each and every member is showed to satisfy the conditions for autonomous formation and consequently self-impose the freedom restrictions, it cannot hold for those members who are in the process of developing capacities for autonomy, namely the children in that community. The showing of concern for autonomy requires that the individuals live in such circumstances in which they will be in position to autonomously engage with options available in their environment, namely autonomously form a conception of the good. If this is so then the theory of autonomy, I propose, offers a ground on which one can easily base a support for the state requirement for mandatory basic education, as a condition to be such circumstances.

personal autonomy<sup>115</sup>. I will start by first presenting the cases and then proceed with their discussion from the perspective of various theories of autonomy demonstrating that the hybrid theory of personal autonomy I propose can account most consistently for our intuitions about them proving to be of higher level of explanatory robustness than the other theories, which I believe is a feature that makes it more preferable than alternative or rival accounts.

#### Case 1. The house of decency

Ana Marie had a particularly strict upbringing in which the opinions of her parents gained an absolute authority over the general way she thinks, over her opinions about what is good and what bad, what is right and wrong, her manners, the appropriateness of the gestures to be exhibited in public, including over the way she dresses or how she should do her hair. She doesn't have any friends, and her social contacts after finishing high-school are mainly limited to occasional communication with uncles, aunts and cousins when they visit her family or during the summer holidays at the seaside with her parents. Ana Marie never had an intimate relationship with anybody and feels embarrassed to talk about "that kind of stuff" in the first place. Her days mainly pass in doing house work and serving the needs of her elderly parents who believe that the only right way for their daughter to pursue in life is to take care of them. "It is the child's duty to take care of the parents!"- says her father. For someone who is an outsider of the life of this family it seems as these words capture the only principle that guides the actions in the life of Ana Marie, although this is not really something she has ever seriously thought of. When her aunt Luisa once told her "how virtuous of a daughter you are, Ana Marie" she shyly responded that this comes somehow naturally out of her, it is something that has simply befallen

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<sup>115</sup> See Anderson, "Regimes of Autonomy," 355-368.

on her. “It is how life arranged things for me aunty”!- she responded, echoing the words of her mother, who always reminds her how happy she is that god gave her such an angel to take care of her and her husband.

Case 2. I am about to choose and then I shudder...

There is nothing scarier for Lila than making big decisions. Whenever she has to make one, she feels terrible distress to the level that she does not feel herself well, in a bodily sense, for days and the psychological torture she suffers from the doubting whether the decision she made was good or bad, is something that she would rather avoid under any price. Her mother on the other side who cares a lot about Lila’s wellbeing, knowing well her general interests, strengths and vulnerabilities is the opposite of her: she likes that the big picture of her life is ordered, she has good reason for whatever she is doing, and she leads a decent and just life by following her conception of the good. She believes that taking over the authority to make decisions about her daughter’s life would maybe be the best thing to do for Lila. She gradually takes over that role in regard of Lila’s life: she decides what she should do, what kind of job to take, what to say to this and that person, for whom to vote on elections, to circle “pro” on the anti-abortion referendum, etc. Lila does everything that her mother tells her to do without any questioning or opposition. When her friend asked her why she always does what her mother tells her to do, she responded: “I would rather do that than have to pass through the horror of thinking about all these things on my own and suffer from distress. I feel better myself this way”.

Case 3. Gays in the Church

Bob is a primary school teacher who likes to start a family with his partner Sam. He had a strict upbringing until his teenage years. However, after he was forced by his parents to attend conversion therapy because of his homosexuality, he parted ways with his family and lived in the gay quarters of the city where he founded the “Gays in the Church” organization. However, things for gays are not at their best in the country where he lives. After a radically conservative government started ruling the country and introduced constitutional changes equaling homosexuals with pedophiles, Bob and Sam’s rights as equal citizens of their country have been in a considerably downfall. According to the last constitutional amendments they do not have a right to enter into marriage, because that is constitutionally proclaimed to be a sacred institution in which only individuals who were assigned male and female sex by birth have access to; adoption of children in this country is only an option for heterosexual couples or individuals who can prove to the section of the ministry of interior dealing with “sexual mores” that they are not homosexuals and do not have any sort of perverse and non-reproductively directed desires; and lastly Bob can’t continue having the teacher position because according to the new pedophilia law which equals homosexuals with pedophiles, homosexuals cannot hold working posts in proximity to children below age of sexual consent. Bob does not have the job he loves and he can’t go on with his life as he planned initially. As he said in his last interview about the “god loves the gays” campaign of his organization, he has no other options at the moment than to oppose this government and their policies, and overthrowing them on the next election is the only worthy aim left for him to take now.

#### Case 4. Earning a place in haven

Ava is member of a religious community in a liberal democratic society whose beliefs are centered around ancient religious cults. She moved to this community voluntarily, after she read about them in

a newspaper. One of the central doctrines of the cult is that females should be subordinated to males and that they should perform practices ascribed accordingly for their gender, according to the scriptures of this religious cult, which however do not tie them only to child bearing and rearing, cooking and maintaining the house, but also afford opportunities for various forms of participation in the communal public life: they can educate other women according to the scriptures, they can contribute with advices to modify the economy of the community, participate in the community council which determines the proper ways of entertainment for children and adults etc. Ava is an avid member of this last community council. Fanatically energetic in trying to ensure that no person of the community can fall short of the religious virtues, Ava works tirelessly in monitoring what the community member's entertainment is, whether some foreign cultural elements have somehow entered the community, whether a member has swayed from the road of salvation etc. She is responsible for the work of the female section of this council to an elder who later conveys their proposals to the council of males, who are the only ones that can make an authoritative decision about how the committee should act. But above all these work-related successes, Ava is a great mother and a virtuous wife embodying all the attributes of a paradigmatic women from the scriptures she believes in. When asked by her fellows in the council how can she have all that energy to cope with all those things in such a magnificent way, Ava answered that this is the most meaningful and fulfilling life a women can have on Earth and it is the only way she can secure a place for her in heaven.

#### Case 5. "It's stronger than me"

John is addicted to heroin. Although it all started out of curiosity and willingly, with time he lost control over his desire and he is currently not in a condition where he can perform basic things in his life without the use of it. He does not work anymore; he was fired in the last two months from three

places because he was unable to take responsibility for practically, anything. In addition, he can't take care of his son and he is probably about to lose the custody over him. He is not interested in maintaining social contacts with anybody: the only time he reaches out to former friends is when he needs money to buy drugs. However, after his son's accident which occurred due to his negligence, John decided to quit: he sees where this desire for drug which he initially embraced is leading him and he is determined to put the end of this addiction. However, whenever he tries to do so an almost unstoppable urge to take drugs defeats his intention.

#### Case 6. When all hell breaks loose

Bea was forced to work as a sexual worker in a brothel. She traveled from her small village to the capital of another country with a promise to receive later a working visa for a position in a food-packing company. However, when she arrived there, without linguistic skills and lack of understanding and awareness of her rights she fell prey to the interests of her "recruiter" who first made her dependent on him and then took advantage of her. He forced her to work in the brothel for 2 years, taking most of the money she earned and giving her in exchange a place to sleep and food. Thanks to a generous customer Bea managed to escape the brothel and is currently trying to renegotiate her life. However, she still does not speak the language, her legal residence in the country has long expired, the money she got from her "guardian angel" are slowly running out, and she has a strong conviction that she can trust nobody anymore, seeing with suspicion even the people who are trying to help her from the human trafficking agency in whose premises she currently stays. Going back home is not an option as all that she wanted was to leave that place. She likes to somehow settle somewhere outside of the capital but remain in the country and avoid living under constant threats, violent attacks and



doing sexual work. She likes to finally find a job in the food-packing company she was promised to and earn enough to travel the world, which was what she always wanted to do.

#### Case 7. The old days

Iba is an elder in an indigenous community in a liberal democratic country. As an elder Iba has a great responsibility for maintaining the proper functioning of the ordinary communal life as well as for keeping everything in line with the values of her community. However due to the climate changes, the unpredictable weather conditions and the frequent and severe droughts her ability as an elder to guide her peoples on the most ordinary questions such as where and when to plant, gather essential seeds, hunt, fish, or graze animals, has been undermined. In these conditions she is unable to fully use her indigenous knowledge which resulted in change of the attitude of her people towards her as an elder and seems to ultimately threaten the basic values of their indigenous communities. In addition, the basic values of her community start to erode. The sacred relation between her people and their natural resources as well as the duty to preserve them is lost. There is increased tendency to see natural resources only as a commodity to be bought and sold; many of her people started to plant seeds which are not traditional for her community and those who do not do that, left the community and settled in poor neighborhoods in urban areas. Day by day the members of her community remain smaller in number and she is aware that the day came when she has to leave the land as well. She was offered several possibilities for relocation and jobs and accepted to work on a farm because that was what she least disliked and where she could also use some of her knowledge. She is grateful that she had this opportunity but, as she said to her husband she cannot see herself as anything but a person who can serve her community as an elder.

## Case 8. The burdens of time passing

James is a receptionist in a small motel in a mountain village in the middle of nowhere. Although he finished university in a department for agriculture in a nearby town, he did not have any affinity for farm work. When the receptionist position appeared – the motel is only five minutes from his home – he initially thought it is a great opportunity to earn something and avoid the boredom of the life in the village. So, it was and he accepted the offer. He has many friends in the village but none of them can be claimed to be a close one. They are mainly good company to get wasted, every Saturday in a local bar in the next town around 60 km far from the village. Aside from the job and the weekly waste-my-self practice he doesn't do much because as he says: "there is nothing else to do". He plans to switch his job and take a position in the gas station near the village, just to switch between two different boredom.

The hybrid ideal and conception of autonomy I proposed considers Lila, Bob and Ava - in the Cases 2, 3 and 4 - to be autonomous while the individuals in the rest of the cases non-autonomous. In what follows I will discuss the cases above in cross reference with the features of other theories, pointing out to the evaluative differences between them and the theory I propose.

My conception of personal autonomy can clearly be distinguished from substantive conceptions of personal autonomy in that it does not set any limits on the content of the pro-attitudes, values, conceptions of the good that can be validated nor it confers status of autonomy or non-autonomy to individuals based on the type of social environment in which they function, where certain types of environments are necessary condition to determine this status. Substantive conceptions can be strong

or weak. Strong substantive accounts stipulate that the content of certain preferences or the relations in which a person finds oneself regarding others determine the status of autonomy of an individual, irrespective of whether such preferences or relations are endorsed by an individual.<sup>116</sup> Natalie Stoljar, for instance, argues that only a substantive criterion can account for what she refers to as ‘feminist intuition’: namely that ‘preferences influenced by oppressive norms of femininity cannot be autonomous’<sup>117</sup>. Marina Oshana proposes another strong substantive account in which the limit is not set on which preferences make an individual non-autonomous, but on the types of relations vis-à-vis others one finds oneself after endorsing a preference. According to Oshana “it is possible for two individuals to satisfy all the psychological, historical, and competency conditions ... but to differ nonetheless with respect to their status as autonomous beings ... (In) addition to whatever can be said of a person’s psychological history, there are social criteria according to which we judge someone as autonomous. These external criteria are independent of facts about the individual’s internal state: autonomy is not decided ‘from within’ or on the basis of the valuational perspective of the individual whose autonomy is at stake. External criteria constitute autonomy and external criteria measure it.”<sup>118</sup>

So according to strong substantive account of autonomy, in order to determine whether someone is autonomous or not, it is necessary that you evaluate whether a preference is coherent with an oppressive norm or whether some relations one finds oneself in are oppressive and if it is so then the individual can be considered non-autonomous. Since Ava’s conception of the good in “Earning a Place in Haven” seems to a great extent to integrate oppressive norms towards women, although she

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<sup>116</sup> See Catriona Mackenzie and Natalie Stoljar, eds., *Relational Autonomy: Feminist Perspectives on Autonomy, Agency and the Social Self* (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); Oshana, *Personal Autonomy in Society*; Jennifer Warriner, “Gender Oppression and Weak Substantive Theories of Autonomy,” in *Personal Autonomy and Social Oppression – Philosophical Perspectives*, edited by Marina Oshana (New York: Routledge, 2015), 25-47.

<sup>117</sup> Natalie Stoljar, “Autonomy and the Feminist Intuition,” in *Relational Autonomy: Feminist Perspectives on Autonomy, Agency and the Social Self*, edited by Catriona Mackenzie and Natalie Stoljar (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 95.

<sup>118</sup> Oshana, *Personal Autonomy in Society*, 49-50.

endorses this conception in an independent fashion, she can't according to Stoljar's conception be claimed to be autonomous. Oshana's theory of autonomy would also agree with this conclusion although not because of this reason but because Ava lives in a society in which she does not retain ultimate authority over the affairs of fundamental importance for her. There can always be for instance a male: her husband, her superior or someone else who can ultimately tell her what and how to do and for what reasons, and she is not able to question their authority as such. In opposition to these conceptions my conception of autonomy deems Ava autonomous and finds Stoljar's and Oshana's views in tension with the respect for Ava's autonomy. The reason is that Ava fully satisfies the conditions for formation of a conception of the good: she has a dialogical disposition to defend her commitment to a conception of the good in an outcome intendent way, she endorsed this commitment voluntarily in a procedurally independent way and she performs the constitutive actions of the conception of the good she values. Denying the autonomy of a person like Ava on Stoljar's and Oshana's ground does amount to disrespect for their autonomy. As Marilyn Friedman points out "in practice, someone's failure to manifest recognizable autonomy, or, what is more important for theories of oppression, the failure of others to recognize her behavior as autonomous, may well promote the conviction in others that she is not really capable of autonomy and, therefore, does not deserve the respect that is premised on a capacity for it [...]"<sup>119</sup> Thus, I am skeptical that Stoljar's claim that only a normative constrain on the content of autonomous pro-attitudes can "vindicate the feminist intuition,"<sup>120</sup> is true. There might be various reasons for this. For instance, one such reason we can find in the competing intuition that people in oppressive social contexts are in fact capable of acting autonomously. Bob in "Gays in the Church" is one such example. Although even his gay activism has been strongly influenced by his strict religious upbringing, he nevertheless is in fact living an

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<sup>119</sup> Friedman, *Autonomy, Gender, Politics*, 23.

<sup>120</sup> Stoljar, "Autonomy and the Feminist Intuition," 109.

autonomous life aside from the degrading environment in which he acts. Oshana's theory, with its stress on the external component in the form of relations one finds oneself in vis-à-vis others, would make Bob's life non-autonomous, which I believe most people find counterintuitive. From different reasons things don't stand better with other externalist theories of autonomy, such as for instance the ones of Joseph Raz and Steven Wall, which require as a condition for the adequacy of options that individuals have a "wide variety of good options", where, as I mentioned above, these are defined as being ones with long term as well as short term effects, etc. Well, Bob has no such options: there is only one option, here and now, and there is no other way for him to live except in doing what he does. However, although he does not have other options, he does have a disposition to validate his commitment to what he does for reasons which at the moment are outcome independent and in a procedurally independent way. As he performs the actions constitutive of the activism which is his conception of the good, he cannot be anything but autonomous, and indeed autonomous in a paradigmatic sense. Externalist ideals and the substantive, perfectionist conceptions of autonomy based on them, as the ones mentioned above, have no resources or find it extremely difficult to plausibly account for autonomous resistance to oppressive circumstances, if they can account for it at all.

Although not in such tension as with the strongly substantive conceptions of autonomy the hybrid conception is also different from various weakly substantive conceptions of autonomy. This group of conception include as conditions for personal autonomy the possession of certain practical competences such as self-worth or regard for oneself as a legitimate normative authority<sup>121</sup>, self-

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<sup>121</sup> Paul Benson, "Autonomy and oppressive socialization," *Social Theory and Practice*, Vol.17, No.3 (Fall 1991): 385-408; Paul Benson, "Free Agency and Self-Worth," *Journal of Philosophy* Vol. 91, No.12 (December 1994): 650-668; Paul Benson, "Feminist Intuitions and the Normative Substance of Autonomy," in *Personal Autonomy: New Essays on Personal Autonomy and its Role in Contemporary Moral Philosophy*, edited by James Stacey Taylor (Cambridge: Cambridge University

trust<sup>122</sup>, self-respect<sup>123</sup>, self-esteem<sup>124</sup> etc., which are attainable through the interpersonal relations with others. Unlike the strong substantive accounts such as Oshana's, for instance, according to these views the social context does not necessarily make persons non-autonomous, even if it is autonomy-undermining. One can still attain autonomy even in these kinds of environments, in case one possesses the right normative competences which in some way "guarantee" one's path to achieving autonomy, safeguarding oneself from autonomy negating influences such as those contributing to one becoming subservient, or to the internalization of views on one self as a lower human being or worthless etc. For instance, according to the recognitional account on autonomy proposed by Anderson and Honneth "full autonomy" understood as the "real and effective capacity to develop and pursue one's own conception of a worthwhile life" is only possible under some autonomy supporting social conditions<sup>125</sup>. In order for one to possess such capacity one requires, beside other factors, the possession of agentic competencies which include the development of attitudes towards oneself such as for instance self-trust, self-respect and self-esteem<sup>126</sup>. Developing these attitudes, or relations-to-self, is, in turn, a result of an ongoing intersubjective process in which they emerge in the encounter with the recognitional attitudes of others towards oneself.<sup>127</sup> It follows that developing and sustaining certain attitudes towards oneself such as self-trust, self-respect and self-esteem is dependent on the sustaining attitudes of others, through being recognized by those whom one also recognizes within social relations of respect, care and esteem. Reflecting back on the concept of autonomy, this implies that being able to develop and pursue one's own conception of a worthwhile life is dependent on one

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Press, 2005), 124-142; and Catriona Mackenzie, "Relational Autonomy, Normative Authority and Perfectionism," *Journal of Social Philosophy* Vol.39, Issue 4 (Winter 2008): 512-533.

<sup>122</sup> Joel Anderson and Axel Honneth, "Autonomy, Vulnerability, Recognition and Justice," in *Autonomy and the Challenges to Liberalism*, edited by John Christman and Joel Anderson, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 127-150.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

<sup>124</sup> Anderson and Honneth, "Autonomy, Vulnerability, Recognition and Justice," and Benson, "Free Agency and Self-Worth".

<sup>125</sup> Anderson and Honneth, "Autonomy, Vulnerability, Recognition and Justice," 130-131.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

being supported by social relations, such as those of recognition. Damage to these relations, according to Anderson and Honneth, results in the diminishing of the autonomy of an individual, as it undermines the support for the sustenance of the practical-relations-to-self necessary for autonomy.

There are several problems with weakly substantive accounts such as the recognitional one proposed by Anderson and Honneth. First although I accept that people in general do require self-trust, self-respect and self-esteem in order to be able to pursue their conceptions of the good it is far from this being a necessity as both of them present it. One can be autonomous even though one lacks some of these attitudes. Let us analyze the case of individuals like Bea in the human trafficking case. According to my theory Bea is not simply non-autonomous but together with John from the addition case they both fall outside of circumstances for autonomy. These are individuals who need to renegotiate their position in life in order to be able to become autonomous. It is very probable that Bea's attitude of self-trust or self-esteem as well as John's regarding self-esteem will long after be missing considering their history. However, it is far from being a necessity that due to the lack of self-trust Bea will not be able to become autonomous. She already possesses an idea of would-be-a-life-worth-living exhibiting some sort of a disposition to validate a commitment to such life. It seems that what she requires at the moment is protection and adequate means to put her in a position to think about the instrumental steps in pursuing that kind of life, and as long as she is able to secure these, she will be in a position to live autonomous life irrespective of the level of self-trust she will exhibit. Of course, the lack of self-trust might manifest itself as an issue in the maintaining of intimate relationship with others in future etc., but this does need not necessarily make her non-autonomous given her idea about the worthy life she currently hinges on. Not granting her autonomy in the steps she makes towards renegotiation of her life in accordance with her conception of the good because she lacks self-trust would be a "slap in the face" from persons and institutions which try to assist persons in the situation

as Bea. On the other side the link between these attitudes to self or agentic competencies and recognition is also problematic. According to Anderson and Honneth they proceed from favorable social circumstances of being recognized by others by being shown trust, respect or esteem. If that was the case then Bob according to their theory cannot be claimed to be autonomous as he should be lacking self-respect due to the institutionalized disrespect towards gay persons in his country. However, if anything, it seems that Bob does manifest quite some level of self-respect in being able to stand for his cause. Another weakness of weak substantive theories is that they divorce us considerably from the reasons, we generally offer for why an individual is autonomous or not. Consider what the recognitional theory can say on the case of John in the addiction case. We do consider him non-autonomous because he can't maintain his commitment to the conception of the good he formed. Anderson and Honneth might answer that he is non-autonomous because he does not respect himself sufficiently. Maybe! But to say that, that it is just a manifestation of lack of self-respect means to stretch the causal chain relevant for evaluating autonomy to factors which might but need not have a contributory role to autonomy, as I argued in Bea's example above<sup>128</sup>. Lastly, weakly substantive theories do not offer sufficiently distinctive guidance in the evaluation of someone's autonomy or non-autonomy. Consider the cases of Bob and John again. Both of them are non-autonomous according to these conceptions because of lack of self-respect. The hybrid theory I propose is in line with our intuitions that Bob is autonomous while John is not and it offers tools for sufficiently explaining why this is so. In some sense one may tell that both Bob and John are struggling for "liberation" of some sort, one from the addiction, the other from the oppression. But while Bob

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<sup>128</sup> See more on the constitutive and the contributive role of such factors and relations in Holger Bauman, "Reconsidering Relational Autonomy: Personal Autonomy for Socially Embedded and Temporally Extended Selves," *Analyse & Kritik*, Vol.30, No.2 (2008): 445-468.



translates his conception of the good into action, John is incapable of doing it. The external conditions I propose explain the difference between the two cases.

