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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Toward a More Honest Public Reason Liberalism

by

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Contemporary liberal philosophers have spent considerable time defending a public reason liberal politics in which citizens publicly deliberate about laws and policies but bracket their private moral, philosophical, and religious worldviews when doing so. Instead of their parochial worldviews, citizens in the public forum are to deliberate about laws and policies using public reason – principles, values, and inquiry guidelines that all citizens can accept as free and equal.

The current literature, however, makes oversimplifications in two areas, causing it to neglect serious obstacles facing a public reason liberal politics. First, the literature oversimplifies the idea of a worldview, causing it to underplay the epistemic obstacles that face citizens in setting aside their parochial worldviews in politics. Second, the literature oversimplifies the elements that go into arriving at a political solution, causing it to overlook the inability of public reason to arrive at and publicly justify answers to some political questions.
This dissertation avoids these oversimplifications and, subsequently, offers a refined version of a public reason liberal politics that addresses the obstacles that these oversimplifications originally masked. First, in light of a more detailed understanding of a worldview, a public reason liberal politics must work into its procedures formal segments in which participants exchange and attend to worldviews. Second, in light of a more detailed understanding of the elements that go into reasoning to a political solution, a public reason liberal politics must work into its theoretical structure a convergence conception of public justification that can inform deliberative processes capable of reaching publicly justified political outcomes when public reason is incomplete.
# Table of Contents

Introduction...........................................................................................................1

Chapter 1: Public Reason Liberalism......................................................................15

Chapter 2: Entangling Worldviews and Incompleteness........................................66

Chapter 3: Entangling Worldviews and Publicly Justified Outcomes.....................109

Chapter 4: Incompleteness and Publicly Justified Outcomes.................................134

Bibliography.........................................................................................................173
Introduction

“I may be opposed to abortion for religious reasons, but if I seek to pass a law banning the
practice, I cannot simply point to the teachings of my church or evoke God’s will. I have to
explain why abortion violates some principle that is accessible to people of all faiths, including
those with no faith at all.”
– Barack Obama, Call to Renewal Keynote Speech, June 2006

1. Overview

On June 28, 2006, in his “Call to Renewal Keynote Address”, then Senator
Barack Obama spoke about the role of private moral and religious convictions in a
democratic politics. He shared with the audience his Christian faith and the steadfastness
of his convictions. Shortly thereafter, however, he acknowledged the increasing diversity
of America’s population. “Whatever we once were,” he spoke, “we are no longer just a
Christian nation; we are also a Jewish nation, a Muslim nation, a Buddhist nation, a
Hindu nation, and a nation of nonbelievers.” Mr. Obama’s affirmation of this pluralism
set the stage for what he had to say next: a liberal democracy demands that laws and
policies be supported on the basis of principles that are “accessible to people of all faiths,
including those with no faith at all.”¹

Many contemporary political philosophers would agree – laws and policies in a
free democracy ought to be grounded in and properly justified to citizens using reasons
they can accept. This idea has led many liberal theorists to envision for a free democracy
a politics in which citizens publicly deliberate about laws and policies but bracket their
private convictions and views of the world when doing so. Instead of their parochial

¹ Text of this speech is available online. See Obama Speeches. “Call to Renewal Keynote Address”.
worldviews, citizens in the public forum are to deliberate using *public reason* – principles, values, and inquiry guidelines that all can accept as free and equal. It is through such a politics, these liberals insist, that laws and policies grounded in and justified using bases all can accept are reached. Over the years, this view, which I call *public reason liberalism*, has garnered a long list of supporters, including John Rawls, Charles Larmore, Stephen Macedo, Jonathan Quong, Joshua Cohen, Lawrence Solum, Micah Schwartzman, and Samuel Freeman.

This dissertation argues that the current literature on public reason liberalism makes oversimplifications in two areas, causing theorists to neglect two facts that present

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obstacles to a public reason liberal politics as it currently is conceived. First, the literature oversimplifies the idea of a worldview, causing it to underplay the epistemic obstacles that face citizens in setting aside their parochial worldviews in public deliberation. Second, the literature oversimplifies the number of elements that go into arriving at a political solution, causing it to overlook the inability of public reason to arrive at and publicly justify answers to some political questions.

Each obstacle challenges the capability of a public reason liberal politics to arrive at political outcomes grounded in and justified using bases all can accept. In such a way, each obstacle is as threatening to the public reason liberal project as it is real. My dissertation offers a refined version of a public reason liberal politics that addresses these obstacles. The refined public reason liberal politics proposed, unlike its original counterpart, demands more than simply the justificatory processes on which theorists have focused their attention, inviting a more multifaceted public discourse for a free democracy.

2. Background: Public Reason Liberalism

Public reason liberalism has its roots in a liberal tradition that has occupied itself with questions arising from the pluralism referenced in Obama’s speech. As citizens in a free democracy, we hold different views of the world and beliefs about human existence. To some extent, we celebrate these differences and the free institutions that make them possible. At the same time, however, we are forced to recognize the disagreement over fundamental political questions that these differences inevitably generate. While political
disagreement rooted in different worldviews is an unavoidable fact of a liberal democracy, it also presents a serious challenge to securing a stable, enduring political order.

In particular, political disagreement of this kind presents a challenge to reaching laws and policies whose legitimacy is recognized by a diverse citizen body. It is widely believed that legitimate laws and policies must be backed by acceptable reasons; a law backed by hidden reasons or reasons acceptable to only a few is an unjust imposition that fails to respect citizens as free and equal. Often in today’s society, this belief is expressed through resentment – by both liberals and conservatives – when either side tries to “impose” its morality (e.g., “their God”, “their views of sexuality”, “their definition of marriage”, “their conception of personhood”, “their relativism”, “their secularism”) on the other. Unfortunately, political disagreement rooted in different worldviews seems to suggest that losing parties will be unable to accept the reasons on which the winner’s favored law is based, creating a political order based on reasons foreign to some.

This challenge presents an important question for liberal philosophers. In particular, how should laws and policies be discussed and decided in a pluralistic liberal democracy in a way that respects citizens as free equals? Over the years, contemporary liberal theorists, influenced by the social contract tradition, have turned to a “politics of

10 As I understand and use the term in this dissertation, a “worldview” encompasses the totality of ethical, metaphysical, existential, and spiritual beliefs (often presuppositions) we hold as individuals and through which we view and make sense of the world. The beliefs encompassed by a worldview include beliefs about the human good, personal character, familial relationships, human nature, free will, the afterlife, the existence of God, the order of the universe, the nature of morality, the limits of human knowledge and understanding, the makeup of the human being, and so on.
public justification” to address this question. A public justification for a law, in effect, offers citizens – including those who disagree with the law – a rationale they can accept for that law. A public justification, liberals believe, expresses respect for citizens as free and equal by making the laws and policies that govern their lives reasonable to them. The project of public justification, thus, has been duly called “the moral lodestar of liberalism”.

Liberal theorists, thus, have attempted to work out a politics that honors the commitment to reaching publicly justified political outcomes. A public reason liberal politics is the result of such an attempt. Such a politics is one in which publicly justified outcomes are generated through public deliberation. In this deliberation, citizens and public officials, prior to deciding legislation and policy, justify to fellow citizens in the public forum their favored laws and policies. In doing so, they exchange reasons, listen to arguments, and respond to counterarguments raised by others. It is through this deliberative process, according to public reason liberalism, that a democratic politics (1) arrives at political outcomes that are capable of being publicly justified and (2) offers a public justification for these outcomes to citizens.

In such a politics, public reason liberalism insists, it is important that citizens do not advance just any reason or argument. A free democracy is permanently divided over worldviews. Thus, convictions and ways of reasoning grounded in parochial worldviews cannot provide the bases of deliberation or decision-making if the outcome is to be justified to all. Instead of these convictions and ways of reasoning, citizens are to use the

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11 Macedo. (1990), 78
values they share as free and equal – such as freedom of speech, equality of opportunity, domestic tranquility, the right to privacy, and so on. In addition, they are to use shared methods of reasoning and guidelines of inquiry. These values and guidelines, it is claimed, provide the “freestanding” content of public reason – a reason that citizens can share.

Thus, a public reason liberal politics is a deliberative politics in which citizens in the public forum deliberate using principles, values, and guidelines of inquiry all can share as free equals. In doing so, they bracket their parochial moral, philosophical, and religious convictions, whatever these might be. While a public reason liberal politics cannot guarantee agreement, it can at least offer a common language (i.e., a “public reason”) to discuss politics and generate political outcomes that are properly justified to all.

3. Oversimplifications in the Literature

Many liberal theorists have spent considerable time defending a public reason liberal politics – and for seemingly good reasons. First, a public reason liberal politics appears to be the politics that best honors the commitment to reaching publicly justified political outcomes. Such a politics appears to effectively generate these outcomes through a deliberative enterprise characterized by public reasoning. The idea is that when citizens deliberate in the public forum using shared principles, values, and guidelines of inquiry and refrain from advancing worldview bases, the outcome will be laws and policies that are publicly justified. Second, a public reason liberal politics appears to
realize normative goods, including mutual respect among citizens with different worldviews. When citizens justify laws and policies using shared bases, they demonstrate respect for each other as free equals and cultivate ties of civic friendship. In addition, they demonstrate to fellow citizens that their worldviews are on equal footing and should not be privileged or used as the basis for coercion.

In articulating this politics, however, public reason liberal theorists have assumed oversimplified accounts of two ideas. As a result, they have articulated a public reason liberal politics against an overly optimistic backdrop that fails to account for certain conditions (and their implied challenges) a deliberative body will face in trying to reach publicly justified political outcomes in a free democracy. This backdrop is responsible for a public reason liberal politics whose procedures and theoretical structure are ill-suited (at least in some instances) to honor its commitment to reach these outcomes.

This project brings to light these oversimplifications and offers a revised version of a public reason liberal politics that is sensitive to the conditions that these oversimplifications mask. While these oversimplifications will be presented in detail in chapter 2, a brief preview is appropriate here.

(1) The first oversimplification is of a worldview. Surprisingly, while the idea of a worldview occupies an important place in the public reason liberal vocabulary, it has been drastically under-theorized. Over the years, political philosophers have typically characterized worldviews as conceptions of value or systems of (largely) transparent, conscious beliefs about what is true and valuable. Consider, for example, the ways in which worldviews are characterized by theorists in the following descriptions of the fact
of pluralism. Cohen describes pluralism as “the fact that there are distinct, incompatible understandings of value.”\textsuperscript{12} Macedo writes: “For even when people are motivated by a desire to find fair terms of social cooperation […] disagreement will still result from the fact that people hold incompatible values.”\textsuperscript{13} And Gerald Gaus writes: “The free exercise of human reason leads us to disagree on wide variety of issues concerning value, goods, ideals of the good life and so on.”\textsuperscript{14}

These standard characterizations fail to be sensitive to the perspectival and existential imports of a worldview for the citizen as well as the processes that lead to the internalization of this view. As a result, they fail to capture important practical realities about citizens and their worldviews in a free democracy. Due attention to these realities requires acknowledging that worldviews are more than conceptions of value or systems of belief – they are cognitive orientations that subtly penetrate into ways of perceiving, apprehending, and reasoning. Moreover, they are deeply internalized by citizens as a result of developmental processes in nonpublic life, including upbringing, personal experiences, memberships in social and political organizations, and so on.

Recognizing these realities forces theorists to come to terms with what I call the \textit{fact of entangling worldviews}. If worldviews are as subtle, penetrating, and internalized as suggested, citizens will face obstacles to setting aside their parochial worldviews in public or private life. As a result, their political frameworks of reasoning will be


\textsuperscript{14} Gerald Gaus. “Reasonable Pluralism and the Domain of the Political”, in \textit{Inquiry}, 42, (1999), 274
entangled with their parochial worldviews, causing the inputs these citizens offer in public deliberation to be tainted.

The fact of entangling worldviews introduces problems for a politics that is supposed to reach publicly justified political outcomes through the untainted public reasoning of free and equal citizens. Up until now, theorists have largely assumed that citizens enter the public political forum ready and able to carry out such an enterprise of public reasoning. The fact of entangling worldviews, however, debunks this assumption – citizens do not enter the public forum as competent public reasoners, but as parochial-minded individuals whose reasoning is tainted by their worldviews. I argue, however, that a reworked public reason liberal politics can help transform parochial individuals into civically-minded citizens capable of public reasoning. This project aims to articulate a public reason liberal politics that embraces this role in light of the conditions suggested by the fact of entangling worldviews.

(2) The second oversimplification the literature makes is of the number of elements that go into arriving at a determinate solution to controversial political questions. It is commonly thought that a citizen body can arrive at a determinate solution simply by applying the shared principles, values, and inquiry guidelines of public reason. This oversimplified account, however, fails to capture the fact that arriving at a determinate solution often requires (a) weighing and ordering values; (b) interpreting these values; (c) interpreting key concepts; (d) determining which values are relevant; (e) assuming a standard of reasonableness; (f) framing the primary issue to be address.
This oversimplification has led public reason liberal theorists to overestimate the ability of public reason to arrive at and publicly justify solutions to all fundamental political questions. Acknowledging the list of element above, however, gives further reason than the literature currently recognizes to suspect that public reason is insufficiently rich to arrive at and publicly justify determinate solutions to all fundamental political questions. I call this the fact of incompleteness.

Not surprisingly, given the inflated belief about the abilities of public reason, the fact of incompleteness has not received its due attention from public reason liberal theorists. The few responses\textsuperscript{15} to incompleteness that have appeared are unsatisfactory, turning to second-order adjudicating procedures – such as a majority rule vote or even a coin flip – as vehicles for public justification. The problem with these responses is that they sacrifice important virtues that the idea justifying legislation and policy through public deliberation originally embodied. And in sacrificing these virtues, public reason liberal theorists betray central reasons for backing a deliberative politics to begin with.

Coming to terms with the fact of incompleteness that the above oversimplification masks highlights the need to investigate options – more promising than a turn to second-order procedures – that can be exercised in a public reason liberal politics if the principles, values, and inquiry guidelines citizens can share run out. This project aims to articulate a public reason liberal politics that can arrive at publicly justified political outcomes through deliberative processes when shared bases are incomplete.

4. Toward a Refined Public Reason Liberal Politics

Overall, there is a need for a revised account of a public reason liberal politics that can honor its commitment to reach publicly justified outcomes through deliberation under the conditions suggested by the fact of entangling worldviews and the fact of incompleteness. This revised public reason liberal politics would include processes that help transform parochial individuals into civically-minded citizens capable of public reasoning. It would also be capable of reaching publicly justified political outcomes through deliberative processes when the set of principles, values, and inquiry guidelines free equals can share is incomplete.

My aim is to provide this revised public reason liberal politics. In doing so, it is shown that a deliberative politics that best honors the commitment to reaching publicly justified political outcomes is more multifaceted than the politics public reason liberal theorists currently specify. Thus far, theorists have largely articulated a politics that embraces solely a justificatory role carried out by citizens justifying laws and policies using shared principles, values, and inquiry guidelines. This dissertation shows that a public reason liberal politics, en route to publicly justified outcomes, must embrace additional roles that demand more than simply the justificatory processes on which theorists have focused most of their attention.

The revised public reason liberal politics proposed, like its original version, aims at publicly justified political outcomes through deliberative processes but recognizes the importance of establishing strong interpersonal relationships and a rich understanding of different worldviews among the citizen body along the way. It acknowledges the role
that parochial worldviews can play in the path to publicly justified political outcomes and, therefore, encourages citizens to share their worldviews in the public forum. It prioritizes a mode of justification that invokes shared bases, but possesses the flexibility to adapt when shared based run out. In short, while its ultimate end is to reach publicly justified political outcomes through public deliberation, it embodies the fact that reaching these outcomes is a more multifaceted process than public reason liberal theorists currently acknowledge.

Given that the move toward this more multifaceted politics is needed, public reason liberal theorists – in focusing primarily on the justificatory processes of public deliberation – have detailed only a fragment of a public reason liberal politics. To be certain, processes in which citizens justify laws and policies is a key part to a flourishing public reason liberal politics, but to focus exclusively on this part is to attend to only a piece of the project. This dissertation illuminates other important pieces, pointing to the need for theorists to turn attention to the importance of cultivating in the public forum strong interpersonal relationships and a rich understanding of different worldviews among the citizen body.

5. Road Map

This dissertation proceeds as follows. The first half introduces public reason liberalism and details the two facts that I claim the literature overlooks. Chapter 1 introduces a public reason liberal politics and motivates its standard procedural and theoretical features. A public reason liberal politics is described as a deliberative politics
characterized by public reasoning informed by a consensus, quasi-populist conception of public justification. It is also a politics in which citizens have a duty to largely refrain from advancing arguments that rely on their parochial worldview bases.

Chapter 2 presents the fact of entangling worldviews and the fact of incompleteness, tracing the literature’s oversight of these facts to oversimplifications. Public reason liberal theorists, it is shown, assume an oversimplified idea of a worldview and an oversimplified idea of the number of elements that go into arriving at determinate political solutions. Once these oversimplifications are remedied, theorists are forced to grapple with conditions that present challenges to a public reason liberal politics’ path to publicly justified political outcomes.

The second half of the dissertation addresses the challenges raised by these facts, making the appropriate changes to public reason liberalism’s procedural and theoretical structure. Chapter 3 addresses the conditions suggested by the fact of entangling worldviews. It is argued that public reason liberalism must work into its procedures formal segments in which participants exchange and attend to worldviews. Substantive discussion of worldviews in the public forum, it is shown, generates a citizen body whose members have a richer and more expansive understanding of worldviews. Such an understanding puts citizens in a capable position to weed out parochial biases that taint inputs in the public forum and carry out a sustained process of public reasoning.

Chapter 4 addresses the conditions suggested by the fact of incompleteness. It is argued that public reason liberalism must work into its theoretical structure a convergence conception of public justification. Such a conception expands the
justificatory resources of a public reason liberal politics, permitting citizens – through deliberative processes – to justify laws and policies using the worldviews bases belonging to their fellow citizens when shared bases run out. It is then shown how substantive discussion of worldviews in the public forum, as described in chapter 3, can help establish the preconditions for reaching political outcomes justified on the basis of convergence.
Chapter 1: 
Public Reason Liberalism

A central problem that contemporary political philosophy seeks to address concerns how coercive laws and policies should be set in a free democracy characterized by deep and permanent worldview differences. This problem is generally viewed against two fundamental liberal ideas. First, all citizens in a free democracy are free and equal. They possess certain rights and liberties, including the right to pursue their conception of the good life. Second, a permanent feature of a free democracy is the fact of reasonable pluralism. The pluralism of worldviews that characterizes free democracies is the inevitable product of individuals freely exercising their intellectual and creative capacities in a society that celebrates freedom of thought, association, and religion.

The general recognition of both citizens as free equals and the fact of reasonable pluralism lead contemporary political philosophers to insist that laws and policies, backed by the coercive powers of the state, should not be imposed without proper reason. Laws and policies should not be imposed on the basis of hidden reasons, reasons acceptable only to a select few, or for no reason at all. Rather, laws and policies in a free democracy ought to be made reasonable from the point of view of all who are subject to them. Citizens, as free equals, are owed a justification that they can reasonably accept for the coercive laws and policies that govern their lives. Such a justification to citizens, or a *public justification*, is widely thought to embody an idea of respect for free equals under conditions of reasonable pluralism. As such, a public justification is widely regarded as a basic condition for the legitimate exercise of coercive political power over free equals.
It is no surprise, then, that contemporary political philosophers have tried to work out what the commitment to reaching laws and policies that are publicly justified implies for a politics\(^1\) in a free democracy. Public reason liberalism is a view that has sprung from a specific attempt by liberal theorists to do this. In essence, public reason liberalism specifies a politics that manifests the idea that laws and policies ought to be justified to all citizens on grounds they can accept. In this sense, public reason liberals take fundamental ideas from liberal theory and make them specific in working out a certain kind of politics for a free democracy.\(^2\)

Over the years, the politics specified by public reason liberalism has become a major – if not the standard – liberal account of what the commitment to publicly justified laws and policies means for a democratic politics. It has garnered many supporters, including Rawls, Larmore, Macedo, Quong, Cohen, Solum, Schwartzman, and Freeman.

