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# LIBERALISM, RELIGION AND INTEGRITY

Kevin Vallier

It is a commonplace that liberalism and religious belief conflict. Liberalism, its proponents and critics maintain, requires the *privatization* of religious belief, since liberals often argue that citizens of faith must repress their fundamental commitments when participating in public life. Critics of liberalism complain that privatization is objectionable because it requires citizens of faith to violate their integrity. The liberal political tradition has always sought to carve out social space for individuals to live by their own lights. If liberalism requires citizens to violate their integrity, liberals have cause for concern. I seek to rebut this *integrity objection* to liberalism. I focus on the dominant form of philosophical liberalism: public reason liberalism. I argue that the integrity objection undermines the *mainstream conception* of public reason liberalism, but not public reason liberalism itself. The paper opens by outlining the structure of public reason liberalism and the integrity objection (§§2 and 3). It then analyses two versions of the objection and argues that the second version is successful against the mainstream conception of public reason (§4). I argue in response that public reason liberalism need not endorse *principles of restraint*—the civic restrictions on religious expression typically associated with it. I then sketch a conception of public reason liberalism that eschews principles of restraint (§5). This alternative promises to reconcile public reason liberals and their faith-friendly critics by putting the integrity objection to rest.

## 1. Introduction

Liberalism and religious belief are often thought to be in tension.<sup>1</sup> Specifically, many have argued that liberalism impels religious persons to ‘privatize’ their beliefs.<sup>2</sup> This *integrity objection* is commonly advanced by liberalism’s critics, such as Michael Perry: ‘To “bracket” [religious] convictions is therefore to bracket—to annihilate—essential aspects of one’s very self’ [Perry 1988: 181–2].<sup>3</sup> Privatization is said to require citizens of faith to repress their fundamental commitments when participating in politics, thereby forcing them to violate their integrity.<sup>4</sup>

In response, liberals often deride the objection. Stephen Macedo is explicit: ‘[I]f some people . . . feel “silenced” or “marginalized” by the fact

<sup>1</sup>‘Liberalism’ as used in this paper refers to a brand of political theory, not the liberal democratic polity.

<sup>2</sup>Terms like ‘religious citizen’ and ‘citizen of faith’ do not imply that persons of faith have uniform commitments.

<sup>3</sup>Many faith-friendly critics like Perry consider themselves liberals despite criticizing public reason liberalism.

<sup>4</sup>Integrity-related worries are not restricted to citizens of faith; instead, this paper focuses on the integrity of citizens of faith to analyse the most prominent case of a general problem.

45 that some of us believe that it is wrong to shape basic liberties on the basis of  
 religious or metaphysical claims, I can only say “grow up!” [Macedo 2000:  
 35]. Nonetheless, the integrity objection cannot be so easily dismissed.  
 Liberalism has always aimed to produce a society where all are free; if some  
 50 feel silenced or marginalized by liberal institutions and political norms,  
 liberals are committed to taking such complaints seriously. One traditional  
 reason to endorse liberalism is that it *preserves* the integrity of all citizens. If  
 liberals are committed to *frustrating* integrity then this is cause for alarm, for  
 if liberalism unjustifiably restricts integrity, a crucial rationale for liberalism  
 is undermined. Thus liberals must either defeat the integrity objection or  
 55 modify liberal political theory in the light of it. The integrity objection  
 therefore deserves careful explication and evaluation.<sup>5</sup>

This article focuses on the presently dominant form of philosophical  
 liberalism: public reason or justificatory liberalism. Public reason liberalism  
 combines traditional liberal commitments to individual liberty and political  
 60 democracy with a demand that coercion be justified to those coerced in  
 terms they can reasonably be expected to endorse.<sup>6</sup> Those who advance the  
 integrity objection have diverse moral commitments and political philoso-  
 phies, so their defences of the integrity objection will differ. For this reason,  
 it is best to show that the integrity objection threatens public reason  
 liberalism on its own terms. Since public reason liberal moral commitments  
 65 require ascribing the integrity objection normative force, it may be  
 addressed from within a public reason liberal framework.

This article maintains that the integrity objection undermines the  
 mainstream conception of public reason liberalism but fails to undermine  
 70 public reason liberalism *per se*. It concludes that the integrity objection  
 presses public reason liberals to work out an alternative to the mainstream  
 view and sketches one such alternative. The paper proceeds in four parts. §2  
 outlines the conceptual structure of public reason liberalism. §3 distin-  
 guishes the mainstream version of public reason liberalism from public  
 75 reason liberalism *per se*. §4 analyses two versions of the integrity objection.  
 §5 explains how to evaluate them and outlines an alternative conception of  
 public reason liberalism that can withstand the integrity objection.