The conception I propose falls in the group of procedural ahistorical non-hierarchical conceptions of autonomy. As procedural it shares with all such conceptions the feature that it does not set a limit on the content that can be autonomously endorsed by an individual. What it does not share with all of them, with exception of Ben Colburn's conception of autonomy, is the pursue conditions for autonomy. The reason for the difference is that virtually all procedural conceptions are worked out on the background of the ideal of autonomy as self-determination. However, my conception is built on the background of the hybrid ideal of autonomous persons, as self-determining and self-controlling individuals, while Colburn's procedural conception is worked out on the Razian ideal of autonomous persons as self-creating individuals in the background. The inclusion of external conditions in my conception gives the conception three advantages. First, it helps me avoid the accusations for psychologization of autonomy commonly raised against the procedural accounts. Second, the inclusion of the external condition pays justice to the relevance for autonomy of distributive concerns within a liberal morality regarding resources and opportunities. Lastly, the introduction of the pursue conditions allows for relating the living of an autonomous life with the responsibility for how our life goes, a link which is missing in most procedural conceptions of autonomy.

In what follows I will point out to how procedural theories, differentiated along the criteria of being historical or ahistorical and hierarchical or non-hierarchical, differ from the procedural theory I propose, in giving different evaluation on the cases above. However, I should mention that procedural conceptions of personal autonomy can be differentiated along different lines and exhibit features to which we would do no justice if we simply classify them within some of the above mentioned procedural categories. Laura Waddell Ekstrom's account of autonomy is for instance a procedural

non-hierarchical account according to which a person is autonomous if one secures *a coherence*, not among first and second order pro-attitudes but among the set of non-coercively formed first order pro-attitudes and non-deviantly cause an action<sup>129</sup>. Autonomy is undermined, according to Ekstrom, when some attitudes that conflict with elements of the agent's psychology play a role in the production of an action. Marilyn Friedman's account constitutes a good example of a causally relational, non-hierarchical, procedural conception of autonomy. According to her for a desire to be considered autonomous, "practically any self-reflective reaffirmation will do it"<sup>130</sup>, and that reflection does not even have to be a "deepened" one. Similar to Friedman, very minimal procedural accounts of personal autonomy are offered by both Uma Narayan and Sarah Buss. According to Buss "the key to [...] self-governing agency is the distinction between a healthy human being and a human being who suffers from some psychological or physiological 'affliction' (e.g., intense pain, fear, anxiety, fatigue, depression, and obsession)<sup>131</sup>". As for Narayan, she writes that "a person's choice should be considered autonomous as long as the person was a 'normal adult' with no serious cognitive or emotional impairments and was not subject to literal outright coercion by others"<sup>132</sup>. All these views take one aspect of the traditional procedural accounts, which were hierarchical and ahistorical and build their procedural theories on the modification and/or rejection of the other motivated by concerns which were not traditionally in the focus of the procedural theories but which became prominent with the proliferation of various account of relational autonomy. However, since these do not seem to offer different evaluative guidance on the cases above I will retain my focus only on the accounts that do make such difference.

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<sup>129</sup> Laura W. Ekstrom, "Alienation, Autonomy and the Self," *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* Vol.29, Issue 1, (2005): 45-67.

<sup>130</sup> Friedman, *Autonomy, Gender, Politics*, 7.

<sup>131</sup> Sarah Buss, "Valuing Autonomy and Respecting Persons: Manipulation, Seduction, and the Basis of Moral Constraints," *Ethics* Vol.115, No. 2 (January 2005): 215.

<sup>132</sup> Uma Narayan, "Minds of Their Own: Choices, Autonomy, Cultural Practices and Other Women," in *A Mind of One's Own- Feminist Essays on Reason and Objectivity*, edited by Louise M. Antony and Charlotte E. Witt (Boulder: Westview Press, 2002.):429.

As ahistorical, the conception I propose does not view the attitude of an individual – whether one feels alienated or not, for instance - towards the development of a pro-attitude as solely relevant for the autonomy of an individual. One might feel non-alienated regarding pro-attitude and yet not be autonomous. John Christman proposes the most well-developed historical procedural account of autonomy. According to Christman the specification of the conditions for autonomy in regard of a desire is done in the following way. An agent P is autonomous relative to some desire (value, etc.) D at time t if and only if: (i) P did not resist the development of D (prior to t) when attending to this process of development, or P would not have resisted that development had P attended to the process; (ii) The lack of resistance to the development of D (prior to t) did not take place (or would not have) under the influence of factors that inhibit self-reflection; (iii) The self-reflection involved in condition (i) is (minimally) rational and ii) involves no self-deception; (iv) The agent is minimally rational with respect to D at t.<sup>133</sup> The case of Iba, in “The Old Days”, seems to pose a puzzle for the theory of autonomy which Christman offered. Iba need not feel alienated when attending how she came to be what she currently is. She might understand that all her current situation was due to her inability to do something else, that this inability is due to her being skilled only for elder life, that not being able to do what she was skilled for is due to the climate change and climate change is due to global capitalism, overpopulation, human negligence or whatever other reason she might find when attending the

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<sup>133</sup> John Christman, “Defending Historical Autonomy: A Reply to Professor Mele,” *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* Vol.23, No.2 (June 1993): 288. In later years Christman has modified these conditions. In the “Politics of Persons” Christman speaks about the autonomy of a person relative to a characteristic of that person C where C refers to basic organizing values and Commitments. In this case autonomy obtains if: (i) The person is competent to effectively form intentions to act on the basis of C. (ii) The person has the general capacity to critically reflect on C and other basic motivating elements of her psychic and bodily make-up; (iii) Were the person to engage in sustained critical reflection on C over a variety of conditions in light of the historical processes (adequately described) that gave rise to C; (iv) She would not be alienated from C in the sense of feeling and judging that C cannot be sustained as part of an acceptable autobiographical narrative organized by her diachronic practical identity; and (v) The reflection being imagined is not constrained by reflection-distorting factors. See more in John Christman, *The Politics of Persons* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), Ch. 7. However, the objection I will rise above is not affected by the modification of the conditions.

development of her current pro-attitude to work on someone's farm and live a "western life". Understanding well these reasons about what was happening in  $t-1$ , she need not feel alienated in  $t$ , which is now, when attending the development of her pro-attitude to work on the farm, on the contrary she might understand the causality of these processes and given the circumstances, she might be in peace with the idea that if that was the case the way she ended could not have been different. And yet we have the intuition that she is non-autonomous aside from being disposed to validate her current commitment. What does make her however non-autonomous is that the reason for her validation is not outcome independent. Namely she chose to pursue this life because everything else was even more worthless in her opinion. Christman's account seems to lack sufficient means to account for the non-autonomy of Iba, because in cases in which the lack of available resources to pursue what one truly values is not correspondingly reflected in a feeling of alienation from what one currently does, it does not give us an intuitively plausible guidance. In fact, as she is already committed to another conception of the good and because she seems not to be alienated from it when attending the development of her commitment, namely, she is disposed to validate her commitment, she seems to be autonomous under Christman's conception. However, my conception with the outcome-independence condition can account for her non-autonomy: although she validates her commitment to a conception of the good the reason is not outcome independent and refers to the circumstances of having worthless options rather than the value of the conception of the good.

On the other side however, Iba's case is susceptible for an interpretation, in fact a very plausible one, in which she does feel alienated but I am afraid that ascribing such form of alienation as relevant for one's non-autonomy will make the normative pressure to treat persons as non-autonomous in many instances in tension with the principle of respect for autonomy and the anti-perfectionist commitments to which Christman is committed to. Namely, taking Christman's conditions for guidance, we can claim that, that kind of alienation would not have to do with the feeling of resistance

or alienation towards the development of a particular desire or a value *D* that is effective in one's psychological economy, but rather with circumstances and the social position in which one dwells. She might feel alienated in the same sense that people who used to live in countries which no longer exist feel alienated from life in general in the newly formed countries and cultures in which they find themselves, especially if life there is worse than it used to be<sup>134</sup>. It seems that some people living in such circumstances might forever bear the marks of the life in the old good times, and give themselves fully to a nostalgia which makes them predisposed to feel alienated from everything that happens to them now. This seems to pose a problem for Christman's theory as it implies that one can feel "tout-court alienated" and yet not feel alienated from any effective desire in particular. But while this kind of alienation seems plausible as a psychological mechanism of resistance of people in the situation of Iba, it is not clear what the moral consequences of such a vague and all-encompassing alienation would be: the relation between such alienation, autonomy and the treatment of non-autonomous persons because of such alienation seems to bring anti-perfectionists into troubles.

Although non-hierarchical my theory of autonomy was greatly influenced by hierarchical procedural accounts, in the first instance by Gerald Dworkin's theory of autonomy. According to Dworkin's hierarchical procedural account "the idea of autonomy is not merely an evaluative or reflective notion, but includes as well some ability both to alter one's preferences and to make them effective in one's actions and, indeed, to make them effective because one has reflected on them and adopted them as one's own"<sup>135</sup>. According to Dworkin any modification of first order desires in a coherent way with the higher order desires of an individual demonstrates that one is autonomous. However, this higher-

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<sup>134</sup> For instance, this was a common phenomenon – known as Yugonostalgia- for people who used to live in former socialist Yugoslavia after the disintegration of the country, not only because the life after the disintegration proceeded in bloody ethnic wars, but because they felt alienated from the "forms of life" that ensued in the newly formed independent countries.

<sup>135</sup> Dworkin, *The Theory and Practice of Autonomy*, 17.

order reflection is not the whole story, as he stresses: “the choice of the kind of person one wants to become , may be influenced by other persons or circumstances in such a fashion that we do not view those evaluations as being the person’s own”<sup>136</sup> So in addition to the coherence between higher and lower order desires an individual should be procedurally independent, in the sense of not being subject to manipulation, coercive persuasion, subliminal influence<sup>137</sup>. Dworkin’s conception has been attacked on several grounds<sup>138</sup>. I will not go into the particular arguments against some of the conception’s condition but point out, on the cases above that it is insufficient to reflect properly our concerns with autonomy in several respects. Consider the case of James in the boredom. My conception makes James non-autonomous because he does not validate his commitment in an outcome-independent fashion. However, Dworkin’s conception would make him autonomous. Similar judgment would also be reached from Ben Colburn’s conception according to which a life is more or less autonomous depending upon the extent to which the agent in question through her adult life, decides for herself what is valuable and lives according to those decisions. And an agent decided for herself what is valuable to the extent that the following two conditions obtain: “1) endorsement condition: the agent has a disposition to reflect on values she oath to pursue and she judges of some things they are valuable; 2) independence condition: her reflection would be free from factors undermining her independence.”<sup>139</sup>

Now both conceptions would give a positive judgment about James autonomy status based on the possession of disposition to validate his commitment. However, they both fail to see that the reason

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<sup>136</sup> Dworkin, *The Theory and Practice of Autonomy*, 18.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid.

<sup>138</sup> Regress ad infinitum regarding the required coherence between higher and lower order pro-attitudes and a charge for incompleteness due to the introduction of the procedural independence condition in his conception, are the most common objections raised. See Friedman 1986, and Christman 1991. Substantivists of any sort do not engage with criticism of the plausibility of the conditions but object on the base of the evaluation regarding the autonomy of individuals that Dworkin’s theory gives. See Oshana 2006, Levinson 1999.

<sup>139</sup> Colburn, *Autonomy and Liberalism*, 25.

why this is so, in its formal character, is relevant for whether one is autonomous or not. In the case of James, he does not have this disposition because he finds his life in the village and his job valuable in themselves but rather pursues this life because he is bored or because “there is nothing else to do”. It is not that he values what he does but he disvalues least what he does of all the things he can do in his village. This makes him non-autonomous rather than autonomous. Hence again, as in the case of Christman above, the fact that he has the disposition to validate his commitment is insufficient to deem him autonomous. It is the lack outcome independent reason that makes him non-autonomous. It will not suffice to claim in favor of Dworkin for instance that the fact that “there is nothing else to do” there means that James lives in conditions where he is not able to “alter his preference”. As a matter of fact, he can: he can be a cashier at the gas station. But that is also not something he has disposition to endorse in accordance with the outcome-independence condition. At the same time, both Dworkin and Colburn cannot claim that this is an instance of adapting preference. Adapted preferences are unconscious, while James, has a conscious disposition supported with a reason for his conception of the good.

There are however two cases which I did not touch upon in the discussion above: the first two cases of Ana Marie and Lila which mirror each other in important respects and yet my theory deems the first non-autonomous and the second autonomous. How to account for these judgements? Ana Marie is clearly an oppressed woman, one which is not conscious about her oppression, and one which acts in accordance with her oppression. She is the type of agent whom feminists would call “deeply oppressed” where oppression is so pervasive that the individual practically lost the capacities to raise questions about the pro-attitudes that govern her life. But would that really be true? It seems that Ana Marie does have a tacit disposition to accept the life she lives. She never objects the authority of her parents nor disrupts in any way the activities they assign to her nor demonstrate any kind of resistance

to that way of functioning. So if it makes sense to claim that someone has a disposition to validate a commitment then she certainly is the type of person that would have it. The question is from what reason? And in which way? On this second question we need not judge her procedurally non-independent, although that might also be an easy way for someone to deem her non-autonomous. However, she was neither hypnotized nor indoctrinated. She did indeed have a strict childhood but it was not an indoctrinating one, she went to public schools, she had access to information about all sorts of things and yet she developed a form of psychological dependence or excessive deference and overvaluing of her parent's authority. It seems that what does explain her non-autonomy in this case is that she does not satisfy the transparency condition, namely the reason entailed by her disposition is opaque. One can act on an opaque reason unconsciously as in the cases of adaptive preferences or as a result of self-deception. It is important to stress that being disposed to validate a commitment for opaque reasons need not imply that one can not satisfy the outcome-independence condition. Ana Marie's conception of the good which can be characterized as one of a devoted and deferred caretaker of her parents rests on an outcome independent reason she tacitly endorses speaking from her actions, namely that "there is an absolute duty to care for one's parents", hence the outcome independence condition is satisfied. So, the hard question in case we consider the procedural independence condition to be satisfied is to explain why is this reason opaque and not transparent? The case of Ana Marie points out to the relevance of the feminist intuition that there is more to autonomy than the mere procedural concerns which the procedurally intendent condition aims at grasping: there are additional conditions that can undermine autonomy beyond the reasons that make one procedurally independent. The transparency condition I posed above tends to capture these additional factors to some extent. It seems that social pressure, the pressure to fit, the fear of confrontation, incapacitations of showing resistance, disempowerment, can escape the factors undermining procedural independence and yet undermine one's autonomy. Unlike the conditions of procedural independence



where there is an intention to interfere with the process in which one develops a disposition to validate a commitment here there is no such intention. The pressure to fit might be there as a matter of mix of pressures to fit pattern behaviors favored by social institutions which require that an individual to perform certain roles according to their gender, sex, ethnicity etc. What reasons do we have to believe that Ana Marie acts on opaque reasons? The case of Lila would help offering a potential answer. In both agents the authority over their life is something that has been simply undertaken by their parents, step by step and was never explicitly endorsed by the agents. However, while in the case of Lila there is a disposition which rests on a transparent reason, namely on balance she values more giving the authority over her life to her mom than suffering from distress, hence she values more her being good than being autonomous in Ana Marie's case there is no self-reference at any point of the development of her disposition to validate her commitment which can be taken as one possible indication of opaqueness. The fact that she claims that this kind of life has "befallen on her somehow" is a way of signaling that the agent is not aware of the real reasons for one's disposition, and that being the case that she does not clearly see how her agency proceeds from particular reasons which are transparent to her. This rather points out to reasons endorsed probably from pressure which resulted in development of psychological dependence and deference. In other words opaque reasons cause a disruption between the agency of the agent and actions conducive to the the conception of the good one pursues.

With the discussion of the cases above I demonstrated that the conception of personal autonomy I developed in this chapter based on the hybrid ideal proposed in Chapter Two, is the only one that can accommodate all of our most common-sense intuitions about the autonomy of the individuals concerned in the cases, exhibiting thus more robust explanatory advantages in respect of alternative and rival theories. In the next chapter I proceed with the last building block of the theory of autonomy

I propose which refers to determining the value of personal autonomy within partially comprehensive anti-perfectionist morality.

## Chapter 4. Specifying the value of personal autonomy

### Introduction

Why is personal autonomy valuable? What grounds its value? Is it valuable for the sake of something else, to which it is a mean or to whose achievement it contributes, or is it valuable for the sake of itself irrespective of the other things to which it might contribute? In this chapter I defend the view that personal autonomy is valuable for its own sake, namely as a final value, and as such it has a personal and impersonal value, which supervene on the living of an autonomous life and the capacities for autonomy respectively, as bearers of those value. In Section One, I will first introduce some preliminary formal value-theoretical categories and distinctions which will be applied in the investigation of the value of personal autonomy. I will then proceed, in Section Two, with exposing an argument from abduction for the personal final value of autonomy and, in Section Three, with a transcendental argument for its impersonal value. Both arguments rely on the close relation between autonomy and the category of personal values which shapes my understating of the values of autonomy as I defend them throughout this dissertation.

### 1. Several formal distinctions in investigating values

Many arguments in moral and political philosophy rest on the widely accepted axiological distinctions between different kinds of values: intrinsic or extrinsic, final, constitutive or instrumental etc. However, since some of them gave rise to much confusion it seems important that we have a clear background on their deployment in investigating the value of personal autonomy. We can ask several interconnected questions in determining the value of something, x. First, we can ask why is x valuable?

The formal answers commonly given are that either x is valuable because of properties that reside in x itself or because of relational properties which are external to x, which reside in the relation which x has with something else which is valuable. In the first case we say something is intrinsically valuable, while in the second extrinsically. Another question we can ask about the value of x is: what is x valuable for? Is it valuable for the sake of itself or for the sake of something else such as some other value to which x contributes in being realized or because x is constitutive of some other value from which x derives its value, such as some organic unity, or perhaps, because x is a mean for the achievement of some other thing which is valuable, y. If the first is the case we say that x is finally valuable. If the other two, then x is non-finally valuable. Finally and non-finally valuable things can be valuable for particular persons or for no-one in particular: in case of the former we talk about personally valuable things while in case of the latter about impersonally valuable things, both of which can be conditionally or unconditionally valuable. Lastly, we can ask how and how much should we value x? What would be the right attitude towards the value of x? Should we respond to x's value by showing admiration, respect, or by preserving it, or promoting it? Also, how much should we value x? In case x's value is comparable with y's should we show more respect for x than for y and how can we justify that?

Let me briefly elaborate on the first two pairs of distinctions which are commonly confused in the literature, as I believe we have good reasons to distinguish them before we proceed into the discussion about the value of personal autonomy<sup>140</sup>. The first question of why something is valuable is a question about the residence of the properties that make something valuable. For hedonists experiencing pleasure is intrinsically valuable<sup>141</sup>. Of course, a particular experience of pleasure might be claimed to

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<sup>140</sup> See on the distinction Christine Korsgaard, "Two Distinctions in Goodness," *Philosophical Review*, Vol. 92, No.2 (April 1983): 169–195 and Shelly Kagan, "Rethinking Intrinsic Value," *Journal of Ethics*, Vol. 2, No.4 (1998): 277–297.