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce a public reason liberal politics and motivate its standard procedural and theoretical features. The chapter is divided into eight sections. Sections 1 and 2 examine some basic ideas in contemporary liberal theory

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\(^1\) By “politics”, I refer to the activity of citizens and public officials when influencing and deciding legislation and public policy. By implication, then, the previous statement can be reworked to read: “Much of contemporary political philosophy focuses on working out what the commitment to reaching laws and policies that are publicly justified implies for the activity of citizens and public officials when influencing and deciding legislation and public policy.”

\(^2\) Gerald Gaus and Kevin Vallier also use the term “public reason liberalism”, though I use the term in a more specific manner than they do. Gaus and Vallier regard “public reason liberalism” as referring to the class of political theories that feature the liberal idea that a coercive law or policy is justified only if all citizens can view it as reasonable. In contrast to Gaus and Vallier, I regard public reason liberalism as the view that features this liberal idea and, in turn, specifies a deliberative politics characterized by public reasoning in an attempt to work out what this idea implies for a free democracy. My reasons for using “public reason liberalism” in this more specific sense stems from the fact that Gaus and Vallier’s definition is consistent with a theory that specifies a non-deliberative politics or a politics that does not feature public reasoning.
that inform public reason liberalism. Section 1 examines the fundamental liberal idea on which public reason liberalism is based – the idea that laws and policies in a free democracy ought to be publicly justified to citizens. Section 2 examines a central concept invoked in this liberal idea, specifically, the concept of public justification.

Sections 3 through 5 discuss the standard features of public reason liberalism. Section 3 presents the *procedural* features of a public reason liberal politics. Section 4 motivates these features by showing how they constitute a normatively rich and compelling account of what the commitment to reaching publicly justified political outcomes implies for a democratic politics. Section 5 presents and motivates an important *theoretical* feature of public reason liberalism – its conception of public justification.

Finally, Sections 6 through 8 provide additional details about public reason liberalism and offer a look ahead. Section 6 examines the content of a public reason liberal politics and how it is derived. Section 7 revisits a procedural feature of public reason liberalism – the norm of restraint. Section 8 states the need for revisions to a public reason liberal politics and previews what lies ahead.

1. Liberalism: Respect and Coercion

As mentioned, a central problem that contemporary political philosophy seeks to address concerns how laws and policies should be set in a free democracy characterized
by permanent worldview\(^3\) differences. The idea that laws and policies ought to be publicly justified is central to liberal theory’s response to this problem. This idea is the starting point in contemporary liberal thought and underlies public reason liberalism’s articulation of its politics. Why do the laws and policies that govern a free democracy need to be publicly justified?

According to contemporary liberal theory, providing a public justification for laws and policies is mandated by an idea of respect for citizens in a free democracy. To see this, consider that talk of respect owed to another presupposes that the person to whom respect is owed possesses a certain status. This status might be conferred onto persons by virtue of their social standing. For example, certain types of respect are owed to teachers, judges, and police officers by virtue of their social standing, where this respect imposes specific obligations for individuals interacting with these figures. Other times, however, we might speak of respect owed to others outside of a particular social role that they occupy. For example, we speak of respect owed to persons. One might believe, as Kant did, that respect for persons requires that we not treat them as a means solely, but in a manner consistent with their inherent dignity and worth.

As a political theory, liberalism aims to respect individuals as citizens. A liberal politics, thus, will respond to the problem of setting and enforcing laws and policies under conditions of permanent pluralism in a manner that respects individuals as citizens.

In a free democracy, liberals maintain, citizens are regarded as free equals. They are

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\(^3\) To repeat what was said in the introduction, as I understand and use the term, a “worldview” encompasses the totality of ethical, metaphysical, existential, and spiritual beliefs (often presuppositions) we hold as individuals and through which we view and make sense of the world. This characterization is consistent with how the term (often referred to as a “comprehensive doctrine”) is used in the literature, though, as I make clear in chapter 2, it suggests a bit more.
capable of pursuing a conception of the human good in their private lives and deliberating about public policy in their public lives. In addition, citizens in a free democracy are thought to have certain rights and liberties including freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom of conscience, equal opportunity, a right to education, and a right to pursue their conception of a good human life.

This conception of citizenship, liberals insist, is an appropriate starting point for political theory. The conception is not peculiar to a single group, religious doctrine, or worldview, but is widely accepted by individuals educated and living in the public political culture of a free democracy. It is a conception of citizenship that has been shaped by a confluence of historical events, philosophical ideas, and cultural factors. As such, it is a conception of citizenship that individuals in a pluralistic democracy can share despite their worldview differences.

Given that citizens are free and equal, both the state and fellow citizens have obligations to respect them as such. It follows that they have an obligation not treat citizens in a manner inconsistent with their freedom and equality. So, for example, they ought not segregate public schools, deny the mentally handicapped a right to an education, deny women the right to vote, or persecute groups for practicing a certain religion. But this is not all. Respect for citizens as free equals also requires refraining from unjustified coercion – citizens and the state have an obligation not to coerce others in a manner inconsistent with their status as free equals.

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As it happens, given that laws and policies regulating citizen behavior are necessary, coercion is unavoidable. Legislation and policies, after all, are backed by the coercive powers of the state. Those who fail to obey these laws and policies are subject to punishment. For liberal theory, thus, the issue is not whether coercion can be avoided, since it obviously cannot. The issue is whether such coercion can be made *legitimate*. For acts of coercion to be legitimate, they must be consistent with the respect that free equals are owed. And this requires that acts of coercion are supplemented with a justification that those subject to this coercion can accept.

While contemporary liberal theorists are in agreement about this requirement, different theorists emphasize different features of citizens to which this requirement responds. Many emphasize the freedom of citizens. It might be said that for a subject to be free under conditions of coercion, that subject must freely and reasonably (i.e., on the basis of her reason) agree to enter into the relation involving coercion. This implies that she can accept the reasons on which the coercion is based; if she cannot accept the reasons on which the coercion is based, she has not freely agreed to such coercion, and such coercion is in violation of her freedom. To coerce a citizen on the basis of reasons she cannot accept, then, is to fail to recognize the conditions of her freedom.

Other theorists emphasize the equality of citizens. It might be said that in a free democracy, citizens are equal members of a collective body whose reason authorizes the

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5 Different public reason liberals give different reasons for this claim. As Simone Chambers notes, “While respect stands at the center of all ideas of public justification, some views stress respect for the equal freedom of individuals while others the rational capacity of individuals.” See Chambers, “Theories of Political Justification”, in *Philosophy Compass* 5/11, (2010), 895.
exercise of coercive power. The government which enforces coercive laws and policies is, to use Lincoln’s famous words, “of the people, by the people, and for the people”.

Citizens are not only subjects of laws and policies, but also legislators of laws and policies that they implement on the basis of their reason. To coerce citizens on the basis of reasons they cannot accept is to ignore their status as equal members of this body. Such coercion amounts to treating them as subjects, but not as legislators.

Finally, some theorists emphasize the rationality of free and equal citizens. Citizens are not objects like rocks or trees that are incapable of rational thought. Rather, they are capable of pursuing projects and goals using means-ends reasoning. To coerce citizens without offering a justification they can accept constitutes a failure to recognize this feature of citizens; it constitutes a failure to recognize citizens as rational beings to whom reasons are owed.

Whatever the feature of emphasis, liberals come to the same conclusion: a proper recognition of the essential features and interests of free and equal citizens requires that coercive laws and policies be publicly justified. This central liberal idea has been articulated in many ways by different liberal philosophers. It is a fundamental

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8 See Lawrence Solum. “Faith and Justice”, in DePaul Law Review, 39, (1989) 1095: “Respect for the freedom and equality of citizens requires that decisions be made on the basis of public reason”; Macedo. (1990): “In a liberal society, coercive political arrangements require the support of articulable reasons capable of meeting objections and being fairly applied.”; Larmore. (1987), 137: “To respect another person as an end is to insist that coercive or political principles be just as justifiable to that person as they are to us.”; Rawls. (2005), 446. “Our exercise of political power is proper only when we sincerely believe that the reasons we would offer for our political actions […] are sufficient, and we also reasonably think that other citizens might also reasonably accept those reasons”; Gerald Gaus and Kevin Vallier. “The Role of Religious Conviction in a Publicly Justified Polity”, in Philosophy and Social Criticism, vol. 35, no. 1-2,
assumption grounding much of the work in contemporary liberal thought. Because it is such an important idea, it needs to be specified further. The next section details a central concept invoked in this liberal idea – the concept of a public justification.

2. Liberalism: Public Justification

The standard definition of a public justification is “a rationale or set of rationales that citizens, suitably construed, can accept as reasonable”.\(^9\) It is a justification that proceeds “correctly from premises we accept and think others could reasonably accept to conclusions we think they could also reasonably accept.”\(^10\) Having said this, a public justification for a law or policy is commonly thought to invoke two things.

First, a public justification is said to invoke public reasons – or considerations that citizens (i.e., the public), suitably construed, can accept.\(^11\) Public reasons are to be distinguished from nonpublic (“private”, “personal”, or “parochial”) reasons. Religious considerations are typically regarded as paradigm cases of nonpublic reasons. For example, many believe that considerations derived from religious scripture, mystical

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\(^9\) This sentence leaves open the possibility that a public justification consists of more than one rationale. As will be seen below, some have recently proposed that a public justification for a law or policy can take the form of plural rationales.

\(^10\) Rawls. (2005), 465

\(^11\) The term “can accept” has been challenged, however. See James Bohman and Henry Richardson. “Liberalism, Deliberative Democracy, and ‘Reasons All Can Accept’”, in Journal of Political Philosophy, 17: 253-274.
perception, or divine command fail to count as public reasons, since they are not reasons that all citizens can accept.

Besides religious considerations, it is often thought that (non-religious) worldview beliefs and convictions are nonpublic. This is because worldview beliefs and convictions are subject to reasonable disagreement in a pluralistic democracy. Persons with different worldviews, for example, will reasonably disagree about ideals of personal character, ideals of familial relationships, the existence of God, the definition of personhood, whether the universe has an inherent moral order, whether humans have free will, whether certain differences between the sexes are inherent or culturally shaped, conceptions of a good human life, and so on. Thus, to appeal to convictions regarding these topics in politics is to appeal to considerations that cannot be accepted by all.\textsuperscript{12}

Second, in addition to public reasons, a public justification is said to invoke methods of reasoning that others can accept. It appeals to “presently accepted […] forms of reasoning found in common sense, and the methods and conclusions of science when these are not controversial.”\textsuperscript{13} So, for example, a public justification may properly invoke commonly accepted logical rules of inference such as modus ponens, but it may not invoke inferences based on religious faith or mystical perception.

To further illuminate the idea of a public justification, let us briefly look at Gaus and Christopher Eberle’s contrast between a public justification and a personal

\begin{footnotes}
\item[12] See Rawls’s discussion between public reasons and secular reasons in Rawls. (2005), 452.
\item[13] Rawls. (2005), 224
\end{footnotes}
(“nonpublic”, “private”) justification. A citizen enjoys a personal justification for a view \( X \) if she can justify that view from within her own *justificatory set* – the set of beliefs, experiences, guidelines, and perspectives on which she relies to formulate and justify her political views. Of course, as it is often the case, a citizen may be able to accomplish this without being able to justify \( X \) to others with different justificatory sets. Enjoying a personal justification does not entail enjoying a public justification. Thus, we might say that a personal justification constitutes a rationale that is convincing to oneself (or one’s own group), but not necessarily to other and all citizens with different justificatory sets.

A *public* justification, in contrast, requires more than does a personal justification. A public justification is convincing not only to oneself or a small group of citizens, but to all citizens, suitably construed. Eberle articulates with pointed clarity the loftier demands for pursuing a public justification. The pursuit of a public justification, unlike a personal justification, requires citizens to look beyond their own justificatory set of beliefs, experiences, guidelines, and perspectives. To quote Eberle in length, the pursuit of a public justification for a given law:

> forbids [the citizen] to consult *only* his own point of view – his evidential set – in determining whether to support a given law. It enjoins him to look outward, beyond the merely personal, to inhabit the points of view of his fellow citizens, in

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order to determinate whether his compatriots have good reason, from their perspectives to support a given law.\textsuperscript{15}

These loftier demands follow from the fact that, as earlier mentioned, the content of a public justification must be content that citizens can accept. Having said this, the concept of a public justification appears to implicitly invoke certain epistemic desiderata with respect to its content. Several insist, for example, that the reasons constituting a public justification must be \textit{intelligible} as reasons,\textsuperscript{16} \textit{publicly accessible},\textsuperscript{17} and \textit{shared}.\textsuperscript{18} Others emphasize that the modes of reasoning invoked in a public justification must be \textit{accessible} to others. This accessibility condition is most notably reflected in Rawls’s statement\textsuperscript{19} that public justifications should be restricted to commonsense reasoning and non-controversial procedures of science.

Though these desiderata are commonly invoked in the literature, the definitional contours of these desiderata are by no means clear. As a result, these desiderata have

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{15} Eberle. (2002), 65
\item \textsuperscript{16} See Gaus and Vallier. (2009), 8-9.
\item \textsuperscript{17} See Kent Greenawalt. \textit{Religious Convictions and Political Choice}, (1988); Greenawalt. \textit{Private Consciences and Public Reasons}, (1995). The idea behind “publicly accessible” is that the content should be accessible to everyone, not simply a select few individual with, say, privileged status or special mental faculties (e.g., telepathy, special insight, etc.).
\item \textsuperscript{18} The \textit{shareability} condition is standard across conceptions of public justification. Recently, however, it has been challenged by Gaus and Vallier who are, by and large, sympathetic to the public justification project. See Gaus and Vallier. (2009).
\item \textsuperscript{19} See Rawls. (2005), 67, 162, 224
\end{itemize}
been challenged by some. I shall not attempt to adjudicate this debate here, but instead assume that these desiderata hold up. For now, it is enough to state that a public justification is a rationale that all citizens, suitably construed, can accept as reasonable. It is a justification that appeals to principles, values, and guidelines of inquiry that all citizens can accept.

To sum up, contemporary liberal theory states that respect for the essential features and interests of free and equal citizens requires that coercive laws and policies be publicly justified. That is, these laws and policies must enjoy a rationale or a set of rationales that citizens, suitably construed, can accept as reasonable. Given that this is a central idea in contemporary liberal theory, the question is what it implies for a politics in a free democracy. Public reason liberalism provides an answer this question.


There is reason why public reason liberalism has attracted several followers. It is here that I begin my attempt to show why public reason liberalism is compelling. The first task is to introduce the standard procedural features of a public reason liberal politics. It is only after these features are on the table that we can see why a politics that contains these features is widely thought to be both a normatively rich and compelling account of what the liberal commitment to reaching publicly justified political outcomes implies for a democratic politics.

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What are the procedural features of the politics that public reason liberalism specifies? In my mind, there are three, each of which is represented in a general description of a public reason liberal politics: a public reason liberal politics is a (1) deliberative politics (2) characterized by public reasoning that specifies (3) a norm of restraint for citizens. Below, I outline these three procedural features of a public reason liberal politics.

(1) First, public reason liberalism specifies a deliberative politics in which ordinary citizens and public officials, prior to deciding public policy, discuss and deliberate with others in the public political forum. A deliberative politics, thus, is different from a politics in which citizens simply go to the polls and vote;\textsuperscript{21} rather, citizens in a deliberative politics engage in a political dialogue in which they present fellow citizens with justifications for laws and policies in the public forum. They exchange reasons, listen to arguments, and respond to worries and counterarguments raised by others. “When citizens deliberate,” Rawls writes, “they exchange views and debate their supporting reasons concerning public political questions. They suppose that their political opinions may be revised by discussion with other citizens […].”\textsuperscript{22}

A deliberative politics, at least for the public reason liberal, functions to reach political outcomes that are publicly justified. It is through the exchange of reasons and arguments in the public forum that political outcomes that are capable of being publicly justified are reached and public justifications for those outcomes are arrived at. As

\textsuperscript{21} For a good article by a public reason liberal that clarifies the main features of a deliberative politics, see Freeman. (2000).

\textsuperscript{22} Rawls. (2005), 448
Cohen writes, the idea of a democratic politics “is rooted in the intuitive idea of a democratic association in which the justification of terms and conditions of association proceeds through […] argument and reasoning among citizens.”²³ Coming to publicly justified political outcomes through argument and reasoning among citizens is a feature that distinguishes a deliberative politics committed to reaching publicly justified outcomes from a non-deliberative one. ²⁴

In specifying a deliberative politics, public reason liberalism envisions this kind of public political discourse to be a central feature of a democratic society. Public political deliberation among ordinary citizens in formal political settings would therefore be more pervasive than what is found in contemporary American politics where citizens typically go to the polls and vote without participating in interpersonal deliberation. As Paul Weithman notes, “[I]f politics were reformed along lines advocated by deliberative democrats, then ordinary citizens would engage in considerably more public deliberation than they do now.”²⁵


²⁴ When I refer to an outcome as being “publicly justified”, I am presupposing an objective standard as to whether an outcome is publicly justified. In particular, the objective standard is whether the justification can be reasonably accepted by an individual in her capacity as a free equal. A justification that meets this standard will be a rationale that is: (1) complete; (2) freestanding from worldview bases; (3) responsive to the fundamental interests and capacities of free equals (as well as the conditions for realizing and exercising these, respectively). In contrast to this view, some philosophers have defended a pure procedural view which defines a publicly justified outcome as simply an outcome generated from an ideal deliberative procedure. According to this view, there is no independent standard (beyond the procedure) by which a publicly justified outcome is defined – the publicly justified outcome simply is what is churned out by this procedure. While some embrace such a view, in my mind, there is reason to think that most public reason liberal theorists assume the objective standard view. As such, I shall assume this view.

(2) Second, not only does public reason liberalism specify a deliberative politics, but it specifies a certain kind of deliberative politics. The deliberative politics that public reason liberalism specifies is characterized by public reasoning. Public reasoning is a form of reasoning that invokes “public reasons”, which are reasons or considerations that all citizens can accept. Specifically, public reasoning appeals to values, principles, and guidelines of inquiry that all can accept. It may be wondered if such values, principles, and guidelines can exist in a pluralistic society characterized by deep differences. More will be said about this section 5.

A central part of a politics characterized by public reasoning is public justification. As mentioned above, a deliberative politics consists of citizens justifying their favored laws and policies to fellow citizens, particularly to those with whom they disagree. Those who disagree, in response, may provide counterarguments and offer justifications of their own for their favored policies. A politics characterized by public reasoning requires that these justifications and counterarguments be public. That is, the facts, principles, values, and guidelines of inquiry appealed to in a justification for or a counterargument against a law or policy must be those that all can accept. “Public justification,” says Rawls, “is not simply valid reasoning, but argument addressed to others; it proceeds correctly from premises we accept and think others could reasonably accept to conclusions we think they could reasonably accept.”26 More will be said about public justification in following sections.

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26 Rawls. (2005), 465
(3) Third, public reason liberalism specifies, as part of its politics, a norm of restrain. The norm of restraint is a moral norm for citizens as political actors – it applies to citizens when acting in public political settings such as the public forum or the voting booth.\textsuperscript{27} Broadly speaking, the norm of restraint requires that citizens refrain from acting solely from nonpublic bases in the public political sphere. Such a norm is proposed as a moral norm, not a legal norm. Citizens have a moral duty – a duty of civility – to uphold the norm of restraint, though there are not legal punishments if they violate this norm.

