Helder De Schutter, David Robichaud (eds.), *Linguistic Justice: Van Parijs and his Critics*, Routledge, Abingdon-on-Thames, Oxford and New York 2016.

Over the past fifteen years, a number of political theorists have begun to explore the normative dimensions of linguistic diversity in contemporary societies. This debate is normally centred around the idea of linguistic justice, which concerns the question of how states and supranational institutions should respond to the fact of linguistic diversity, i.e. the presence of diverse linguistic communities within their boundaries. The linguistic justice debate can be traced back to earlier debates on liberalism, communitarianism and multiculturalism, which dominated contemporary political theory during the 1990s and early 2000s. However, while categories such as religion, culture and ethnicity soon became central to those debates, language remained somehow marginal to them, and only more recently became the object of a discrete area of inquiry. Even then, however, and apart from a few exceptions (Kymlicka and Patten 2003; Van Parijs 2011), there has been a relative dearth of books offering comprehensive analyses of the place of language in contemporary political theory. For this reason, the volume *Linguistic Justice: Van Parijs and His Critics*, edited by Helder De Schutter and David Robichaud, represents an important and welcome addition to this body of work.

The volume, previously published as a special issue of the *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy*, is centred around the only existing monograph entirely dedicated to linguistic justice, i.e. Philippe Van Parijs's *Linguistic Justice for Europe and for the World* (Van Parijs 2011). The book contains critical commentaries on key aspects of Van Parijs's book written by key authors in the field, followed by Van Parijs's response in the last chapter. The book constitutes an invaluable resource for anyone interested in linguistic justice. Its added value is its interdisciplinary character. By including contributions by scholars from such diverse disciplines as political theory, political science, law, and sociolinguistics, the volume reveals the complex implications of Van Parijs's theory and, more generally, of any normative political theory aiming to deal with the complex empirical dimensions of language and linguistic diversity. In this review, I will focus on the commentaries rather than on Van Parijs's response, and I will aim to show how they raise interesting issues that in some cases have remained unexplored in the linguistic justice debate and deserve further examination.

The introductory chapter, written by the volume editors Helder De Schutter and David Robichaud, offers a very useful and comprehensive overview of the debate on linguistic justice, clearly highlighting the main positions advocated in the literature and the various interests (both identity- and non-identity-related) that underlie different approaches to linguistic justice. The chapter also offers a useful summary of Van Parijs's book, which defends the desirability of English as a lingua franca and of a regime of linguistic territoriality[1] aimed at guaranteeing equal respect (or esteem) for speakers of all languages. The chapter finally provides an overview of the volume.

In her contribution, Sue Wright draws a crucial distinction between language as a 'system' (p. 28) and language as 'practice' (p. 31). Wright points out that seeing English through the lens of the former conception is limiting, and overlooks the many ways in which English can be used by

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1 Linguistic territoriality refers to the idea 'that languages should be territorially accommodated, such that on each particular territorial unit only one language group is present or officially recognized' (De Schutter 2008, p. 105).

interlocutors, especially in increasingly diverse societies, to negotiate and (co-)create meanings, in a way that does not necessarily put non-native speakers at a disadvantage, as Van Parijs argues in his book.

Wright's argument is intriguing and presents many points of connection with Charles Taylor's (2016) recent work on language. Like Wright, Taylor also highlights the distinction between two main traditions or ways of seeing language, one designative and instrumental, in which language is used to describe a pre-existing reality, and one constitutive, in which language is seen as something that contributes to creating and constituting meanings, and thus shaping speakers' understanding of the world.

The constitutive view of language has broader implications for linguistic justice than Wright acknowledges. I would like to focus on two of them. First, and as Taylor himself points out in his book, the constitutive view helps to make sense of the problem of linguistic relativity, i.e. the view that our native language(s) shape(s) our understanding of the world, and that this may make it difficult (though not impossible) to provide exact translations of specific terms belonging to one language into another language. Perhaps this issue could be resolved through the negotiation of meaning discussed by Wright but things are more complex than Wright suggests and some recent work in political science and political theory (Collin 2013; Peled and Bonotti 2016) reveals the complexity of the challenge involved. And this challenge, it should be noted, concerns not only the real-world kind of deliberation illustrated by Wright but also the very process of formulating concepts and theories of justice (Peled and Bonotti 2016).