<sup>141</sup> Bentham for instance claims that "Strictly speaking, nothing can be said to be good or bad, but either in itself, which is the case only with pain or pleasure; or on account of its effects, which is the case only with things that are the causes or preventives of pain and pleasure". See Jeremy Bentham, *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* (London: Athlone Press, 1970), 11.

be valuable because it gives us further pleasures, and to that extent is not valuable in itself, but the point is that ultimately for the hedonist there is no non-pleasure-related state which might make an experience of pleasure additionally valuable. If the properties for which an object is valuable are to be found in the relation that this object bears to other valuable objects then the object is extrinsically valuable. Among the things which comprise these relational properties might be the causal properties of an object, for instance that this object is a mean to produce something which is valuable. Other such properties might be based on the relation that an object has with particular persons or with other objects of the same kind such as the property of being unique, etc. Money is commonly considered to be valuable in this sense, namely their valuable property lies in the objects we can have through their exchange<sup>142</sup>.

The second question, namely, for the sake of what is something valuable is a question about the way in which we value something<sup>143</sup>. A beautiful object such as Rodin's *Le Penseur* is valuable for its own sake, not because you can sell it and get money in exchange or because you can break it and build something else with the material. Some might say it is valuable because it is beautiful like it is: it makes the world richer! Of course, one can instrumentalize it, but that does not negate the fact that it has a value for its own sake, as it is. One of the central discussions in value theory concerns the question of whether an object that is valuable for its own sake can be valued as such based only on intrinsic properties or its value can rely on extrinsic properties? Moore for instance claims that "to say that a kind of value is 'intrinsic' means merely that the question whether a thing possesses it, and in what

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<sup>142</sup> As Kagan, notes the distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic values makes sense only from particular meta-positions about values. If someone is subjectivist about values, for instance, one would have a principle objection to the existence of such a thing as an intrinsic value, namely a thing which is valuable in itself. If all value is valuable for a subject, then there can be no such a thing as intrinsic property in the sense of being valuable in itself. See Kagan, "Rethinking Intrinsic Value," 282.

<sup>143</sup> See Korsgaard, "Two Distinctions in Goodness."

degree it possesses it, depends solely on the intrinsic nature of the thing in question”.<sup>144</sup> So Moore believes that what is valuable for its own sake can only be valuable in itself. In order to determine whether something is valuable for its own sake Moore proposes the famous isolation test: “it is necessary to consider what things are such that, if they existed by themselves, in absolute isolation, we should yet judge their existence to be good”.<sup>145</sup> I share the opinion with those who, opposite of Moore, believe that we have good reasons to doubt that a finally valuable object must be based on something which is intrinsically valuable. Take for instance Shelly Kagan’s example about the unique stamp<sup>146</sup>: such stamp is finally valuable due to its relational property of simply being unique and I believe most of us would have an appropriate attitude towards this type of value that the stamp bears. But if that is the case, then it implies that a final value of an object might depend on the extrinsic properties of an object,<sup>147</sup> namely its uniqueness. Note also that if we accept this conclusion, we should abandon Moore’s test about the intrinsic value of something which according to Moore overlaps with something being “valuable for its own sake” or final value. For instance, if “uniqueness” can be claimed to be the property on which the final value of the stamp supervenes, then Moore’s test would not be able to lead us to this conclusion. His test for intrinsic value requires abstraction and focus on the internal properties of an object, in which case we would deal away with the property of uniqueness in the first place.<sup>148</sup> A more plausible, substitute test, however, for whether an object is valuable for its own sake or not we can find in the so called “fitting attitude approach”. The central idea of the

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<sup>144</sup> George E. Moore, *Philosophical Studies* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1922), 286.

<sup>145</sup> George E. Moore, *Principia Ethica* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 236.

<sup>146</sup> See Kagan, “Rethinking Intrinsic Value.”

<sup>147</sup> Many Mooreans are not convinced in the claim that such objects can have final value. Among them those who do accept that the examples such as Kagan’s above point out to something special about the value of those objects try to accommodate them in new categories, but exclude them from the classification as final values. Tucker claims for instance the somehow special value of such objects is in fact better grasped as “sentimental” rather than final value. See Miles Tucker, “The Pen, The Dress, and the Coat: A Confusion in Goodness,” *Philosophical Studies*, 173 (2016): 1911–1922.

<sup>148</sup> Some such as Korsgaard and Kagan go further to claim that a final value can be based on a narrower category of extrinsic values such as for instance are the instrumental values as well. Kagan gives the example of beautifully designed racing car. They are valuable because of their ability or capacity to be driven at high speed. So, they get their final value based on their capacity to have instrumental value.

approach is that “axiological concepts such as ‘value’ and ‘goodness’ must be analyzed in terms of deontic notions.”<sup>149</sup> Through this approach we reduce the evaluative to deontic claims about attitudes towards a valuable object which is fitting or which one ought to or one has reason to take up. Another feature of this approach is that it is the subvenient properties, other than the value property, that provide reasons to respond to the thing by taking up some attitude.<sup>150</sup> Applied to final values, this approach then states that an object is finally valuable if there is a reason to favor it for its own sake, where “to favor” can take any attitude that is called for by a value (such as respect, appreciation, admiration, preservation etc)<sup>151</sup>. An object is instrumentally valuable, on the other side, if there is a reason to favor it for its effects sake or some other object’s sake.<sup>152</sup> As it will become obvious from my discussion about the value of autonomy I do not fully and without limitation endorse the fitting attitude approach, aside from accepting one of its central features, namely the translation of axiological into deontic terms. However, I cannot offer here a more detailed discussion on the merits and deficiencies of this approach<sup>153</sup>.

The Moorean view on final values also contributes to another confusion, namely it equals final value with unconditional value, being thus committed to the claim that what is valuable for its own sake can’t be valuable on condition of something else. But again, it seems that, at least if we are pluralists

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<sup>149</sup> Toni Rønnow-Rasmussen, “Analyzing Personal Value,” *The Journal of Ethics*, 11 (2007): 410. For the origin of the idea see Franz Brentano, *The Origin of Our Knowledge of Right and Wrong* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969). For more recent conceptualizations of the approach see Thomas M. Scanlon, *What We Owe to Each Other* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1998). For critical discussion of the approach see Wlodek Rabinowicz and Toni Rønnow-Rasmussen, “The Strike of the Demon: On Fitting Pro-Attitudes and Value,” *Ethics* Vol. 114, No.3 (April 2004): 391–423.

<sup>150</sup> As Rønnow-Rasmussen writes: “Following Scanlon we could say that what carries the buck is not value but that on which the value supervenes on! In other words, to be valuable is to have the property of having a value-making base that gives us reason to hold a pro-response vis-a-vis the valuable object.” See Rønnow-Rasmussen, “Analyzing Personal Value,” 410.

<sup>151</sup> Rønnow-Rasmussen, “Analyzing Personal Value,” 418.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid.

<sup>153</sup> See Rabinowitz and Rønnow-Rasmussen, “The Strike of the Demon: On Fitting Pro-Attitudes and Value,” *Ethics* Vol. 114, No.3 (April 2004): 391–423.

about values, we have good reasons to distinguish final value from unconditional value<sup>154</sup>. Take friendship for instance<sup>155</sup>. Most of us take friendship to be valuable for its own sake. However, friends usually take pleasure or happiness from being in their relationship. If their friendship was bringing misery instead of happiness then it would not be of value. In this sense, the value of friendship is not unconditional. But that the value of friendship is conditional on the friends being happy does not mean that we value friendship for the sake of happiness. Friendship is valuable for its own sake, for the properties that make it valuable, although it is not unconditionally valuable. It should be stressed that the fact that something is conditionally valuable does not diminish its final value. The conditionality should be understood as giving the context in which an object is valued. However, the conditionality status of final values does reflect on the appropriateness of the attitudes towards that value. If I care for instance about Napoleon's hat for its own sake, but show otherwise utter indifference towards Napoleon's sword, or indeed to objects belonging to comparable historical figures, then my valuing is not of the fitting kind, precisely because it is insensitive to the structure of the final value towards which it is directed (assuming, of course, that the hat is only valuable for its historical connection)<sup>156</sup>. Irrespective of whether final values are conditional or unconditional on other values they both may depend or be conditional on enabling conditions. For instance, one can be friendly only if one is alive and there are other people around him. But as Orsi clarifies "this is a dependence on factual, rather than evaluative, conditions: enabling conditions of this sort do not refer to the value of being mentally sophisticated or the value of there being people around. In this sense, an unconditional final value can and normally does depend on factual conditions."<sup>157</sup>

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<sup>154</sup> The view that something which is finally valuable can be conditional was made prominent by Kant who famously claimed that someone's happiness is valuable only if they are worthy of it (due to their good will).

<sup>155</sup> The example is taken from Francesco Orsi, *Value Theory* (London/New York: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2015), 30.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid.



Lastly, an important distinction about values has been the distinction between “impersonal” and “personal” value or something being “impersonally” and “personally” valuable. Personal values are “values for”, they supervene on objects that are valuable for someone in particular, and not in virtue of that object being valuable simpliciter, or valuable period<sup>158</sup>. On the other side impersonal values are values period or values *simpliciter*. Nature “untouched by man”, like some parts of the Amazonian rainforests, seems to be impersonally valuable. Of course, they might be personally valuable for someone as well, but even if they did not, this will not affect their impersonal value. My nephew’s first drawing on the other had, has a personal value for me. It can hardly be claimed that at the moment it has any value simpliciter as it seems to lack any artistic or aesthetic quality.

Let us conclude this section about the main formal distinctions we can make in investigating the values of objects. Something can be valuable for its own sake based on its intrinsic or extrinsic properties. We call that a final (extrinsic or intrinsic) value and what is not valuable for its own sake a non-final value. A final value can be conditional or unconditional. The conditionality of a final value does not detract from its value when based on enabling conditions but this conditionality does require that when similarly valuable objects are concerned, the attitude we take towards the values is the same. Finally or non-finally valuable things can be valuable period and valuable-for someone, where the first are impersonally while the second are personally valuable. I will not go into discussing additional modes of values. I only treat the above-mentioned distinctions as they will prove to be useful for my investigation of the value of personal autonomy in the next section. Considering the role I purport autonomy to play for partially comprehensive anti-perfectionists, it is of lesser importance to show that autonomy can be, for instance, instrumentally valuable. This is a conclusion which most people anyway endorse. What I aim to provide in what follows is a plausible argument for its final personal

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<sup>158</sup> Toni Rønnow-Rasmussen, *Personal Value* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), xii.

and impersonal value as fitting the above specified role which personal autonomy plays in a partially compressive anti-perfectionism.

## **2. The bearers of the values of personal autonomy and their properties**

The distinctions made in the previous section are intended to be helpful as formal guides in the structure of our substantive investigation of the value of personal autonomy. In order to do that we need to thus respond the following questions: (1) what is the bearer of the value of personal autonomy, what are the properties on which the value of autonomy supervenes and are they intrinsic or extrinsic? (2) is personal autonomy finally or non-finally valuable? Is the value of autonomy personal, impersonal, or both? (3) is the final/non-final value of personal autonomy conditionally or unconditionally valuable and if conditionally what are the conditions which account for its value? I will answer the question under (1) and (2) in this section while the conditionality of the value of personal autonomy will be treated in the next, Chapter Five.

Before I proceed let me just briefly stress the importance of answering these questions. If we are to ascribe personal autonomy the quite fundamental role it plays in a partially comprehensive anti-perfectionist morality it seems inevitable to provide a detailed insight in its value comprised of answers on the above specified questions. We justify our actions, and we do moral evaluations by referring to features of particular values, measuring their weights, balancing them against other values etc. Of course, in our everyday interactions we do not necessarily ask those questions: if a state enacts a law which allows individuals tuition free access to higher education, one need not think whether one supports the policy by asking whether free access to university is instrumentally or intrinsically valuable. However, dealing with fundamental issues such as grounding of the basic commitments of

a political morality does seem to require that kind of investigation of the values which support these commitments.

Consider the following three hypothetical situations. Tom is an adult, member of a Jehovah witness group. He had a car accident and is in need of transfusion. However, he refuses to get one because this is against his faith. The doctor administering his case respects his decision. Or second: imagine the case of Jane, a vegan, who was recommended by her doctor to start eating animal-based milk products, because of her very poor blood tests. Her mother Zoe, however, knows that Jane is “too stubborn” to give weight to the doctor’s recommendations (perhaps because Jane is convinced that using animal products is wrong). So, whenever Jane comes to visit her, she cooks her favorite pie but substitutes the soya cheese, which her daughter prefers, with animal milk in a way that Jane cannot notice. Lastly, the case of Coli, a high school student especially talented for engineering, winning several national prizes with their school projects. However, due to their interests in arts, they prefers pursuing a career as a video animator although they is not particularly talented in their work. Their parents believe that choosing video art would be a waste of talent for Coli, while engineering would bring them much success in future, for which they would be one day grateful to them. Hence, they communicated to Coli that they will support them by paying tuition fee only if they chooses an engineering school. Depending on how we determine the value of personal autonomy and its features and what kind of substantive arguments we can use in order to demonstrate that personal autonomy has one rather than another of the formal characteristics mentioned above, we can justify or condemn the actions that the doctor, the mother and the parents took in respect of Tom, Jane and Coli. If personal autonomy proves to be finally but conditionally valuable, for instance, on condition it leads to self-realization, then Coli’s parents who know their talents and capacities may be justified in conditioning their career prospects because self-realization is what ultimately matters. Or if autonomy

is only instrumentally valuable then maybe Jane's mother is justified in changing the soya milk with animal-based one in her daughter's favorite pie out of concern for her health and wellbeing, as health matters more irrespective of whether her daughter acknowledges that or not. Or opposite to Jane's mom, determining that autonomy is valuable for its own sake and unconditionally so, one might be lead as the doctor in respecting Tom's autonomy into not administering the needed transfusion to save his life. In each case, what we need are substantive arguments which can support the determination of the value of autonomy one way or another. In the next subsections I will offer such arguments guided by the formal axiological categories discussed above. I will first specify the bearers of the value of personal autonomy and the properties on which the values supervene; in the subsequent sections I will offer first an argument from abduction for the personal final value of autonomy, and then a transcendental argument for the impersonal value of autonomy. In the last section of this chapter, I will answer several worries that might be raised regarding my arguments for the personal and the impersonal value of autonomy.

When we talk about the value of personal autonomy what is the object on which this value supervenes? In this dissertation so far, I talked about several possible candidates for bearers of the value of personal autonomy: the capacities for autonomy, the autonomous life, the highest and higher order interests supervening on them, their conjunction amounting to an interest of individuals in living autonomously and the articulation of this interest in a hybrid ideal of personal autonomy. Which of these is the bearer of the value of personal autonomy given its role within a partially comprehensive anti-perfectionist morality?

I believe partially comprehensive anti-perfectionists have good reasons to maintain that personal autonomy is both personally and impersonally valuable, given the roles it plays in such morality explained in Chapter One, Section Three above. However, the personal and the impersonal value

supervene of different bearers which I determine to be the living of an autonomous life and the capacities for autonomy in a narrow sense, respectively.

The living of an autonomous life, as having the properties or features of being self-determinate and self-controlled is the bearer of the personal value of autonomy. Living autonomously, I maintain below, is primarily valuable for the particular person who lives such life because it responds to his interest to instantiate something which he considers to be of personal value in one's life as well as to ultimately instantiate his own life as of personal value, by which I mean as life which is an instance of the type of life one considers to be valuable for one self. From what was said so far about the "autonomous life" in the previous chapters, I believe it is clear that by determining the bearer of the value of personal autonomy to be the "living of an autonomous life" as a state in which a person is, I do not intend to set as a bearer of the value of personal autonomy a particular way of life: living an autonomous life does not say anything about a way of life in terms of content, but it is expressive of how it came about. Derivatively, I do talk within this dissertation about "autonomous persons" as bearers of the value of personal autonomy, but by that I only mean "persons living autonomous lives".

The impersonal value of autonomy supervenes of the capacities for autonomy in the narrow sense defined in Chapter One, Section Two, namely as the capacities necessary to form a conception of the good according to the hybrid ideal and conception of autonomy proposed in the previous two chapters. The impersonal value supervening the capacities for autonomy, as I will claim below, grounds the respect for the pursuits of individual, understood as that which they consider to be of personal value.

### **3. Argument for the personal final value of autonomy**

Revealing the final personal value of autonomy as supervening on the living of an autonomous life, should depart from the following question: is the autonomous life through its properties of being self-determinate and self-controlling valuable for its own sake or for the sake of something else to which it contributes, or for the sake of something else to which it is only an instrument? The argument I will offer for the value supervening on the properties of the autonomous life singled above has an abductive form and it aims to appeal to our intuitions about the proper favoring attitudes towards the autonomous life in two hypothetical cases. I expect that the conclusion from considering the cases would be reached by virtually all readers and they will support the claim that it is proper to favor, in one way or another, the autonomous life for its own sake, and that consequently, given our definitions in the previous section, personal autonomy is a final value for the particular person who lives an autonomous life.

Imagine you have the options to choose between making the most important decisions that concern the way your life goes autonomously in the above specified way<sup>159</sup>, or giving your life in the hands of an all-knowing, benevolent, caring God, who finds ways to do this for you in two ways, either by:

- (1) interfering only with the self-controlling conditions of your agency, based on his knowledge about your capacities and talents, your good and bad sides, your weaknesses and strengths, or
- (2) interfering with the self-determining conditions (namely the formation of your pro-attitudes) as well as the self-controlling conditions of your agency.

Needless to say, giving your life in the hands of a God with these features in scenario (1) makes successes and self-realization necessary and in scenario (2) adds to this the living of a good life as well, because he can take care that you act in accordance with a conception of the good he implants in you from the start. Imagine the scenario (1): whenever you like to pursue a path in your life which will end

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<sup>159</sup> As specified in the conditions explained in Chapter Three.

up bad for you, God is there to set you on the right track by removing the bad option; whenever you like to choose an option that does not fit your talents, God makes that option disappear as if that opportunity never existed. And so on, until you form the commitment to pursue options which will lead to success and self-realization. Simply giving the self-controlling aspects over your life in the hands of God, or depriving yourself from the de-facto authority and responsibility which the self-controlling aspect of personal autonomy confers upon you, makes it impossible that you do not come to live a successful and self-realized life.

But is that really a life we would favor? It seems to me that most of us would find this kind of life undesirable exactly because it deals away with the idea of de-facto authority and personal responsibility for one's life. That kind of agency and life which would have no possibilities for failure because someone else would always take care that we are self-realized, and successful, even if it is ultimately determined by us – because at some point we would come up to form and pursue a conception of the good that fits our talents- could hardly be something we can desire it for ourselves, because it deprives us from taking credit for living it. And it matters that we have such a credit for living our life and not just arrive at a point we determined for ourselves as a purpose, even if we would fail on that way. One may ask why is it that a life guided by our responsible choices but less successful is better than a life of an overriding value to us guided by an impersonal mechanism? The reasons is that through our responsible choices we take proper credit for the life we live, which will lack if some impersonal mechanism directs us into living a more successful life. And sometimes the point of the choice is to take responsibility for the chosen option. Although most of the time we value our choices for their instrumental function in getting us what we want, this is not always the case. Choices need not be instrumental in bringing us utility benefits or increasing our welfare but they have other values for individuals as well. For instance, they can have demonstrative, symbolic, or indeed other types of

values. In this respect the demonstrative value of a choice, as Scanlon calls it, is especially relevant.<sup>160</sup>

To restate his example: for the birthday of my partner, I do not like to just have any present, but I like to have a present for him that I have chosen myself and which will reflect my feelings for him for the particular occasion, although it might not be the present he will prefer most. Same holds for choices that reflect on myself: I like to choose myself how to arrange my training routines, how to decorate my apartment aside from the fact that many can probably do it better for me, rather than if I did it myself. So, this demonstrative, and I would say, expressive value we attach to the choices we make cannot be ignored when we pursue our conceptions of the good, irrespective of whether an impersonal mechanism would make our life better was it to arrange life for us for the price of losing the responsibility which allows us to take credit for the life we live.