Section 7 will discuss the norm of restraint in more detail and bring to light important distinctions regarding this norm. It should be mentioned on the outset, however, that two articulations of the norm of restraint can be distinguished: the norm as it applies within the context of decision-making (e.g., in the voting booth) and the norm as it applies within the context of public deliberation (e.g., in the public forum). This dissertation focuses primarily on the norm of restraint as it applies within the context of public deliberation. Within this context, the norm of restraint requires that citizens in public deliberation generally refrain from advancing claims or arguments in favor of a law or policy that implicitly or explicitly invoke nonpublic bases.\textsuperscript{28} As Freeman writes:

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{27}The norm of restraint only applies in the public political sphere. Citizens are not bound by the norm of restraint in what Rawls calls “background culture” settings such as a church, a country club, a university seminar room, a bar, or a dinner table.
\end{flushright}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{28}As will be discussed in section 7, there are stronger and weaker versions of the norm of restraint.
\end{flushright}
[C]itizens recognize a duty in their public political deliberation […] to avoid public argument on the basis of reasons peculiar to their particular moral, religious, and philosophical views and incompatible with public reason.29

And as Rawls writes:

[I]n discussing constitutional essentials and matters of basic justice we are not to appeal to comprehensive religious and philosophical doctrines – to what we as individuals or members of associations see as the whole truth […]30

And as Quong writes:

The idea of public reason further requires that, in the political arena, citizens and public officials only offer each other arguments based in public reasons, and that they generally refrain from appealing to their comprehensive doctrines or other beliefs about the whole truth as they understand it.31

And as Larmore writes:

29 Freeman. (2000), 382. Also see Freeman. Rawls, (2007), 415: “[Public reason] requires us as citizens or public officials, when making arguments and decisions in political context about constitutional essentials and basic justice, to abstract away and ‘bracket’ what we regard as the ‘whole truth’.”

30 Rawls. (2005), 224-25

31 Quong. (2011), 256
In the face of disagreement we should keep the conversation going, and to do that, of course, we must retreat to neutral grounds.32

As Freeman, Rawls, and Quong suggest, among considerations that are nonpublic are those that invoke worldviews. Considerations that invoke worldviews are considered nonpublic because of the permanent worldview differences in a pluralistic democracy – since different citizens subscribe to different worldviews, worldview considerations do not qualify as considerations all can accept. Thus, according to public reason liberalism, a citizen must generally refrain from advancing claims or arguments that invoke worldview considerations such as those that appeal to religious convictions, ideals of personal character, conceptions of human value, metaphysical theses about reality, and so on.

To recap my summary, the three procedural features of the politics that public reason liberalism standardly specifies are the following: (1) A public reason liberal politics is a deliberative politics in which citizens deliberate together in the public political forum before deciding legislation and public policy; (2) A public reason liberal politics is characterized by public reasoning, or reasoning that invokes facts, values, principles, and guidelines of inquiry all can accept; (3) A public reason liberal politics specifies a norm of restraint that demands that citizens generally refrain from advancing claims and arguments that rely on worldviews. The next task is to explain the motivation for these features.

32 Larmore. (1987), 67
4. Motivating the Procedural Features

It was mentioned earlier that a public reason liberal politics reflects the standard, mainstream attempt by liberal theorists to work out what the commitment to reaching publicly justified political outcomes implies for the activity of citizens and public officials in a democratic politics. Public reason liberalism has garnered many followers, including Rawls, Larmore, Macedo, Quong, Cohen, Solum, Schwartzman, and Freeman. What makes a public reason liberal politics so attractive?

To answer this question, consider how the standard procedural features of a public reason liberal politics constitute a politics that honors the commitment to reaching publicly justified political outcomes and functions as a normatively rich vehicle for reaching these outcomes. To begin, consider the appeal of a deliberative politics committed to reaching publicly justified political outcomes over a similarly committed non-deliberative politics that invokes other means for reaching these outcomes. Imagine a politics that is not deliberative but implements institutional bodies for ensuring that laws and policies are publicly justified (e.g., a Department of Public Justification). Why prefer a deliberative politics committed to reaching publicly justified political outcomes over a non-deliberative politics that relies on institutional bodies?

A major difference between a deliberative politics in which citizens deliberate before deciding policy and a non-deliberative politics that implements institutional bodies

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33 To some extent, the Supreme Court plays such a role. See Gaus. (1996) and Gaus and Vallier. (2009) for mention of the role of institutions in generating publicly justified political outcomes. Quong also entertains this option briefly only to dismiss it in favor of a deliberative politics. See Quong. (2011), 257
is the mechanism on which each politics relies to reach political outcomes that are publicly justified. A deliberative politics relies on the deliberative efforts of citizens to reach these outcomes. A deliberative politics comes to political outcomes that are capable of being publicly justified and arrives at justifications for these outcomes through the exchange of reasons and arguments among citizens. A non-deliberative politics, on the other hand, does not rely on the deliberative efforts of citizens. Rather, it relies on other mechanisms to reach publicly justified political outcomes, such as institutional bodies.

Having made the distinction clear, there is reason to think that a deliberative politics that aims for publicly justified outcomes has advantages over the non-deliberative politics above in terms of its ability to reach publicly justified political outcomes. The public political forum is a space in which different citizens test their arguments for laws and policies, listen to counterarguments, and respond to these counterarguments. Proposed laws and policies, as well as arguments for these laws and policies, are “subjected to extensive scrutiny” by citizens coming from different perspectives. A deliberative politics, thus, has the luxury that an institutional body does not of using the collective efforts of citizens for ensuring that the political outcomes that result are both capable of being and are ultimately publicly justified. Each law and policy is thoroughly vetted by a citizen body consisting of numerous, diverse members before it is implemented.

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34 See Quong. (2011), 258
Furthermore, it must be added that a deliberative politics honors the normative core of the commitment to public justification more deeply than a non-deliberative politics. This is because a deliberative politics embodies—in ways a non-deliberative politics does not—the fundamental idea in which the commitment to public justification is rooted. It is worth repeating that a liberal politics, whether deliberative or non-deliberative, is committed to reaching publicly justified political outcomes by virtue of a public justification being a requirement of respect for free equals. Respect for free equals lies at the root of the commitment.

A deliberative politics embodies this respect in a way that a non-deliberative politics does not. Respect for free equals entails recognizing their reason as authorizing the exercise of coercive power. While a non-deliberative politics honors this idea to some extent, a deliberative politics institutionalizes it—it directly realizes in the public political forum of a free democracy the idea that citizens are equal members of a collective body whose reason authorizes the exercise of coercive power. Such a politics is an embodiment of the idea that citizens are legislators of laws and policies that they implement on the basis of their reason.

This point, I believe, is connected with the promotion of another fundamental liberal interest that informs the commitment to public justification—legitimizing the use of political power. While a deliberative and non-deliberative politics might both be capable of reaching publicly justified political outcomes, there is reason to think that a

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As stated above, however, I believe that a deliberative politics has distinct advantages over a non-deliberative politics in reaching publicly justified political outcomes.
deliberative politics that directly realizes the idea that citizens are equal members of a collective body whose reason authorizes the exercise of coercive power purchases an increased sense among citizens of the legitimacy of the political outcome.\textsuperscript{36} This is especially true with respect to citizens who, for whatever reason, believe that the outcome, while publicly justified, is not the most reasonable solution. As Freeman writes, “citizens who lose out in the resolution of competing claims are more likely to accept the decision when it is adopted after careful consideration of the relevant merits of competing moral claims for resources [through deliberation].”\textsuperscript{37} Citizens can rest assured that their arguments have been equally heard and considered to the fullest extent. Such assurance is not always realized when an institutional body decides outcomes. In fact, an institutional body can easily fail to give due attention to some considerations (especially those of minority groups).

Finally, it must be mentioned that a deliberative politics has important value beyond what has been mentioned above. In particular, a deliberative politics is a normatively rich means for reaching these outcomes. When citizens deliberate together with the aim of reaching publicly justified political outcomes, they directly partake in the enterprise of reaching publicly justified political outcomes. And in doing so, they directly honor the commitment to publicly justified outcomes,\textsuperscript{38} demonstrate respect for each other as free equals, and cultivate ties of civic friendship. In addition, they

\textsuperscript{36} It is an open question among public reason liberals whether public deliberation is a \textit{necessary condition} for legitimacy. Some, such as Cohen, think so.

\textsuperscript{37} Freeman. (2000), 383

\textsuperscript{38} See Quong. (2011), 258
demonstrate to fellow citizens that their worldviews are on equal footing and should not be privileged or used as the basis for coercion. These elements are noticeably absent in a non-deliberative politics.\textsuperscript{39}

Given that a deliberative politics committed to reaching publicly justified political outcomes is to be preferred over a non-deliberative one, it appears to follow that deliberation characterized by public reasoning is what the commitment to reaching publicly justified laws and policies implies for the deliberative processes. It is worth repeating that a deliberative politics relies heavily on citizen claims and arguments to reach political outcomes that are publicly justified; it is through citizen deliberation that political outcomes that are capable of being publicly justified are reached and actual justifications for these outcomes are arrived at. It follows that citizen inputs should, as best as possible, promote the aim of reaching publicly justified political outcomes in the public forum.

To reach publicly justified political outcomes in a politics that relies on citizen claims and arguments, it appears that these citizen inputs must reflect the kind of considerations that can count as properly justificatory. Generally speaking, “we would wish that the nature of our [interpersonal] reasoning to reflect the conditions for public justification.”\textsuperscript{40} Given that laws and policies must be justified using considerations all can accept, citizens ought to give expression to claims and arguments that consist of these

\textsuperscript{39}This normative dimension of a public reason liberal politics is certainly part of its appeal. The idea is that citizens directly demonstrate respect for fellow citizens in the public forum. Rawls says that citizens have a “duty of civility” to be “able to explain to one another on those fundamental questions how the principles and policies they advocate and vote for can be supported by the political values of public reason.” Rawls. (2005), 217

\textsuperscript{40}Gaus and Vallier. (2009), 66
considerations. If citizens deliberate about laws and policies using considerations that can count as justificatory, weight will be given to these considerations, attention will be given to laws and policies that can be justified using these considerations, and the outcome presumably will be laws and policies that are publicly justified. Public deliberation, thus, should take the form of public reasoning in which citizens present arguments, respond to counterarguments, and assess potential legislation and policy using facts, values, principles, guidelines of inquiry that all can accept.

Further, to ensure the proper functioning of these deliberative processes, there seems to be good reason to articulate a norm of restraint that specifies duties for citizens in the public forum to generally refrain from advancing claims and arguments that rely on parochial worldviews. Claims and arguments that rely on parochial worldviews can derail the project of reaching publicly justified political outcomes by disrupting the mechanism – a steady flow of citizen inputs free from worldview bases – upon which a public reason liberal politics depends to reach these outcomes. At best, arguments that rely on parochial worldviews can be a nuisance that can (temporarily) disrupt efforts to reach these outcomes. At worst, such arguments, especially if widespread, can cause public deliberation to deviate from public reasoning and escalate into a debate about worldviews.

In addition, it must be mentioned that the norm of restraint seems to be implicit in the idea of respect that a public reason liberal politics aims to realize. The deliberative processes of a public reason liberal politics, it is worth repeating, are supposed to realize a mutual respect among citizens with different worldviews. Citizens manifest respect for
each other by offering rationales others can accept for laws or policies. To advance arguments that rely on parochial bases appears to constitute a departure from these deliberative processes. A citizen who does so is purportedly no longer carrying out the task of offering fellow citizens rationales they can accept, but another project entirely (e.g., a project of religious conversion, philosophical persuasion, moral imposition, or whatever).

Overall, it seems that a deliberative politics characterized by public reasoning in which citizens uphold the norm of restraint best manifests the commitment to publicly justified political outcomes while offering a normatively rich vehicle for reaching these outcomes. A deliberative politics more completely than a non-deliberative politics honors the commitment to reaching publicly justified outcomes. In addition, such a politics provides a public space in which citizens can manifest respect for each other and realize other interpersonal goods. Given that a deliberative politics is to be preferred, it appears that the reasoning that characterizes such a politics should reflect the conditions for public justification. Citizen inputs that constitute this reasoning ought to consist of the kinds of considerations that can be invoked in a public justification. Nonpublic reasons, such as worldview considerations, should generally be discouraged from the reasoning processes that make up a deliberative politics. It is no wonder that public reason liberalism has garnered much support over the years.

5. Public Reason Liberalism: A Theoretical Feature
Sections 3 and 4 motivated the major procedural features of a public reason liberal politics. This section presents and motivates an important theoretical feature of public reason liberalism – its conception of public justification that informs the processes of its deliberative politics. Public reason liberalism assumes a “consensus/quasi-empirical/abstract” conception of public justification. This section illuminates the choices public reason liberalism makes in coming to this conception and motivates these choices.

Of course, the fact that there exist these choices presupposes flexibility in terms of how the concept of public justification can be specified. That there is flexibility in this respect follows from the fact that the general definition of a public justification – defined in section 2 as “a rationale or set of rationales that citizens, suitably construed, can accept as reasonable” – is vague and ambiguous. In a moment, we will see the different manners in which the concept can be specified without losing its definitional essence.

Before going into this, however, it must be mentioned that manners of specification are restricted by normative parameters that reflect the role that a public justification plays in liberal theory. The requirement to provide a public justification for coercive laws and policies, it is recalled, arises from the liberal idea that a coercive law or policy must be justifiable to those subject to it. And this idea has its roots in the idea that citizens in a free democracy are free equals living under conditions of permanent but reasonable pluralism. The liberal idea follows from a basic requirement of respect for the kind of subjects specified in the idea of citizens as free equals – respect for citizens as
free equals requires that the laws and policies under which citizens live are capable of being made reasonable from their point of view.

A conception of public justification, thus, must not only be true to the definition above, but it must also be consistent with liberal commitments and the role it plays in liberal theory. A conception of public justification must be true to its purpose of showing its recipients that the laws and policies under consideration are reasonable from their point of view. It must not be designed for the purposes of manipulating or coercing its recipients into accepting a law or policy. In addition, such a conception must not be inconsistent with the idea that citizens are free equals or that a plurality of worldviews is a permanent feature of society. It must not, for example, regard citizens as royal subjects, feudal vassals, or subordinates to church authority. Furthermore, it must not assume that citizens agree upon a single religion or worldview. So, for example, a conception of public justification cannot restrict rationales all citizens can accept to Christian rationales on the assumption that all who are duly rational will see the truth of Christianity.

Even with these normative parameters, the concept of public justification remains open to different interpretations. Recently, some political philosophers have articulated and exploited the concept’s ambiguities.\(^{41}\) Among these philosophers, Fred D’Agostino does the most thorough job. D’Agostino begins with the standard definition and shows that such a definition is ambiguous with respect to at least two areas. As such, the phrase

\(^{41}\) See Fred D’Agostino. *Free Public Reason: Making it Up as We Go*, (1996); Eberle. (2002); Gaus and Vallier. (2009)
“a public justification for proposal $P$” can mean different things. Below are different choices that a conception of public justification can embody.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Empirical vs. Normative</th>
<th>Empirical: justification of $P$ to citizens as they are</th>
<th>Normative: justification of $P$ to idealized citizens</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consensus vs. Convergence</td>
<td>Consensus: justification of $P$ on the basis of considerations on which there is a consensus</td>
<td>Convergence: justification of $P$ on the basis of convergence of diverse considerations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract citizens vs. particular citizens$^{42}$</td>
<td>Abstract citizens: justification of $P$ to citizens who have abstracted away from their worldviews</td>
<td>Particular citizens: justification of $P$ to citizens as particulars (worldviews, concrete identities, and so on)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Empirical vs. normative**

The empirical / normative dichotomy arises from the fact that “a rationale or set of rationales that citizens, suitably construed, can accept as reasonable” is ambiguous with respect to how citizens (i.e., the public) should be construed. Should the public be construed as they actually are? Or should a conception of public justification idealize the public? Should the public be construed as being ideally rational? As being fully informed? As possessing a perfectly coherent set of beliefs and commitments? As having achieved a base level of education?

The manner in which a conception of public justification construes the public has a direct effect over which rationales will count as justifications “citizens can accept”.

$^{42}$ While the other categories in this table are included by D’Agostino, this particular category is not. I have included it, however, because I believe it is important for clarification purposes for reasons articulated below.
This is because the rationales that “citizens” can accept depends upon how a conception of public justification construes “citizens”. A conception of public justification that construes the public as they actually are, for example, will count certain rationales as publicly justified that are not counted by a conception of public justification that construes the public as fully rational and informed, and vice versa. The same holds true for a conception of public justification that construes the public as having a perfectly coherent set of beliefs and commitments verses a conception that does not.

The literature has classified conceptions of public justification that, more or less, construe the public as they actually are as empirical (or populist) conceptions of public justification. “[T]he default populist position,” as Eberle writes, “is that a rationale R counts as a public justification only if the members of the public find R acceptable in light of their existing evidential sets, irrespective of their epistemic pockmarks and doxastic defects.” Populist conceptions are characterized by their resistance to idealizing the public. It is important to note, however, as Eberle does, that populist conceptions can come in degrees. Thus, one will find in the literature conceptions of public justification that somewhat idealize the public but are still labeled as “populist”.

It is commonly accepted that some form of idealization is required to render a populist conception of public justification plausible. The problem with a purely

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43 Eberle. (2002), 200 (my italics)

44 Frankly, I am unable to identify the precise point at which a conception of public justification ceases to become “populist”. However, nothing significant hinges on the (in-)ability to do so.

45 Eberle has a fine discussion of populist conceptions that covers ways in which a purely populist conception can be tweaked to become more palatable. Rather than providing a full discussion of populist conceptions here, I shall simply refer the reader to Eberle. (2002), chapter 7.
populist conception is that its construal of the public is too inclusive. After all, a purely populist conception’s construal of the public would include all citizens as subjects for whom a policy can be acceptable, including the insane incapable of rational argument, the zealot uncommitted to mutual reason-giving, and the ideologue incapable of being moved by reasons against her own views. However, the fact that these kinds of individuals “can withhold their assent because of obstinacy, selfishness, laziness, perversity, or confusions”\(^{46}\) should not preclude a well-grounded policy from being publicly justified. Any plausible conception of public justification, thus, must exclude these kinds of individuals from the public to whom a rationale can be acceptable.

Public reason liberalism’s construal of the public, presented in detail by Rawls, gracefully avoids the difficulties facing purely populist conceptions while preserving the spirit of populism. On the one hand, Rawls is concerned that members of the public find justifications for laws and policies acceptable from within their existing worldviews. More will be said about this point in the next section. On the other hand, however, Rawls stipulates that members of the public conceive of themselves as rational and reasonable free equals with certain fundamental capacities and interests.\(^{47}\) A public justification, thus, for Rawls, is a rationale or a set of rationales that members of the public who conceive of themselves as rational and reasonable free equals can accept.

This construal of the public enables public reason liberalism to exclude certain kinds of citizens – namely irrational and unreasonable ones – from the public to whom a

\(^{46}\) See Gaus. (1996), 131

\(^{47}\) For a discussion of the reasonable and the rational, see Rawls. (2005), 48-58. Gaus has a nice list of five characteristics of Rawls’s conception of the reasonable. See Gaus. (1996), 131-132.
rationale must be capable of being accepted. Rational and reasonable citizens, says Rawls, are committed to proposing and adhering to fair terms of social cooperation that are grounded in reasons all can accept.\textsuperscript{48} They subscribe to the project of public justification when it comes to discussing and deciding coercive laws and policies. In this way, public reason liberalism’s conception excludes the likes of the zealot who is uncommitted to mutual reason-giving. In addition, rational and reasonable citizens are “sufficiently intelligent and conscientious in exercising their powers of practical reason, [and their] reasoning exhibits none of the familiar defects in reasoning”.\textsuperscript{49} They are capable of publicly accessible, common sense modes of reasoning. In this way, public reason liberalism’s conception excludes the likes of the individual with severely defective reasoning abilities.\textsuperscript{50}

\emph{Consensus vs. convergence justification}

The consensus / convergence dichotomy arises from the fact that “a rationale or set of rationales that citizens, suitably construed, can accept as reasonable” is ambiguous with respect to whether the reasons that make up these rationales need to be shared among citizens. On the one hand, a public justification might take the form of a rationale or set of rationales that consist of reasons citizens can share. Such a justification would be a \emph{consensus public justification}. A consensus public justification for a law realizes a

\textsuperscript{48} Rawls. (2005), 49
\textsuperscript{49} Rawls. (2005), 119
\textsuperscript{50} Even in light of these changes, Gaus still criticizes public reason liberalism’s construal as being too populist. See Gaus. (1996), chapter 9
state of affairs in which citizens view that law as reasonable from a shared point of view, on the basis of shared considerations.