The second aspect can be traced back to the philosophy of Herder, one of the main exponents of the constitutive view of language. One of the aspects of language also highlighted by Herder is its sensorial (and especially aural) dimension, e.g. the fact that language and its sound can generate sympathy among speakers (or lack thereof). As Alan Patten points out when analysing the role of sympathy in Herder's thought, '[s]ympathy, he maintained, is very often triggered through the sense of hearing: we hear plaintive cries and moans of suffering and are moved to project ourselves into the place of the sufferer (*I* 100/145–6). Most of the human-made sounds we hear do not take such an elemental form, however, but are expressed in language: "voice and language are the principal sources of sympathy (*Mitgefühls*)"' (Patten 2010, p. 682). I do not intend to examine Herder's philosophy of language but only point out that the sensorial aural dimension of language highlighted by Patten (following Herder) should have a more central place in contemporary theories of linguistic justice. For example, there is significant empirical evidence (e.g. Lippi-Green 1997; Moyer 2013) showing that the accent with which a person speaks English (or any other language) affects they way in which they are unreflectively perceived and judged by listeners. This may result in various forms of 'epistemic injustice' (Fricker 2007), which takes place when some individuals are unjustly assigned low or high levels of epistemic qualities (e.g. intelligence, trustworthiness and credibility) based on how they speak (e.g. with a foreign, regional or class-based accent) rather than on what they say. Theories of linguistic justice should pay greater attention to the sensorial aural dimension of linguistic communication, which is central to real-world linguistic experience (Peled, Yael and Bonotti, Matteo (forthcoming). 'Sound Reasoning: Why Accent Bias Matters for Democratic Theory', *The Journal of Politics*). It is unfortunate that neither Wright (despite her emphasis on a practice-oriented constitutive view of language) nor Van Parijs nor any of the other volume contributors discusses this aspect.

A further aspect of Wright's analysis deserves attention. Wright often highlights how it is the 'superdiversity' (p. 38) of contemporary societies, and especially of contemporary 'megalopolises' (p. 40), that renders the constitutive view of language more appealing than the instrumental/designative conception. But even though all or most societies are becoming superdiverse, this is not the case for all areas/territories within them. Smaller urban areas and rural areas, for example, might display lesser levels of linguistic and cultural diversity. Does this imply that linguistic justice should take different shapes in different settings? In other words, would a differentiated approach to linguistic justice and language policy, taking into account the different kinds of interests and challenges that characterize different areas of a country (e.g. cities vs. rural areas, small towns vs. megalopolises, etc.), be more suitable for linguistically diverse societies?

In her chapter, Denise Réaume criticizes Van Parijs's idea of linguistic territoriality and his failure to sufficiently problematize the power dynamics, traceable back to the British Empire and to the US's global dominance, that contributed to the rise of English as a global lingua franca. Réaume also points out that even if everyone had the same chance to learn English, as Van Parijs argues is desirable, children from privileged backgrounds would still be advantaged (e.g. with regard to education, English language learning, etc.) compared to their peers, thanks to their parents' support.

I would like to focus, however, on another aspect of Réaume's analysis, i.e. her view that a lingua franca is not necessary for the kind of democratic debate across linguistic boundaries invoked by Van Parijs. Instead, she argues, it is sufficient that a small number of people 'concentrated in certain sectors and occupations – the media, policy-makers, perhaps all or part of the academy' (p. 69) are bilingual or multilingual. This view seems to presuppose a distinctive conception of democracy that emphasizes its representative (as opposed to its participatory or direct) dimensions. Moreover, it is not clear whether Réaume is arguing that multilingual deliberation is only feasible or also desirable, as Nicole Doerr (2012), for example, has argued. Réaume could have clarified and expanded these points as I think they contain rich and important implications for linguistic justice, especially in connection with democratic theory. Moreover, Réaume could have explained whether politicians (and especially elected representatives) should be assigned a special role in the process of multilingual deliberation and, if so, what implications that might have for their relationship with their constituents and with citizens in general.