Of course, as mentioned when talking about the ideal of autonomy in Chapter Two, the level of control we talk about here is a reasonable level of control and also one which is relevant for the central projects in our life. There might be cases where we delegate some of these decisions to external agents so we can concentrate on important decisions. So, the argument does not purport that autonomy requires full control in the execution of every aspect of our lives, but only after some important decisions. I might want to parent my children, but I'm happy to delegate some decisions—say about what they eat—to others who know their nutritional needs better than I do. This is perfectly compatible with the self-control necessary for autonomy.

Now, imagine further the second scenario in which God intervenes in the process of self-determination as well. Here not only that God can interfere with the opportunities you have in pursuing particular conceptions of the good but he can also interfere with the formation of your pro-attitudes in a way that you always have the right motivational economy that leads you to the living of

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<sup>160</sup> See more on the way choices can be important in Thomas M. Scanlon, "The Significance of Choice," in *The Tanner Lectures on Human Values (Vol.8)*, edited by Sterling M. McMurrin, (Utah: University of Utah Press, 1988) 149-216.



a successful, self-realized or good life. Again, such a “blessed life” would seem undesirable for most persons as it negates or more particularly offends our capacity to value something for ourselves and to set the end or the purpose of our actions for ourselves. Without the purposeful aspect of our actions, they can barely be called “ours” in some personal, substantive sense as they won’t be expressive of anything that can relate to the “I” which is affirmed for instance in the demonstrative value of choices discussed above. We would function rather as automated executioners or extensions of someone else’s will and purpose. The value of such life in that case would lay ultimately in the purpose set by another person, to which we are only a mean. Such life while it might be of some other type of value, will lack a personal value in the first place.

If these conclusions above are correct, namely if we have reasons to value the autonomous life irrespective of whether it is good, successful, or self-realized, because none of those lives can endow our life with the value necessary to make it “ours”, then we can claim that we should favor such life for the sake of itself. Consequently, the autonomous life is finally valuable<sup>161</sup> for the particular person who lives it not because of the utility benefits it brings him but primarily because it endows the individual with the power to make meanings out of his actions, to constitute something of personal

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<sup>161</sup> Let me make one remark on the ascription of final value to personal autonomy. One may object that the claim that personal autonomy is a final value is false, because clearly living an autonomous life is not an end in itself. Steven Wall seems to have this kind of a view on final value as he is explicit that personal autonomy is not a final value, but it is intrinsically valuable by which he means “valuable for its own sake”. See Wall, *Liberalism, Perfectionism and Restraint*, 145-146. That objection would rest on a different understanding of what final value is. Although some use the terms “valuable for its own sake”, “valuable in its own right” or “valuable as an end” interchangeably, the first two while synonymous among themselves are not synonymous with the last. And it is the last one which is at the basis of the objection one might rise. One way to deal with it is to treat this as linguistic dispute and claim that we don’t use the term in the same sense: if final values refer to values as an end, then personal autonomy is not such end. No one lives a life with the sole end of being autonomous, because there is no content to the autonomous life. Living an autonomous life does not say anything about the way of life or a person or his conception of the good. It would also be self-defeating. You can’t intentionally live an autonomous life, just like you can’t try and be spontaneous. We should also stress that this meaning of “final value” based on which such objection would rest, is not compatible with any of the examples of final value we gave above, such as unique stamps, Rodin’s sculpture etc., but rather presupposes that the only bearers of value can be propositional objects. Since we find the examples plausible, we should reject this view on final values and retain that they refer to something “valuable for its own sake” or “valuable in its own right”, rather than “values as ends.”

value and to have authority in instantiating that which is of personal value in his life. Choosing one's own aims or setting the purposes of one's agency for oneself is a way in which an individual on the one side, makes meaning of his agency and on the other, creates "values for" himself, in the form of "his" conceptions of the good, which as such set special normative pressure on his future agency, as well as normative constraints on the agency of others towards him. When individuals are self-determinate, when they form conceptions of the good, through the validation of their commitments, they create personal values which "overwrite" the meaning of their actions. This is how, for instance, something which is seemingly a pointless activity, such as kicking a ball into a goal, might acquire its meaning for someone and not only becomes a source of value but a central aspect in one's life. In this respect Stephen Darwall seems to correctly observe when he says that for "personal autonomy to be linked in the ways it frequently is to self-actualization, identity, and the expression of one self as an individual, it must be understood in relation to personal values, that is to valuing that can be a source of reasons additional to any reasons that warrant those valuing"<sup>162</sup>. Self-determination as a necessary component of the living of an autonomous life, I maintain, is valuable, for it ultimately ensues in creating something meaningful for the individual which as such is of primarily personal value. But the autonomous life is not only valuable because it enables the individual to create something of personal value but because it also grants the individual with the de-facto authority<sup>163</sup> to instantiate this personal value in one's life, through which one can take responsibly and credit for living the life one lives. Ultimately, the living of an autonomous life is personally valuable because such life instantiates itself as of personal value for the individual who lives it.

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<sup>162</sup> Stephen Darwall, "The Value of Autonomy and the Autonomy of the Will," *Ethics* Vol.116, No.2 (January 2006), 272.

<sup>163</sup> Nowhere in the literature on personal autonomy is this aspect of having authority over one self, more stressed than in the theory of autonomy of Marina Oshana. However, in Oshana as we saw this aspect was secured with a substantive independence condition which proved to be in tension with our anti-perfectionist commitments.

The central feature of the personal value of autonomy as thus specified is that it has a primarily ethical significance as being the ground which enables one to conceive and instantiate one's life as meaningful and embodying what one considers to be valuable for oneself. It is a commonality to believe that the personal value of personal autonomy is connected closely with the person's benefit. However, the argument for the final value of autonomy from above pointed out that the personal value of autonomy I have in mind is rather related to the value of autonomy as a meaning-making capacity or as a capacity to constitute and instantiate personal values rather than as a "benefit bringer".

The personal final value of autonomy as specified requires several more explanations and answers of important questions regarding how others should relate to the autonomous pursuits of individual. But this is something I can discuss only after I argue for the impersonal value of autonomy as the answer to the latter type of questions substantively depend on that argument.

#### **4. Argument for the impersonal final value of autonomy**

The argument for the impersonal value of autonomy is of transcendental form and it also makes a close reference to the existence of personal values but this time in relation to the capacities for autonomy in a narrow sense as capacities for formation of a conception of the good. For its demonstration I will have to offer a longer overview into the account of personal value I endorse, and based on that account I will demonstrate the following claims, some of which I reckon one might find controversial. If personally valuable objects, as a category, are owed an appropriate minimal engagement with their value by others, for the sake of the person for whom they are personally valuable and just because they are valuable to him, then this is owed due to the value of the act which constituted them as "personally valuable", namely the act which endowed them with the value-for

they have. “My conception of the good” falls within the scope of personally valuable things, it is a type of personal value, and as such requires the appropriate minimal engagement with its personal value – which in this case I maintain is consideration-respect - for the sake of the person for whom it is personally valuable, just because it was constituted by him as personally valuable. Now, the most plausible explanation about what can grant such an act such a value is that it inherited it from the capacities which produced it, which must themselves be valuable. Since the capacities which constitute “my own conception of the good” as a personal value are the same as the capacities for autonomy in a narrow sense, it follows that the capacities for autonomy in a narrow sense ground the consideration-respect for the pursue of the autonomously formed conceptions of the good of individuals. Hence, I conclude, the capacities for autonomy in a narrow sense as capacities for formation of a conception of the good according to the hybrid ideal are impersonally valuable.

I will start with proving the points from the first claim above. Do we ought to treat personally valuable objects in some particular way just because they are valuable for someone in particular? In general, perfectionists hold that if something is valuable it does require that it is in some sense favored. As Raz says regarding “what is of value, be it instrumental or intrinsic, there is a universal reason for everyone to respect it, which is the minimal form of engagement with value. It is the right reaction to what is of value even when you do not value it, you do not personally care for it”.<sup>164</sup> The minimal engagement here implies that one should not destroy object of value or treat them inappropriately for their value. Raz intends this to hold for impersonal values but as Erich Hatala Matthes shows in his analysis of Raz’s view, if Raz’s claim is correct, then it is insufficient to distinguish impersonal from personal values as the latter also require such respect on virtue of being values,<sup>165</sup> irrespective of the fact that

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<sup>164</sup> Joseph Raz, *Value, Respect, and Attachment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 164.

<sup>165</sup> See Erich Hatala Matthes, “Impersonal Value, Universal Value and the Scope Cultural Heritage,” *Ethics* 125 (July 2015): 1010.

they are values for someone. Hence it seems that since personally valuable objects are valuable, then there should be no reason why they are not to be favored. The question is whether there is something specific about them and the attitude towards them which makes them normatively interesting and which we can use to elucidate something about the value of autonomy.

As mentioned above personal values are types of extrinsic values, which are such that they are defined through their relation with a particular person. Impersonal values, need not involve a reference to the attitude a particular person has towards them. The things which are commonly taken to be bearers of personal values can range among very diverse ontological categories. They include, for instance, my training routine, my annual friends' reunions, the ideal of the person I want to become or my conceptions of the good. They all share in common that I for some reason value them for myself and because they are valuable for me, they add additional reasons for me to behave in relation to them in some ways rather than others. But the other face they have as personal value is turned towards the others who recognize them as valuable for me. I think we have good reasons to side with those who believe that one of the central characteristics of objects of such personal value is the distinctive attitude which other individuals take towards them as bearers of personal value which is best captured as an attitude of favoring/disfavoring<sup>166</sup> them for the sake of the person for whom they are personally valuable<sup>167</sup>. To favor something for another person's sake implies that one ought to favor an object of personal value in virtue of the extrinsic property that that object is being actually favored by the person for whom it is personally valuable. Further, personally valuable objects can be finally valuable such as

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<sup>166</sup> Favoring in case of a positive and disfavoring in case of a negative value. I take them as generic technical terms for any kind of engagement with a value, be it respect, praise, preservation etc.

<sup>167</sup> This presupposes that we favor them in virtue of their external relation namely because they are favored by someone else. While I do acknowledge some of the insights by Rønnow-Rasmussen my analysis of personal value is much closer to what he terms De facto favoring attitude analysis which he rejects. See, Rønnow-Rasmussen, "Analyzing Personal Value."

our conceptions of the good or non-finally valuable such as money. The first types of personal values are thus ones which others should favor for their own sake, for a particular person, p's sake, while the instrumental one's on the other side are such personal values which others should favor for the sake of something else, for a particular person, p's sake. Imagine that your friend, Bob, who has a dream to travel around the world for a year, wins a lottery. In this case you would be glad for the lottery, as instrumental - for the sake of it allowing your friend to travel around the world - for Bob's sake, so you will exhibit the kind of attitude others have towards people's instrumental personal values. Or, to use Rønnow-Rasmussen's example for an attitude towards someone or something of final personal value consider how we treat friendly strangers who are friends of Bob, for Bob's sake. We can expand the example in regard to negative personal values as well but I believe the examples above suffice in pointing out the distinctive normativity of personal values: personal values require attitude for someone else's sake because they are personally valuable for him. So - opposite of skeptics such as Moore for instance<sup>168</sup> - we can claim that personal values are not private values but they do give public reasons for others to take attitudes towards the objects on which they supervene for the sake of the particular person for whom they are values, whose identity figures centrally in the intentional content of the attitude.

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<sup>168</sup> Moore is skeptical to the whole idea about something being of such value. He claims: "when I talk of a thing as 'my own good' all that I can mean is that something which will be exclusively mine, as my own pleasure is mine ... is also *good absolutely*; or rather that my possession of it is *good absolutely*. The *good* of it can in no possible sense be "private" or belong to me; any more than a thing can *exist* privately or *for* one person only". What Moore is trying to say is that when we claim that some object O is good for a person p, all we mean is either that the belonging of that object to P is good, or that that some object O is good or valuable simpliciter and that in some way it is related with p. The first seems unproblematic but it does not express the idea of value-for we like to convey. The second however does not make space for such value either. If some object O is good simpliciter then it is not just me who has a reason to pursue it but anyone and there is nothing normatively significant that it is my own conception of the good that I pursue. If valuable-for me or my own conception of the good, as an instance of such value-for, are supposed to mean something different than this then Moore believe they should be considered as some sort of private values, but since these last can't exist, because there are no facts corresponding to something like "my own good" – what is good is good simpliciter and how you relate to it does not bear any special fact about the goodness of the object - we have good reasons to disregard personal values as well.

What particular kind of attitude is fitting or appropriate towards personal values and why? The fitting attitude towards personal values would vary depending on the object of value and depending on the identity of the person for whose sake we value something. Some personal values will require preservation to the extent that we care about the person for whom the object is valuable, while in case we don't, they require as an interaction with their value consideration-respect which in my opinion entails at the minimum a withdrawal from destroying the object in one way or another. Rønnow-Rasmussen claims that the general engagement with personal values is consideration, where to be considerate means to favor something for someone's sake: "to be a considerate person is not necessarily to be someone who cares for the person involved. In this sense, being considerate is a much less demanding attitude than caring, to care for someone is to show among other things that you are considerate"<sup>169</sup>. The important conclusion here is that the fact that we have to behave in particular ways towards personal values is merely because of regard for a particular person. But why is it so? Unlike the relations to persons which other external values might have, such as for instance Napoleon's hat, personal values, such as those supervening on my training routines or the ideal of the person I want to be, are constituted as values-for through an act of favoring them by me for some agent relative reason, most commonly a prudential one. Perhaps Napoleon also favored his hat, but for us its value is rather impersonal because of the historical significance he has, unlike the personal value of my training routines or my conception of the good is for me. This has a further implication which points out that the reasons why we treat personally valuable objects with consideration-respect is closely connected to the actual attitude of the person for whom they are personally valuable, rather than with the content of the personal values. Namely, personally valuable objects are not favored by others because they are impersonally valuable: they may but need not be rooted in the value simpliciter of an object. For instance, the first drawing of my four-year-old nephew is one such object deprived

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<sup>169</sup> Rønnow-Rasmussen, *Personal Value*, 116.

of impersonal artistic or aesthetic value. But other than this there are several other reasons why such object might lack impersonal value. Samuel Scheffler believes that some valuing for instance are *positional* in the sense that “there are some things of which it is true (1) that only those who occupy the right position in relation to the thing are capable of valuing it, or of valuing it in a certain way, and (2) that not everyone is capable of occupying the right position in relation to that thing”<sup>170</sup>. Hence, I believe the most plausible explanation for why we show consideration-respect towards personal values of others for their own sake is because of the way they are constituted, because as personally valuable they are actually favored for some reasons by a particular person and it is this “value constitutive act” which accounts for their personal value. But what is special about this act that makes it “value constative”? I will give the answer to this question in the context of the conceptions of the good individuals pursue as that is the context of the conclusion I want to reach. Our own conceptions of the good as noted above can be understood as paradigmatic and indeed most significant bearers of final personal values. Something becomes “our conception of the good”, as said in Chapter Three, through an act of validation of reasons for our commitment to it. Since it is this act that makes the conception of the good valuable for us, it can be claimed to be the “value constitutive act” of its personal value. But what makes an act of validation legitimate in this regard, as personal value endowing, is that it ensues from the exercise of particular types of capacities which allow the act to transfer that value to the object which thus becomes personally valuable: the act can transfer such value and secure consideration-respect for the object endowed with value only because the capacities from which it ensues, endowed it with value. From this it follows that the source of the requirement for the favoring attitude towards a personally valuable object, in this case the consideration-respect for the pursue of “my conceptions of the good”, is the value of the capacities for autonomy which enables the act of validation and through which that conception became a personal value. Hence, the

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<sup>170</sup> Samuel Scheffler, *Equality and Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 37.



capacities for autonomy in a narrow sense, as capacities for formation of a conception of the good according to the hybrid conception of autonomy, are impersonally valuable as grounding the respect for the autonomous pursues of conceptions of the good by individuals. One may press a valid point and ask what about the value of the capacities for autonomy in a narrow sense? While these are finally valuable, I believe they are not unconditionally valuable. Their conditionality is however intrinsic as the source of the value is within what we called the minimal capacities for autonomy on which the narrow ones build up, and which capacities make one a moral person. It is this value, which moral persons carry inside them as moral persons, that is the ultimate source of the value of the value constitutive act.

I believe this transcendental deduction of the value of the capacities for autonomy in a narrow sense from the existence of personally valuable object can give us a plausible outlook of the ethical and political use of the value of personal autonomy, as well as, of its relation to the category of personal autonomy.

With very few exceptions, the value of autonomy has mainly been seen as derived from its contribution to a person having “a character”<sup>171</sup>, the ideal of the good life<sup>172</sup>, or its constitution of a more general “ideal of agency” as one of causal efficacy in the sense of “making a causal impact on the world and determining facts about it”<sup>173</sup>, rather than from its relation to personal values. The reasons for this are various. Many do not really see the category of personal values as significant in its own right with its own normativity but rather exclusively as a perspectival attachment to what is valuable simpliciter. Raz seems to propose that the only way to make sense of personal values is by seeing them as an “appropriation” of impersonal values: “the personal meaning of objects, causes, and pursuits depends

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<sup>171</sup> See Mill, *On Liberty, Utilitarianism and Other Essays* and Wall, *Liberalism, Perfectionism and Restraint*.

<sup>172</sup> See Raz, *The Morality of Freedom* and Wall, *Liberalism, Perfectionism and Restraint*.

<sup>173</sup> Thomas Hurka, *Drawing Morals: Essays in Ethical Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 139-154.

on their impersonal value, and is conditional on it.”<sup>174</sup> Hurka even thinks that as a category personal values or the “ ‘good for’ is fundamentally confused, and should be banished from moral philosophy”<sup>175</sup>. My argument above confirms and pushes more radically an insight made by Stephen Darwall, in which the value of autonomy is explicitly brought in close relation to personal values. As Darwall notes “more important than the fact that autonomy can have personal value is autonomy’s relation to the significance of the very category of personal value. The reason we have this category at all is to signal that the fact that someone values, wants, cares about, or is devoted to something can be a source of reasons that add weight to that of whatever reasons there might be for him to value it in these ways, that is to the object’s value independently of his valuing it, whether this be in terms of well-being or values of other kinds.”<sup>176</sup>

Unlike the personal value of autonomy, the impersonal value of autonomy is of moral character. This value plays a key moral role in an anti-perfectionist political morality as it grounds the respect for the autonomous pursuits of individuals. As being of moral character the impersonal value of autonomy gives compelling reason for the state to properly recognize the capacities for autonomy of its citizens and to show proper concern that each of them can develop them since that grants respect for their pursuits. It is this character of the impersonal value of autonomy which supports the equal respect requirement grounding the neutrality principle which sets constraints on the reasons the state can appeal to in justifying its policies. To the extent that citizens all possess to a requisite degree the capacity for autonomy understood as a capacity to create personal values, the pursuits of each of them should be treated with equal respect.

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<sup>174</sup> Raz, Value, Respect, and Attachment, 19–20

<sup>175</sup> Hurka, Good and Good for, 72

<sup>176</sup> Stephen Darwall, The Value of Autonomy and the Autonomy of the Will, 270

In Chapter One I mentioned that the requirements for equal respect and equal concern go hand in hand. As impersonally valuable in grounding respect for individual's pursuits, the value of autonomy justifies provisions which enable individuals to obtain such capacity, which considering what was said in Chapter Three amounts to provisions which keep individuals in circumstances for autonomy. Individuals are not born with capacities for autonomy. They acquire them through their life. Hence, the anti-perfectionist state committed to the principle of equal respect should show equal concern for each individual that they are and remain in circumstances for autonomy, by granting them certain basic rights, security, healthcare which are the base on which individuals can develop and exercise their capacities for autonomy. This implies that the state should have a "guarantee base" which will not allow individuals who obtained once such capacities to fall below the level of being in circumstances for autonomy due to bad brute luck and in some extreme cases due to bad option luck.

## **5. Two worries regarding the arguments for the values of autonomy**

My accounts of the personal and the impersonal value of autonomy give rise to two worries regarding their plausibility of different character. The first is more of a question than a worry and concerns the weighing of the personal and impersonal value of autonomy in cases of conflict, an issue on which I remained silent above; the second problematizes the plausibility of the arguments themselves by indicating some apparent inconsistencies surrounding the normativity of the account of personal value I proposed. In what follows I will give an answer to the question regarding the conflict of the two values and will dismiss the inconsistencies worries as unfounded.