A consensus conception, however, is not the only reading. A small group of philosophers have recently proposed what they call convergence public justification. A public justification for a law, they suggest, need not be in the form of a rationale consisting of considerations citizens can share. Instead, a public justification can be in the form of a set of rationales, each of which consists of different (worldview) considerations. A free democracy can provide different rationales to different citizens, where each rationale is tailored to the addressee’s particular worldview. For example, in justifying a law, a free democracy can provide Bob the Christian with justification J1 that consists of Christian reasons and Sally the secular feminist with justification J2 that consists of secular feminist reasons. To seek justification for a proposal on the basis of convergence, then, is to aim for a state of affairs in which citizens view that proposal as reasonable from their different parochial point of views.

The consensus/convergence distinction is nicely articulated by D’Agostino in the following passage:

If both A and B share a reason R that makes a regime reasonable for them, then the justification of the regime is grounded in their consensus with respect to R. If A has a reason R_a that makes the regime reasonable for him, and B has a reason

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Rb that makes the regime reasonable for her, then the justification of the regime is based on *convergence* on it from separate points of view. ⁵²

Public reason liberal theorists standardly adopt the consensus view of justification. Laws and policies are to be justified on the basis of facts, values, principles, and guidelines of inquiry that all citizens *can share* in their capacity as free equals. More generally, laws and policies are to be made reasonable from a shared point of view – the point of view of a rational and reasonable free equal. This shared point of view constitutes the justificatory bases of a public reason liberal politics. ⁵³

A public reason liberal politics that adopts the consensus view has a distinct practical advantage over a politics that adopts the convergence view. Macedo reminds us that a law or policy, once decided upon, is not enacted in a static environment. The law or policy must be applied, elaborated on, and extended in light of new circumstances. In the event that such extension is necessary, the shared values, principles, and so on that are invoked in a consensus-type rationale for the law or policy can be used to carry out this extension. The content of a consensus-type rationale, as such, can contribute to the transparency of a law or policy’s extension. In these circumstances, “all citizens would be able, in principle, to enter into the mindset appropriate to officials’ exercising their

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⁵² D’Agostino. (1996), 30

⁵³ It should be mentioned, at least when it comes to Rawls, that citizens embrace the shared values and principles of public reason from their own parochial worldview. As a result, there is a sense in which features of what I have called “convergence” are present – citizens converge on the shared values and principles of public reason from separate points of view.
discretion and consider for themselves the appropriate standards of conduct."  

A politics that adopts convergence carries with it no such luxury, being that no shared currency of ideas among citizens is part of its normative aim. Because of this, a convergence politics may lead to a less stable society in which suspicion about the application of a law or policy is present.

To be fair, those sympathetic to the convergence view typically argue that it is more hospitable to pluralistic reasoning in politics than a consensus view. Rather than squelching expression of different points of view in the public forum, the reasoning of a deliberative politics that adopts convergence gives expression to this pluralism. This feature of a convergence politics is significant insofar as it is believed that fewer strictures on expression in political discourse are requisite for fostering the conditions for citizen integrity. It is also significant insofar as it is believed that expression of different points of view can promote stability and mutual respect among individuals with different worldviews by reminding them of the fact of reasonable pluralism.

I am sympathetic to these concerns that a convergence view addresses. As it will be made clear in later chapters, however, I do not believe that a consensus politics implies squelching expression of different points of view in the public forum to the extent


56 Limitations on expression can block the deep-seated convictions of some groups from being heard or recognized by the public. Limitations on expression can also block citizens from acting on integrity-conferring commitments. Gaus and Vallier present this worry as it appears within Nicholas Wolterstorff’s work. See Gaus and Vallier. (2009) and Nicholas Wolterstorff and Robert Audi. Religion in the Public Square: The Place of Religious Convictions in Political Debate. (1997), 105.

that public reason liberals have led us to believe. A central thesis of mine is that a deliberative politics that aims to justify laws and policies on the basis of consensus must expand the conversation so as to include – and even encourage to some extent – expression of worldview differences. Insofar as this is correct, it does not appear that a convergence politics is unique in its capability of addressing concerns about citizen integrity and promoting stability by illuminating the fact of reasonable pluralism to citizens. At the very least, the onus is on the convergence theorists to show that it is unique in this way.

Though I am partial to the consensus view, the convergence view will play a significant role in chapter 4, where I address the conditions suggested by the fact of incompleteness. It is important, thus, that the reader does not dispose of the convergence view from memory during the interim discussion.

*Abstract citizens vs. particular citizens*

The abstract citizens / particular citizens dichotomy is my addition to D’Agostino’s taxonomy. The dichotomy reflects whether citizens should be construed in the abstract or in the particular. For example, public reason liberalism, as we will see, construes citizens as free equals who have largely abstracted away from their worldviews, particular identities, personal commitments, and so on. The kinds of justifications for laws and policies for which public reason liberalism advocates are those that appeal to free equals *as such*. On the other hand, a conception of public justification
can also construe citizens as particulars with their unique worldviews, particular identities, personal commitments, and such.

While this dichotomy is not recognized by D’Agostino, it is important for the purpose of distinguishing between two kinds of consensus-type conceptions of public justification. A consensus conception can construe the public as abstract citizens (apart from their parochial worldview bases), as public reason liberalism does. However, it can also construe the public as particulars. While both require that the justificatory bases be ones that citizens can share, the former defines these justificatory bases as ones that citizens can share apart from their worldviews while the latter defines these bases as ones that citizens can share in their particularities. The latter, thus, leaves open the possibility of justifying a law or policy by appealing to worldview bases, provided that these bases happen to be shared by all citizens.

The problem facing a consensus conception that exclusively construes citizens as particulars is a scarcity of justificatory resources – there is likely to be a scarcity of justificatory bases that citizens in a deeply pluralistic society can share in their particularities. Public reason liberalism, thus, rightly opts for a consensus conception that construes citizens as abstract free equals. Of course, one might argue that the ideal choice would be a combination view that that construes citizens both as abstract free equals and particulars. I view this option as compatible with the commitments of public reason liberals, though I shall not go into detail about this here.

Consensus/quasi-empirical/abstract public justification
To summarize, public reason liberalism adopts a consensus/quasi-empirical/abstract conception of public justification. To cash this out, public reason liberalism’s conception of justification suggests that:

A public justification for some proposal, $P$, is a rationale that appeals to values, principles, and guidelines of inquiry that reasonable and rational free equals can share.

Such a view gracefully avoids the difficulties facing purely populist conceptions while preserving the spirit of populism. It has distinct practical advantages when it comes to applying and extending a law or policy under new circumstances. In addition, it avoids the scarcity of justificatory resources that is likely to face a consensus view that construes citizens in their particularity. For these reasons, public reason liberalism appears to make a sound choice when assuming its consensus/quasi-empirical/abstract conception of public justification as part of its theoretical structure.

6. The Content of Public Reason

Something must be said about the content of a public reason liberal politics – particularly about the shared values, principles, and guidelines that make up this content; how this content comes about in a free democracy characterized by worldview differences; the relationship this content has with a citizen’s worldview; and so on. These topics often attract only perfunctory attention in the work of public reason liberal
theorists. The notable exception is the work of Rawls. Given that Rawls provides the most comprehensive account of the shared values, principles, and guidelines of public reason, I shall follow his discussion in what follows.

The content of a public reason liberal politics is best understood in light of the essential interests and capacities of members of the public. This is because this content is responsive to these interests and capacities. Public reason liberalism, it is recalled, construes members of the public as free and equal.58 As a result, the content of a public reason liberal politics is responsive to the essential interests and capacities of free and equal citizens as well as the conditions for realizing and exercising these interests and capacities, respectively. As Freeman writes, “This conception of persons as free and equal, with interests in maintaining their moral and rational powers, provides the fundamental basis for thinking about the political values of public reason.”59

The values of public reason, in particular, respond to the fundamental interests of free and equal citizens in securing the conditions to maintain their freedom and equality, in pursuing their particular conception of the good, in reflecting on this conception of the good, in participating in political life, and so on.60 Rawls provides specific examples of such values. According to him, several are mentioned in the preamble of the U.S. Constitution: a more perfect union, justice, domestic tranquility, the common defense, the

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58 It is worth repeating that public reason liberalism also assumes that individuals in a free democracy conceive of themselves politically as free equals. See Freeman. (2000), 402

59 Freeman. (2000), 402

60 Freeman articulates these interests in good detail. See Freeman. (2004), 2029-30.
general welfare and the blessings of liberty for ourselves and our posterity. Of course, several others can be named: equality of opportunity, the social bases of self-respect, promoting biological and medical knowledge, environmental preservation, personal privacy, economic efficiency, respect for human life, sexual equality, freedom of speech and religion, and so on.

According to Rawls, citizens who live and are educated in the public political culture of a free democracy will be shaped by and become invested in these political values. They will recognize these values as essential to realizing their fundamental interests and capacities as free and equal citizens and embrace them for this reason. Over time, citizens will learn to accept and care for these values from within their own worldviews. When this occurs, these values will become parts of a consensus among citizens in a free democracy.

These values, and many others, are important parts of the content of a public reason liberal politics. However, these values are parts of this content only insofar as they appear in and are expressed by what Rawls calls a “political conception of justice” that interprets, orders, and applies these values. Values standing on their own – even ones that respond to the essential interests and features of free equals – are abstract, general, and ambiguous in terms of their significance. Consequently, if these values are to lead to anything substantive, a political conception of justice is needed to give shape to

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61 Rawls. (2005), 453
62 Freeman. (2004), 2030-31 footnote 25
63 I am indebted to Andy Reath for helping me articulate this point. Also, see Rawls. (2005), 160.
these values. It is only then that these values can be used by citizens to arrive at determinate resolutions to political questions.

Political conceptions of justice

A political conception of justice consists of two major components. First, political conceptions consist of substantive principles of justice for the basic structure of society. These principles form the framework of reasoning the citizen uses when deliberating within that particular political conception – a citizen deliberating within that political conception will attempt to resolve fundamental political questions by appealing to and applying its principles. Rawls specifies that the principles of justice of a reasonable political conception must be liberal; they must properly specify rights, liberties, and opportunities for citizens as free equals.

These principles of justice introduce and make relevant the values of public reason. For example, a principle of justice that articulates basic liberties and rights for citizens to pursue their conception of the good implicitly introduces and makes relevant values such as freedom, equality, social stability, national security, justice, equality of opportunity, economic prosperity, social bases of self-respect, and so on. While the principles of a political conception introduce these values and make them relevant to public deliberation, the second major component of a political conception of justice is responsible for properly combining, ordering, and giving shape to these values.

64 Rawls says that the values of public reason “fall under the principles of justice”. In other areas, Rawls uses the terms “principles” and “values” interchangeably when discussing the content of a political conception of justice, though doing so can lead to confusion. See Rawls. (2005), 224
The second major component of a political conception of justice is its guidelines of inquiry. These guidelines are “principles of reasoning and rules of evidence in the light of which citizens are to decide whether substantive principles [of the political conception] properly apply.”⁶⁵ These guidelines help citizens reason to laws and policies that best satisfy the principles of justice of the political conception. They are guidelines that, among other things, help citizens combine, order, and give shape to the values made relevant by the principles of justice in an effort to apply these principles appropriately.

Unfortunately, Rawls is somewhat reticent when it comes to the specifics of these guidelines. The most he says is that these guidelines must direct inquiry that is “free and public”.⁶⁶ It follows that the forms of reasoning and methods of assessing evidence specified by these guidelines must be public – they must be freestanding, non-controversial, and/or “found in common sense”. Despite leaving vague these guidelines, Rawls insists that “[w]ithout such guidelines substantive principles cannot be applied and this leaves the political conception incomplete and fragmentary.”⁶⁷

Two other features of reasonable political conceptions of justice must be mentioned: reasonable political conceptions of justice are supposed to be “complete” and “freestanding”. To be complete, a political conception of justice must have the resources to be able to arrive at determinate solutions to all fundamental political questions. It must not be indeterminate with respect to these fundamental political questions in terms of its

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⁶⁵ Rawls. (2005), 222
⁶⁶ Rawls. (2005), 224
⁶⁷ Rawls. (2005), 222
values, principles, standards of reasoning, methods of assessing evidence, and so on. To be “freestanding”, a political conception of justice must not depend on or be derived from any particular worldview. Its framework of reasoning must be capable of being accepted by all, irrespective of the worldview to which they subscribe. Combing these two features, a complete, freestanding worldview is capable of arriving at determinate solutions to all fundamental political questions without relying, either implicitly or explicitly, on a worldview.\textsuperscript{68}

According to public reason liberalism, a \textit{family}\textsuperscript{69} of reasonable freestanding and complete political conceptions of justice provides the content of a public reason liberal politics. To engage in public reasoning is to reason using the framework provided by one of these political conceptions. As Rawls writes:

\begin{quote}
A citizen engages in public reason when he or she deliberates within a framework of what he or she sincerely regards as the most reasonable political conception of justice, a conception that expresses political values that others, as free and equal citizens might also reasonably be expected reasonably to endorse.\textsuperscript{70}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{68} An important question here is whether it is possible to arrive at determinate resolutions to \textit{all} fundamental political questions without relying on or invoking – in any way, shape, or form – the moral orientations worldviews supply. As the next chapter will show, I am skeptical about this possibility.

\textsuperscript{69} Rawls writes about the family of political conceptions: “It is crucial that public reason is not specified by any one political conception of justice, certainly not by justice as fairness alone. Rather, its content – the principles, ideals, and standards that may be appealed to – are those of a family of reasonable political conceptions of justice that this family changes over time.” Rawls. (2005), 1-li

\textsuperscript{70} Rawls. (2005), 450
Because the political conceptions of justice that provide the content of public reason are freestanding from worldviews and responsive to the fundamental interests and capacities of free equals, to engage in public reasoning involves reasoning about laws and policies from the perspective of a free and equal citizen as such. As Freeman puts it:

Public reasoning implies the adoption of a general standpoint, one where people abstract from their ordinary [worldview, parochial, private] perspectives guided by their particular interests and comprehensive views and take up the point of view of a democratic citizen. From this point of view one is to focus on the reasons and interests of free and equal democratic citizens and what they require in order to function in their role as citizens to freely pursue a conception of their good.

It should be mentioned that even citizens who abstract away from their worldviews and reason from the perspective of a free equal will continue to disagree about fundamental political issues. This fact is implicit in affirming a family of political

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71 This is what Rawls means when he says that public reason is “the reason of [free, equal, democratic] citizens as such.” Rawls. (2005), 213

72 Freeman. (2004), 2029-30

73 This is because public reason underdetermines a single best solution to fundamental political questions. Put another way, there is more than one solution to fundamental political questions that can be justified using the resources of public reason. Schwartzman, following Gaus, provides useful terminology for thinking about this. Briefly, he defines a justification as undefeated if it can be defended against arguments that would undermine or rebut its conclusion. He goes on to suggest that public reason can produce undefeated justifications for two (or more) unique positions on a political issue, where neither justification is victorious. That is, each position enjoys a reasonable justification, but the resources of public reason cannot show that one is uniquely reasonable or more reasonable than the others. Having said this,
conceptions of justice that make up the content of public reason. Citizens are expected to reason from different political conceptions of justice, each of which may produce different (reasonable) solutions to political questions. “The role of public reason,” Freeman writes, “is not so much to eliminate or even diminish actual political disagreement, as it is to provide democratic citizens with reasons and arguments that, if valid and sound, they can accept as democratic citizens.”74 In the end, after a political decision is reached, some citizens may disagree with the solution and continue to argue and lobby against it. This is to be expected. At the same time, however, they can recognize it as publicly justified on the basis of reasons they can accept. As such, they can view it as legitimate law enacted and, thus, not resist it with force.75

*Developing a political conception of justice*

The discussion has already hinted at how citizens develop a political conception of justice for public reasoning. It was mentioned earlier that citizens who live and are educated in the public political culture of a free democracy will be shaped by and become invested in certain political values. Citizens will recognize these values as essential to realizing their fundamental interests and capacities as free and equal citizens and embrace

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74 Freeman. (2000), 405

75 This sentence follows Rawls’s discussion about how citizens can disagree with a political decision decided by public reasons but still regard it as legitimate. See Rawls. (2005), 480. Also see Rawls. (2005), 446, where he writes that a political decision “may not be thought the most reasonable, or the most appropriate, by each, but it is politically (morally) binding on him or her as a citizen and is to be accepted as such.”
them for this reason. As a result, they will learn to accept and care for these values from within their own worldviews.

Political conceptions of justice are worked out from these fundamental values of the public political culture. Working out a political conception involves combining and ordering these values to formulate a coherent framework of reasoning that can answer all fundamental questions. When citizens formulate this framework, they are to be guided by the idea of citizens as free equals, methods of inquiry that are free and public, and others ideas implicit in the public political culture of a free democracy. Importantly, citizens are to avoid the influences of their parochial worldview when combining and ordering political values.

This completes my summary of the content of a public reason liberal politics. To recap, the values that are essential parts of the content of a public reason liberal politics are responsive to the essential interests and features of free and equal citizens. These values are interpreted, ordered, and given specific shape by a political conception of justice which, along with other political conceptions, provides the content of a public reason liberal politics. To engage in public reasoning, as public reason liberalism conceives of it, is to reason about laws and policies from within one of these political conceptions of justice. To do so, moreover, is to deliberate about laws and policies as a free and equal citizen, independent of whatever private or parochial worldviews the individual might hold.

7. The Norm of Restraint Revisited
Before concluding this chapter, I want to look at important distinctions concerning the norm of restraint. I shall distinguish between discourse and decision-making versions of the norm of restraint, stronger and weaker versions of this norm, and, finally, a norm of restraint that restrict arguments that rely on nonpublic bases and a norm that restrict arguments made in terms of nonpublic bases.

(1) Discourse vs. decision-making versions: The first is a distinction between the discourse-version and the decision-making version of the norm of restraint. Section 3 described the discourse-version, which specifies moral demands on citizens within the context of public political discussion with fellow citizens. It requires that citizens in public political discussion generally refrain from advancing claims or arguments in favor of a law or policy that implicitly or explicitly invoke nonpublic considerations.

The decision-making version of the norm of restraint, on the other hand, similarly specifies moral demands on citizens, but this time within the context of political decision-making. Whereas the discourse-version specifies moral demands that fall on citizens in public political discussion, the decision-making version specifies demands when it comes time to vote for (or against) a law or policy. In essence, the decision-making-version requires that citizens refrain from voting for laws or policies that cannot be justified on the basis of considerations all can accept.76

76 It is possible for someone to take issue with one of the above specified versions of the norm of restraint but not the other. Someone, for example, might argue that while the decision-making-version is appropriate, the discourse-version would significantly impoverish public political discourse, exclude some citizens from giving expression to their deep-seated convictions in the public setting, and so on. On the other hand, someone might reject the decision-making version but insist upon the discourse version on the grounds that, say, introducing nonpublic convictions in public political discourse would cause civic strife between those with different worldviews.
Being that this dissertation focuses primarily on the political processes that involve public political discourse, the focus will be on the norm of restraint as it applies within the context of public political discussion. References to a norm of restraint, thus, unless indicated otherwise, will assume a discourse-version of the norm of restraint.