## 80 2. Public Reason Liberalism

Justificatory or public reason liberalism is a successor to the social contract  
 tradition of Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau and Kant. The social contract  
 tradition understands the problem of political legitimacy as one of justifying  
 85 *coercion* or *interference*. As Locke claims, ‘The natural liberty of man is to  
 be free from any superior power on earth, and not to be under the will or  
 legislative authority of man, but to have only the law of nature for his rule’

<sup>5</sup>This article focuses on the integrity objection as advanced by philosophers and theologians who endorse the basic institutions of liberal democracy, such as Eberle [2002], Greenawalt [1995], Perry [1991], Quinn [1997], and Wolterstorff [1997b].

<sup>6</sup>For more on justificatory liberalism, see Gaus [1996]. This paper takes public reason liberalism and justificatory liberalism to be synonymous.

[Locke 1690: 17]. Public reason liberals agree: human beings are naturally at liberty to pursue their own ends, but they find that by accepting limitations on their liberty, they can better pursue those ends. Public reason liberalism departs from the Hobbes–Locke consent standard of legitimacy and follows Kant and Rawls by developing an idealized contract.<sup>7</sup> Post-Rawlsian liberalism focuses on public justification, claiming that respect for persons requires that coercion be justified from every reasonable point of view [Gaus 1996: 120–3, emphasis in original]. Christopher Eberle puts it aptly: ‘*Respect for others requires public justification of coercion*: that is the clarion call of justificatory liberalism’ [Eberle 2002: 19, emphasis in original].

Public reason liberalism represents a family of distinct political theories. For this reason, it is best defined in terms of a principle sufficiently general to represent that diversity. I define the public justification principle as follows:

*The Public Justification Principle*: A coercive action C is justified if and only if every member of the public P has a conclusive reason R to endorse C.

C specifies the relevant class of coercive actions; public reason liberals specify the class differently [Gaus 1996: 232; Quong 2004; Rawls 2005: liii]. Rawls’s version of the principle, his liberal principle of legitimacy, restricts C to constitutional essentials [Rawls 2005: 137]. Members of the public P include all of those to whom coercion must be justified. Public reason liberals often *idealize* members of the public in order to remove the informational and cognitive errors characteristic of most individuals [Audi 2000: 67; Gaus 1996: 30–42]. P also represents the deliberative conditions under which members of the public determine whether a proposal is justified. For example, Rawls’s veil of ignorance models the reasonableness of the parties to the original position by excluding information from their deliberation that would impugn their impartiality [Rawls 1971: 118; 2005: 104]. The requirement of conclusiveness may seem unduly strong, but it is arguably part of the ideal of public justification [Gaus 2010: 245–6]. Without conclusiveness, John might provide Reba with a reason  $R_a$  to accept coercion that, while Reba acknowledges  $R_a$  as a reason, she believes her reason  $R_b$  overrides  $R_a$  in her present circumstances. If John coerces Reba despite  $R_b$ , he appears to disrespect her despite offering her  $R_a$  as a justification for his actions. It is only when coercion is justified by conclusive reasons that we can say that each citizen is committed to the coercion proposed.

All public reason liberalisms assume *reasonable pluralism* or evaluative diversity, maintaining that the free exercise of reason will lead to broad disagreement about life’s deepest questions. For Rawls, ‘[reasonable] pluralism is . . . the natural outcome of the activities of human reason under enduring free institutions’ [Rawls 2005: xxiv]. Given reasonable pluralism, citizens will regard themselves as having distinct reasons for

<sup>7</sup>For classic statements of the idea of public reason, see Kant [1797] and Rawls [2005].

action. The public justification principle aims to be sensitive to these diverse reasons.<sup>8</sup>

Public reason liberals typically constrain what count as permissible reasons R. Broadly speaking, there are two conceptions of permissible reasons: the *consensus* conception of public reasons and the *convergence* conception. Convergence requires only that coercive proposals be supported by the diverse reasons of each individual, whereas the consensus conception requires that all permissible reasons R to support coercive action C share some crucial epistemic property, such as accessibility or shareability [D'Agostino 1996: 30].

### 3. Mainstream Public Reason Liberalism

#### 3.1 *The Basic Structure of the Mainstream View*

Public reason liberals have tended to prefer some conceptions of public reason over others; in particular, they have tended to endorse a consensus conception of reasons via an accessibility or shareability requirement. The shareability requirement holds that all public reasons 'can be shared' [Macedo 2000: 13]. In other words, they are reasons that all citizens acknowledge as having normative force *for them*. The accessibility requirement holds that all public reasons must be able to be accessed in some sense. Public reasons will be ones that reasonable people can see as justified for the person who offers them.<sup>9</sup> Accessible reasons are therefore those that all citizens can ascribe epistemic credence. The convergence conception lacks a shareability or accessibility requirement, ascribing all *bona fide* reasons justificatory force [Gaus and Vallier 2009: 56]. Arguments for accessibility and shareability possess common features. Accessibility is thought to be implied by treating others as free and equal. For instance, Thomas Nagel has maintained that to engage in public justification, a citizen is responsible for 'present[ing] to others the basis of [his] beliefs, so that once [he] has done so, *they have what [he] has*, and can arrive at a judgment on the same basis' [Nagel 1987: 232]. Lawrence Solum has claimed that with respect to judicial decisions, cases decided 'on the basis of reasons that are not publicly accessible ... would be disrespectful of the freedom and equality of citizens' [Solum 1990: 1092]. For Nagel, citizens disrespect one another if they fail to offer their compatriots reasons for coercion that they can share, whereas for Solum, respect requires offering reasons that others can evaluate or access. Offering unshareable or inaccessible reasons is tantamount to asking citizens to accept government action based on those reasons alone.