David Robichaud's chapter challenges Van Parijs's argument that the existence of English as a global lingua franca involves a form of cooperative injustice, since English native speakers benefit from it without contributing to it. According to Robichaud if, as Van Parijs argues, '[the] benefits [enjoyed by native Anglophones] are externalities produced by a large number of individuals freely and rationally choosing to learn English as a maximizing strategy, native Anglophones are doing nothing wrong by benefiting from it' (p. 83). However, 'if the benefits produced were only possible through the cooperation of all, or if compensation from native Anglophones were necessary to make the learning rationally advantageous for learners of EGLF [English as global lingua franca], then a contribution to the production of this good would be morally required' (p. 83). In other words, Robichaud claims, Van Parijs's argument would be strengthened if we could 'find reasons why natural interactions could fail at producing EGLF' (p. 90), as in that case native Anglophones would have a duty to contribute.

Robichaud illustrates some such reasons. First, he points out that if the dominance of English

was challenged by other languages then Anglophones would have an interest in contributing to the promotion and learning of English, and this would place them under a moral duty to contribute. Second, he points out that sometimes the 'maxi-min'[2] process which, according to Van Parijs, normally encourages people to continue to use and learn English over other languages could be weakened due to some actors' ideological stance. 'We could imagine', he argues, 'an ideological posture taken against the USA or the UK. A rejection of their ideology, of their identity and of what they stand for, could convince a substantial portion of the population not to learn English, or at least not to use it in some contexts [...] especially in more formal contexts where the symbolic significance of political decisions can be very important' (p. 89). Third, Robichaud also explains that native Anglophones are often involved in broader cooperative projects than those only involving issues of language, and that cooperation in the former may demand cooperation in the latter. For example in the EU, he argues, '[i]f we look at the thick web of cooperation EU countries are involved in, we could consider that it is the benefits offered by this "general" cooperative venture, not those offered by a specific one, namely the creation of EGLF, that triggers a duty to contribute. If it is in the interest of native Anglophones to remain good co-operators in the cooperative ventures they are involved in, it could be in their interest to contribute to the creation of EGLF' (p. 90).

I have highlighted these three points because I do not think that the scenarios imagined by Robichaud are merely hypothetical. Instead, they reflect some of the changes triggered by the 2016 Brexit referendum in the UK. As Diarmait Mac Giolla Chríost and I argue elsewhere (Mac Giolla Chríost and Bonotti forthcoming), first, while English may not necessarily lose its central role in the EU in the long term, the fact that some prominent public figures are already starting to replace English with French in certain occasions clearly has an ideological and symbolic value. Second, in order to increase their chance to secure a post-Brexit deal with the EU, the UK and its citizens will need to appear to be good co-operators and this, one might argue, also involves being willing to contribute to the costs involved in the production of English as a lingua franca.

In his contribution, Jean Laponce agrees with Van Parijs's arguments but also highlights that English as a lingua franca might not benefit those who are not as proficient in it as others, and that linguistic territoriality should be grounded in the idea of national self-determination (i.e. the view that members of a political community should be able to rule themselves according to their own laws rather than being ruled by an external power) rather than in parity of esteem. Laponce also points out that increasing the amount of communication among individuals thanks to the use of English as a lingua franca might not be welcomed by many, as it might lead to a 'communication overload' (p. 106). This conclusion seems to presuppose that we should evaluate English as a lingua franca (or any lingua franca) in relation to people's conceptions of the good or, more generally, to their interests, values and preferences. But the fact that some people might not be interested in communicating with many other people (e.g. because that is not part of their conception of the good, because it might prevent them from pursuing other goals that they consider more valuable, etc.) is not relevant to Van Parijs's theory. Van Paris's argument is that people *ought to* communicate with each other in order to address issues of (global) justice, and that English as a lingua franca would enable them to do that. There is

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2   This indicates the fact that speakers of different languages tend to converge on the language known best by the speaker who knows it least.

therefore a difference between seeing language in relation to people's conceptions of the good and seeing it in relation to issues of justice.