(2) Stronger vs. weaker versions: Some further distinctions need to be made concerning the discourse-version of the norm of restraint. As it happens, both stronger and weaker versions of the discourse-version appear in the literature. Some prefer a stronger version that requires citizens in the public forum to never make claims or arguments in that implicitly or explicitly invoke nonpublic considerations. Under this stronger version, citizens in the public political forum have a duty to offer only claims and arguments that invoke public considerations – claims or arguments that invoke nonpublic considerations are prohibited. The stronger version, in essence, envisions a public political sphere entirely free of nonpublic arguments and discussion.

While Rawls initially leant toward a stronger version, his most recent work on public reason proposes a weaker version that allows citizens at any time to present arguments that invoke nonpublic considerations for a law or policy, with the “proviso” that in due course a corresponding public argument for that policy or law is given. So, for example, a religious citizen may present an argument that invokes her ideological or

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77 See, for example, Larmore. (1987); Larmore. (2003); Macedo. (2000), 22; James Madigan. “The Idea of Public Reason Resuscitated”, in William and Mary Bill of Rights Journal, 10:3, (2002), 719-78. Rawls also appears to have endorsed, very early on, a strong version, but has since refined his view. See Rawls. (2005), 247 footnote 36

78 See Rawls. (2005), 462. For another public reason liberal who favors a “weaker” version, see Solum. (1993).
religious convictions at any time, provided that a public argument for whatever proposal she supports is forthcoming. 79

This weaker version is more lax than the stronger version for obvious reasons, but it still appears to limit citizen expression concerning certain nonpublic claims or arguments, specifically nonpublic claims or arguments that do not have corresponding “public” versions. As Lawrence Solum makes clear, it appears that under this weaker version, a nonpublic consideration can be advanced only if it “were the foundation for a public reason” or it “were an additional sufficient justification for a policy that would be given an independent sufficient justification by a public reason.” 80

There is reason to think that Rawls had specific motives for introducing his less restrictive view. Besides attempting to placate critics who charge that normative restrictions on worldview claims and arguments are unfair and disproportionately burdensome, Rawls specifically discusses a circumstance in which the introduction of moral, philosophical, and religious bases into the public forum has value, provided that the proviso is ultimately satisfied. Rawls specifies a situation in public discussion in which citizens come to doubt each other’s allegiance to freestanding public values and principles – such as in a discussion about a heated political issue. In such cases, citizens may have to reassure each other of their sincere commitment to public principles and values by introducing the moral, philosophical, or religious bases that ground their


80 Solum. (1993), 748
allegiance to basic political values and principles. By introducing these, citizens demonstrate to their fellow citizens that they do, indeed, affirm basic political values.⁸¹

(3) Rely on vs. in terms of: Another important distinction concerning the discourse-version of the norm of restraint is with respect to arguments that rely on nonpublic grounds and arguments that are made in terms of nonpublic grounds. This distinction is made necessary by the fact that an argument that relies on nonpublic grounds does not necessarily have to be expressed in terms of nonpublic grounds. A citizen, for example, can express an argument concerning, say, abortion, same-sex marriage, or capital punishment that relies on nonpublic grounds in terms of public considerations, leaving unsaid the nonpublic grounds working beneath the surface. The citizen’s ability to do so is accentuated by the fact that nonpublic grounds are often subtle and non-transparent.

This distinction is important. First, it unearths the option of only restricting arguments cast in terms of nonpublic grounds, but not necessarily arguments that rely on nonpublic grounds. Public reason liberalism, as it might be guessed, defends a more stringent restriction – it restricts arguments that rely on nonpublic grounds, even if these arguments are cast in terms of public considerations. Second, the distinction is important for my purposes, given that chapter 2 argues that there are some, if not many, fundamental political questions with respect to which citizens cannot avoid relying on nonpublic grounds when defending their favored laws and policies. The question then

⁸¹ See Rawls. (2005), 462-66
becomes whether the norm of restraint requires citizens to cast their arguments in terms of public considerations, even though they rely on nonpublic grounds.

8. A Look Ahead

This completes my discussion of public reason liberalism. Public reason liberalism has been characterized as a view that attempts to articulate a politics for a free democracy that best honors the commitment to reaching publicly justified laws and policies. The politics public reason liberalism specifies is a deliberative politics characterized by public reasoning where citizens deliberate about laws and policies from the standpoint of free equals as such. Citizens are also to generally refrain from advancing claims or arguments that implicitly or explicitly rely on nonpublic grounds.

Moreover, this politics is informed by a specific conception of public justification. As part of its theoretical structure, public reason liberalism assumes a conception of public justification that is quasi-populist and consensus-based. This conception of public justification, in addition, defines its subjects as abstract free equals who are shaped by and invested in the public political culture of a free democracy.

Overall, I embrace the fundamental insights of public reason liberalism, including its commitment to reaching publicly justified political outcomes, its emphasis on deliberation as a vehicle for reaching these outcomes, and its preference for a mode of justification that appeals to bases citizens can share. At the same time, however, I am wary that public reason liberal theorists have made significant oversimplifications in two
areas. These oversimplifications cause theorists to overlook two facts as well as the conditions these facts present for a deliberative body in a democratic politics.

Chapter 2 will present these facts. It will be argued that worldviews are, in a certain sense, entangling and that the political conceptions of justice that provide the content of a public reason liberal politics are incomplete. Each of these facts challenge the ability of a public reason liberal politics to generate publicly justified political outcomes, given its current procedural and theoretical structure. As a result, public reason liberalism must be refined so that its politics can continue to generate publicly justified political outcomes through deliberative processes under the conditions suggested by these two facts.

Chapters 3 and 4 will make specific the changes that need to be made to public reason liberalism – both on the procedural and theoretical levels. Chapter 3 will argue that in light of the fact of entangling worldviews, a discussion in which citizens exchange worldviews in public deliberation becomes essential to the process of reaching publicly justified political outcomes in the public forum. As a result, such a discussion must be worked into the procedures of a public reason liberal politics. Chapter 4 will argue that in light of the fact of incompleteness, public reason liberalism must make room in its theoretical structure for a conception of public justification whose criteria can be fulfilled under conditions suggested by the fact of incompleteness. The hope is that once these changes are made, public reason liberalism becomes a more honest view that can properly realize the aims for which it is designed.
Chapter 2: 
Entangling Worldviews and Incompleteness

Chapter 1 described the features of public reason liberalism and the type of politics it specifies. Public reason liberalism, to repeat a central claim from chapter 1, specifies a politics characterized by public reasoning in which citizens deliberate about laws and policies from the standpoint of free equals, independent of their parochial worldviews, personal interests, and so on. Citizens, furthermore, are expected to generally refrain from advancing claims and arguments that rely on worldviews. Such a politics, public reason liberal theorists insist, honors the commitment to reaching political outcomes whose grounds all in a pluralistic democracy can accept. The idea is that if citizens deliberate about laws and policies in such a manner, weight will be given only to the considerations all can accept, attention will be given only to laws and policies that can be justified using these considerations, and the outcome will be laws and policies that are publicly justified.

Chapter 1 ended with a worry that public reason liberal theorists have made oversimplifications, causing them to overlook two significant facts as well as the conditions these facts present for a deliberative body in a democratic politics. Chapter 2 illuminates these oversimplifications and the facts these oversimplifications mask. The aim is to provide good reason to think that these facts articulate truths about citizens in a free democracy and the content of public reason. The following chapters will make specific how these facts challenge the ability of a public reason liberal politics to generate
publicly justified political outcomes, given its current procedural and theoretical structure.

As a preview, below are the two facts that this chapter brings to light:

(1) The Fact of Entangling Worldviews – citizens will (a) be unable to escape the influences of their parochial worldviews on their own and will initially (b) embrace a political framework of reasoning that is tainted by their parochial worldviews

(2) The Fact of Incompleteness – the content of a public reason is insufficiently rich to arrive at determinate solutions to some fundamental political questions

Section 1 presents and argues for the fact of entangling worldviews. The fact of entangling worldviews is brought to light after acknowledging a more detailed characterization of a worldview than political philosophers typically provide. Specifically, it is shown that this more detailed characterization implies that citizens will be unable to escape the influences of their parochial worldviews by their own efforts.

Section 2 presents and argues for the fact of incompleteness. The argument involves illuminating a more complete list of areas on which political issues turn than public reason liberal theorists typically recognize. Once this list of areas is acknowledged, there is good reason to think that arriving at determinate solutions to some fundamental political questions depends upon maneuvers that a freestanding political conception of
justice cannot always direct. Section 3 wraps up by stating that the truth of the two facts explicated in this chapter present a deliberative body with obstacles for which public reason liberal theorists have not properly accounted when specifying their politics for a free democracy.

1. The Fact of Entangling Worldviews

The success of a public reason liberal politics, as a response to pluralism, depends on citizens who are able to carry out a politics characterized by public reasoning. The way to publicly justified laws and policies is through citizen inputs that are expected to be already refined and purified, through individual efforts, from worldview bases. Achieving publicly justified laws and policies, thus, depends on the proper workings of the individual citizen’s “internal filter”, which serves to separate public bases from worldview ones. The citizen’s “internal filter”, it is assumed, meets a certain level of operational efficacy that allows her to enter into the political realm ready and able to carry out a politics characterized by public reasoning.¹ Specifically, it is assumed, the citizen can enter politics ready and able to (1) present claims and arguments that do not rely on her parochial worldview and (2) assess proposed claims and arguments without being influenced by her parochial worldview.

This section challenges this assumption. The worldviews that citizens subscribe to in a free democracy are deeply internalized cognitive orientations that cannot be set aside through citizen intrapersonal efforts. As a result, I argue, citizens will bring with

¹ Here, I follow Gaus and Vallier. (2009), 70.
them to the public forum a political framework of reasoning that is entangled with their parochial worldviews. Thus, citizens’ political deliberations, including their presentation and assessment of arguments, will be tainted by this parochial worldview. While this section does not go as far as to suggest that disentangling a political framework from a parochial worldview is impossible, it does suggest that public reason liberalism, in working with an oversimplified idea of a worldview, underestimates the difficulty for an individual citizen to do so. Later chapters will examine the possibility of disentangling through interpersonal dialogue.

Worldviews as entangling cognitive orientations

The concept of “worldview” is an indispensable idea in public reason liberalism’s vocabulary. It appears, whether directly or indirectly, in the questions that express the problem public reason liberalism tries to address (“How should citizens and public officials go about setting policy in a society of free equals characterized by a plurality of worldviews?”) as well as in the solution to this problem (“Citizens ought to set aside their worldviews and deliberate about legislation and policy using principles, values, and guidelines of inquiry all can accept as free equals”).

Being that the concept of a worldview is a significant idea in public reason liberalism, it is surprising that few political philosophers have examined it in detail. Many political philosophers, both proponents and critics of public reason liberalism, have
viewed a worldview as merely a conception of human value (“conception of the good”). Others, less crudely, have viewed a worldview as a formal system constituted by a set of premises or propositions that reflect the particular beliefs, values, and ideals of someone who subscribes to that worldview (“comprehensive doctrine”, “belief system”).

Typically the idea of a worldview is not specified beyond this.

I believe that standard characterizations of a worldview are oversimplified. These characterizations fail to give due attention to the perspectival and existential imports of a worldview for the citizen as well as the processes that lead to the internalization of this view. As a result, they ignore important practical realities about citizens and their worldviews in a free democracy. Ultimately, I believe, there are at least four features of a worldview that standard characterizations fail to capture. These features are significant because they imply another important feature of a worldview that presents an obstacle to public reason liberalism’s current path to reaching publicly justified political outcomes.

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2 Many political philosophers have been content with the label “conception of the good” to indicate that over which citizens in a pluralistic society differ. At times, “comprehensive doctrine” and “conception of the good” are used interchangeably. See, for example, Rawls. (2005), xliv footnote 16: “Both Theory and PL speak of a (comprehensive) conception of the good. From here on, it is referred to as a doctrine.” Following this characterization, many are content with describing the fact of pluralism as a thesis about the values citizens hold. Cohen describes pluralism as “the fact that there are distinct, incompatible understandings of value.” Macedo writes: “For even when people are motivated by a desire to find fair terms of social cooperation […] disagreement will still result from the fact that people hold incompatible values.” Gaus writes: “The free exercise of human reason leads us to disagree on wide variety of issues concerning value, goods, ideals of the good life and so on.” See Cohen. (1997), 408; Macedo. (1999), 7; Gaus. (1999), 274.

3 See Rawls. (2005), 175: “A doctrine is fully comprehensive when it covers all recognized values and virtues within one rather precisely articulated scheme of thought; whereas a doctrine is only partially comprehensive when it comprises certain (but not all) nonpolitical values and virtues and is loosely articulated.” See Macedo. (unpublished), 25: “In some respects it is important to regard the public conception as […] furnishing sufficient resources to decide questions concerning justice and basic rights, and so not essentially dependent on any particular comprehensive belief system citizens also hold.”
What I want to do below is explicate these features with the help of voices outside of political philosophy. As indicated above, seldom in political philosophy do we get a detailed description of a worldview. In contrast, social scientists have paid a good amount of attention to worldviews and their features. Let us look at what these social scientists have to say about worldviews. Consider James Olthuis’s characterization:

A worldview is a framework or set of fundamental beliefs through which we view the world and our calling and future in it. [T]his vision is a channel for the ultimate beliefs which give direction and meaning to life. It is the integrative and interpretive framework by which order and disorder are judged; it is the standard by which reality is managed and pursued; it is the set of hinges on which all our everyday thinking and doing turns.  

And Melvin Miller’s characterization:

World views and their concomitant constructs are like structural ‘filters’ through which phenomena are perceived. They are basic sets of presuppositions that are molded, for the most part, by words and concepts and serve as as frame of reference for one’s thoughts and behaviors. In fundamental terms, one’s world

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view or philosophical frame of reference is a set of conceptual rules used to guide one’s life and make sense of one’s world.\textsuperscript{5}

And Walter Kaufman’s:

An overall framework of interpretation of this sort, which gives meaning to existence, is indispensable to humans. We cannot gain orientation in life and cannot act without some conception or vision of the context within which we are living and moving – and without some understanding of our own place and role within that context. Such a framework of interpretation is like the air we breathe: it does not easily or quickly become an object directly perceived or noticed.\textsuperscript{6}

And James Davison Hunter’s:

Let it be clear, the principles and ideals that mark these competing systems of moral understanding are by no means trifling but always have a character of ultimacy to them. They are not merely attitudes that can change on a whim but basic commitments and beliefs that provide a source of identity, purpose, and togetherness for the people who live by them. It is for precisely this reason that political action rooted in these principles and ideals tends to be so passionate.\textsuperscript{7}


\textsuperscript{6} Walter Kaufman. *Theological Imagination*, (1981), 27

\textsuperscript{7} James Davison Hunter. *Culture Wars*, (1991), 42
At least three of these authors – Olthuis, Miller, and Kaufman – emphasize the perspectival import of a worldview. By having “perspectival import”, a worldview affects the way in which an individual apprehends, interprets, and deliberates. Olthuis characterizes a worldview as an “integrative and interpretive framework” and “a framework or set of fundamental beliefs through which we view the world”. Miller characterizes a worldview as providing “structural ‘filters’ through which phenomena are perceived”. And Kaufman characterizes a worldview as an “overall framework of interpretation” that provides one with “orientation in life” and a “vision of the context” in which one is living.

To reinforce the idea that worldviews have perspectival import, consider examples of worldviews: Catholicism, liberal feminism, Buddhism, Islam, and secular humanism. To be a Catholic, a liberal feminist, a Buddhist, a Muslim, or a secular humanist means more than embracing a set of premises that reflect the beliefs, values, and ideals of that particular worldview. Rather, to be a Catholic, a liberal feminist, a Buddhist, a Muslim, or a secular humanist involves operating behind a perspectival lens through which that person sees the world. That person evaluates in terms of a particular conceptual framework; emphasizes the importance of certain problems over others; interprets moral and political values through a certain lens; deliberates on the basis of particular epistemic standards; and operates with basic assumptions about the world.

In addition to perspectival import, all of the authors emphasize the powerful existential import of a worldview. Kaufman says that a worldview “gives meaning to existence [and] is indispensable to humans”. Similarly, Miller suggests that worldviews
are “used to guide one’s life and make sense of one’s world”. Olthuis writes that they “give direction and meaning to life”. Hunter emphasizes the existential import of a worldview the most: “[worldviews] provide a source of identity, purpose, and togetherness for the people who live by them”.

Kaufman is the one to emphasize the subtly of the content of a worldview. According to him, a worldview “does not easily or quickly become an object directly perceived or noticed”. Sociologist Kristen Luker echoes this idea: “[the content of a worldview is] so deep and so dear to us that we find it hard to imagine that we even have a ‘world view’ – to us it is just reality – or that anyone else could not share it. By definition, those areas covered by a ‘world view’ are those parts of life we take for granted, never imagine questioning, and cannot envision decent moral people not sharing.”

Finally, though not covered by these authors, it must also be mentioned that worldviews are typically deeply internalized. A free democracy can expect its citizens to have internalized their worldviews by means of various processes in the private sphere, including their upbringing, personal and professional experiences, conversations with likeminded family members and friends, selectivity in media outlets, memberships in social and political organizations, practices honoring their worldview doctrines (e.g., religious services, worship, scripture reading), and so on.

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Overall, it is clear that a worldview is more than what is captured by labels such as “conception of the good”, “belief system”, or “comprehensive doctrine”. More profoundly, a worldview is (1) a perspectival orientation that (2) has existential import for the individual. Its (3) content is subtle and (4) deeply internalized (usually from childhood). This shift in characterization is significant because the new characterization implies another feature of a worldview that political philosophers miss. As an internalized perspectival orientation with existential import, a worldview is entangling. That is, beyond the profound influence of a worldview on the individual, the entangling nature of a worldview suggests that this influence cannot be avoided by the individual on her own, whether in private and public life. Let me articulate reasons for thinking this.

First, the fact that a worldview is subtle gives rise to serious intellectual obstacles to identifying all of its elements. The elements of a worldview act behind the scenes as subtle influences, affecting the ways in which an issue is viewed, concepts are interpreted, and values are understood. They subtly influence choice of moral vocabulary, when and how distinctions are drawn, which arguments are found convincing, and on whom it is thought the burden of proof rests. Even for the most conscientious citizen, discerning all of these is unrealistic.

Second, the existential import of a worldview can also create obstacles to identifying its elements. Because a worldview provides “a source of identity, purpose, and togetherness for the people who live by them”, even the most intellectually honest citizen will encounter psychological obstacles to conducting the impartial, full scale self-

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9 Greenawalt makes a similar point on the topic of religious citizens and their worldviews. See Greenawalt, (1988), 155
scrutiny needed to identify all its elements. The deep existential import of a worldview renders citizens psychologically incapable, on their own, of carrying out this impartial self-scrutiny. Indeed, this existential import is a major reason that “those areas covered by a ‘world view’ are those parts of life we take for granted, never imagine questioning, and cannot envision decent moral people not sharing”.

Third, even if a citizen succeeds in identifying all the elements of her worldview, the fact that a worldview is a cognitive orientation with perspective import raises obstacles to setting aside its identified elements. Bracketing a cognitive orientation that governs apprehension, interpretation, and thought – even when consciously identified – is not as easy as flipping off a switch. The nature of such an orientation is unlike that of a set of premises (e.g., belonging to a logician) or pieces of evidence (e.g., belonging to a 12-person jury) that can be counted or discounted in an impartial logical calculation. Whereas the literature’s characterization of a worldview seems to imply that the content of a worldview can be discounted in this way, my characterization does not.