<sup>8</sup>The public justification principle requires that coercion be conclusively justified and unanimously justified; these elements do not directly affect the argument of the paper.

<sup>9</sup>For an analysis of versions of accessibility, see Eberle [2002: 252–86].

## 3.2 Doctrines of Restraint

Mainstream public reason liberalism normally assumes that a consensus conception of public reasons entails what Christopher Eberle terms *doctrines of restraint*—norms that require citizens not to rely on inaccessible or unshareable reasons in certain political contexts [Eberle 2002: 109].<sup>10</sup> Restraint is taken to follow directly from shareability and accessibility requirements: if public reasons must be shareable or accessible to express respect for persons, then citizens who employ unshareable or inaccessible reasons will disrespect one another. These principles vary in degree and application, so let us analyse two prominent examples, beginning with Robert Audi's principle:

One has a *prima facie* obligation not to advocate or support any law or public policy that restricts human conduct, unless one has, and is willing to offer, adequate secular reason for this advocacy or support ... [and] unless in advocating or supporting it one is sufficiently *motivated* by (normatively) adequate secular reason.<sup>11</sup>

[Audi 2000: 86, 96]

Audi's principle of restraint is quite strong, requiring that citizens have an adequate secular *rationale* and secular *motivation* for political action. If citizens lack adequate secular reasons and motivations, then the ideal of good citizenship requires that they develop them. Audi argues that his principle of restraint is required to recognize the equality and liberty of others and must be followed by good citizens. John Rawls's principle follows:

Reasonable comprehensive doctrines, religious or nonreligious, may be introduced in public political discussion at any time, provided that in due course proper political reasons—and not reason given solely by comprehensive doctrines—are presented that are sufficient to support whatever the comprehensive doctrines introduced are said to support.

[Rawls 1999: 591]

Rawls's principle is weaker. For Rawls, citizens may advance reasons derived from their comprehensive (including religious) doctrines in public political discussion. Restraint is *post-hoc*: if no properly political reasons for the policy or law advocated are forthcoming, then the previous use of comprehensive reasons will have been unjustified.

<sup>10</sup>For the connection between restraint and accessibility or shareability, see Fish [1996: 22], Greene [1994: 659], and Gutmann and Thompson [1996: 70]. The domain of restraint is often unclear; this paper takes restraint to apply political conversation in electronic or print media, protest, activism and visible public conversation.

<sup>11</sup>Audi, it must be noted, is no public reason liberal, though he is arguably a fellow-traveller. He is also moving away from the secular–religious reason distinction [Audi 2009].

### 3.3 Exclusion and Restraint

240 While principles of restraint vary in significance, they typically require that  
citizens not employ comprehensive or private reasons in their political lives.  
However, citizens' reasons can be restricted in two ways. First, citizens of  
liberal societies may be required to limit the use of sectarian bases of  
expressed political justification and action. As seen above, such principles  
govern the considerations upon which citizens may permissibly act or the  
245 reasons they may offer in public political conversation. In contrast,  
sometimes reasons are excluded from public justification as justifiers; they  
are barred from the set of reasons to which just institutions must be  
sensitive. *Principles of exclusion* regulate such reasons. To illustrate,  
compare a duty of civic virtue with the Establishment Clause of the United  
250 States Constitution. A duty of civic virtue regulates how one should act or  
talk politically, whereas the Establishment Clause precludes certain  
considerations from counting as bases of coercion. Restraint concerns the  
*practice* of justification, exclusion the justification itself.

255 The distinction is important; a reason expressed in the public sphere does not  
necessarily impact the ratification or rejection of a proposal. The reasons John  
offers Reba to support a law may differ from the reasons Reba has to support  
the policy. Laws must be sensitive to Reba's reasons to support or reject a  
policy in order to be publicly justified; but, they need not be sensitive to the  
260 reasons John offers Reba in conversation or *vice versa*. Consensus standards of  
reasons, which may include either an accessibility or shareability requirement,  
are often thought to directly imply principles of restraint, but it is now clear that  
consensus may do so only by way of exclusion.