### 5.1. The conflict between the personal and impersonal value of autonomy

What would be the normative outcome from the conflict between the personal and the impersonal value of autonomy? The personal value implies that there are reasons to value living autonomously as a way for one to instantiate one's own life as of personal value. The impersonal value of autonomy has as an implication that everyone has reasons to value the capacities for autonomy as they are the ground which gives pro-tanto reasons to others to respect one's autonomous pursuits. But one may claim sometimes individuals autonomously choose to waste their capacities away or to live lifestyles which puts their capacities for autonomy in danger and risk to lose them temporarily or permanently. How should we treat the value of their autonomous pursue in cases of, for instance, the voluntary slaves, gamblers, bikers riding a motorbike without a helmet?

These are quite diverse instances in which individuals expose themselves to different degrees of dangers, which pose the risk of losing their capacities for autonomy or their lives in general indeed. The general view I proposed so far maintains that individuals possessing capacity for autonomy have the responsibility for their exercise and consequently subject to the meeting the conditions coming from the requirements of justice- as explained in the next chapter - we should treat their pursuits as we treat personal values, with consideration-respect for the sake of the person for whom they are personal values. However, due to the individual's status as citizens, enjoying equal respect based on the capacities for autonomy in a narrow sense -as I explained them in Chapter 1 - the state cannot respect conceptions of the good which fully waive their capacities for autonomy. For if the state is to respect that, it would ultimately mean that the state recognizes that someone has a valid claim as citizen, on institutionalization of inegalitarian relations as an adequacy requirement for the sake of pursuing his own conception of the good. Since that cannot be the case because of the state's moral

commitment to the equality of citizens, that kind of autonomous pursues such as for instance self-enslavement are not valuable under the view I defend as a matter of justice.

What about the other cases such as the gambler or the imprudent motorbike rider? When the capacities for autonomy are understood as capacities to create and realize something of personal value as specified in the sense above, there should be no reason why these activities would not make one's autonomy valuable beside the risks for the capacities for autonomy involved. These risks in my view are also not a reason for the state to make a priori the pursue of these activities more expensive, although the individuals pursuing them are liable to bear the consequences from such engagement, namely if needs occur they are liable for covering the costs for their pursues. One may ask here, what if they are incapable to cover them? As I will discuss in the next chapter the state has an obligation to provide for a sufficientarian distribution of generally adequate means which allow citizens to be in circumstances for autonomy, namely they are capable to take roles in the basic functions of a society which in turn makes them capable to have a conception of the good, although these means are insufficient to make one autonomous. Hence, there is general justice-based obligation that no citizen falls below this threshold. So, to the extent the imprudent are able to cover the costs for their imprudence, without falling below this threshold they are the sole responsible for doing so. I believe this is much better to solution than the other options which either include paternalism of some sort or are perfectionist. Otherwise, it is difficult to see how one can consistently claim to have a moral reason to respects a person's capacity for creating personal values but does not have a moral reason to respect what the individual considers to be of personal value. To stress again, the fact that I have a moral reason to respect what is of one's personal value need not imply that I value that object. And this seems to be true not only in respect of personally valuable things but also impersonally valuable ones. You don't have to value Taj Mahal or playing cello but you owe to respect them appropriately as impersonally valuable.

Paul Bou-Habib makes the suggestion that while it is permissible for the imprudent motor bike rider to pursue his conception of the good, he should in fact be compelled to insure himself in order to cover the costs for his pursue, if we are to fully avoid the problem of exploiting others by making them compensate for his pursue of the imprudent in case of an accident<sup>177</sup>. This compulsory insurance is non-paternalistic, according to Bou-Habib, because it aims to cover the costs of others for helping him in need, for which they have a moral obligation to do so, and because in addition to this the biker also cannot waive his right to receive help. The reason why he cannot waive his moral right to receive aid is because of the intrinsic value of his autonomy which entails a duty to preserve it. “If there is a duty to preserve the intrinsic value of autonomy, then the imprudent person may not waive his moral right to receive aid because his doing so would contravene his duty to preserve his own autonomy. Our denying him the power to waive his moral right to receive aid therefore need not be paternalistically grounded in a concern for his well-being.” When he talks about the intrinsic value of autonomy, what Bou-Habib has in mind is what I call above the impersonal final value of autonomy but bearing on capacities for autonomy in a broad sense which comprise appropriate mental capacities, adequate range of opportunities, and freedom from subjugation to other’s will. The duty to preserve the value of autonomy is according to him a duty to preserve these three capacities.

There are several problems with these suggestions. First, I find it implausible to claim that when we help an imprudent person whose life is in danger what we are doing is “discharging our non-rights-based moral duty to preserve his autonomy”, as Bou-Habib says. “Saving a life” is different than preserving autonomy. While there is a moral duty to save other people’s lives, I am skeptical we have a moral duty to preserve other’s autonomy as – I agree on this with Raz- I am not sure that there is such a thing as a single “right to autonomy”, although as stated many times in this dissertation

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<sup>177</sup> Paul Bou-Habib, “Compulsory Insurance without Paternalism,” *Utilitas* Vol.18, Issue 3 (September 2006): 243-263.

individuals do have fundamental interests in autonomy which is being protected by many rights. This interest implies a duty for the state to help the development of capacities for autonomy in a broad sense, of those who have not, but the responsibility for preserving them in future – in their broad sense- befalls on the individuals themselves. Second, it seems impermissible under the view I defend in this dissertation to restrict the autonomy of individuals – who possess capacities for autonomy – for the sake of more autonomy gains in future, without them voluntarily endorsing those restrictions. Hence, Bou-Habib's suggestion is not non-paternalistic. Lastly, this kind of substantive conceptions of autonomy seems to be incompatible with our broader moral conviction, such as for instance our believes that in some cases euthanasia or assisted suicide are morally permissible.

To conclude: to the extent that one's autonomous pursuits do not deprive one of equal status as citizen, the impersonal value of autonomy guarantees the respect for one's pursuit. Beyond that threshold one's autonomous pursuit or autonomous decision can only be respected for the sake of preserving the dignity of a person.

## 5.2. Worries regarding internal inconsistencies in the account of personal value

The second type of worries raise questions regarding my analysis of personal values and the ways in which the success of the arguments relies on that analysis.

The first objection among them, denies that personal values as values-for depend in their constitution on the capacities for autonomy in a narrow sense: surely, many things are "valuable for" a person irrespective of whether he values them or not, in fact irrespective of the pro-attitude he might have towards them. Whether I like it or not, whether I value it or not, having a clean environment with zero pollution is valuable for me. And the same is true for all other things which fall, as Dworkin

would say, under one's critical interests, or as Feinberg calls them welfare interests.<sup>178</sup> While I acknowledge that this is indeed true, and that we do use the term "valuable for" in this sense frequently, this is a mere perspectival view on things which are nevertheless impersonally valuable. Hurka makes the following distinction that I believe helps to clear the issue: "Something is good from a person's point of view if she (and perhaps only she) ought morally to desire and pursue it. ...It fixes a goal that the person ought to seek regardless of her present desires or inclinations. That something is good from a person's point of view does not imply that it answers to her subjective states. It means that her (but perhaps only her) states should aim at it. The claim imposes external directives, and thus establishes goods; but it does so for one agent at a time."<sup>179</sup> While the things the objection mentions can be claimed to be valuable for a person, in ordinary discourse what we mean is that they are "valuable from" the perspective of that person as well, but otherwise they are impersonally valuable. Hence, they are not "values for" in the sense that conceptions of the good essentially are. "Value for" in the sense I analyze it, as a personal value, is not "value-from" a person perspective.

A second possible objection relies on the worry that even if we set impersonally valuable things as "valuable from a particular perspective" outside the scope of the values-for which I intended to cover, it is not necessary that we need some actual attitude or some apparent "value constitutive act" in order for something to be valuable-for a particular person. Rønnow-Rasmussen seems to endorse this kind of view of personal values: an "object of personal value is one that we ought to favor for a person's sake, and this might well be the case whether or not anyone actually favors the object for this person's sake."<sup>180</sup> He invites us to suppose that a person, A, aside from knowing the names of her parents does not know how they looked like. There is photo of her parents however which she does not know

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<sup>178</sup> See Ronald Dworkin, *Sovereign Virtue*, 237-285 and Joel Feinberg, *Harm to Others* (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), 43-45.

<sup>179</sup> Thomas Hurka, " 'Good' and 'Good-For,'" *Mind* Vol.96, No.381 (January 1987): 71.

<sup>180</sup> Rønnow-Rasmussen, *Analyzing Personal Values*, 425.



about. Such a photo according to Rønnow-Rasmussen can plausibly be claimed to bear a personal value irrespective of whether the person knew about it or not. Moreover, this value is not hypothetical on condition of her attitude towards that photo. Even if the person declares that she couldn't care less about the photo, Rønnow-Rasmussen concludes it does not follow that the photo has no value. But it seems to me that this is not the conclusion to be established. I can admit that the photo might have value and even personal value, but it definitely does not have a personal value for A, which is what we were after. To say that aside from A declaring that she is indifferent to the photo, the photo still has personal value for A, I think is simply counterintuitive and it seems to disproportionally stress the other persons' attitudes towards personal values as constitutive for a personal value, on the expense of those values, being primarily valuable for the particular person. The very subjective dimension of personal values would be lost in such approach.

Lastly, one may be skeptical whether consideration-respect is really the attitude that is owed to personally valuable objects or to all personally valuable objects. What if I don't agree with one's reasons for valuing something or if a person values something which is valueless indeed, or if he is mistaken about the reasons for which he considers something to be valuable? What if he favors something for the wrong reason? Lastly, what if the person has evil character? Imagine for instance two friends who value their friendship because in it they cultivate their sadistic desires. Do we owe respect to what they consider personally valuable even in these cases?

Let's start with the first which was at different places above partly answered. Above I gave many examples of personal values which do not have impersonal value, hence it is plausible to think that others might not think they are valuable. Consider for instance the first sketches of my four-years old nephew. They can hardly be claimed to have any kind of artistic or aesthetic value, so they have no

impersonal value but are valuable for me as first drawings of my nephew. Maybe the reason is because his parents are artists and he will grow up in such a family in which he will probably develop good artistic skills, so I want to have something from him from the time he didn't even properly know how to draw. You might not find any of this as a good reason to value them and see them as valueless but to the extent that I do consider them personal values they do give you a *pro tanto* reason to value them: they require you to take some attitude in relation to that object for my sake. The same holds for the autonomous pursuits of individuals as belonging to the category of personally valuable objects.

Of course, as I will claim in Chapter Five, if such conceptions of the good are unjust or wrong, such as the immoral friendship of the friends in the question above, or if they can be pursued only by doing something unjust or wrong to others, we have no reason to respect them. But otherwise as long they are autonomous in the way that the conditions for autonomy in Chapter Three propose it, such pursuits should be granted respect. I must reckon here that while based on what was said about the value of autonomy in this dissertation, it is easy to justify why unjust autonomous pursuits should not be respected, it is not that easy to generalize such conclusion for some kind of personal values in general. But the problem of "valuing for a wrong reason" is one on which the fitting attitude approach finds many difficulties in general and its application to personal values is not an exemption. I cannot treat the topic in much depth here, but my intuition is that we can retain the analysis of personal values which I presented so far, and maintain that even things which are wrong can be of personal values but that the moral reason to respect them is cancelled by their disrespect towards others.

## Chapter 5. The interlocking relation between justice and the value of autonomy

### Introduction

This chapter picks up on the last points of the specification of the value of personal autonomy and zooms into its conditionality. Although the personal value of autonomy was determined as a final value in the previous chapter, we should not maintain that autonomy is unconditionally valuable. Aside from being valuable for its own sake, I claim that autonomy is also conditional on the just. However, as I already mentioned in Chapter One, the insights into the role which autonomy plays in a partially comprehensive anti-perfectionist political morality suggests that this relation between the two values is more complex than simply being one of one-directional conditionality. Principles of justice do not only subsume but also presuppose the value of living autonomously as supervening on the highest and the higher order interests of individuals in the original position who devise these principles. So, in addition to the claim that autonomy is conditional on the just, I defend the view that the content of the principles of justice is also conditional on accommodating and advancing the interest of individuals to live autonomously. The investigation of the value of personal autonomy from the perspective of a partially comprehensive anti-perfectionist liberal morality thus suggests that the value of autonomy and the principles of justice form an interlocking relation which should be understood as a biconditional according to which justice sets constraints on valuable autonomy but the interest in living autonomously also puts certain constraints on justice. This conditionality has several consequences regarding the substantive outcomes of the legitimation procedure which liberals should

endorse most prominently reflected in the central distributive and relational autonomy-based principles of justice they should endorse.

In Section One I investigate the conditionality of the personal value of autonomy and reject the view which considers its value to be conditional on the good. In Section Two, I present an argument for the personal value of autonomy as conditional on the just and account for the specificities of this relation of conditionality between autonomy and justice. In Section Three, I start my investigation of the reverse conditionality. I maintain that rational individuals with interest in living autonomously would devise two irreducible types of principles as advancing this interest of theirs: distributive, which concern the distribution of the general and particular adequate means for autonomy, and relational, which concern the quality of the horizontal and vertical relations in which individuals find themselves. In this section I defend the view that the generally adequate means require sufficientarian while the particularly adequate means an egalitarian distribution, and reject the views which distribute means for autonomy based on sufficientarian or egalitarian principles all the way down. In the last Section Four, I demonstrate how the establishment of relations as equals is also supported by the value of autonomy I proposed.

## **1. The conditionality of personal autonomy**

Although personal autonomy is valuable as a capacity to create and instantiate something personally valuable out of our lives, as I mentioned above in explaining its personal value, autonomy as such is not unconditionally valuable. Clearly, one can find meaning and take responsibility in bringing about something which is morally repulsive. People who find injuring and the suffering of others valuable or who incapacitate others to live autonomous lives, are examples that not every autonomous life is

valuable. But what exactly accounts for the disvalue of their autonomy? In what follows I will defend the view that autonomy is conditional on the just, by which I mean that personal autonomy is valuable as long as it is pursued within the limits of principles of justice. The best way to account and explain this conditionality is through its comparison with a competing view about the conditionality of personal autonomy which sees autonomy as conditional on the good.

Raz and Wall are proponents of the view that the value of autonomy is conditional on the good. According to them, the well-being of individuals should be understood as a realization of self-chosen valuable goals, but valuable goals cannot be valuable just because individuals happen to value them. They cannot simply be valuable because they are desired or preferred. Instead, in order for such goals to be valuable and to contribute to one's well-being, they should be valuable independently of the valuing of the individual. For instance, the person "whose only pleasure is to count blades of grass in various geometrically shaped areas such as park squares and well-trimmed lawns"<sup>181</sup> cannot be claimed to live a good life, even if he enjoys and cares about grass counting, according to Raz. This is so because grass counting is not a valuable activity period. Raz also claims that "satisfaction of goals based on false reasons does not contribute to one's well-being."<sup>182</sup> In addition, according to Raz, well-being consists in realization of comprehensive goals. One is not living good if one only succeeds in the realization of short term and immediate goals but not in the comprehensive goals. So, when making judgements about the value of the autonomy of an individual we should see the success or failure in the pursue of comprehensive independently valuable goals. What this conception of the value of autonomy ultimately amounts to is that the value of personal autonomy is determined by the congruency of the autonomous choice or formation of a conception of the good with "the good" or,

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<sup>181</sup> Rawls, *Theory*, 379.

<sup>182</sup> Raz, *Morality*, 173.

to use the distinctions from the beginning of the previous chapter, with what is valuable period or simpliciter. Autonomy is valuable only to the extent that it contributes towards the living of a good life. Both Raz and Wall claim that in contemporary western democratic societies autonomy is a necessarily component of the good life, because it is centrally positioned in the ideal of living good in such societies, due to the effect of the current social forms that structure the social interactions in such societies. So, while the good life today in these societies is necessarily an autonomous life, the reverse does not hold: not every autonomous life there is good and hence given the conditionality of the value of autonomy they propose, not every autonomy is valuable.

My argument against the view about the conditionality of the value of autonomy on the good was in part already given in the previous chapter, when I defended the final value of autonomy. I mentioned there that individuals give different value to their choices. While some primarily value choices as instrumental for getting what they want or for enjoying utility, others value them for their demonstrative or for their symbolic function primarily or whatever other value it might have. The balancing of values a choice can have, does not have some pre-determined priority rules and people disagree about them. Claiming that autonomously pursuing conceptions of the good is valuable only if those conceptions of the good contribute to the living of a good life, imposes such pre-determined priority rules regarding the value of choice. Clearly this need not be the case and individuals can legitimately choose to pursue options even if they do not contribute to their well-being. If we are right about why the living of an autonomous life is finally valuable, namely valuable for its own sake, as an instantiation of what individuals consider to be personally valuable, and if these in addition need not have any impersonal or welfare increasing value, then we have good reasons to suppose that the value of autonomy is, in perhaps, better grasped by something like the primacy of the demonstrative value of choice in one's deliberations and actions, whose purpose is to reflect something personal,

something related or something which fits the identity, the preferences or the ambitions of the one who chooses. But to recognize this point is to recognize that the contribution of the autonomous choice towards the good need not matter neither always nor primarily, and in that case the claim that autonomy is conditional on the good proves to be false.

Indeed, when Wall elaborate on why autonomy is according to him finally valuable, he seems to concede something along this proposal of mine above. However, I am skeptical that he can combine that approach with his view that the value of autonomy is conditional on the good and retain autonomy's final value. He claims that autonomy is valuable for the sake of itself, because it is valuable for people to lead their own lives and this in turn is valuable because it is valuable to give meaning to one's own life, which is ultimately valuable because to give meaning is essential to have a character. If this is so then it should be the case that whatever meaning one gives to one's life should be valuable as well, because it is *essential* to one having a character. However, the view which sees the value of autonomy conditional on the good is committed to a claim that, in fact, it is not valuable to give just any meaning to one's life. The reason can be either because not any giving of a meaning to one's life contributes to having a character or because some such meanings contribute to having "bad characters". Wall's general position seems to go for this latter option. But in that case, it seems that personal autonomy is valuable not because it is valuable to give meaning to one's life, but only to the extent that it gives such meanings to life which are essential for something else which is valuable, which are good characters. So, it turns out that the properties which make autonomy valuable are much narrower than the initially claimed ones. However, if personal autonomy is conditional on such properties, which are ultimately conditional on the good, then personal autonomy is left without a final value, or it is not valuable for the sake of itself, which is contrary to what Wall is trying to establish. Wall can try to defend the status of autonomy as valuable for its own sake by claiming that it

constitutes an organic unity with the good: the fully good life. I believe in that case one should be committed to the view that autonomy as such does not have any value at all, or if we admit of talking about neutral values, then that at best it possesses such, both views being counterintuitive. The reason why this is so is the following. Imagine the two cases in which “Adam makes autonomous choices” and “Adam makes autonomous choices in pursue of the bad”. These are two different states of affairs, the second is an organic unity of the first. Proponents of the organic unity view agree that the first one is valuable, while the second one is not, and that the first one is part of the other or is entailed by the other. Why is the first valuable for its own sake? Because of the properties autonomy has. But then, the same properties are entailed in the organic unity as well and yet, one claims they are not valuable. If we ascribe final value to the state of living an autonomous life, then it must be the case that any instance of living an autonomous life is valuable because of the properties that make it valuable. For the proponent of the organic unity to make the different judgement he must refrain from claiming anything about the value of autonomy in the first case, before he acquires further information about the choice, whether is directed to the good or to the bad. Only when he can see the whole situation, he can attribute value to particular state of affairs which will be “autonomous choice in pursue of the good” or “autonomous choice in pursue of the bad”, but autonomy itself would neither be valuable for its own sake nor for something else. If a good character exercising autonomy is valuable for its own sake, and a bad character exercising autonomy is not valuable, then I am afraid we can’t say anything about characters exercising autonomy as such. And even if we accept the claim by Wall that autonomy is valuable because it is essential for having a character, we must conclude that such value is inexistent without further information.<sup>183</sup>

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<sup>183</sup> My argument against the view of the value of autonomy as constitutive or in organic unity with the good is an application of Zimmerman’s account and distinction of virtual and actual intrinsic value. See Michael Zimmerman, “Virtual Intrinsic Value and the Principle of Organic Unities”, *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* Vol.59, No.3 (September, 1999): 653-666.