Fourth, the fact that a worldview is internalized (likely from an early age) through a confluence of social processes is another reason to anticipate obstacles to setting aside its elements, even if these elements are consciously identified. In addition, a worldview provides manners of apprehension, interpretation, and thought that are likely to have been used throughout one’s life – from early childhood to adulthood – to understand the world and render meaningful personal experiences, histories, and narratives. Because a

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10 Rawls seems to assume that bracketing a worldview is similar to bracketing a piece of evidence in a trial. See Rawls’s analogy between how evidence in a criminal case can be excluded and how a citizen’s “view of the whole truth” can be put aside. Rawls. (2005), 218-219
worldview is profoundly internalized and reinforced in this way, its content cannot be readily discounted as one does in an impartial logical calculation.

All in all, a characterization of a worldview as a deeply internalized perspectival orientation whose content is subtle yet existentially meaningful to the individual brings to light its entangling nature. Specifically, such a characterization strongly suggests that a worldview cannot be avoided by the individual on her own, whether in private and public life. I now want to examine the entangling nature of worldviews as it expresses itself in the context of politics. As we will see, the entangling nature of worldviews has significant implications for how citizens, prior to partaking in a public reason liberal politics, develop political frameworks of reasoning.

*The influence of worldviews in developing a political framework of reasoning*

So far, I have detailed the entangling nature of worldviews. I now want to examine the implications of this point for public reason liberalism’s account of how political frameworks of reasoning are developed by a citizen in a free democracy. I argue that if a worldview is as entangling as suggested, there is good reason to think that worldviews will unduly influence the development of a political framework of reasoning for public political deliberation. If this is right, we can expect that the framework of reasoning a citizen brings to the public political forum will be deeply entangled with her worldview.

It is worth repeating why a framework of reasoning provided by a political conception of justice is crucial to public reason liberalism’s idea of public reasoning.
Recall from chapter 1 that a framework of reasoning provided by a political conception of justice provides the content of public reason. A citizen engages in public reasoning, according to Rawls, only insofar as she appeals “to one of these political conceptions – to their ideals and principles, standards and values – when debating fundamental political questions.”\(^\text{11}\) Elsewhere, Rawls writes that a “feature of public reasoning […] is that it proceeds entirely within a political conception of justice.”\(^\text{12}\) An essential condition for the proper functioning of a deliberative politics characterized by public reasoning, thus, is that each citizen properly develops and adopts a framework of reasoning provided by a freestanding political conception of justice and deliberates from this framework in the public political forum.

According to public reason liberalism, how does a citizen develop a freestanding framework of reasoning? A freestanding framework of reasoning, as implied above, is provided by a political conception of justice. Chapter 1 described a freestanding political conception of justice as being worked out – independent of one’s parochial worldview – from the fundamental ideas and values of the public political culture of a free democracy. These are shared ideas and values that citizens living in a free democracy are purportedly shaped by and invested in. Rawls discusses the development of these political conceptions of justice on multiple occasions:

\(^\text{11}\) Rawls. (2005), 453

\(^\text{12}\) Rawls. (2005), 453
[A political conception of justice] is elaborated in terms of fundamental political ideas implicit in the public political culture of a democratic society.\textsuperscript{13}

We start, then, by looking to the public culture itself as the shared fund of implicitly recognized basic ideas and principles. We hope to formulate these ideas and principles clearly enough to be combined into a political conception of justice […]\textsuperscript{14}

“[w]e turn instead to the fundamental ideas we seem to share through the public political culture. From these ideas we try to work out a political conception of justice congruent with our considered convictions on due reflection.”\textsuperscript{15}

Using the fundamental values of a shared public political culture, a citizen, at first, works out a political conception of justice as a freestanding view, apart from her parochial worldview. This involves combining and organizing these values to formulate a “coherent political conception”\textsuperscript{16} that can supply answers to all fundamental political questions. After doing so, the citizen embeds this political conception of justice into her worldview. This may involve having to tweak parts of her worldview to accommodate

\textsuperscript{13} Rawls. (2005), 223

\textsuperscript{14} Rawls. (2005), 8

\textsuperscript{15} Rawls. (2005), 150

\textsuperscript{16} Rawls. (2005), 8
that political conception. The ideal is to have all citizens embed a reasonable political conception of justice into their worldview. Once this occurs, an overlapping consensus has been achieved.

Now, departing from the traditional public reason liberal theorist, let us take into account the entangling nature of a worldview – i.e., the idea that the influences of a worldview cannot be avoided by the individual on her own, whether in private and public life. When we do so, I believe, a precondition for developing a political conception of justice that provides a freestanding framework of reasoning is undermined. Consider that under the public reason liberal account discussed above, a citizen can come to a political conception of justice that provides a freestanding framework of reasoning only insofar as such a political conception can be worked out from the shared fundamental values of the public political culture of a free democracy. Here, to classify fundamental values as “shared” is to presuppose a common, freestanding understanding of the content of these values – citizens must come to a common understanding of the fundamental values of their public political culture that is derived from and can be presented apart from worldview bases.

But why think that citizens can come to such an understanding of the values of the public political culture? Why think that they can apprehend and become invested in these values in a manner uninfluenced by their parochial worldviews? Indeed, in taking into account the entangling nature of a worldview, it must be presumed that citizens will be influenced by their parochial worldviews as they experience the public political culture and come to understand its fundamental values. As a result, it must be presumed that
different citizens will impute different content to fundamental values of the public political culture.

A worldview can impact a citizen’s understanding of the values of the public political culture in various ways. First, a citizen might be influenced by her already established views about morality as she comes to understand these values. In particular, she might privilege understandings of values that support and are in accord with these views. For example, a liberal feminist and staunch advocate for abortion rights might construe the values of freedom and equality in a manner that supports her already established views about abortion. Or a Catholic might construe and elevate the value of social stability in a manner that supports her established views about same-sex marriage.

Second, a citizen’s understanding of the values of the public political culture might be influenced by worldview beliefs or ideas that have perspectival and existential import but are not immediately transparent. For example, notions of ensoulment and human sanctity – even if not consciously invoked – can subtly inform understandings of what respect for human life requires. Beliefs about human nature (e.g., perhaps rooted in a notion of original sin, the human capacity for compassion) can subtly affect opinions about the conditions for social stability. Intuitions about the capabilities of the human being can inform beliefs about what constitutes equal opportunity. Notions about inherent psychological human needs can inform opinions about the preconditions for freedom. Attitudes toward the rationality of religious belief can influence understandings of the boundaries of freedom of religion. Finally, the worldview grounds from which a value is affirmed can affect a citizen’s understanding of how far that value extends. For
example, a hedonistic utilitarian who affirms freedom on utilitarian grounds will have different ideas about what freedom requires in certain contexts than a Christian who affirms the value on Christian grounds.

Now, to be clear, I am not denying that a consensus between citizens will occur in a weak sense where, for example, progressives and libertarians, theists and atheists, secular feminists and Catholics all affirm values such as freedom, justice, and equality. What I am suggesting is that given the entangling nature of worldviews, there is a presumption that different citizens will impute different content to these fundamental values, even if they are situated in the “same” public political culture. Thus, rather than a pre-defined, static, shared public political culture that generates a fund of values from which a citizen can work out a freestanding political framework of reasoning, we can expect different understandings of the public political culture.

Now, even if the account I have provided above is mistaken, and citizens can somehow come to a shared (albeit very general) understanding of the fundamental values and ideas of the public political culture, there is still reason to be skeptical that a citizen can work out a freestanding political framework of reasoning before entering the public forum. Even if it is true that citizens can arrive at a shared understanding of the fundamental values of the public political culture, why think that each citizen can formulate and combine these values into a complete political framework of thought without being influenced by his or her worldview? Developing a political framework of

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17 I do believe that a “weak” consensus will occur and be robust enough to produce agreement that any sincere application of values such as “freedom”, “equality”, and “justice” precludes certain kind of practices. Those who embrace these values will agree that a society that permits slavery, religious persecution, racial segregation, or strict restrictions of speech and assembly is a society that fails to embody these values.
reasoning from fundamental values is a complex, multistep process that leaves ample room for worldviews to infiltrate.

Consider the complexity of working out a political framework of reasoning. A political framework of reasoning provided by a political conception of justice, it is worth repeating, is supposed to be capable of arriving at a determinate solution to all fundamental political questions. That is, for each fundamental political question, the political conception should have the resources to weigh and order relevant values, interpret these values (if necessary), weigh factual evidence, and do whatever else necessary to direct an individual to a determinate solution. A political conception, Rawls writes, “should express principles, standards, and ideals, along with guidelines of inquiry, such that the values specified by it can be suitably ordered or otherwise united so that those values alone give a reasonable answer to all, or nearly all, questions involving constitutional essentials and matters of basic justice.”\(^{18}\)

Thus, working out a political framework entails much more than simply taking the fundamental values of the public political culture as they are. It requires generating guidelines for ranking them, interpreting them, giving them proper weights, and combining them so that these values, together, form a complete political conception from which a citizen can deliberate about and come to conclusions about legislation and public policy. Working out a political framework also requires working out general guidelines of inquiry that specifies standards of reasoning and rules for assessing evidence.

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\(^{18}\) Rawls. (2005), 454
Given the entangling nature of worldviews and the intellectual and psychological impediments to escaping their influences, however, there is good reason to think that citizens will be influenced by their worldviews as they shape and combine the fundamental values of the public political culture. In the spirit of the point made earlier, I am inclined to think that citizens will develop their frameworks of reasoning so that they are made compatible with fundamental facets of their parochial worldviews, including the moral conclusions that these worldviews already support.

_Tainted political frameworks of reasoning_

This section began with presenting a more detailed characterization of a worldview than political philosophers typically provide. This characterization brought to light the entangling nature of worldviews, which suggests that citizens will be unable to escape the influences of their worldviews on their own. This section then examined the implications of this point for working out a framework of reasoning from the fundamental ideas and values of the public political culture. It was argued that worldviews will not be passive as citizens experience these fundamental ideas and values or work out a political framework from these ideas and values. As a result, it can be expected that citizens will bring with them into the public forum a political framework of thought that is deeply entangled with their worldview bases.

The upshot is that the individual citizen will deliberate in the public political forum from a political framework tainted by her worldview. Moreover, she will be incapable, on her own, of disentangling this framework from the parochial worldview.
bases that infiltrate it. As a result, her presentation and assessment of claims and arguments will be influenced by her worldview, even if her worldview bases are not explicitly articulated or even noticed. In addition, she is likely to have a distorted (i.e., both an overly narrow and broad) sense of what can be properly justified using public reason. In some cases, she will mistakenly reject the justifiability of certain views that can be publicly justified while in other cases, she will mistakenly insist upon the justifiability of views (e.g., some of her own) that cannot be publicly justified.

These facts present a serious challenge to the enterprise of public reasoning. They threaten to render such an enterprise an inauthentic charade that falls short of reaching publicly justified political outcomes. The next chapter will further describe this challenge and examine a way of addressing it that involves working into a public reason liberal politics an expansive interpersonal dialogue in which citizens exchange worldviews.

2. The Fact of Incompleteness

It is recalled from the first chapter that the content of a public reason liberal politics is provided by a family of reasonable freestanding political conceptions of justice, each of which provides a framework of reasoning that gives expression to the values that all free equals can accept. A citizen engages in public reason when she deliberates using the principles and guidelines of inquiry belonging to one of these freestanding frameworks of reasoning. Moreover, each political conception of justice is claimed to be complete in that it enables citizens reasoning purely from the framework
provided by that political conception to arrive at determinate, freestanding solutions to all fundamental political questions.

This section presents reason to think that the freestanding political conceptions of justice of a public reason liberal politics are incomplete – though these political conceptions might possess the resources to arrive at determinate solutions to some fundamental political questions, there is reason to think that they will be insufficiently rich to reach determinate solutions to others. My aim is to establish a working presumption that a deliberative body, in some cases, will encounter conditions in which the set of bases free equals can share runs dry.

While the idea of incompleteness has sporadically appeared in the literature, public reason liberal theorists have largely been able deflect the idea. This section presents a more robust case for incompleteness that articulates a more detailed list of areas on which political issues turn than theorists have previously recognized. This list is not formed ad hoc; rather, it is a list that, I believe, addresses an oversimplification. Once this list is acknowledged, there is good reason to think that arriving at determinate solutions to some fundamental political questions depends upon maneuvers that a freestanding political conception cannot always direct.

The content of a political conception of justice

Before presenting my reasons for thinking that the political conceptions of justice that provide the content of public reason are incomplete, it is worth revisiting what public reason liberals say about the content of a political conception of justice. To introduce this
content, I want to briefly examine why public reason liberalism views a need for political conceptions of justice in public reasoning. Why must citizens deliberate from a framework provided by a political conception of justice? Why can’t citizens simply deliberate in the public forum on the basis of political values that they share?

It is to Rawls’s credit that when it comes to the requisite conditions for arriving at determinate solutions to fundamental political questions, he acknowledges that a simple agreement on political values will not do. Freeman expresses Rawls’s thoughts about the insufficiency of such an agreement with detailed clarity:

Even if all citizens might agree on the relevant political values of public reason and impartially vote the common good, they will still assign political values different degrees of importance. In the absence of a more secure basis for public reason, they likely will assign importance to the political values of public reason according to the demands of their particular values and comprehensive views. But this is a breakdown of public reason: laws are ultimately decided according to the particular reasons of comprehensive views, which many democratic citizens cannot reasonably be expected to endorse.19

In other words, values on their own – even if shared by citizens – are abstract, general, and ambiguous in terms of their significance. These values need to be given specific shape if they are to lead to determinate solutions to political questions. It is in

19 Freeman. (2000), 403-04
light of this fact that political conceptions of justice are needed. Political conceptions of justice are presented as providing the “secure basis for public reason” without which political values would remain amorphous and public reason would be incomplete. This is why Rawls insists that to engage in public reasoning is not simply to appeal to public values that all free equals can accept, but to deliberate within a framework of reasoning provided by one among a family of reasonable political conceptions of justice.

A political conception of justice, as we saw in chapter 1, consists of two major components. First, political conceptions consist of substantive principles of justice for the basic structure of society. These principles of justice form the framework of reasoning the citizen uses when deliberating from that particular political conception – a citizen deliberating from that political conception will attempt to resolve fundamental political questions by appealing to and applying its principles. Rawls specifies that the principles of justice of a reasonable political conception must be liberal; they must properly specify rights, liberties, and opportunities for citizens as free equals.

Second, in addition to substantive principles of justice, a political conception includes guidelines of inquiry. These guidelines are “principles of reasoning and rules of evidence in the light of which citizens are to decide whether substantive principles [of the political conception] properly apply.” Rawls specifies that the principles of justice of a reasonable political conception must be liberal; they must properly specify rights, liberties, and opportunities for citizens as free equals.

Unfortunately, Rawls is somewhat reticent when it comes to the specifics of these guidelines. The most he says is that the forms of reasoning and methods of assessing

20 Rawls. (2005), 222
evidence specified by these guidelines must be freestanding, non-controversial, and “found in common sense”. Nonetheless, Rawls claims, “Without such guidelines substantive principles cannot be applied and this leaves the political conception incomplete and fragmentary.”²¹

Unlike a set of values standing by themselves, then, a framework of reasoning that consists of substantive principles and guidelines of inquiry is claimed by public reason liberals to be sufficiently robust “such that the values specified by it can be suitably ordered or otherwise united so that those values alone give a reasonable answer to all, or nearly all, questions involving constitutional essentials and matters of basic justice.”²² The principles of justice and the guidelines of inquiry are claimed to be capable – on their own, without invoking worldviews – of guiding an individual to determinate solutions to all fundamental political questions. It is this claim that I wish to challenge. On the whole, I am skeptical that a framework of reasoning provided by a political conception can be rich enough to always enable citizens – throughout the entirety of public deliberation – to reason to determinate solutions without privileging parochial worldview bases.

Arguments for incompleteness

²¹ Rawls. (2005), 222
²² Rawls. (2005), 454
As it happens, I am not the only skeptic on the matter. In fact, “incompleteness objections” have already appeared in the literature.\textsuperscript{23} According to this objection, public reason liberalism, in expunging worldviews from the political domain, excludes too much. The content that would remain, the objection states, if worldview bases were expunged from politics would be insufficiently rich to generate determinate solutions to certain fundamental political questions. As such, the structure of the politics public reason liberalism specifies fails to permit citizens to arrive at determinate solutions to some fundamental political questions.

Those who raise the incompleteness objection typically give specific examples of political questions with respect to which citizens would purportedly have to “rely on” unshared, worldview bases in order to arrive at a determinate solution.\textsuperscript{24} This section attempts to do more. I show that a more robust case can be provided by articulating a more complete account than the literature has provided of the various factors on which controversial political issues turn. Doing this unveils the magnitude of the claim that the frameworks of reasoning belonging to freestanding political conceptions of justice can arrive at determinate solutions to all fundamental political questions. The next section embarks on this endeavor.

Before getting into the examples of policy questions articulated by standard incompleteness objections, it is important to be clear about what would count as “relying


\textsuperscript{24} See Reidy, (2000); Eberle, (2002); Greenawalt, (1988)
on” (or “privileging”) worldviews bases in politics. An obvious case involves explicitly adding a fully articulated worldview premise to a justification. A citizen in the deliberative politics who proposes a constitutional amendment banning abortion on the basis of society’s interest in reproducing itself across generations, discouraging teenage pregnancy, and outlawing the destruction of a human soul obviously relies on a worldview base. The third and final reason she articulates is not a public premise that all can reasonably accept.

Relying on worldview bases, however, can be less conspicuous. It requires not that the worldview bases are fully articulated or consciously invoked, but only that the bases play active and determinant roles in one’s decision to defend a position over others. To provide an example, suppose that the same citizen who proposes a constitutional amendment banning abortion, instead of declaring her metaphysical beliefs about the fetus, articulates only values that all can reasonably accept in a pluralistic democracy – due respect for human life, society’s interest in reproducing itself across generations, and discouraging teenage pregnancy. She recognizes that women’s reproductive rights are also relevant to the issue; however, she believes that, without question, due respect for a full human life is more relevant and weightier in this case.

Now, even though she justifies her view in terms of public considerations, her decision to weigh “due respect for human life” over “women’s reproductive rights” (let us assume) is grounded in the belief that abortion involves taking a full human life, which
invokes the metaphysical premise formerly articulated in the first example. Thus, she is still guilty of relying on worldview bases – the fact that she does not explicitly articulate or consciously invoke the worldview bases is arbitrary when it comes to whether she has relied on such bases. This is an important point that is often left unmentioned in the literature.

Those who maintain completeness, thus, must do more than simply insist that the content of their politics allow citizens to appear to justify political resolutions in terms of public considerations. Justifying political resolutions in terms of public considerations may not be difficult, particularly for those who have mastered the language of public reason. More profoundly, those who maintain completeness must insist that the content of its politics is sufficiently robust to allow citizens, in actuality, to successfully arrive at and justify determinate political resolutions without relying on worldview bases, including (and especially!) bases that are often unarticulated or unconsciously invoked. And this is a more difficult task.

Now, as mentioned, many who argue for incompleteness make their case by articulating specific examples of public policy questions with respect to which citizens would have to rely on worldview bases to arrive at a determinate resolution. Two types of questions are commonly identified. The first are questions whose resolution ultimately

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25 Of course, it is quite possible that she is unaware that her worldview bases influence how she weighs these values. Greenawalt makes this point when he writes that “even if the point of ensoulment is decided on the basis of purely naturalistic reasoning the whole perspective that surrounds that notion will subtly influence how the moral status of the fetus and the permissibility of abortion are regarded.” See Greenawalt, (1988), 36-37, 155.
turns on a specific weighing and ordering of relevant but conflicting public values.  

David Reidy, for example, writes:

But on a great many political issues, some fundamental, many citizens will have no sense of how competing or conflicting values are to be ordered […] More importantly, they will find within their political conception of justice no criterion or criteria for ordering competing or conflicting values or ends in new and difficult cases.  

Falling within the category of this first type, Reidy says, are questions about affirmative action and human cloning. Different answers to these questions will presuppose a particular weighing and ordering of relevant values, but there will be no algorithm or criterion within the content of a public reason liberal politics to determine which weighing and ordering citizens should affirm.  