### 3.4 The Structure of the Integrity Objection

265 To summarize, mainstream public reason liberals endorse consensus  
conceptions of reasons and take consensus to support principles of restraint.  
While both public reason liberals and their critics tightly associate public  
270 reason liberalism with restraint, moving from the former to the latter  
requires three substantive steps:

- (1) Public Reason Liberalism → Accessibility/Shareability Requirement
- 275 (2) Accessibility/Shareability Requirement → Principles of Exclusion
- (3) Principles of Exclusion → Principles of Restraint

280 Step (1) requires a substantive argument that a consensus conception of  
public reasons (those with accessibility and/or shareability requirements) is  
superior to convergence. Step (2) requires a substantive argument that many  
sectarian reasons (especially religious ones) are inaccessible or unshareable  
and so should be excluded from public justification. Defending step (3)  
requires bridging the gap between exclusion and restraint. Once public

reason liberals successfully defend a principle of exclusion they must explain how the principle of exclusion implies a civic or political ethic that mandates restraint. The integrity objection is advanced against public reason liberalism by means of principles of restraint; public reason liberalism is criticized only by implication. If the mainstream conception of public reason liberalism is defeated by the integrity objection because it requires unjustified restraint, public reason liberalism *per se* may emerge unscathed. Public reason liberalism can avoid the integrity objection by blocking any of these three steps. This paper briefly defends a convergence conception of reasons, which undermines step (1) and the subsequent steps by implication. Someone might argue that a principle of exclusion need not imply a principle of restraint, or that accessibility and shareability need not imply exclusion, but my intention is to cut the tripartite implication off at first pass.

#### 4. The Integrity Objection

##### 4.1 Terminology

The integrity objection concerns liberal demands on citizens of faith, so it is best to begin with some relevant definitions. Take a religion to be a set of principles about the *supernatural* that prescribes practices, rituals, norms, beliefs and actions. Take supernaturalism to be a type of non-naturalism, holding that non-material, non-conceptual entities exist, such as immaterial beings like angels, demons, gods or the God of classical theism. A religious commitment is a commitment to principles about the supernatural or the practices, rituals, norms, beliefs and actions prescribed by them.<sup>12</sup> Connecting religion and supernaturalism seems to capture the class of practices and belief systems typically designated as religious, and excludes those not ordinarily thought of as religious. Faith must be defined carefully, even in the light of the above definitions. Often faith is taken to involve irrational and unsupported beliefs, but such a conception of faith precludes the possibility of reasonable religious beliefs; it thereby fails to recognize reasonable pluralism. Instead, many religions understand faith in terms of trusting supernatural beings, believing in their promises, redemption, etc., believing that they exist and even believing in them as objects of faith. These conceptions of faith need not imply irrational epistemic commitments.

The integrity objection is tied to the philosophical idea of integrity.<sup>13</sup> Bernard Williams has the most prominent conception of integrity, sometimes termed the ‘identity’ view [Cox *et al.* 2008: 29]. Reba has identity integrity when she is true to her character, projects, plans and beliefs. On the identity view, ‘integrity means fidelity to those projects and principles that are constitutive of one’s core identity’ [Calhoun 1995: 235]. A principle is a commitment to some comprehensive ideal of life or a corollary or implication of it. Fidelity to these ideals requires acting consistently with

<sup>12</sup>For other definitions of religious commitment, see Eberle [2002: 71] and Perry [1991: 119].

<sup>13</sup>Patrick Neal draws this connection in Neal [2009].

335 them and reliably not violating them. Projects are more complex than principles. Loren Lomasky describes a project as having three primary characteristics: (1) persistence, (2) centrality and (3) structure. Projects are persistent in so far as they extend over long periods of time and have centrality when they ‘help [explain] a life’ or when they are the focus of many other goals [Lomasky 1987: 26]. A project’s structure is related to its centrality as it structures one’s other reasons and plans.

#### 340 4.2 Wolterstorff and Perry’s Version of the Integrity Objection

345 Consider a classic statement of the integrity objection from Nicholas Wolterstorff:

350 It belongs to the religious convictions of a good many religious people in our society that they ought to base their decisions concerning fundamental issues of justice on their religious convictions. They do not view it as an option whether or not to do so. It is their conviction that they ought to strive for wholeness, integrity, integration, in their lives . . . etc. Their religion is not, for them, about something other than their social and political existence; it is also about their social and political existence.

[Wolterstorff 1997a: 105]

355 Michael Perry similarly suggests that to ‘bracket’ one’s religious convictions is tantamount to ‘[annihilating] essential aspects of one’s very self’ [Perry 1988: 181–2]. The integrity objection maintains that public reason liberalism requires individuals to repress or privatize those religious aspects of their identities that require them to engage in political activity. For Perry and  
360 Wolterstorff, such a requirement is objectionable. Asking citizens to privatize their beliefs is manifestly unjustified to them and so privatization cannot be required to treat others with respect as public reason liberals maintain. From the perspective of many theistic citizens, public reason liberalism requires them to violate their duties to God.

365 Wolterstorff and Perry may appear to advance a psychological objection—that principles of restraint alienate religious persons from themselves by frustrating them, breeding resentment, etc. But the integrity objection is best interpreted as concerned with publicly justifying moral demands. The psychological interpretation faces difficulties, as public reason liberals could simply reply by telling their religious critics to toughen up. It thereby makes the integrity objection smack of whining—the religious critic objects to restraint on the grounds that citizens of faith are psychologically fragile. If religious critics instead reply that they have a claim against integrity-violating demands because they have *no reason* to restrain themselves, then they have abandoned the psychological interpretation for a normative one. On this view, the integrity objection  
370 concerns the moral norms citizens of faith have reason to endorse, not what citizens of faith *can* handle but about what they can *reasonably be*  
375 *required* to handle.