Lastly, as I elaborated in much details in Chapter One, the view of the value of autonomy as conditional on the good ensues in unjustified paternalism which offends the capacities for autonomy of individuals and is unacceptable given the anti-perfectionist commitment. Given the impersonal value of autonomy we do ought to show respect for the autonomous pursues of individuals even if they lack instantiating some impersonal or perfections value.

## **2. The constrains on the value of autonomy from the principles of justice**

The role which autonomy plays within partially comprehensive anti-perfectionism as specified in Chapter One, where I demonstrated the way in which the value of autonomy is presumed and subsumed under principles of justice, gives the natural context of the conditionality of its value, namely as conditional on the just. Claiming that the value of autonomy is conditional on the just thus does not imply evaluation of the value of the particular conceptions of the good one forms. The conditionality on the just view is rather focused on the “pursue aspect” of autonomy: namely whether whatever conception of the good one autonomously forms, is pursued within the limits of the just in two respects. Whether attending frog jumping competitions is valuable or not is irrelevant for the value of one’s autonomy. This is a consequence supported by the impersonal value of autonomy above, which guarantees a minimal engagement with the autonomous pursues as being of personal values. Some people might pursue banal conceptions of the good or lead self-destructive ways of life which they might consider to be of values for them. As long as they pursue their lives autonomously, we have moral reason to respect their pursues. Some might pursue autonomously their conceptions of the good and then for various reasons lose their autonomy. I believe all of us have experience with loses and gains of degrees of personal autonomy in particular spheres of our lives, and some even with

loss of global personal autonomy. To the extent that this is due to option luck, individuals should be responsible for how they use their capacities for autonomy and they are responsible for the variations in autonomy. However, as I will claim in the next sections in discussing the requirements that autonomy sets on the principles of justice, a state has reasons to ensure the resilience of its citizens after such losses by allowing them to stay within what I call “circumstances for autonomy”, ones in which they are not deprived from generally adequate means, which while insufficient to guarantee them renewal of their autonomy, it is sufficient to partially maintain their capacities for autonomy which are necessary for their practice of equal citizenship. So, what matters according to the conditionality of the just view for the value of people’s autonomy is (1) whether a conception of the good is in principle congruent with the just and if it is, (2) whether its pursue can be done with full respect of the principles of justice.

Whether a pursue is congruent with the principles of justice requires that we see whether in principle it satisfies the relational and the distributive demands coming from principles of justice. The distributive demands find their expression in sufficientarian and egalitarian principles governing the distribution of the adequate means. This implies that such conceptions of the good which place demands on adequate resources above the level of distribution as administered by the two distributive principles fall outside the scope of justice. Why exactly these distributive principles should be seen in a hybrid way as comprised of sufficientarian and equalitarian component is something to which I dedicate the next section, where I discuss the constrain that come from the ideal of autonomy to the distributive principles of justice. The relational demands, on the other side, find expression in relational egalitarian principles. These principles aim to establish a society of equals through the establishment of interpersonal and institutional relations of equals. What is inimical to the social equality these relations aim to foster, I believe, are social relations of domination and social hierarchies,

both on different institutional and interpersonal levels. Most broadly speaking: interpersonal relations as equals are established when persons treat each other as equals, while egalitarian institutional relations are established when institutions treat or have attitudes towards individuals as equals. What these general requirements for equal treatment amount to is something I discuss in more details in the last section of this chapter. What is of relevance here for understanding the conditionality of the value of autonomy in accordance with constrain (1) is that in a society regulated by such relational principles of justice, conceptions of the good which incorporate unequal moral and social status among human being, which are based on racist or supremacists' principles, conceptions of the good which in principle rely on the exploitation of others or which are supported by relations of domination over others will make the autonomy of the individuals endorsing them without value, as their pursue is in principle incongruent with the relational requirements of justice. One might object that this condition is too extreme. Consider, for instance, a religious woman who values hierarchical roles and who believes that women are socially – but not morally- inferior than man. If her autonomy has no value, then it is not worse for her if she is not autonomous—for instance, if she is forced to abandon the practices of her religion. I believe what is objectionable in this case is that the state interferes by forcing the person to abandon her religious practices. But this is not necessarily the way an anti-perfectionist state should act towards citizens who exercise non-valuable autonomy and certainly not the way in the case of the religious women. The state has other means with which it can respond to its citizens whose autonomy is not valuable, such as for instance persuasive ones, aiming to make people accept reasonable doctrines. Of course, the state should act by containing the spread of some doctrines by its citizens whose autonomy would not be valuable because they endorse such conceptions of the good which are essentially directed towards diminishing the equal moral status of other co-citizens, such as for instance supremacist doctrine. This is compatible with partially comprehensive anti-perfectionism. But this is not necessarily the way it should react to all instances of non-valuable

autonomy, as they can be addressed with different means. To be precise, none of these autonomies which are non-valuable because of violating the relational egalitarian principles have a valid claim to adequate means for autonomy to address to the state: the simple reason is that they demand something which is unjust! But how the state will react in regard to them and with what means might depend on many other factors, rather than that their autonomy is not valuable, in the first instance on the evaluation of how threatening the spread of their doctrines is for the maintenance of the basic liberal values in a society and how threatening it is for the maintenance of the capacities for autonomy which grant the equal status to citizens.

Another important respect in which the value of autonomy is conditioned by principles of justice concerns not only whether in principle a pursue is congruent with principles of justice, but whether it can be performed with full respect of those principles. For instance, even if one autonomously forms a conception of the good which falls within the scope of the relational principles, if pursuing that conception is inconsistent or violates some of the distributive principles then one's autonomy again cannot be considered valuable. If your pursue of running a haircut shop can be maintained only by you not paying tax, then your autonomous pursue is not valuable. The same holds if you violate the relational egalitarian principles, for instance you run the haircut shop by threatening to fire your hairdressers if they don't work a bit overtime.

Let me conclude the argument so far. I maintain that living an autonomous live is valuable conditional on the just. This implies that autonomy has a conditional personal final value depending on the principled congruency of the pursues with the relational and the distributive principles of justice and the full compliance of the pursue with the relational and the distributive principles of justice. This conditionality as I mentioned stems naturally from the role autonomy plays in partially comprehensive

anti-perfectionism and it does not make autonomy less valuable for its own sake. That autonomy is conditional on the just, does not imply it is valuable for the sake of justice, just that its value is *pro tanto*.

There is an interesting asymmetry to be noted on the way the value of autonomy is conditioned by the principles of justice. The distributive principles on the one side constrain the value of autonomous pursuits, with conditions which stem from the requirements of the hybrid ideal of autonomy itself. The relational principles on the other side constrain the value of autonomous pursuits with conditions which are derived from the equality of citizens and the requirement to treat them as equals. Furthermore, the violations of the distributive conditions on the value of autonomy seem to result in mainly impersonal injustice while the relational one's are person oriented, the first cause thus an indirect backset of the interest of others while the latter directly affect the interests of other people. Some relational autonomy approaches tend to see the value of autonomy only in relation to this relational dimension, lacking resources to properly account for the distributive one due to misconception of the role autonomy plays in a political morality. It is the virtue I believe of the hybrid conception of autonomy I offered and its value, that we can account for both types of conditioning.

Since, as I discussed above, the impersonal value of autonomy is invested in the capacity to create and pursue something of personal value, its value as conditional on the just can be considered one of a "magnifying nature" in both directions: namely when exercised within the just, or when valuable, personal autonomy magnifies the value of the pursuits while when exercised outside the just, or when autonomy is not valuable, it makes the act of pursue worse than if it wasn't autonomous. Compare the situations in which Adam makes a racist offence to Bob, in the first case autonomously and in the second non-autonomously, for instance he was coerced to do it. Is the autonomous or the non-

autonomous act worst? One may say: it doesn't really make a difference. A racist act is wrong period, irrespective of whether one did it autonomously or non-autonomously. But I believe this is in tension with our basic intuitions about the degrees to the wrongness of acts. Most of us would be inclined to say that autonomous wrongdoing is much worse than non-autonomous wrongdoing. Autonomously making a racist offense because one's doctrine of racial supremacy is a central aspect of one's conception of the good is much worse than doing the same act, without any racist convictions, but out of coercion. The magnifying nature of the value of autonomy works also in the other direction, namely when pursuits are congruent and compatible with the principles of justice. Helping a friend in need is much better when one does it autonomously rather than when one is conditioned to do so. The same holds also in respect to conceptions of the good or actions which seem to be almost meaningless if not autonomously endorsed by an individual. Consider a person collecting different forms of seashells on the beach, for instance. The person autonomously doing this adds value to that act of collecting shells, which if it wasn't for his autonomous commitment to collecting shells - for whatever reason one had - would simply be valueless. That autonomy does act as a magnifier even in this sense - consider the case in which this person is your friend. You know he is committed to collecting seashells and you are walking together along the coast when you see a bundle of shells which gives you a desire to disperse them with your foot. Although you might consider the shells not to be valuable in any sense, knowing that your friend is committed to collecting them constrains in some way the permissibility of your actions in a sense that dispersing them might be considered as an act of disrespect towards your friend's pursuit. One may object to this that such an act would indeed be disrespectful but not because autonomy adds some value to the collecting of seashells but because it is your friend that is in question and it is the relationship of friendship which grounds the respect for the activity. But that kind of reply would only seem to confirm the normativity of personal values I discussed above in Chapter Four, hence it does not really count as an objection to the claim.

### 3. Distributive principles of justice and the constraints from the value of autonomy

In accounting for the distributive principles which advance most the interest in living autonomously by individuals, we have to review some of the things I already said about the relation between the adequate means necessary for pursuing a conception of the good – which are subject to the distribution- and the living of an autonomous life. I claimed that one of the conditions for autonomy is the performative condition which implies that in order for individuals to pursue their conceptions of the good they ought to perform actions constitutive of that conception. And that in order to do this they need to use adequate means for the pursue which can be of two types: generally adequate and particularly adequate means. The distinction of the two types of adequacy of means was crucial in formulating an anti-perfectionist ideal of personal autonomy in which the external component for autonomy would not include imposition of value pre-commitments on the individual, but on the contrary, in line with the commitment of anti-perfectionist to the principle of respect for autonomy, this component will be conceived as a function of the preferences of individuals. Such ideal found its expression in the hybrid ideal of autonomy, which I proposed in Chapter Two.

Starting from the twofold structure of the adequate means for autonomy, as generally and particularly adequate, I maintain that the distributive principles of justice, as constrained by the value of autonomy, require that the outcome of the legitimation procedure ensues in the devising of hybrid distributive principles which contain a sufficientarian and an egalitarian principle, each governing one of the components of the adequate means for autonomy. The sufficientarian principle governs the distribution of the generally adequate means while the egalitarian principles hold for the particularly adequate means, as well as the additional means one can use for revision of a conception of the good.

The two principles form a unity achieved by a shift principle according to which satisfying the sufficientarian principle implies a shift in the reasons for benefiting further an individual for the purpose of being autonomous, above which egalitarian principles govern the distribution of particularly adequate means for autonomy. I will start by first offering the justification for the sufficientarian principles governing the distribution of generally adequate means and then proceed with the egalitarian principles governing the particularly adequate ones.

### 3.1. Sufficiency and the “circumstances for autonomy”

I believe there is an obvious, intuitively appealing sense in which the value of personal autonomy is threshold-seeking. Being capable to live as one sees fit, namely to be capable to be self-determine about the values that inform your actions and have self-control over leading your life according to those values, requires that one is freed from certain necessities that pose threat to the development and exercise of these capabilities. Suffering from hunger, severe poverty, being deprived of basic liberty rights, etc., are all seriously threatening conditions which deprive individuals from being in circumstances to engage with options in their environment in a way they can enjoy global autonomy. At the same time, while eliminating these forms of deprivation or lacks of food, health etc., is necessary, this seems to be insufficient to account for the autonomy of individuals as we conceived it in the previous chapters. In this regard we can claim that eliminating these obstacles to autonomy, although not sufficient to guarantee that individuals will lead autonomous lives, it is sufficient to put them in “circumstances for autonomy”. What is necessary for individuals to be in circumstances for autonomy is susceptible to an objective non-comparative standard which we can find in the amount of generally adequate means individuals need for autonomy. Thus, I believe that “having enough” to be in circumstances for autonomy represents a morally significant threshold for the distribution of



general adequate means. I propose that endorsing the critical importance of positioning citizens above such threshold, implies the following three sufficientarian distributive principles:

- 1) A Positive Principle: We have weighty autonomy-based reasons to distribute enough general adequate means.
- 2) A Threshold Principle: Individuals have enough when they are in circumstances for autonomy, namely they have developed and can maintain the possession of capacities for autonomy in a narrow sense.
- 3) A Shift Principle: Once individuals secure enough to exercise their capacities for autonomy in a narrow sense, there are less weighty sufficientarian reasons for political institutions to provide additional generally adequate means to benefit their autonomy.

Let me provide a justification for each of the three sufficientarian principles. First, the positive thesis. Sufficientarian distributive principles imply that having enough of some good is a demand on justice. Following Casal, we can call this requirement to “secure enough” the “positive (sufficientarian) principle”.<sup>184</sup> Applied in our context the positive principle states the following: individuals should have enough general adequate means for the purpose of their autonomy-prospects. As stated in Chapter One, the highest and the higher order interests of individuals which ensue from the stipulation of the second moral power of citizens, understood as a capacity to form, revise and pursue conceptions of the good, entail a fundamental interest in living autonomous lives. Individuals advance this interest within the original position, by devising such principles of justice, which among other means, would also regulate the distribution of all-purpose means or generally adequate means which they can use in

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<sup>184</sup> Paula Casal, “Why Sufficiency is not Enough.” *Ethics* Vol.117, No. 2 (January 2007): 296–326.

order to develop their capacities for autonomy. Since such means are necessary to situate them in circumstances for autonomy – though not sufficient for autonomy- individuals guided by their interest in living autonomously and their rational deliberations would use a non-comparative standard for their distribution and determine a morally relevant threshold for the possession of generally adequate means, below which individuals would be considered as being outside circumstances for autonomy. This provision is in line with our anti-perfectionist commitment to liberal neutrality. In Chapter One I argued that to the extent that anti-perfectionists are committed through the neutrality principle to the equal respect for individual’s autonomy, they have an unavoidable commitment to ensure the development of the capacities for autonomy in a minimal and narrow sense. An anti-perfectionist state committed to the impersonal value of autonomy as specified in Chapter Four cannot “push” their citizens into living autonomous lives but it should ensure that all its citizens are in circumstances for autonomy<sup>185</sup>. Only against a background of securing enough for individuals to be in circumstances for autonomy, does it make sense to exercise neutrality and be committed to anti-perfectionism.

The positive principle above requires answer to two related questions. First, where should we position the threshold for having enough to be in circumstances in autonomy? Second, if the positive principle guides us in distributing in ways that secure everyone has enough generally adequate means, how are we to think about distributions over that threshold? What kind of principles, if any, should apply to a supra-threshold level?

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<sup>185</sup> Mind the difference between this view and the perfectionist view by Raz and Wall for instance which insists not that individuals are situated in circumstances for autonomy - namely that they have sufficient generally adequate goods or as Rawls calls them primary goods which secure the development and exercise of their capacities for autonomy in minimal and narrow sense - but rather that they have enough to instantiate the ideal of autonomy they propose. I will say below, in what follows, what is wrong with that kind of distribution for autonomy.

Classical sufficientarian doctrines such as Frankfurt's define the level of sufficiency in absolute terms, above which inequalities are irrelevant for justice. Many believe that this is an inescapable commitment of the ones who endorse sufficientarian principles of justice, which Casal terms the "negative sufficientarian thesis": distributions over the threshold do not have moral significance and should not be of concern of justice. In the last years, however, some sufficientarians dismissed the commitment to this negative thesis. One way to do this is by being committed to what Liam Shield calls the *shift principle*<sup>186</sup>. The shift principle implies that one may endorse the positive thesis and plausibly claim that a consequence of its endorsement is not that distributions over the threshold do not matter, but that we have less weighty reasons to provide more. This presupposes that the positive principle is satiable, having the feature that its demands can be completely met and "when they are completely met then whatever may happen and whatever might have happened the principles cannot be, nor could they have been, satisfied to a higher degree"<sup>187</sup>. If this is so then we can formulate a shift principle which the individuals in the original position would endorse in conjunction with the positive principle governing the distribution of the generally adequate means: once individuals secure enough generally adequate means to be in circumstances for autonomy, there is a shift in the reasons to benefit them further for the pursue of their autonomy. The shift consists in a movement from sufficientarian reasons to benefit their autonomy to egalitarian reasons to benefit them for the same purpose which apply to the distribution of the particularly adequate means for autonomy. To conclude, by not endorsing the negative thesis and substituting it with the shift principle, my distributive conception allows that once individuals have been granted enough to be in circumstances for autonomy, the reasons to further benefit them for this purpose disappear but the reasons to benefit further their

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<sup>186</sup> Liam Shields, *Just Enough: Sufficiency as a Demand of Justice* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), 30.

<sup>187</sup> Raz, *The Morality of Freedom*, 235-236.

autonomy do not. They shift however to other factors which are relevant for further distributions which I consider to be of egalitarian concerns. I turn to these considerations in the upcoming section.

If this is so then how much is enough? One of the most difficult questions for proponents of any kind of sufficientarian principles is to determine where the threshold should be set, as it seems that it will always be kind of an arbitrary and controversial point. While I do not aim to offer a unit-based account of the threshold, I believe that the value of autonomy and the structure of the ideal I defended offer a plausible base for setting this threshold. I claim that individuals have enough to be in circumstances for autonomy when they are capable to perform basic functionings in their society upon one's individual voluntary endorsement to do so, which practices are constitutive of their practice of equal citizenship. In Chapters Two and Three, when discussing the external component of the ideal of autonomous persons and the adequacy of the means for autonomy, I mentioned that the provision of generally adequate means is a function of the aggregation of the basic needs of the citizens. Political institutions have an insight into what citizens need in order to be equal and fully functional members of a society, and provide them with generally adequate means to perform those functions. I also maintained that majority of citizens usually form their conceptions of the good in reference to such functions. Hence by providing its citizens with the means to perform basic function in a society, the state provides them with access to generally adequate means which put them in circumstances for autonomy and provide thus the minimum necessary for them to be considered equal to other citizens. Individuals are not in such circumstances when they lack capability to perform such function upon their voluntary endorsement. Recall the situation of Bea in the human trafficking case from Chapter Three. Not just that she is not autonomous, but she is not in circumstances for autonomy as well, considering that she does not have access to means which allow her to perform basic functions as a citizen or worker, for instance: she is practically homeless, psychological traumatized, having a history

of physical abuses, without abilities to claim her rights as a citizen, without intimate support from her family. This implies that she is not only in lack of control over her life but that she is outside of circumstances to take such, in a vulnerable position and exposed to various forms of violence, oppression and domination. Having enough to be in circumstances for autonomy requires maintaining lifelong accessibility to the generally adequate means which allow one to be capable to perform basic functions in a society and perpetuate thus in circumstances of autonomy. Many take this to offer strong reasons in support of the provision of some form of basic income that citizens can enjoy in order to be maintained within the circumstances of personal autonomy and avoid suffering non-comparative disadvantages which increase their vulnerabilities, especially in regard of social oppression and domination. Of course, to live autonomously is insufficient to have solely generally adequate means, but autonomy requires access to particularly adequate means.

Before I proceed with the justification for the egalitarian distribution, I would like to dismiss the claims that the value of autonomy justifies sufficientarian distributions all the way down, hence that there is no need for non-sufficientarian principles governing the distribution of adequate means in order to advance the interests of individuals in living autonomously. I believe such accounts of the distribution required by the value of autonomy are misleading for two reasons. First, they seem to be committed to a rather implausible conception of autonomy, which in my opinion can at best pretend to explain distributions which set individuals in circumstances for autonomy, but not their autonomy. Second, such distribution is incompatible with the anti-perfectionist commitment as it violates the principle of respect for individual's autonomy due to not taking seriously the role of the particularly adequate means in the pursue of conceptions of the good and their relation to the self-determining part of the ideal of autonomous persons.