The second type of questions commonly identified is those whose resolution turns on the answer to a background question about the moral status of an entity. Reidy thinks that abortion falls under this second category, because an answer to whether

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26 As Reidy points out, the list of public values is quite extensive: “individual liberty, happiness, political equality, equality of opportunity, distributive justice, social stability, the orderly reproduction of political society, fraternity, openness and honesty in government, economic prosperity, social diversity, liberal democratic citizenship, the common defence, the general welfare and cultural vibrancy.” See Reidy. (2000), 65

27 Reidy. (2000), 65


29 Also see Greenawalt. (1988)
abortion should be legally permissible presupposes an answer to questions about the moral status of the fetus. Such a question, Reidy claims, cannot be resolved without invoking moral, philosophical, or religious premises. In this case, then, the content of a public reason liberal politics would not have the resources available for citizens to take a stand on abortion one way or another.

Factors on which controversial political issues turn

The examples provided by incompleteness objectors, if they survive scrutiny, illustrate that public reason is incomplete with respect to some controversial fundamental public policy questions. More than providing isolated counterexamples to completeness, however, what these voices have done, though unintentionally, is turn attention to factors on which controversial political issues turn. Indeed, the most important lesson to take away from current incompleteness objections is not that public reason is incomplete with respect to issues such as abortion, but that controversial political issues turn on several factors.

Illuminating these factors unveils further areas on which a complete political conception of justice must give direction, thereby increasing the burden on those who maintain that political conceptions are complete. To me, this is a more promising direction of criticism, and it is the direction taken for the remainder of this section. My methodological assumption is that the more factors exposed – and the more it is unveiled what it truly means for a political conception of justice to be complete – the less plausible

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it becomes to think that a political conception is complete without smuggling in worldview bases.

To his credit, as shown above, when it comes to the requisite elements for arriving at determinate solutions to policy questions, Rawls demonstrates his awareness that arriving at these solutions requires much more than invoking political values and principles. To arrive at these solutions, Rawls insists, requires deliberating from within a framework of reasoning that provides “besides principles of justice, guidelines of public inquiry that specify ways of reasoning and criteria for the kind of information relevant for political questions.”31 Guidelines of inquiry are supposed to provide guidance to the individual when applying the principles of justice. They are supposed to direct the individual in moving from the principles of justice to determinate solutions to fundamental political questions.

Rawls, however, does not specify in further detail what these guidelines consist of or how substantive they are. Instead, the reader is left to wonder what is meant by vague terms such as “guidelines of inquiry”, “principles of reasoning”, and “rules of evidence”. He does, it is worth repeating, mention that the guidelines of inquiry must be non-controversial, “found in common sense”, and consistent with scientific standards of inquiry.32 This elaboration, however, is vague and leaves unanswered questions. Do “principles of reasoning” go beyond a specification of the common logical rules of inferences? Do “guidelines of inquiry” provide algorithms for assigning weight to

31 Rawls. (2005), 224
32 Rawls. (2005), 224
values? Do “guidelines of inquiry” provide rules on how to interpret relevant concepts and values? Do “rules of evidence” direct on which evidence to focus? On the whole, are non-controversial, commonsense guidelines of inquiry really sufficient in terms of their capability of directing individuals from abstract principles of justice to determinate solutions to all fundamental political questions?

What I want to highlight here is that controversial political issues turn on how several “variables” (so to speak) are “filled in”. Incompleteness objectors have identified two of these variables: (1) Weight and ordering of public values, and (2) Answers to background questions about moral status. However, in focusing only on these, even incompleteness objectors have oversimplified the number of areas on which politics issues turn. Indeed, (1) and (2) are not the only variables that deserve mention in this context – there are several more.

(3) Interpretation of relevant values and concepts: Political issues turn on how relevant values are interpreted. Consider how different positions on a political issue can be the result of different interpretations of shared values. For example, citizens in the United States share the values expressed in the first amendment of the Constitution, including the free exercise of religion and the separation of church and state. There is, however, widespread disagreement about how to interpret these values, especially with respect to public policy issues about federal funding for religious organizations, school
vouchers, prayer in the classroom and in Congressional chambers, school curriculum (e.g., the teaching of creation science), and the content of school textbooks.\footnote{A main point of disagreement is whether the Establishment Clause should be given a \textit{separatist} interpretation or an \textit{impartial} interpretation.}

Similarly, political issues turn on how relevant concepts are interpreted. Consider concepts such as freedom, equality, justice, motherhood, sex, pregnancy, family, marriage, personhood, life, happiness, science, religion. Citizens may share these concepts and even agree on their broad definitional contours. Controversial political issues such as abortion, same-sex marriage, and economic distributive policies, however, appear to turn on particular interpretations of these concepts.

For example, it can be argued that some questions about social programs turn on different interpretations of freedom. Consider the different ways in which “freedom” is interpreted in the United States. Some believe that an individual is free only if certain social and economic preconditions are in place. To be free, according to this camp, presupposes that the individual has proper access to health and education services, is guaranteed a basic standard of living, is a part of nurturing social relationships, and so on. Laws and policies that guarantee these conditions, thus, are fundamental to a just political order. Others, in contrast, believe that being free simply means being unrestricted by external interference. According to this camp, the means to securing the preconditions specified in the former interpretation of freedom (e.g., government taxation and regulation) undermine the essence of what it means to be free.

\textit{(4) Which considerations are deemed relevant:} Political issues turn on which considerations are deemed relevant to the political issue. In particular, arriving at a
solution to a political issue through deliberation turns on the bases from which one begins. In an effort to answer how and why moral judgments vary across the political spectrum, Jesse Graham, Jonathan Haidt, and Brian Nosek\(^{34}\) have recently offered empirical evidence that shows that liberals and conservatives differ over the sets of moral considerations they invoke when deliberating about politics. Out of five sets of empirically corroborated cross-cultural moral considerations – harm/care, fairness/reciprocity, ingroup/loyalty, authority/respect, purity/sanctity – Graham, Haidt, and Nosek show that liberals consistently show greater invocation of the first two considerations while conservatives use all five considerations more equally.

In a separate article, Haidt suggests how different views on which considerations are relevant to the debate leads to political disagreement between liberals and conservatives on same-sex marriage. “Liberals,” Haidt writes, “tend to relate most moral issues to potential harms and injustices. They therefore can’t understand why anyone – including the majority of Americans – would oppose gay marriage, for example, because legalising gay marriage would hurt nobody and end an injustice.”\(^{35}\) Conservatives, on the other hand, appeal to arguments about the sanctity of marriage, the authority of tradition, and the preservation of strong social institutions that, says Haidt, for the liberal “sound like empty words sent out to cover irrational homophobia.”\(^{36}\)

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\(^{36}\) Of course, it is also possible that individuals who differ over how to determine which considerations are relevant come to different conclusion over which resolutions are *reasonable*. Consider two individuals,
(5) A standard of reasonableness: Political issues turn on the standard of reasonableness assumed in deliberation. That is, they turn on a standard that determines whether the establishment (or refutation) of a piece of empirical evidence is controversial, whether a piece of empirical evidence is significant, when a piece of empirical evidence (or its refutation) is relevant to the issue, whether a justification for a policy is victorious, whether a justification is defeated, whether a distinction is arbitrary or significant, on whom the burden of proof rests, and so on.

For example, arriving at a determinate solution to abortion may very well turn (in part) on determining where the burden of proof rests. Compare comments made by Freeman and Robert George. Freeman writes: “[T]he burden of proof should reside on the side of opponents to choice, to make the case that there are sufficiently compelling public political reasons that justify burdening those political values and women’s vital interests.” In contrast, George writes, “The challenge to the orthodox liberal view of abortion […] is to identify nonarbitrary grounds for holding that the unborn […] do not qualify as subjects of justice.”

To take another example, this time regarding the weight assigned to certain facts, consider Luker’s characterization of the abortion debate. According to her, the debate is

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38 The George quotation was found in Perry. (1997), 72.
not about facts, but about “how to weigh, measure, and assess facts.” For example, those on both the pro-life and pro-choice sides, Luker writes, agree on medical facts about the fetus (that it has a heartbeat on approximately the twenty-fourth day, that it does not breathe until birth, that it cannot experience pain until after the second trimester, and so on), but cannot agree on what these facts mean. “The two sides,” Luker writes, “therefore examine exactly the same set of ‘facts’ but come to diametrically opposed conclusions about them.”

(6) Framing the issue at hand: Political issues turn on how the issue is framed to begin with. Different positions on an issue depend on a determination of whether a situation is a problem in need of moral response, what exactly the problem is, and what constitutes an appropriate response to the problem. In her work, Carol Gilligan has tried to show how this phenomenon has occurred within moral philosophy itself. She identifies two moral perspectives – a justice perspective and a care perspective – and argues that an individual occupying one of these perspectives will have different interpretations of moral dilemmas than an individual occupying the other perspective, leading each to concoct a separate solution that responds to different moral aspects of the situation.

The abortion issue presents a good example of this phenomena occurring in politics. For many liberals, the issue of abortion is a question of whether to legally permit a medical procedure that protects the rights of and responds to the emotional,

39 Luker. (1985), 5

psychological, and financial needs of the woman. For many conservatives, in contrast, the abortion issue is a question of whether to legally permit the killing of a baby in response to the poor, undisciplined choices of the future mother. While these descriptions might be caricatures of extremes, we can certainly see how differences in framing will elicit different attitudes toward abortion.

Incomplete political conceptions of justice

Given that (1) through (6) are variables on which controversial political issues turn, I submit that the burden falls on those who think that freestanding political conceptions of justice are complete to make the case that these political conceptions are sufficiently rich to generate determinate solutions to all fundamental political questions. Such a case would involve giving an account that establishes good reason to think that freestanding political conceptions of justice are capable of doing the following, when needed, with regard to all fundamental political questions:

a. Resolving background questions regarding moral status
b. Weighing and ordering relevant values
c. Interpreting relevant values and concepts
d. Determining which values are relevant
e. Determining a standard of reasonableness
f. Determining how the issue is to be framed
On the whole, I am doubtful that such an account can be given. Let us remember that such a case must argue that political conceptions are capable of arriving at determinate solutions to all fundamental political issues, not just some. Here, let me run through and respond to cases that might be made on the behalf of those who believe that freestanding political conceptions are – or can be augmented to be – complete. I anticipate four.

First, it might be claimed that political conceptions of justice can look to already established premises and methods of reasoning in the public political culture for guidance on how to fill in variables (1) through (6). Consider that (almost) everyone believes that slavery, segregation, anti-miscegenation laws, and limited suffrage are unjust. Of course, this was not always the case; but over time, premises and methods of reasoning used to overturn slavery, segregation, anti-miscegenation laws, and limited suffrage policies became widely embraced. It is now accepted that segregation is inherently unequal, that regarding an individual as 3/5 of a person is unconstitutional, that women are just as intellectually capable as men to partake in public life, that legal restrictions against interracial marriage restrict freedom of choice, and so on. Might the premises and methods of reasoning used in support of established tenets provide guidance for filling in variables with respect to other political disputes?

Unfortunately, these premises and methods are nowhere near what are necessary to provide guidance on how to fill in variables (1) through (6) for all fundamental political questions. The premises and methods of reasoning used to overturn slavery, segregation, anti-miscegenation laws, and limited suffrage policies provide little guidance
as to how to fill in variables (1) through (6) for issues such as abortion, animal rights, and distributive justice. In some cases, the matter under dispute will be whether established premises and methods of reasoning can even provide guidance on a particular issue. For example, some view the dispute over same-sex marriage as analogous to the dispute over anti-miscegenation laws. Because of this, they invoke premises and methods of reasoning used to overturn anti-miscegenation laws to justify their views on same-sex marriage. Others, however, reject the analogy and, therefore, deny that the premises and methods of reasoning used to undermine anti-miscegenation laws can be properly applied in the dispute over same-sex marriage. With respect to this dispute, neither established methods of reasoning nor political conceptions of justice have anything to say.

Second, it might be claimed that objective guidelines can be uncovered that direct how to fill in variables (1) through (6). It might be the case, for example, that free equals can arrive at these guidelines apart from their worldviews and apart from any particular political issue. These guidelines, once reached, can subsequently become parts of the “guidelines of public inquiry that specify ways of reasoning and criteria for the kinds of information relevant for political questions”\(^{41}\) that make up a political conception of justice.

However, I am inclined to think that a specific guideline that directs how to fill in (1) through (6), generally speaking, is not the kind of thing that enjoys a rationale over which abstract free equals can come to a general consensus. The application of such a guideline is not a rational maneuver that is defensible in terms of a shared criterion or

\(^{41}\)Rawls. (2005), 224
second-order rule that all free equals, independent of their worldviews, can accept. Nor, it should be added, is a second-order rule so obvious in terms of rational permissibility (just as a rule of inference such as modus ponens is permissible) or commonsense that no defense of this rule is required.

Third, it might be claimed that a citizen reasoning from a freestanding political conception of justice may fill in variables by appealing to personal judgment and interpretation. Consider what Rawls says about indeterminacies that arise when individuals reason about ethical and philosophical questions. Such indeterminacy, he writes, “means that we must rely on judgment and interpretation (and on judgments about interpretations) within some range (not sharply specifiable) where reasonable persons may differ.”42 Though this discussion is about moral and philosophical disagreement, the suggestion might extend to indeterminacies that arise when reasoning about fundamental political questions.

This response is plausible with respect to some fundamental political issues. Consider the issue of free speech. Most would agree that free speech is a fundamental liberal value and, therefore, should be restricted only under exceptional circumstances in which significant harm is foreseen. Here, there seems to be leeway in interpreting the criteria for when speech significantly harms a party. Some would argue, for example, that hate speech leads to significant harm while others would disagree. Regardless, each of these positions appears to be based on reasonable interpretations that do not depend upon affirming a particular worldview.

42 Rawls. (2005), 56
My concern about this response, however, is that it assumes that personal judgment concerning which considerations are relevant, how an issue is to be framed, or how a concept is to be understood, and so on can always be made independent from a worldview. This, however, is a dubious assumption. It seems, for example, that framing the abortion issue, interpreting the concept of motherhood, or determining which considerations are relevant to the same-sex marriage dispute are not judgments or interpretations made outside of a parochial worldview, but within one. Perhaps I am wrong about this, but if anything, I believe that the onus is on those who invoke this response to specify what exactly personal judgment and interpretation are. Without this specification, it is difficult to see how personal judgment can be categorically separated from appealing to worldview bases.

Fourth, and as a final resort, it might be claimed that there is enough preexisting background agreement among citizens to ensure that the variables are filled in prior to public reasoning. The strategy of this response is not so much to insist on the ability of a political conception to fill in the variables above, but to deny that a political conception needs to fill in these variables in the first place. Consider, for example, the question of assisted suicide. It might be argued that there is background agreement concerning whether the patient has moral status, which considerations are relevant to the issue, what orderings are reasonable, and how the issue might be framed. Many would agree, for

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43 Rawls suggests that different personal experiences and upbringings can lead to different individual judgments. What I would argue, however, is that these personal experiences and upbringings cannot be thought as separate from the worldviews individuals bring to the conversation. Personal experiences and upbringings should not be thought of in isolation, but as determinants for how individuals see the world. Thus, at least I would argue, what is at the kernel of the political disagreement is not different personal experiences or upbringings themselves, but different worldview perspectives shaped by personal experiences and upbringings.
example, that a terminally ill patient has moral status; that patient autonomy, the doctor-patient relationship, and the effects on the family are relevant to the issue; that the issue can be framed in terms of these considerations; and so on. Of course, citizens will ultimately disagree about the best political solution, but this disagreement arguably would be the result of different freestanding judgments (see the discussion above about judgment) regarding the ordering of relevant considerations and values.

There are two ways in which this response can be shown to be inadequate as an attempt to salvage the completeness of public reason. The first way is to give specific examples of issues for which such background agreement does not hold. Again, it is worth emphasizing, when it comes to issues such as abortion and same-sex marriage, differences appear as deep as to how values and concepts should be interpreted, which values and facts are relevant, and how the issue is to be framed. These are issues that undermine the above response as an attempt to rescue the completeness of public reason.

The second way is to argue that the background agreement that the response insists upon comes into tension with the fact of pluralism with which liberal theory begins. In my mind at least, it seems that a society in which there is preexisting background agreement on (a) answers to questions about moral status, (b) weighing and ordering of values, (c) ways in which relevant values and concepts are to be interpreted, (d) which values are relevant, (e) which standard of reasonableness is to be invoked, (f) how an issue is to be framed is not a pluralistic society at all, but a society united – or nearly united – by a single (or perhaps a few) comprehensive worldviews.
The fact of incompleteness and a look ahead

Overall, I have articulated my skepticism that frameworks of reasoning provided by freestanding political conceptions of justice, ideally constructed, are rich enough to enable citizens – throughout an entire segment of public deliberation that covers all fundamental political questions – to reason to determinate solutions. While the political conceptions of justice will enable citizens to arrive at determinate solutions to some political questions, there is good reason to think that these political conceptions will be indeterminately broad, ambiguous, and inconclusive with respect to other questions.

As a result, public reason liberal theorists must brace themselves for conditions in which a deliberative body in a free democracy finds themselves in circumstances in which the exhaustive set of principles, values, and guidelines of inquiry that free equals can accept fails in terms of guiding them to a determinate solution. Under such conditions, it seems that citizens can, at best, deliberate in terms of public reasons, but not in fact. They can cast their claims and arguments for their favored laws and policies in terms of public considerations, leaving unsaid the worldview bases working in the background.

Like the fact of entangling worldviews above, the fact of incompleteness presents a serious challenge to the enterprise of public reasoning; it threatens to render such an enterprise an inauthentic charade whose resources are incapable of reaching publicly justified political outcomes under certain circumstances. In some way, then, public reason liberals must respond to the fact of incompleteness, ideally in a manner that is consistent with and continues to honor the commitment to arriving at determinate
solutions that are publicly justified. The next chapter will present a way in which public reason liberalism can do so by tweaking its theoretical structure.

3. Conclusion

This concludes my presentation and arguments for the fact of entangling worldviews and the fact of incompleteness. Again, the aim of this chapter was to provide good reason to believe that these facts are true – or at least good reason to adopt these facts as working presumptions. These facts present a deliberative body with conditions for which public reason liberals have hitherto not properly accounted when specifying their politics for a free democracy. Such conditions challenge the ability of a public reason liberal politics to generate publicly justified political outcomes, given its current procedural and theoretical structure. Chapters 3 and chapter 4 will further specify these challenges and attempt to refine a public reason liberal politics so that it can continue to meets its obligation to reach publicly justified political outcomes in light of the conditions suggested by these two facts.
Chapter 3: Entangling Worldviews and Publicly Justified Outcomes

This chapter begins the attempt to offer a revised public reason liberal politics that is responsive to the challenges raised by the fact of entangling worldviews and the fact of incompleteness. In particular, the aim is to provide a revised public reason liberal politics (1) whose processes can help transform parochial individuals into citizens capable of public reasoning and (2) that is capable of generating publicly justified political outcomes through deliberative processes when the set of shared bases is incomplete.

With this aim in mind, chapter 3 details procedural revisions for a public reason liberal politics. It is argued that exchanging and attending to worldviews are essential to reaching publicly justified political outcomes in the public forum in light of the conditions suggested by the fact of entangling worldviews. Specifically, substantive discussion of worldviews in the public forum helps realize conditions for reaching publicly justified political outcomes in public deliberation that the fact of entangling worldviews initially uproots. Because of this, while public reason liberal theorists have largely been reticent about the idea of having a substantive discussion of worldviews occupy a significant space in public deliberation,¹ this chapter argues that such a discussion must be worked into the procedures of a public reason liberal politics.