380

A successful version of the integrity objection must also do more than cite costs to integrity—impositions that bar citizens from acting on their integrity-related reasons—in order to undermine public reason liberalism. All political theories impose some integrity costs by requiring citizens not to act on at least some of their core reasons. The public reason tradition, for instance, has always averred that accepting some integrity costs will prove a net benefit to those who wish to preserve their integrity.<sup>14</sup> If citizens give up their claim to act on some of their integrity-related reasons, they will gain more liberty to act on other, perhaps more significant concerns.

Wolterstorff and Perry suggest that the integrity costs imposed by public reason liberalism are morally significant because they require ‘splitting’ the identities of persons of faith. To split an identity is to corner-off the social space in which individuals can act in accord with their own judgments. Thus, political theories that split identities prevent citizens from acting on their convictions in some vital domain of life. Since activity in that domain is (it is assumed) of great import, restraint threatens to alienate citizens from their values and principles. But, like integrity costs, split identities do not by themselves imply a problem for public reason liberalism. Liberal society presumably splits the identity of a mobster; mobsters characteristically use violence to get their way and liberal society demands that they not do so. A better example is the split between a person acting in her office as judge and her private concerns. Surely there is no problem with *this* public–private splintering. If a religious judge or juror claimed that the restrictions of her office violate her integrity because they require her to deliberate only on admissible evidence, we would rightly balk. Liberalism makes demands of citizens that, if followed, will inevitably make some forms of life impossible, such as being a mobster or being a judge who rules based on her private reasons; such restrictions are not a bad thing. The power in Wolterstorff and Perry’s argument relies precisely on the disanalogy with the judge and the mobster: the religious person seems burdened *without sufficient reason*.

Public reason liberals will undoubtedly reply that the reasons for restraint are strong enough to justify imposing the integrity costs to which Wolterstorff and Perry object; the duty to treat others as free and equal trumps the integrity-related reasons of citizens of faith and requires privatization. Evaluating who is right may prove difficult. To strengthen their arguments, Wolterstorff and Perry might try to show *how* integrity costs are imposed when citizens abide by restraint in political practice and then explain how restraint threatens to split their identities. For this reason, let us turn to Paul Weithman’s more developed and empirically oriented arguments to this effect.

### 4.3 Weithman’s Version of the Integrity Objection

Paul Weithman argues that many American churches play a positive role in promoting democratic action and political participation.<sup>15</sup> For instance,

<sup>14</sup>Understand a ‘benefit’ to include an improvement in the satisfaction of one’s obligations.

<sup>15</sup>For another powerful version of the integrity objection, see Eberle [2002: 143–51].

430 from the Civil Rights Era to the present day, black churches have played  
 a fundamental role in introducing members of black communities to  
 politics. Weithman claims that African-Americans are one among many  
 cultural and ethnic groups whose members often develop their citizenship  
 by participating in religious organizations. The good achieved by such  
 435 participation is ‘realized citizenship’, a full involvement in politics that is  
 a ‘great social and political achievement’ [Weithman 2002: 22]. For  
 Weithman, churches contribute to the ‘realization of citizenship,  
 especially by the poor and minorities’. They serve as ‘venues of  
 discussion’, educate citizens about policy and candidates, and teach them  
 440 ‘organizational and parliamentary skills’ applicable to politics. Citizens  
 thereby achieve ‘a sense of self-worth’ that is ‘correlated with political  
 participation’ which in turn helps them ally with their fellow citizens.  
 Churches promote realized citizenship by providing ‘the ability to  
 participate in and to recognize debate as *public* debate’; without this  
 445 ability one cannot achieve realized citizenship and the well-being  
 associated with it [22].

Weithman rejects principles of restraint in part because they close off  
 viable avenues toward realized citizenship. Restraint thus threatens citizens’  
 social and political development and prevents them from learning to  
 deliberate based on considerations that define their interests. While  
 450 Weithman does not object to principles of restraint on explicitly integrity-  
 based grounds, his complaint is related. Churches aid the formation of their  
 parishioners’ identities as citizens around their religious convictions.  
 Weithman might claim that in such cases citizens of faith will have no  
 reason to accept norms that require them to restrict the development of a  
 455 religious identity on the grounds that obeying such norms will make it  
 difficult to develop their identities as citizens. Again, many citizens receive  
 their political education in church and think about political problems in  
 religious terms. Impeding citizens’ acting on religious considerations thereby  
 discourages them from political participation. To illustrate, suppose that  
 460 African-American churches during the Civil Rights Era had accepted  
 principles of restraint and so refrained from publicly defending civil rights  
 on religious grounds. Since many African-Americans attained realized-  
 citizenship through public expressions of religious commitment mediated by  
 their churches, principles of restraint would probably have limited these  
 465 substantial achievements.