In the last few years there were several attempts to offer defense of sufficientarianism by referring in one way or another to the value of personal autonomy<sup>188</sup>. Nielsen defends the sufficiency demand of justice as grounded on what he considers to be an *objective-personal value claim of autonomy (for the recipient)* according to which autonomy is valuable as a capability enabling you to do what you believe is right or as “carrying the freedom to enjoy functionings that are similarly *objectively* valuable<sup>189</sup>”. He claims that it is this value of autonomy that justifies the sufficientarian concerns with people below a relevant threshold for autonomy and the lack of significant concern for inequalities above the threshold<sup>190</sup>. People below the threshold are lacking something which is of critical importance or face some serious obstacle for autonomy. It is only by bringing everyone above the threshold for autonomy that we satisfy the demands of justice which require that such obstacles for autonomy are eliminated.

The problem with this autonomy-based sufficientarian distribution all the way down, which endorses the negative sufficientarian thesis I rejected above, is that it is based on an intuitively implausible objectivist understanding of autonomy which is divorced from any use of autonomy in our everyday practice. The so-called objective-personal value which grounds sufficiency supervenes on a stipulation of a limited set of capabilities – on perfectionist basis- which autonomous persons should have, which while I believe are necessary for autonomy, they only correspond or arise from aspects of the generally

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<sup>188</sup> See, Lasse Nielsen, “Sufficiency and Satisfiable Values” *Journal of Applied Philosophy* Vol.36, Issue 5 (November 2019):800-816, David V. Axelsen and Lasse Nielsen, “Sufficiency as Freedom from Duress,” *The Journal of Political Philosophy* Vol.23, No.4 (2015): 406-426 and Shields, *Just Enough: Sufficiency as a Demand of Justice*. Axelsen and Nielsen, for instance, propose as a threshold the ideal of freedom from duress, understood as “freedom from significant pressure against succeeding in central aspects of human life”. In another paper Nielsen proposes that the threshold could be determined in relation to what he calls objective-personal value of autonomy or on the impersonal value of personal autonomy, both being plausible candidates in his opinion to justify sufficientarian distributive principles.

<sup>189</sup> See Nielsen, “Sufficiency and Satisfiable Values,” 207.

<sup>190</sup> Because autonomy has such value, Nielsen claims it is valuable in an objective-personal sense, namely regardless of whether or not that person achieves any benefit in utility from being autonomous or not. He contrasts this understanding of the value of autonomy with the subjective-personal value according to which autonomy is valuable because of the benefit it brings to an individual. Aside from the subjective-personal and the objective-personal value he maintains that autonomy has a distinct impersonal value as well, which implies that “it is better in some relevant sense that people are autonomous than if they are not, without this being better *for* anyone personally.”

adequate means individuals should have access to, which however, are insufficient to ground autonomy. They are, as I claim above, sufficient to put individuals in circumstances for autonomy but not to make them autonomous.<sup>191</sup> Nielsen, on the contrary, seems to suggest that that once deprivations below the threshold are satisfied a person is autonomous, and we don't have to benefit him further in that respect for his autonomy. He claims "whereas the importance of eliminating obstacles to autonomy is of obvious moral importance, it is significantly less important to provide more resources for the already autonomous person. Once hunger has been eliminated and thus autonomy secured, the now newly well-fed person does not gain in autonomy from receiving more nutritional goods". I believe there is quite some difference between the well-fed and the autonomous. And while being well nurtured or having access to optimally good nutrition is a necessary component of having access to generally adequate means that situate one in circumstances for autonomy, it is far from being sufficient to account for one's autonomy.

Second, Nielsen claims that the "the preferences that matter to sufficientarian distributive justice are evaluated by using an objective criterion of value" and it is these objectively valuable preferences that matter for autonomy. To make his point he refers to Crisp's Beverly Hills example<sup>192</sup>: in a society comprised of two groups, the rich and the super-rich, the rich prefer 1982 Lafite wines to 1982 Latour by the Super-rich, which comprise the majority of the society. Here according to Crisp there will be no injustice done if the state distributes only 1982 Latour, even though the rich are worse off, because once people reach certain level it is irrelevant whether you will benefit them more. In analogy with

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<sup>191</sup> Indeed, Axelsen and Nielsen explicitly claim that one of the theoretical aspects which their sufficientarian conception includes is the limited set of capabilities or opportunities when evaluating whether or no someone has enough from the point of view of justice which implies that freedom from duress should be understood as entailing freeing people from significant pressure in certain *central* areas of human life, while others are to be considered beyond the scope of justice. See Axelsen and Nielsen, "Sufficiency as Freedom from Duress."

<sup>192</sup> Roger Crisp, "Equality, Priority, and Compassion", *Ethics* Vol.113, No.4 (2003): 755.

this conclusion Nielsen concludes that it is not the case that the “opportunity to choose Latour over Lafite wines makes the Super-rich more autonomous than the Rich. The preferences driving choices in ...wines, then, do not matter in a way that obliges other people to accommodate them. But autonomy does.”<sup>193</sup>

I am skeptical that Crisp’s case succeeds in making the point in regard to justice, but Nielsen’s analogy definitely cannot make the point in regard to the autonomy of the members of the groups. It seems that with the focus on the objective factors that set individuals in circumstances to be autonomous, sufficientarians simply disregard or disvalue the subjective preferences of individuals. Such understanding of autonomy and its value which deals away with its primary and irreducible subjective dimension is, however, seriously counterintuitive and one which is incompatible and opposed to the value of autonomy I defend above, namely as valuable for the capacity to create and pursue something of personal value. The preferences of individuals and their status does matter for the autonomy of individuals irrespective of what kind of preferences they are about: whether they are preferences about particular type of schooling, expensive wines or cheap beers. What ultimately will matter for their autonomy is up for individuals to decide for themselves and this subjective aspect of the value of autonomy cannot be accounted from the sufficientarian view on the value of personal autonomy. Allowing for this subjective aspect of autonomy to inform the distribution of the adequate means requires that we look for another way to distribute adequate means above the level of generally adequate means which will be sensitive to the subjective preferences, ambitions, conceptions of the good. I believe an egalitarian distribution of particularly adequate means is the only plausible candidate in this regard to complement the sufficientarian distribution of generally adequate means for autonomy.

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<sup>193</sup> Lasse Nielsen, “Sufficiency and Satisfiable Values,” 207.



### 3.2. Equality and the autonomous life

What are the reasons for this egalitarian requirement on the particularly adequate means stemming from the value of autonomy? There are several issues that arise from the argument so far which are of relevance for how political institutions will ensure the distribution of particularly adequate means for autonomy. From the discussion above of the value of personal autonomy it follows that autonomy is valuable because it is ultimately valuable to determine and realize one's life as of personal value. For the distribution of the particular means for autonomy, this implies that it might not be relevant for me that I have the same type of means as you in order to determine and realize something which is of personal value for me, because we have different conceptions of the good. Second, as I explained in Chapter One, global personal autonomy admits of degrees. This implies that it makes sense to say, for instance, that one autonomous person was more autonomous in the past than he is now, as well as comparatively, that of two individuals, both of whom are autonomous, one is more autonomous than the other. In this second case the reason for the difference, even when two individuals have the same conceptions of the good, is the fact that individuals have different capacities to live autonomously. The factors influencing the capacities of individuals to live autonomously are various but some of the most important refer to the different development of their mental capacities, different abilities to use disposable means to perform actions constitutive of one's conception of the good, as well as to different social factors such as the guarantees against interference with one's decisions, the robustness of the epistemic position from which one pursues a conception of the good, the possibilities to revise their conceptions of the good. All these things matter for how much a person needs in order to determine and perform one's life as of personal value or as embodying something one considers valuable. So, if political institutions are to show equal concern for each individual's

claim to autonomy, then aside from the sufficientarian distribution of generally adequate means they all require in this regard, they need to provide for such distribution of particularly adequate means which will neutralize all these factors that might influence the prospects for living autonomously by individuals which we would consider to be unfair. How can we do that?

I believe the best way to decide on how to devise such distributions of particularly adequate means would be to apply Dworkin's envy test within a hypothetical auction<sup>194</sup>. I will not go into details in exposing Dworkin's equality of resources view but very briefly explain the point why his hypothetical auction is suitable for the distribution of particular adequate means for autonomy. The idea of the hypothetical auction is that each individual, participant, has the same number of tokens - which are the metric for the equality of the distribution of particularly adequate means - with which he trades on the auction, buying particular means according to his conception of the good, where the lots are sold to the highest offer. The auction is opened until an envy test is met which implies that the distribution of the means is equal, as no participant would prefer the bundle of means of some other participant. I consider the envy test applied in this way to be sufficient to properly account for the different claims to particularly adequate means by individuals that stem from the different conceptions of the good they might hold. The hypothetical auction also accounts properly for my claim in Chapter One and Two when I explained the condition of adequacy, that individuals form their conceptions of the good with an eye on the available resources in their society and hence take responsibility for their pursuits, whatever they are.

However, in order to show equal concern for each individual's claim to particularly adequate means, then it is necessary that we take into consideration the factors that influence the capacities of

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<sup>194</sup> Dworkin, *Sovereign Virtue*, 67.

individuals to live autonomously, and redistribute, if the envy test is to hold post-auction. Again, we can use another of Dworkin's devices, the hypothetical insurance procedure. The idea is that it is fair not to hold people responsible for bad brute luck, which is understood as ensuing from risks that they don't take deliberately. So, in order to neutralize the effect of bad brute luck on the prospects of individuals to live autonomously, we compensate those individuals who suffer bad brute luck, according to an average rate of insurance which people would have insured themselves against, in case they knew the incidence of the condition, its effects, but not their own chances to get it.

In applying the hypothetical insurance procedure in respect of the prospects for autonomy of individuals, we should stress that the neutralizing scope of the procedure would be much more narrow than in Dworkin's conception of the equality of resources. This is so because of two reasons. First, in the autonomy-based distributions I propose individuals are already seen as having strong guarantees against falling beyond the threshold of having enough to be in circumstances for autonomy. In this regard I presuppose that a decent distribution of generally adequate means would not let individuals who have rare medical conditions or disease to bear the costs on their own, but would already insure them even against this kind of bad brute luck which the hypothetical insurance in Dworkin's case is highly unlikely that would compensate for (as, probably, only very few would insure against such extremely rare conditions). Second, some of the factors which allow for neutralization in Dworkin's account are not relevant for the autonomy of individuals, such as for instance the lack of talents. As I claimed above in Chapter Two, it is relevant that persons are capable to perform actions constitutive of their conceptions of the good, but not to excel in performing those actions, which might be relevant for their self-realization. So, what the hypothetical insurance procedure does grant as justified redistribution in regard of the effect of the bad brute luck upon the prospects for autonomy of individuals would mainly consist of redistribution due to costs for the purse of conceptions of the

good which are higher than they would have usually been, if for instance the individual did not suffer some forms of bodily or mental disabilities which pose considerable impediments in the pursue of a conception of the good.

Some theories of autonomy propose an all-the way down egalitarian distribution for autonomy. In what I find to be their least plausible variant, they claim that a key requirement for the distributions of political institutions stemming from the equal importance of each individual's autonomy is that they ensure that individuals enjoy equal or a like-autonomy. In their more plausible version, they hold that what political institutions need to equalize is not the autonomy of each and every individual but the access to resources in general.

The claim that we should distribute in a way that everyone enjoys like autonomy seems highly implausible, and unattractive, as it implies unjustifiable violation of liberties and divorces us from our anti-perfectionist commitments. Robert Young seems to suggest that accepting the ideal of equality leads to a requirement to provide for a "like autonomy by all individuals". Hence, the morally relevant respects in which we should distribute autonomy is to uphold the autonomy of all. In this respect Young claims "the autonomy of some should sometimes properly be restricted in the interests of the autonomy of others."<sup>195</sup> Young does not offer an elaborate discussion of his position on the distribution for like-autonomy and this is not in his focus as his paper is mainly directed against libertarian theories of justice. But it seems that his position will only confirm rather than reject the libertarian charges. I will not criticize his position in that direction though. What I would point out to is that such position on the distribution of autonomy might leave most individuals outside the possibility to live autonomous life. By living an autonomous life, some individuals will necessarily

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<sup>195</sup> Robert Young, "Autonomy and Egalitarianism", *Political Studies*, Vol.36, Issue 4 (December 1988):677.

enjoy more autonomy than others. The person who works in a creative industry might need more autonomy than the person who works as an archivist and a self-sustaining farmer might need more autonomy than both of them. Consider how the level of reasonable self-control required for all of them to pursue their conceptions of the good varies between the three of them. If this is so, then principles of justice requiring like-autonomy distributions to most of us would seem implausible and undesirable. What we should aim is perhaps that they have equal means for autonomy rather than equal autonomy.

One such conception is offered in Ben Colburn's luck egalitarian proposal<sup>196</sup>. For Colburn autonomous individuals are those who decide for themselves how to live and who live according to those decisions. Colburn's distributive conception is thus based on two requirements stemming from the conditions for "living autonomously", which complement his conditions for deciding autonomously. These requirements imply first, that the reasons that my life goes that way must be that I made it so; and second, I must bear the consequences of the way I choose to live, or be responsible for my choices and actions. The conception of responsibility which Colburn uses to account for the second requirement is quite complex and incorporates responsibility as attributability as well as substantive responsibility. The first implies that it must be our choices or actions that make our lives the way they are: so, they must be attributable to us. The second implies that only when one is substantively responsibly one is liable for the consequences that are attributable to one.

People in Colburn's view are responsible for the deficits in their autonomy when the following necessary conditions are satisfied which, in his opinion, jointly are also sufficient:

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<sup>196</sup> See Colburn, *Autonomy and Liberalism*, Ch 4.

- (1) the deficits [of autonomy] must be result of voluntary choices, where voluntary choices are defined as those which are “not non-voluntary, and they are non-voluntary if chosen because of no acceptable alternatives”.
- (2) people’s decisions about what is valuable must satisfy the conditions for autonomy (Colburn’s conditions for autonomous decisions, namely the endorsement and independence conditions);
- (3) people must make those decisions against a background of information about the differential costs and payoffs of their decisions (external and internal conditions);
- (4) people’s decisions take place against a background of institutional designs which provide equal minimal conditions (internal and external) for an autonomous life. These last are required for one to be able to live an autonomous life and include the state ensuring that individuals have basic skills and knowledge required to be able to live autonomously. Such conditions will both, according to Colburn, promote autonomy and provide conditions for people to be hold responsible.

Now Colburn’s egalitarian distributions for autonomy rely heavily on the luck egalitarian consideration for the type of distributions which justice requires. However, as he claims, he is able to avoid some of the common objections to luck egalitarianism by incorporating the “equal minimal conditions for autonomy” which seem to account for the requirement for substantive responsibility in his account of responsibility (namely that one has to be liable to bear the costs of one’s choices and actions).

I have two objections, however, to his proposal for egalitarian distribution of autonomy: a weaker and a stronger one. The weaker objection claims that Colburn’s account, with the incorporation of the so called “equal minimal conditions for autonomy” is not after all an egalitarian one all the way down- or a purely egalitarian - distributive conception. Although it is not clear what Colburn means by “equal minimal conditions” for autonomy, from the few specifications he offers it seems that these are not different from “minimal conditions for living autonomously”, and these in turn can be determined

non-comparatively and imply a non-comparative standard for distribution, as I showed in my conception of distributions for autonomy above. Of course, Colburn might accept this weaker objection and retain that hybrid, sufficientarian and egalitarian distributions is what equal concern for autonomy requires and that the conditions are the same that he already exposed and defended. His theory in that case would be incomplete as the sufficientarian aspects necessarily require specification of the threshold for the minimal conditions for autonomy. Without such specification political institutions are left without practical directives of whether one has fallen beyond or is still above the minimal conditions for autonomy. This is especially important, if as he says depending on the satisfaction of this condition, we attribute substantive responsibility to individuals. Claiming as he does that what is important is that “such a threshold exists” irrespective of where the threshold is cannot be sustained in that case. The indications he gives in this regard seem also implausible. For instance, in specifying the “equal minimal conditions for autonomy” Colburn states “people with physical or mental disabilities leaving them effectively unable to live autonomous lives cannot be held responsible for that fact, even if they satisfy the other three conditions [for responsibility] described before. So, someone committed to equal access to autonomy would be committed to neutralizing the effects of such disabilities if it is possible, or to compensating if it is not.” First, considering the wide variety of disabilities a person might have, from slight to extreme, it seems false to claim that disabled persons who are able to satisfy the first three conditions of responsibility should in general be considered as being “effectively unable to live autonomous lives”. There are no principled reasons for instance why a person with amputated legs, a person with dyslexia or a deaf person cannot satisfy the first three conditions, and live according to their conceptions of the good. But if this is so then according to Colburn’s conception this would imply that we do not have autonomy-based reasons neither for neutralization nor for compensation of the disabilities of these persons. Colburn might object that although persons with disabilities are able to live according to their conceptions of the good they are

not able to “effectively live autonomous lives”, which is what the fourth condition states. But whether the persons above satisfy the fourth condition is something we cannot decide in principle as Colburn does not specify what is necessary for “effectively living autonomously” in distinction to “living autonomously or according to one’s conception of the good”.

These are however, in my opinion, objections that Colburn can accommodate with further developments of his theory. The stronger objection to his distributive proposal targets Colburn’s conditions for living autonomously based on which he charts his distributive conception. In my view responsibility in the sense in which Colburn specified it, as incorporating substantive responsibility, can raise several objections to his conception - depending on the specification of its conditions, which are not sufficiently clear in Colburn - one of which is that it does not seem to be necessary condition for living autonomously, as it leads to results incompatible with our ordinary views about responsibility. The following example shows that the condition for substantive responsibility – if we accept that merely satisfying the equal minimum condition for autonomy is not sufficient to make you liable to bear the costs of your decisions – would be too strong of a condition and makes implausibly many people non-autonomous. Imagine that Adam wants to be a farmer and produce oranges. He has much knowledge and experience in planting oranges which he would like to use in future. He autonomously forms a conception of the good based on his preferences. He is well informed about what living as a farmer implies and the consequences of his commitment. However, he has very poor construction skills in building a farm, especially with the technologically efficient watering system he likes to implement there. So, he hires a construction company which builds the watering system for him and can thus pursue his conception of the good.

Now, let’s look at Adam’s case from the perspective of Colburn’s theory of autonomy. According to Colburn’s conception of living autonomously “it is not sufficient for autonomy just that an agent’s life



goes in accordance with values that she decides upon. She must also be responsible for her life going that way, where the conception of responsibility...incorporates both attributability (that is, the reason for her life going that way being her actions and choices) and substantive responsibility (that one is liable to bear the costs of the way that life goes). If responsibility is a condition for living autonomously and if – as Colburn claims- it includes, aside from attributability, substantive responsibility then Adam cannot be claimed to be autonomous as he is not or not fully substantively responsible for how his life goes. He can be claimed to be substantively responsible and hence liable to bear the costs for the building of the farm to the extent that it is his decision to hire the company to build the farm for him. But how his life will go from that point on, considering his autonomously endorsed life project, is something for which he is not liable to bear the costs since it is not his actual actions that determine that direction, but rather the actions of the construction company which builds the farm. The building of the farm cannot be something for which he is substantively responsible and to the extent that this is central action in pursuing his conception of the good, it seems that under Colburn's conception Adam cannot be claimed to be autonomous. It is contrary to our intuitions about responsibility to claim that Adam is in fact substantively responsible insisting that this is because his choice of the company makes him liable to bear all the costs of that decision. Imagine that the company did a bad job and the installed watering system is so deficient that Adam is unable even after a year to do anything related to farming as all the trees die from damp after few weeks. If Adam was substantively responsible – and substantive responsibility in Colburn's view implies attributability as well- then Adam's claim against the construction company for compensation for the defects should be void. But that seems to counter our intuitions that Adam is justified in holding the company accountable for their work. Hence it seems that the incorporation of the substantive responsibility- when liability to bear the costs is not an automatic consequence of one satisfying the equal minimal condition for

autonomy, which I think is plausible to suppose - is too strong of a condition for autonomy and not one which can be used for justifying our autonomy conducive just distributions.

### 3.3. Dismissing utilitarian distributions for autonomy

In the end let me briefly comment on the possibility for utilitarian distributions as required by the value of autonomy. One might claim that the value of autonomy in fact requires that we devise such principles of justice that maximize the autonomy of individuals. The proper way to understand this is in an aggregative way: namely we should distribute in a way that maximizes the autonomy in a society. The obvious problem with that kind of distribution is that it ultimately fails to show equal concern for the interest in living autonomously of every individual. Some individuals are not as capable to live autonomous lives as others, so the aggregate maximizing argument would require that adequate means are transferred to those who are more capable to reach higher degrees of autonomy, and to do so at the expense of those who would fail or reach only lower degree of autonomy. That seems to be in tension with the equal value we ascribe to the interest in living autonomously of individuals. Each individual responds differently to the circumstances in which one lives autonomously and the degree to which one does so should not bear on the distribution.