Laponce also argues that '[s]ome [languages] are prisons from which speakers would not mind and may actually want to escape' (p. 107). However, this statement seems to suggest that we can distinguish between languages, i.e. that some of them are like prisons and some of them are not. But this seems to overlook the fact that *any* language can be a prison. Depending on a person's values, worldview, etc., being the native speaker of a certain language can be seen as a prison by some and as an advantage by others, regardless of whether that language is dominant or not (e.g. see De Schutter 2008).

Similarly to Laponce, Rainer Bauböck grounds linguistic territoriality in the idea of self-government rather than in Van Parijs's idea of parity of esteem. Bauböck argues that the democratic legitimacy resulting from self-government is constrained by such rights as 'free speech and association for all languages' (p. 135). The connection between free speech and language here, as Bauböck himself seems to admit, only concerns toleration and negative freedom. But one could argue that free speech is also essential to the very process of self-government that requires linguistic territoriality, and that therefore there might a positive free speech-based rationale for protecting languages in order to promote self-government.

Stephen May's, Anna Stilz's and Daniel Weinstock's contributions, while differing in many other ways, converge on the critique of the regime of linguistic territoriality proposed by Van Parijs. As well as highlighting the insufficient focus on sociolinguistics research in Van Parijs's account (e.g. with regard to such diverse issues as the identity-related values of language, diglossia, and the existence of a variety of Englishes), May points out that the kind of linguistic territoriality defended by Van Parijs risks excluding many minority languages as well as the languages of immigrants. Similarly Stilz, whose chapters focuses on language and equality of dignity, points out that under linguistic territoriality 'minorities might end up trapped within the linguistic territories' (p. 22).

Weinstock, instead, argues that many cases of linguistic assimilation are instances of 'mere number cases' (p. 116), and that only in some cases they are 'colonial cases' (p. 116), i.e. cases where a dominant language group has deliberately imposed its language upon other linguistic groups. The parity of esteem argument, Weinstock claims, only applies to colonial cases, but even then 'the coerciveness of the linguistic regime may become too costly from the point of view of liberal rights and freedoms' (p. 123).

I find May, Stilz and Weinstock's criticisms of linguistic territoriality very persuasive. Linguistic territoriality is, in my view, the most problematic aspect of Van Parijs's theory. It seems to me that equality of respect (or, as Van Parijs calls it, 'parity of esteem') and, relatedly, of self-respect for speakers of different languages in contemporary (super)diverse societies cannot be realized through linguistic territoriality, in view of the aforementioned issues concerning the presence of minorities and immigrant languages within any given territory. Instead, equal respect should be manifested through public justification and public reason, i.e. by providing speakers of all the various languages spoken within a territory with reasons they could accept in order to justify whichever language policy the state (or the relevant political unit) intends to implement (Rawls 2005; Bonotti 2017). What kind of language policies public justification and public reason might result in is not something that can be predicted in every case. Perhaps it might result in the implementation of a regime based on a personality principle, according to which speakers enjoy

certain language rights regardless of where they live within a state, or in the promotion of a shared lingua franca. The key point is that there is a need to rethink the connection between language and respect in terms of public justification.

To conclude, *Linguistic Justice: Van Parijs and His Critics* represents a vital contribution to the literature on linguistic justice, for two reasons. First, it provides a coherent framework through which readers will be able to (re-)examine the debate on linguistic justice that has developed over the past two decades. Second, it opens up new rich avenues of research concerning linguistic justice. The book will especially be of interest to political theorists working on linguistic justice and, more broadly, to those interested in democratic theory, multiculturalism, and toleration. However, due to its interdisciplinary character, it will also be accessible and of interest to political scientists, lawyers, linguists and sociolinguists.

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