That said, no public reason liberal argues that citizens should not  
 discuss their religious reasons or organize politically in church. Instead,  
 they merely require that, when voting or arguing in the public sphere,  
 citizens should rely primarily on non-religious considerations. For this  
 470 reason, it is hard to see how identity-development and political  
 participation could be substantially set back by restraint. Some burden  
 may be placed on churches’ ability to promote political participation but  
 it is not clear how significant the burden would be in practice. Weithman  
 is no doubt correct that principles of restraint *can* restrict identity-  
 475 formation and political participation, but it is not clear that restraint  
*must* have this effect. Weithman’s version of the integrity objection

therefore seems to rely on complex sociological judgments based on inconclusive evidence. Accordingly, the strength of Weithman's integrity objection is unclear.

Nevertheless, if widely accepted, many principles of restraint would undoubtedly have some of the effects Weithman describes. If citizens recognize that acting on religious reasons in the public sphere is considered immoral or inappropriate, they will be less inclined to act in accord with their religious identities for fear of public sanction. Consequently, should they choose to participate in politics on religious terms, they must bear the costs of being alienated from some sectors of their society on terms most will find unacceptable. Alienation alone is not cause for concern among liberals, but alienation imposed by restraint seems to be in many cases. Weithman's point can be vividly illustrated in a number of real-world cases. For the latter half of the twentieth century, South Africa was ruled by an apartheid government whose brutal crimes killed many and created many more refugees. In 1990 Nelson Mandela was freed from a several-decade prison sentence for protesting apartheid; in 1994, he was elected President of South Africa and started to reverse the social and political damage caused by apartheid. In the process, he formed the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission [TRC], led by Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu. The TRC was designed to expose the human rights abuses of the apartheid regime. Amnesty was offered to those who committed serious human rights abuses in exchange for public admission of their misdeeds. The TRC embraced a conception of restorative justice which realizes justice through reintegrating perpetrators into their communities through confession and forgiveness. While the commissioners were politically, ethnically and religiously diverse, the philosophy of the TRC had an explicitly Christian emphasis.

Throughout his book *No Future without Forgiveness*, Tutu stridently defends the restorative justice approach pursued by the TRC on Christian grounds, arguing that no human, no matter how wicked, should be given up on. Christian theology reminded Tutu that perpetrators 'remained children of God with the capacity to repent, to be able to change' [Tutu 1999: 83]. For Tutu, '[i]t was theology that enabled me to assert that this *was* a moral universe. That theology undergirded my work in the TRC' [87]. When Tutu was challenged by journalists for bringing his Christian convictions into the commission, he remarked:

I told them I was a religious leader and had been chosen as who I was. I could not pretend I was someone else. I operated as who I was and that was accepted by the commission. It meant that theological and religious insights and perspectives would inform much of what we did and how we did it.

[Tutu 1999: 82]

Let us reconsider Weithman's argument in the light of Archbishop Tutu's example. Tutu defended the TRC on explicitly Christian terms in innumerable public places; his Christian commitments directly influenced

525 his role as the leader of a prominent and public institution responsible for  
 healing deep rifts in a nation. If the principles of restraint advocated by  
 public reason liberals were widely acknowledged within South African  
 society, Tutu's witness would have been substantially muted. Again, Tutu  
 'could not pretend [he] was someone else' [82]. This form of integrity  
 530 violation seems contrary to the spirit of liberalism generally and public  
 reason liberalism specifically. Restraint in this case would have undermined  
 Tutu's integrity, integrity which liberals should not only protect, but  
 honour.

535 Even Rawls's weaker principle threatens Tutu's accomplishments. As  
 Rawls remarks elsewhere, when 'discussing constitutional essentials and  
 matters of basic justice we are not to appeal to comprehensive religions  
 and philosophical doctrines' [Rawls 2005: 224–5]. Tutu could publicly  
 reach some South Africans in terms of comprehensive Christian values,  
 and sometimes only in those terms. Thus in some cases, Tutu would not  
 540 have been able to explain his political activities 'in terms of a reasonable  
 balance of political values' [243]. Tutu brought many into the fight for  
 social justice in South Africa who otherwise would have never found  
 their political voice. Principles of restraint would have made this already  
 difficult process more burdensome. Weithman argues that good Rawlsian  
 545 citizens must be able to make 'complex judgments ... to determine when  
 public reasons are called for' and have the sophisticated ability to  
 'respond appropriately when offered the right or wrong kinds of reasons'  
 [Weithman 2002: 206–7]. These requirements are unduly onerous for the  
 severely oppressed citizens for whom Tutu advocated. Public reason  
 550 liberals should be impressed that those who endured so much had the  
 capacity to engage in political dialogue on *any terms at all*. In South  
 Africa, it seems clear that principles of restraint would have closed off  
 many avenues towards realized citizenship, and thus to the development  
 of associated political identities. This is particularly true of Audi's strong  
 555 principle, which would require the new South African citizens to develop  
 adequate secular reasons and *motivations*, arguably a serious if not  
 impossible undertaking given their cognitive and emotional circumstances.  
 The South African case exposes the considerable burdens imposed by  
 asking citizens of faith to advance reasons only in line with political  
 560 values and supplement their religious arguments with language that does  
 not resonate with their convictions. Restraint might be less onerous for  
 university-educated citizens of Western liberal democracies. But when  
 principles of restraint are applied outside this privileged group, their  
 restrictiveness becomes rather obvious, *as well as their soundness as moral*  
 565 *norms*. I suggest that the political history of South Africa and the United  
 States provide various examples of political progress produced by  
 reference to religion that principles of restraint will likely restrict. But  
 these cases of progress seem to be just the sorts of cases that liberals  
 should want to uphold and promote. Thus, restraint seems objectionable  
 570 *on liberal grounds*, as unreasonably restricting the expression and  
 development of identities liberals are sworn to protect. Thus the integrity  
 objection seems to wield great force.