Shouldn't we then perhaps aim to maximize the autonomy of every individual instead as a social aggregate, in the sense of each individual living a maximally autonomous life? I am not sure there is a plausible way to do this without violating the principle of respect for one's autonomy. Because as it was said above the autonomy admits of degree and partly the degree is determined by the temporal disruptions in which an individual maintains a commitment to a conception of the good. These may occur for various reasons, even such, for instance, based on which an individual might consciously

impose restrictions on one's autonomy in light of some other commitment. Imagine someone who is a careerist and whose conception of the good is related to one's professional life. Now suddenly this person's close relative breaks his leg and needs several months of care. The careerist is the only close person who can help him. In light of these circumstances the careerist temporarily leaves the job and spends the few months as a caregiver out of duty towards his relative. Clearly, he lives a less autonomous life than he lived before, but this temporal span in which he does not satisfy the conditions for autonomy is self-imposed out of considerations for other values. He would have increased the degree of his autonomy if he spent more time working but that maximization, considering his decision, is not desirable according to him, maybe because it would deprive him from something else that he values, such as friendship. From the position of political institutions who deal with distributions of autonomy it is not clear how this kind of self-impose opting outs will work. Hence, I don't think the individual maximizing distributive strategy is also a good proposal.

Aside from the outcome view a utilitarian might hold that we might in fact need to maximize the access to resources of an individual rather than one's autonomy. In this respect, the utilitarian claims that we should distribute in a way that individuals have maximal adequate internal and external means on their disposal. Now in the theory of autonomy I proposed, this can amount to several things. Considering that political institutions allow for adequate internal and external means for autonomy by the provision of means that make one capable to perform the basic functions in a particular society as specified above, then one way to treat the maximizing proposal is in a sense that distributions should be such that they make individuals capable to perform basic functions of a society, if they will to do so. If this is so then this will overlap with the necessary provision of adequate means for autonomy. If, however, maximal is to be understood in the sense that irrespective of their endorsement they should be made capable to perform those basic functions then that seems to result in unjustified

paternalism, which would be in tension with the respect of autonomy of individuals. According to this proposal persons who don't like to perform family functions such as being spouses, for instance, would be, in the best case, incentivized to do so by let's say a policy which gives tax reduction to married couple, or offers favorable state sponsored grants for homes, etc. But that seems to imply an unjustified paternalistic treatment of these individuals by the state. Hence the maximal means for autonomy strategy will also not work.

To conclude: I reviewed above whether sufficientarian and egalitarian distributive principles all the way down can be grounded in the value of personal autonomy and considered to be most conducive to the pursue of the ideal of personal autonomy as specified above. I concluded that both suffer from considerable deficiencies which we do not encounter in the hybrid principles I defended, which I believe that individuals with interest in living autonomously would have strongest reasons to choose in the original position.

#### **4. Relational principles of justice and the constraints from the value of autonomy**

The hybrid ideal and conception of autonomy with their personal and impersonal value as specified do not only set requirements for the distributions of the adequate means but also for the structuring of the relations among individuals and among the individuals and the state. To illustrate the need for egalitarian relations for autonomy as an addition to the need for particular types of distributions of the adequate means, namely sufficientarian and egalitarian, Christian Schemmel makes the following point: "if you and I are to divide a bundle of resources among ourselves, and I do not consult you as to how you think they should be distributed, but just go ahead distributing it the way I think is fair, it seems plausible to hold that I am treating you unjustly, because you have a claim to be heard on issues

that matter to you: I am violating a procedural right of yours”.<sup>197</sup> Various definitions as to what in particular egalitarian relations amount to can be found among the advocates of relational egalitarianism. Scheffler for instance considers them to be that kind of relations which are “unstructured by differences of rank, power, or status”<sup>198</sup>. Such relations do not obtain among individuals who see themselves as superior or inferior in respect to others nor when there is an imbalance of power which enables some individuals to dominate or exploit others. Relations can be more or less equal depending on the degree to which they eliminate this kind of inequalities in status, rank, or power and they can refer to interactions within the private and the public life of individuals, within political, social and economic institutions.

There is a wide discussion among egalitarians concerning the relation between the distributive and the relational requirements of the ideal of equality. Some defenders of relational equality maintain that distributions in general are of instrumental importance for egalitarian justice and what is of primary significance is the establishment of relational equality. Samuel Scheffler claims that “equality as a social and political value expresses an ideal of how human relationships should be conducted. That ideal has distributive implications, and the task for an egalitarian conception of distributive justice is to draw out those implications.”<sup>199</sup> Elizabeth Anderson makes a similar point. She claims that “a relational theory of equality (...) views equality as a social relationship” and it “regards two people as equal when each accepts the obligation to justify their actions by principles acceptable to the other, and in which they take mutual consultation, reciprocation and recognition for granted. Certain patterns in the distribution of goods may be instrumental to securing such relationships, follow from them, or even

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<sup>197</sup> Christian Schemmel, *Justice and Egalitarian Relations*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021.

<sup>198</sup> Samuel Scheffler, “Choice, Circumstance, and the Value of Equality,” *Politics, Philosophy and Economics* Vol4, No.1 (2005): 17.

<sup>199</sup> Samuel Scheffler, “Choice, Circumstance, and the Value of Equality,” *Politics, Philosophy and Economics* Vol4, No.1 (2005): 22-23.

be constitutive of them.<sup>200</sup> Aside from these insights which seem to undermine the relation-independent significance of distributions in general, Zoltan Miklosi has persuasively argued that in fact some relational critiques do not pose a fundamental challenge to the distributive conceptions of egalitarianism and that those which do pose such challenge seems to be the least plausible ones.<sup>201</sup> Hence he proves what he calls the core (positive) distributive thesis according to which “the distribution of non-relational goods has relation-independent significance from the point of view of justice.”<sup>202</sup>

While the debate between relational and distributive egalitarians is important in its own right, I do not have the space to dwell more into it here. I follow Andres Moles and Tom Parr, however, in maintaining that the distributive and the relational demands for equality are in most cases complementary rather than derivative from one another. This implies that the reasons we have for fostering egalitarian relations are distinct, irreducible, and compatible in most cases with the reasons we have for egalitarian distributions<sup>203</sup>. Consequently I maintain that even if the distributions of the adequate means are responsive to the constraints coming from the value of autonomy, the fostering of some types of social relations which involve for instance social hierarchies or disproportional distribution of power allowing for domination of some over others seems to have an undermining effect for the capacities for autonomy of individuals or, irrespective of their effect, they might be in tension with both the personal and impersonal value which autonomy has. As I already claimed in Chapter Four, while the equality of persons requires individuals to be treated as morally equal, the ideal of autonomy and its values require that this kind of equal treatment transfers to enjoying social

<sup>200</sup> Elizabeth Anderson, “What is the Point of Equality,” *Ethics* Vol.109, No.2 (January,1999): 313–14.

<sup>201</sup> Zoltan Miklosi, “Varieties of Relational Egalitarianism,” in *Oxford Studies in Political Philosophy* Volume 4, edited by David Sobel, Peter Vallentyne and Steven Wall (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 110.

<sup>202</sup> Miklosi, “Varieties of Relational Egalitarianism,” 113.

<sup>203</sup> See more in Andres Moles and Tom Parr, “Distributions and Relations: A Hybrid Account,” *Political Studies* Vol.67, No.1 (2019):132-148.

and not only moral equality. I will maintain in what follows thus that the hybrid ideal and conception of autonomy I proposed and their values require the institutionalization of egalitarian relations obtaining horizontally among individuals and vertically among individuals and institutions for two main reasons. The first is related to the reasons we have for maintenance of social relations as condition for a reasonable life-time control over the access of adequate means, which in turn enables individual to have reasonable control over the performance of actions constitutive of their conceptions of the good. The second reason is of developmental nature and it refers to the necessity for establishing egalitarian relations as constitutive of some of the pre-conditions for the development of autonomy such as self-respect, as an attitude to self.

#### 4.1. Domination and the maintenance of control over the access to adequate means

Relations of domination are commonly taken to be paradigmatic examples of inequalitarian relations. There is a wide and inconclusive debate regarding the conditions under which an agent can dominate another agent, as well as regarding the type of agents that can be claimed to dominate others. What is relevant however for the purpose of demonstrating the undermining effect relations of domination have on the prospects for autonomy, according to the hybrid ideal of personal autonomy, is that virtually all conceptions of domination see domination as a form of objectionable social control that rests on an imbalance of power among agents. Thus, Pettit claims that an agent dominates another “to the extent that (1) they have the capacity to interfere (2) on an arbitrary basis (3) in certain choices that the other is in a position to make.”<sup>204</sup> Moreover the imbalance of power in relations of domination

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<sup>204</sup> Philip Pettit, *Republicanism: A Theory of Freedom and Government* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 52.

is commonly such that the power of the dominating agent seems to be such that it cannot be constrained by the interests of the dominated agents.

This basic insight into the character and the conditions for domination suffice to locate the negative effect inegalitarian relations of domination can have on the prospects for autonomy according to the hybrid ideal of personal autonomy. Recall, from Chapter Two and Three, that the hybrid ideal of personal autonomy suggests that autonomous individuals are individuals who are self-determinate and who exercise reasonable level of self-control over the pursue of their autonomously formed conceptions of the good. Self-control is achieved when individuals satisfy the performative and the epistemic condition, of whom the first requires that they have access to adequate means for their pursues and that they perform actions which are constitutive of their conceptions of the good. Moreover, as it was stressed several times before, individuals do not form their conceptions of the good out of nothing but always with their eyes on the available resources in their social environments. Since this is the case, then we can plausibly claim that, to the extent that some agents are capable to interfere on arbitrary basis with the access to adequate means of other agents, they are standing in inegalitarian relations of domination to others which are inimical, in a direct way, to the self-control necessary for them to be autonomous, as they make the agents who are dominated incapable to perform actions constitutive of their conceptions of the good, and indirectly to the self-determination necessary for autonomy, as due to lack of access they might be coerced to involuntarily revise their conception of the good. Hence, relations of domination can be claimed to be inimical to personal autonomy according to hybrid ideal of autonomy.

When do agents exercise domination over the adequate means for pursue of others in our social, political, or economic environments? Let's take the economic sphere for illustration. I would not like to generalize the following insight but give several illustrations of how such access can be dominated



in the modern working place. Tom O'Shea invites us to listen what workers in London say about their jobs. In a shambolic 3-D printer manufacturing company, an employee complains about "arbitrary management decisions," including unplanned sackings and hasty changes to working time and pay. A temp at a supermarket distribution center says their shifts get cancelled at short notice with little compensation, while adding that management can get temps to work faster by means of an "arbitrary" hiring process for the "carrot of a permanent job." According to a care worker, casualization has led to greater precarity for their colleagues, such that "current support workers are dependent on the good will of their employer."<sup>205</sup>

On condition that the jobs of the workers in O'Shea's example are central or form significant part of their conceptions of the good, we can see these cases as paradigmatic examples of relations of domination within the institution of labor. In all of them the arbitrary power which their employers exercise threatens the capability of the workers to perform actions constitutive of their conceptions of the good and hence diminish the self-control necessary to be autonomous. Of course, there are such who would object this conclusion and claim that the example above only points out to abuses of power, but can't be taken to imply anything even close to domination as the employees have capacity to "strike back": they freely choose to work what they do for their employers, they have legal protections and they have a legal right to quit! At least three things have to be said in reply. First, none of the things the objection claims the workers have as resources on their side precludes the arbitrary power over them, hence none of them is evidence that these are not cases of domination. Second, what I only wanted to stress in pointing out the examples of domination above as inimical to the self-control required by the hybrid ideal is that it is not even the abuse of power that matters, but the condition of the workers in the cases being vulnerable to such arbitrary power is what is objectionable

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<sup>205</sup> Tom O'Shea, "Are Workers Dominated?" *Journal of Ethics and Social Philosophy* Vol.16, No.1 (September 2019), 1.

and what threatens their global autonomy. It is for the sake of overcoming this vulnerability and securing a reasonable level of self-control that relations as equals within the working place should be established. Third, quitting and changing jobs is not an autonomy-costless activity. On the one side it is not the case that everyone has opportunities to change the job. If the workers are for instance beholden by a monopsonist employer, the degree of domination can be expected to be higher. But even if they are not and can change their job, were these to require forced revision of one's conception of the good, they necessarily involve at least loss of degrees of autonomy. There is vast literature as to what exactly establishing relations as equal on the working place would require ranging from more radical to more moderate. The first aim to tackle structural or systemic domination while the second are focused on the power invested in individual positions within the working place. I do not have the space here to evaluate such proposal but what seems to be of primary relevance for the control required for autonomy is that at least on some minimal level the establishment of relations as equals provides more robust mechanisms and guarantees that the employees can hold their employers accountable for their decisions which directly affect their prospects for autonomy.

#### 4.2. Self-respect as pre-condition for autonomy

The second reason for the establishment of relations as equals is of developmental nature and refers to the constitutive role such relations play for some of the pre-conditions for the development of autonomy such as self-respect, as an attitude to self. As I claimed above, Anderson and Honneth among others maintain that the attitudes that agents have to themselves—such as self-trust, self-respect, self-esteem—are constitutive of the autonomy of individuals<sup>206</sup>. For reasons explained in Chapter Three I rejected this view and maintained that they are of causal rather than of constitutive

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<sup>206</sup> Anderson and Honneth, "Autonomy, Vulnerability, Recognition and Justice," 132.

relevance for personal autonomy. In my conception of autonomy, the attitude of self-respect plays an important developmental role in the capacities for autonomy in a minimal sense which allow among other things the individual to see one self, as Rawls says, as a legitimate source of valid claims. These minimal capacities for autonomy are integrated within the capacities for autonomy in a broader sense, namely those posed by the hybrid ideal, but these latter can be explained without reference to the minimal capacities. Hence what is constitutive for the minimal capacities is a pre-condition rather than constitutive condition of personal autonomy. A person which lacks self-respect would be a person who doubts one's evaluations and reasons for action, who cannot see oneself as an agent capable to act on what he considers valuable, but whose evaluations and actions depend on others and as such, one is a person who is not capable to have a conception of the good on one's own. This is what lack of capacities for autonomy in a minimal sense amount to. Rawls includes the social bases of self-respect among the primary goods which are to be delivered by the institutions of a just society. According to Rawls, self-respect "includes a person's sense of his own value, his secure conviction that his conception of his good, his plan of life, is worth carrying out"<sup>207</sup>. However, it seems to me that to have such sense one needs to have self-respect as an attitude to self in the sense that Anderson and Honneth talk about.

Now, one may ask what is the relation between having self-respect as an attitude to self and the establishment of relations as equals? Isn't self-respect some good that only the person can give it to one self? I believe the most plausible approach to explain the relation between these attitudes to self, in particular self-respect and the external requirement for appropriate particular relations is the theory of recognition<sup>208</sup>. The theory of recognition can be understood as an epistemic and practical theory

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<sup>207</sup> Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, 386.

<sup>208</sup> The tradition of recognition theorists finds its origin in Hegel being significantly advanced and reworked later in the works of Herbert Mead, Axel Honneth and Nancy Fraser among others.

about the formation of personal as well as social identities according to which they are actively shaped within processes of social interaction. Of key analytical importance is here the concept of the relation of mutual recognition which is the base from which our identities are claimed to ensue. As Hegel conceives it, recognition designates an ideal reciprocal relation between subjects, in which each sees the other, both as its equal and also as separate from it. For this reason he considers the relation of mutual recognition to be constitutive for our subjectivity: namely one becomes an individual subject only by virtue of recognizing, and being recognized by another subject. Thus, the recognition from others proves to be key for the development of a sense of self and identity.<sup>209</sup> To be denied recognition - or to be “misrecognized” - is to suffer an injury to one’s identity, and a distortion of one’s relation to one’s self.

If we take this brief insight from the theory of recognition as plausible then the relevance of egalitarian relations for the development of self-respect seems straight forward. Inegalitarian relations, for instance those induced with what Elizabeth Anderson calls “inegalitarian ideologies of racism, sexism, nationalism, caste, class, and eugenics”<sup>210</sup> in which some individuals see others who do not share their social identity as of lower worth can be characterized as ensuing into oppression of others, and as relations which nurture misrecognition rather than mutual recognition necessary for the development of self-respect. This can have different effects on the autonomy of individuals, as conceived according to the hybrid ideal of autonomy I proposed. For instance, where this misrecognition has been internalized, it can contribute to the narrowing of one’s options for formation and pursue of conceptions of the good to a degree that one endorses an option for no outcome independent reasons.

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<sup>209</sup> There are other approaches to explain the development of self-identity which in contrast to the dialogical approach favored by the theory of recognition can be characterized as “monological”. One such approach is has Christine Korsgaard who claims that the reflective structure of the mind itself understood as a capacity not only to have desires but also to deliberate whether we should act on those desires is a source of self-consciousness which forces us to have a conception of a “thing”, or of a “me” which is distinct from these desires.

<sup>210</sup> Anderson, “What is the Point of Equality,” 312.

To illustrate this with an example consider Moody-Adams' insight into how Black children in the United States, due to undermined self-respect, "gradually lower their expectations of themselves, until they effectively relinquish any ambitions of academic success"<sup>211</sup>. The case to which Moody-Adams points out implies that sometimes it is not necessary that some forms of oppression are intentionally perpetrated by a particular agent, but it is the social system itself which generates such social practices, norms, stereotypes in which some groups are being marginalized. Irrespective of whether it is structural or agent-based, oppression is an indication of the existence of inequalitarian relations and to the extent that egalitarian relations are constitutive, as illustrated above for the development of self-respect as a pre-condition for autonomy, we have additional autonomy-based reasons to urge for their establishment on different social levels.

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<sup>211</sup> Michele M. Moody-Adams. "Race, Class and the Social Construction of Self-Respect," *The Philosophical Forum* Vol.24, No.1-3 (Fall-Spring 1992-93): 262.

## Conclusion

In this dissertation I defended a theory of personal autonomy instantiated in a hybrid ideal and conception and an account of its values. The theory of personal autonomy I defended builds upon the role of autonomy within partially comprehensive anti-perfectionism, offering at the same time a defense for this form of liberal political morality.

In Chapter One I demonstrated that a sound liberal morality cannot dismiss the presupposition of the value of personal autonomy in the devising of the principles of justice and that the most plausible such morality is the partially comprehensive anti-perfectionist one, I defended throughout this dissertation.

In Chapter Two and Three I presented and defended an ideal and a conception of personal autonomy tailored for the justificatory role which the value of personal autonomy plays in such morality. The hybrid ideal of autonomy proposed conceives of autonomous individuals as persons who are self-determinate, in that they form their conceptions of the good for themselves, and who exercise self-control over the pursue of their autonomously formed conceptions of the good, in that they use an access to adequate means and live according to those conceptions. The conception I defended, derived from the hybrid ideal of autonomy, is non-hierarchical, ahistorical and procedural in character and specified five necessary conditions which in their conjunction are sufficient to account for the autonomy of individuals: the possession of cognitive and practical capacities, a validation condition, independence conditions, a performative condition and an epistemic condition.

In Chapter Four I specified the value of personal autonomy, as presupposed by partially comprehensive anti-perfectionism and presents two arguments, one from abduction and the other transcendental, for its personal and impersonal final value, respectively. Both arguments were based on the constitutive character of personal autonomy for the existence of personal values.

Lastly, in Chapter Five, I determined the conditionality of the personal value of autonomy. Here I defended the view that the personal value of autonomy is conditional on the just, but at the same time the content of the principles of justice is conditional on the value of autonomy. Thus, I defended the view that partially comprehensive anti-perfectionists should conceive the value of autonomy as being of interlocked nature with the principles of justice. The content of the interlocking relation between the value of autonomy and justice was specified as a biconditional in which I first presented the conditions which justice sets on valuable autonomy and later the conditions which autonomy sets on the distributive and relational principles of justice. In respect of the last I claimed that autonomy requires a complex of sufficientarian and egalitarian principles to govern the distribution of the adequate means for autonomy, as well as relational egalitarian principles to govern the interpersonal relations in a society committed to the hybrid ideal of autonomy

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