## 5. A Promising Alternative to the Mainstream

### 5.1 Integrity Costs

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Perry, Wolterstorff and Weithman are correct that principles of restraint will often inflict unjustifiable integrity costs upon citizens of faith. Many critics of public reason liberalism take the integrity objection to undermine public reason liberalism by implication.<sup>16</sup> If indeed public reason liberalism imposes unjustifiable integrity costs, public reason liberals must worry. Public reason liberalism aims to treat citizens as free and equal under conditions of reasonable pluralism, thereby allowing citizens with different conceptions of the good the liberty to act on their projects and plans. Thus, a commitment to public justification *implies* a commitment to respecting the integrity of citizens. If public reason liberalism implies unjustifiable restraint, then public reason liberalism's commitment to individual liberty undermines itself. Clearly public reason liberalism must require citizens to pay *some* integrity costs, but perhaps it exacts more than it is due.

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To determine whether public reason liberalism requires citizens to violate their integrity, we must arbitrate between those who stress the requirement of public justification and those who stress the protection of integrity. To vindicate either side, one might assign weights to their respective considerations to generate a trade-off rate. But it seems implausible to hold all citizens to a single weighting. Public reason liberalism assumes reasonable pluralism; there is therefore little reason to seek a universal weighting standard. If reasonable pluralism rules out a non-arbitrary weighting, there are only three ways to approach an apparent conflict between public reason liberals and their critics: (i) deny the ideal of public justification, (ii) deny the significance of integrity, or (iii) deny that the conflict is genuine. Option (i) may be preferred by public reason liberalism's critics, but they have not shown that this strategy is required by the integrity objection. While many suppose that public reason liberalism can be defeated by attacking restraint, §2 shows that an objection to restraint must travel far to defeat public reason liberalism. Option (ii) must also be rejected. Public reason liberals must care about integrity since the *point* of liberalism is to create social space for individuals to pursue their diverse aims. Option (iii) seems immediately implausible. From the foregoing discussion of integrity-related criticisms, it seems that the two sources of normative concern conflict.

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### 5.2 The Promise of an Alternative

Nonetheless, option (iii) has merit. It may be possible to show that public reason liberalism *as such* imposes few integrity costs. Recall from §2 that public reason liberalism and the mainstream conception of public reason liberalism are distinct: a criticism of the latter is not necessarily a criticism of

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<sup>16</sup>Weithman is a qualified exception.

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the former. The integrity objection is levelled against the principles of restraint implied by the *mainstream conception* of public reason liberalism, not public reason liberalism *per se*. Consequently, developing option (iii) requires constructing a conception of public reason liberalism that denies at least one of the three entailments listed in §2: (a) that public reason liberalism implies a consensus conception of public reasons, (b) that consensus implies a principle of exclusion and (c) that exclusion implies the principles of restraint defended by public reason liberals. If such a conception is in the offing, then public reason liberalism can accommodate the moral concerns of public reason liberals and their religious critics. An alternative conception of public reason could thereby substantially advance the religion and politics debate.

### 5.3 *An Alternative Conception of Public Reason Liberalism*

The remainder of this article sketches one such alternative, which can be understood as a reinterpretation of the public justification principle:

*The Public Justification Principle:* A coercive action C is justified if and only if every member of the public P has a conclusive reason R to endorse C.

The alternative conception departs from the standard conception in its interpretations of variables R and P. Mainstream public reason liberals give a consensus interpretation of R and tend to articulate conceptions of radical idealization for P, both of which can impose integrity costs. The alternative conception gives a convergence interpretation of R and advances a conception of moderate idealization for P.<sup>17</sup>

The convergence conception of reasons rejects the accessibility and shareability requirements. It therefore attacks the case for principles of restraint at its root. Since the public justification principle is not taken to imply consensus, there are simply no grounds upon which to motivate principles of restraint. Anyone can offer their private reasons as public justifications. Since the convergence conception of reasons does not require restraint, it eliminates the integrity objection, as public reason liberalism no longer requires citizens of faith to split their identities.

This does *not* mean, however, that people can be coerced on the basis of reasons they reject. Instead, coercive proposals are justified when each reasonable individual has a reason *of her own* to accept the proposal. Catholic John and Secular Reba can both endorse an extensive welfare state based on their private reasons, like John's comprehensive Catholic reasons and Reba's comprehensive secular reasons. But if John advocates a proposal that Reba has no reason to accept, imposing the proposal on her would be unjustified. To illustrate further, suppose that John and Reba represent two political coalitions who take opposite positions with respect to passing a particular law. Reba's coalition is in the minority and loses the legislative

<sup>17</sup>In doing so, my moderate conception of idealization is similar to that proposed by Gaus [2011: 235–43].

battle. On the convergence view, John's coalition can pass the law based on solely upon unshared or inaccessible reasons. But doesn't convergence thereby permit John's coalition to coerce Reba's coalition on the basis of reasons they don't share and can't access? In short, no. If John and Reba's society is interested in public justification, it will generate constitutional protections that block the implementation of laws that any non-trivial group has reason to reject. In this case, therefore, Reba's coalition cannot *rightly* be coerced on the basis of reasons that her coalition rejects. A religion-friendly critic may complain that a convergence conception of reasons prevents citizens from justifying proposals based on their private reasons alone, just as it blocks John's impositions, but the religion-friendly critics do not raise the integrity objection on these grounds. They merely complain that public reason liberalism unjustifiably restrains what citizens of faith may say and do in their public political lives, not that it bars them from coercing others on the basis of reasons they reject.

The second component of the alternative conception is a moderate form of idealization. Typically public reason liberals embrace radical forms of idealization. Rawls is perhaps most notorious in this regard. The original position selects principles of justice by modelling an abstract bargaining scenario which, in turn, is supposed to give the best explanation of our considered judgments about justice. Rawls abstracts from any number of features of individuals that many deem essential to individual identity, especially their conception of the good [Rawls 1971: 16–17]. Thus Rawls models parties to the original position as reasoning apart from their conception of the good and then attributes reasons to actual persons partly on the basis of the model. Accordingly, he is often seen as attributing reasons to persons based on beliefs they would have only were they fully rational and reasonable. Both Rawls's liberal and communitarian critics have complained that such abstraction is excessive [Barry 1996: 57–61; Sandel 1982: 161–5]. Faith-friendly liberal critics have advanced the complaint as well, such as Nicholas Wolterstorff, who asks what 'the fact that a person would not believe what he does believe if he were fully rational have to do with how he should actually be treated in the political sphere?' [Wolterstorff 2007: 153]. A more moderate conception of idealization, perhaps one that attributes reasons to citizens based on their conceptions of the good, could ameliorate this criticism entirely, creating a public reason liberalism that attributes reasons to citizens based on models of agents more like themselves.

The alternative conception of public reason needs both convergence and moderate idealization. Moderate idealization cannot meet the integrity objection as it can be combined with a consensus conception of reasons, potentially generating principles of restraint. Similarly, a convergence conception of reasons can be combined with radical idealization that could, in turn, attribute reasons to citizens divorced from their actual religious and private values. Together, though, convergence and moderate idealization refute the integrity objection, thereby saving public reason liberalism from defeat. While the integrity objection provides reason to reject *mainstream* public reason liberalism, public reason liberalism itself survives unscathed.

Rejecting the standard conception of public reason has important implications for many of public reason's traditional features, especially its ideal of deliberative democracy. Convergence severs the tie between public reason and public *reasoning*. A more unruly and unfettered conception of public discourse replaces the traditional public reason ideals of discourse constrained by substantive norms of good citizenship. Good political orders are those that reflect what is publicly justified to citizens; public reason liberalism remains agnostic about which forms of dialogue are most conducive to these ends. Some will regard this implication as a disadvantage for the alternative version of public reason advanced. But this feature is arguably an advantage because it helps public reason liberals avoid excessive focus on deliberation, which is often a *distraction* from the project of developing a publicly justified polity. And even if deliberation remains a central component of public reason liberalism, there are reasons to think that the inclusion of unshared and inaccessible reasons may have advantages. Lucas Swaine argues that inaccessible reasons can challenge citizens to 'ponder why accessibility ... may be desirable' and 'trigger reconsideration of whether the particular reasons one offers ... actually *are* inaccessible' [Swaine 2009: 200].

The alternative conception of public reason sketched here promises to resolve the perennial dispute between liberalism and faith. In resolving the dispute, public reason liberals can answer some of their most powerful critics and avoid settling for anything less than a publicly justified polity. Some religious critics, like Bryan McGraw, suggest settling for a 'constitutional consensus' where citizens have reason to accept the 'main outlines' of a regime and standards for how to resolve conflicts within these 'outlines' but that rejects the need for a truly *moral* justification of political authority [McGraw 2010: 175]. By embracing the alternative, public reason liberals can buttress their hopes for a *just* polity rather than settling for a mere *modus vivendi* with citizens of faith.<sup>18</sup>

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