Section 1 describes the challenge raised by the fact of entangling worldviews to a public reason liberal politics. The fact of entangling worldviews, it is pointed out,

¹ Though it should be mentioned that in his late work, Rawls began to recognize some benefits of sharing worldviews in the public forum
implies that citizens will be ill-equipped to carry out the kind of politics public reason liberalism specifies. Section 2 provides a general account of how a deliberative politics committed to reaching publicly justified political outcomes can meet this challenge. In doing so, the section gestures toward a political discussion that invites, to some extent, citizens to share their worldviews. Section 3 provides specifics, describing ways in which exchanging and attending to worldviews in the public forum can put a body of ill-equipped citizens in capable position to reach publicly justified political outcomes through public reasoning. Finally, Section 4 concludes that public reason liberal theorists need to work into their political procedures an in-depth discussion of worldviews.

1. Entangling Worldviews: The Challenge

A public reason liberal politics, as we saw, is a deliberative politics characterized by public reasoning. A citizen engages in public reasoning “when he or she deliberates within a framework […] that expresses political values that others, as free and equal citizens might also reasonably be expected to reasonably endorse.” In addition, a public reason liberal politics specifies a norm of restraint that restricts the kinds of arguments and claims citizens can generally give in the public political forum. Citizens, according to the norm of restraint, must generally refrain from advancing claims or arguments that rely on worldviews.

Rawls. (2005), 450. Also see Rawls. (2005), 453, where he writes: “To engage in public reason is to appeal to one of these political conceptions – to their ideals and principles, standards and values – when debating fundamental political questions.”
Such a politics, restrictions and all, says the public reason liberal, is supposed to advance the aim of reaching publicly justified laws and policies. Rawls writes, for example, that “when all reasonable citizens think of themselves ideally as if they were legislators following public reason, the legal enactment expressing the opinion of the majority is legitimate [publicly justified] law.” The idea is that if citizens internalize the norms of a public reason liberal politics and carry out a sustained process of public reasoning, the outcome of a deliberative politics will be laws and policies that are publicly justified. In fact, says Quong, it is “only by asking citizens and officials to live up to the idea of public reason […] are we likely to achieve political decisions that are publicly justified.” A public reason liberal politics, theorists insist, is the best way to publicly justified outcomes and, therefore, honors the commitment to publicly justified laws and policies better than any other politics.

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3 “Public reasoning,” Rawls writes, “aims at public justification [which is] not simply valid reasoning, but argument addressed to others: it proceeds correctly from premises we accept and think others reasonably accept to conclusions we think they could reasonably accept.” Rawls. (2005), 465

4 Rawls. (1997), 770

5 Quong. (2011), 257

6 Public reasoning is a central feature of deliberative democracy. Freeman writes: “A democracy is deliberative in so far as its citizens engage in public reasoning about a common good. The idea of public reason is central to accounts of deliberative democracy.” Jane Mansbridge writes: “The process of ‘reason-giving’ is required and central. In that process, participants should […] listen to one another and give reasons to one another that they think the others can comprehend and accept.” Cohen writes: “The deliberative conception of democracy is organized around an ideal of political justification. According to this ideal, to justify the exercise of political power is to proceed on the basis of free public reasoning among equals. A deliberative democracy institutionalizes this ideal.” James Bohman writes: “Above all, any conception of deliberative democracy ‘is organized around an ideal of political justification’ requiring free public reasoning of equal citizens.” Amy Gutmann and Dennis Thompson write: “Deliberative democracy asks citizens and officials to justify public policy by giving reasons that can be accepted by those who are bound by it. This disposition to seek mutually justifiable reasons expresses the core of the process of deliberation.” See Freeman. (2000); Jane Mansbridge and al. “The Place of Self-Interest and the Role of Power in Deliberative Democracy”, in The Journal of Public Philosophy, 18:1. (2010), 65-66; Cohen. “Procedure and Substance in Deliberative Democracy”, (1997), 412; James Bohman. “Survey Article: The
In an important way, the sustenance and success of a public reason liberal politics depends on citizens who are able to carry out a politics characterized by public reasoning. The way to publicly justified laws and policies, as Gaus and Vallier note, is through citizen inputs that are expected to be already refined and purified, through individual efforts, from worldview bases.\(^7\) Achieving publicly justified laws and policies, thus, depends on the proper workings of the individual citizen’s “internal filter”, which serves to separate public bases from worldview ones. The citizen’s “internal filter”, it is assumed, meets a certain level of operational efficacy that allows her to enter into the political realm ready and able to proceed in accord with the demands of a public reason liberal politics.

Specifically, it is assumed, citizens can enter politics ready and able to (1) present to fellow citizens arguments that do not rely on parochial worldviews and (2) assess proposed claims and arguments in a manner uninfluenced by their own parochial worldviews. In doing these, says the public reason liberal, citizens promote and honor the idea of a deliberative enterprise in which all deliberate using public reasons and standards of inquiry. Though such a deliberative enterprise cannot guarantee complete consensus over outcomes, those who dissent can at least recognize these outcomes as

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\(^7\) See Gaus and Vallier’s important distinction between *Institutions as Registers* and *Institutions as Generators*. Gaus and Vallier distinguish between a politics that simply registers citizen inputs about a publicly justified outcome verses a politics that transforms citizen inputs into a publicly justified outcome. Gaus and Vallier classify public reason liberalism as subscribing to an Institutions as Registers view, of which they are highly critical. According to Gaus and Vallier, “[J]ustificatory liberals have spent inordinate time developing ethical constraints on the activity of justification, with the apparent hope of so perfecting the inputs (views of citizens) that electoral and legislative institutions could be largely relegated to registering these vastly improved inputs.” Gaus and Vallier. (2009), 70.
being based on considerations they can accept. “Each thinks that all have spoken and voted at least reasonably, and therefore all have followed public reason and honored their duty of civility.”\footnote{Rawls. (2005), 446} In this manner, the aim of a public reason liberal politics is achieved.

However, public reason liberalism’s assumptions about the citizen and her “internal filter” are unduly optimistic. The previous chapter showed that worldviews are internalized cognitive orientations that are entangling by nature. Because of this, citizens will develop a political framework that is entangled with their parochial worldviews. They will present and assess claims and arguments from this tainted framework, perhaps without even suspecting that their reasoning is tainted. Moreover, citizens will be incapable on their own of disentangling their political framework from the worldview bases that infiltrate it. Overall, far from the citizen the public reason liberal envisions, it is more realistic to expect the citizen to be fundamentally ill-equipped to present and assess arguments free from the influence of her parochial worldview bases.

The fact of entangling worldviews suggests that the abilities and efforts of the individual citizen cannot be relied upon to realize the conditions for a sustained process of public reasoning. Citizens entering the public forum, thus, will be ill-prepared to carry out a sustained process of public reasoning, as asked of them by a public reason liberal politics. In response, it may be suggested that a public reason liberal politics has a self-correcting mechanism that can help filter out nonpublic bases whenever they enter into politics. Even if individual citizens cannot, by themselves, filter out these bases, they can rely on others in public discussion to locate and expunge these nonpublic bases as they
proceed in their sincere, conscientious attempts to deliberate from a framework of reasoning that expresses values, principles, and guidelines that they think others can accept.

This suggestion, if it holds water, would make public reason liberalism look more promising. However, there is no guarantee that such a self-correcting mechanism – functioning as a collective filtering device – will be reliable either. Given that such a politics would largely discourage arguments and claims that cannot be properly expressed in terms of public reasons, deep worldview assumptions, understandings of key concepts, personal experiences, and manners of perceiving the issue would largely be kept hidden from the purview of both the individual and her fellow citizens, forcing participants to “hunt out” these unarticulated bases whenever they enter into public deliberation. 9

Though this endeavor might be successful when it comes to identifying fully articulated nonpublic bases as they enter into public deliberation, it is likely that even the most discerning citizens will be unable to identify and articulate another’s most basic, deeply internalized worldview bases as they seep into the public conversation. 10

Having said this, there is the prospect of unfairness toward those whose worldview bases are more transparent. Many of the worldview bases belonging to

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9 As chapter 1 discussed, in his wide view of the public reason, Rawls permits the introduction of nonpublic reasons into public deliberation “provided that in due course public reasons, given by a reasonable political conception, are presented sufficient to support whatever the comprehensive doctrines are introduced to support.” This would allow a certain class of nonpublic arguments into public deliberation – that is, those that can be properly translated into public reasons. However, it would still preclude the introduction of a large class of nonpublic reasons.

10 Here, it is important to recall the point made in the previous chapter that worldview bases and perspectives, though sometimes transparent to the public, are frequently hidden. Rather than being fully articulated premises, these worldview bases are often subtle and non-transparent. As a result, they can surreptitiously seep into a justification that is made in terms of public considerations.
religious citizens, for example, are easier to discern\textsuperscript{11} than those belonging to “non-religious” citizens, including basic assumptions about the world, epistemic standards, conceptual frameworks, modes of seeing, and so on. Because of this, a public reason liberal politics may end up restricting the conduct of some more than others, even though both are equally guilty of transgressing the boundaries of a public reason politics. This can easily lead to a socio-political environment in which religious bases are disallowed while “non-religious” worldview bases, having never been brought into the purview of the public, continue to freely but surreptitiously seep into a deliberative politics.

Finally, there is no guarantee that the self-correcting mechanism, itself, will not be besmirched by the very biases such a mechanism is supposed to check and filter out. The self-correcting mechanism, after all, is simply “populace-run” and, thus, relies on the citizen efforts and abilities under question. Part of the problem here is that parochial perspectives and biases will not only influence individual judgments about which political solutions are best, but also judgments about whether a claim or argument under scrutiny is public or nonpublic. In other words, a citizen’s limited capacity to properly identify her parochial worldview bases when deliberating about policy will adversely impact her ability to reliably judge whether a claim or argument is public or nonpublic. To suggest otherwise is to assume that the individual citizen can somehow extricate herself from her parochial perspectives and biases for the purposes of judging whether a claim or argument is public, but not for the purposes of judging which political

\textsuperscript{11} Being that they are fully articulated metaphysical considerations expressed through age-old, familiar concepts such as God, the soul, and divine order.
resolutions are best. Without further argument, however, there is no reason to assume this asymmetry in ability.

Of course, it might be claimed that the self-correcting mechanism is constituted by the collective efforts of citizens. And collective efforts are more reliable than individual efforts. However, there is no guarantee that collective imperfect efforts amount to anything that approaches the reliability needed for achieving conditions for reaching publicly justified outcomes. In fact, in relying on a populace-run mechanism, there is the real danger that the majority will have its way in determining when a fact, reason, inference, mode of reasoning, or argument is “public” and when it is not. With regard to this point, much has been written on the phenomenon of hermeneutical injustice and conceptual exclusion, though the literature cannot be examined here.12

Where does this leave public reason liberalism in terms of its sensitivity to the obstacles implied by the fact of entangling worldviews? On the whole, I believe that further discussion among public reason liberal theorists is needed about the ways in

12 Iris Marion Young expresses the danger of group exclusion as it might arise under conditions of social and economic inequality. “Under circumstances of social and economic inequality among groups,” Young writes, “the definition of the common good often devalues or excludes some of the legitimate frameworks of thinking, interests, and priorities in the polity. A common consequence of social privilege is the ability of a group to convert its perspective on some issues into authoritative knowledge without being challenged by those who have reason to see things differently.” See Young. “Difference as a Resource for Democratic Communication”, in Bohman and Rehg, eds., Deliberative Democracy, (1997), 399. Also see Brandon Morgan-Olsen’s article on conceptual exclusion, which builds off Miranda Fricker’s work on hermeneutical injustice. Morgan-Olsen describes a phenomenon in which “the conceptual dynamics of the society are such that the set of common concepts from which meaning, explanations, and arguments are drawn is overwhelmingly reflective of the experiences of the majority group.” See Morgan-Olsen. “Conceptual Exclusion and Public Reason”, in Philosophy of Social Sciences, 40(2), (2010), 216. Also see Fricker. Epistemic Injustice: Power and Ethics of Knowing, (2007). Finally see Thomas Christiano who writes: “What constitutes, in other words, a reasonable acceptance of a different position is likely to be a subject of controversy itself. Thus, some will see that others have come to their alternate views by reasonable means and some will not. To the latter, the result is not politically justified.” See Christiano. “The Significance of Public Deliberation”, in James Bohman and William Rehg, ed., Deliberative Democracy, (1997), 269-270.
which a deliberative politics committed to reaching publicly justified political outcomes can overcome these obstacles. The demand for further discussion seems to be an inevitable prescription, given the importance of the commitment to reaching publicly justified political outcomes in liberal theory. Indeed, by virtue of this importance, even the possibility that the processes and outcomes of a public reason liberal politics might be specious mandates further efforts by public reason liberals to formulate solutions that address this worry – solutions that preferably ensure and demonstrate that the processes and outcomes are not specious but transparently legitimate.

Departing from the common assumption, I am inclined to think that given the fact of entangling worldviews, the way to a sustained process of public reasoning that generates publicly justified outcomes is not through the intrapersonal, isolated efforts of individual citizens. The next two sections propose that the way to such a process is through the use of the diversity and collective efforts of the citizenry as resources. These resources will effectively supplant the intrapersonal efforts of citizens as the means for realizing the conditions for a sustained public reasoning process that generates publicly justified political outcomes. Though a public reason liberal politics, as it currently stands, with its self-correcting mechanism, uses the collective efforts of citizens to a certain extent, it de-emphasizes discussion of worldviews, severely limiting the citizen body’s ability to uncover the subtle, deeply internalized worldview bases each brings to the political conversation.

2. Meeting the Challenge
In all, public reason liberal theorists need to be responsive to the challenges raised by the fact of entangling worldviews. This requires working with different assumptions about the citizen. Instead of a citizen who is ready and able to carry out a deliberative enterprise of public reasoning before entering the public forum, public reason liberals must begin with a citizen who is ill-equipped to do so. The fact of entangling worldviews described in chapter 2 creates a working presumption that the worldview bases the citizen internalizes are entangled with the political framework she brings into the public forum. As a result, as indicated above, the individual citizen entering the public realm neither can be relied upon as a self-regulator who provides properly refined inputs, nor as a member of a populace-run regulating body that vets inputs in an impartial manner.

Given that the efforts and abilities of the individual citizen cannot be relied upon to realize the conditions for a sustained public reasoning process that generates publicly justified outcomes, what, if anything, can be relied upon? Insofar as the institutions and social spaces of the background culture cannot be relied upon to realize the conditions for sustaining this process, the answer must be found in the mechanisms of public deliberation itself. Since individuals cannot be expected to enter the public forum ready and able to carry out a deliberative enterprise characterized by public reasoning, it must be through these deliberative mechanisms that parochial individuals become civically-

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13 As stated in chapter 2, liberalism must be duly sensitive to the fact that worldviews possess perspectival import and are deeply internalized by means of various processes in the private sphere, including their upbringing, personal and professional experiences, conversations with likeminded family members and friends, selectivity in media outlets, memberships in social and political organizations, and practices honoring their comprehensive doctrine (e.g., religious service, worship, scripture reading, etc.).

14 For more on this, see footnote 22.
minded, publicly-spirited citizens who are in position to carry out a public reasoning process that generates publicly justified outcomes. In this manner, public deliberation must be thought of as a self-regulating system whose processes generate the conditions for its own success.\(^\text{15}\)

While citizens entering the public forum are initially incapable of sustaining an enterprise of public reasoning through offering properly refined inputs, they are capable of providing and working with inputs of another sort that, I believe, can be instrumental to the self-regulation and sustenance of a deliberative politics aimed at reaching publicly justified political outcomes. Given that worldview bases will inevitably seep into public deliberation, why not attempt to unearth these bases through a substantive discussion of worldviews in the public forum and use these inputs to the deliberative body’s advantage?

Generally speaking, public reason liberal theorists have overlooked the possibility that substantive discussion of worldviews can help generate the requisite conditions for arriving at publicly justified political outcomes. This oversight is a result of the widespread assumption that these conditions are *already in place* before citizens enter the public forum. This assumption typically leads public reason liberal theorists to view the spectacle of worldviews entering the public forum with a suspicion that manifests itself by proposed norms that place limits on a discussion of worldviews.

However, insofar as substantive discussion of worldviews can be beneficial in terms of helping citizens identify their parochial worldview bases, the shift to an ill-equipped citizen as a starting point should generate *prima facie* support for a politics that encourages this discussion. Public reason liberals have generally been wary of encouraging substantive discussion of worldviews for the fear that public deliberation will degenerate into bouts between adversaries arguing for the whole truth as they see it. However, there is no reason to think that this is necessarily true; substantive discussion of worldviews is not identical with an adversarial debate involving these worldviews.

If discussing worldviews can be beneficial, what is needed is a public discussion in which citizens – properly carrying out norms and procedures – use worldviews not to advance sectarian agendas, but as resources for achieving the requisite conditions for reaching publicly justified political outcomes. The aim of using worldviews as a resource to help citizens identify their parochial standpoints will regulate the modes of communication that are regarded as appropriate in the public sphere. Thus, the norms for citizens will fall out of an idea of what is consistent with and preserves these modes of communication and, ultimately, what advances the overall aim of realizing the conditions for reaching publicly justified political outcomes through a sustained public reasoning process.

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16 Indeed, the idea of public reason is proposed to avoid this kind of politics. “Central to the idea of public reason,” Rawls writes, “is that *it neither criticizes nor attacks* any comprehensive doctrine, religious or nonreligious […].” See Rawls. (2005), 441. Also see Rawls. (2005), 152, where he writes: “[B]y avoiding comprehensive doctrines we try to bypass religion and philosophy’s profoudest controversies so as to have some hope of uncovering a basis of a stable overlapping consensus”.
3. The Exchange of Worldviews as a Resource

The rest of this chapter argues that substantive discussion of worldviews in the public forum helps establish the specific conditions for reaching publicly justified political outcomes in public deliberation that the fact of entangling worldviews initially uproots. In particular, such a discussion brings to public consciousness subtle, deeply internalized worldview bases and promotes among citizens a rich, expansive understanding of the worldviews represented in society. Such an understanding places a deliberative body in an adequate position to carry out a sustained process of public reasoning and ultimately reach publicly justified political outcomes under the conditions suggested by the fact of entangling worldviews. Because of this, such a discussion must be worked into the procedures of a public reason liberal politics.

While liberals and deliberative democrats have typically downplayed the importance of sharing and attending to parochial bases and perspectives in the public sphere, Iris Marion Young\footnote{See Young. (1997); Young. “Communication and the Other: Beyond Deliberative Democracy”, in Seyla Benhabib, ed., Democracy and Difference, (1996), 120-135} is a notable exception. Hers is a conception of public discussion that views such sharing as a necessary resource for decision-making. As a result, though I ultimately depart from her views,\footnote{As it is, I agree with Young about the importance of using difference as a deliberative resource. However, unlike her, I do not view using difference as a resource as part of a larger effort to redefine what she calls “the conditions of publicity”. Contrary to Young, I believe that adopting a public-spirited stance does involve ultimately leaving behind parochial worldview bases and perspectives for the purposes of reasoning as a free equal as such: in this way, I am in agreement with public reason liberalism and not Young. What I want to claim, however, is that the path to leaving these bases and perspectives behind – and reaching so called “conditions of publicity” – must involve exchanging and attending to different perspectives in the public forum, given the fact of entangling worldviews. Thus, insofar as Young claims that exchanging and attending to different perspectives is necessary for reaching public-spirited outcomes,} her work proves useful in illuminating

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how a discussion of parochial worldview bases can be beneficial from the standpoint of putting a citizen body – deliberating under the conditions suggested by the fact of entangling worldviews – in a position to reach publicly justified political outcomes through public reasoning.

Thus, I use Young here to illuminate how a substantive discussion of worldviews can be beneficial in this way. To begin, consider Young’s suggestion that different citizens’ “situated knowledge [can be used] as a resource for enlarging the understanding of everyone and moving them beyond their own parochial interest.”19 Though Young’s language is different from mine, I believe we can come away with an important insight; attending to different worldviews deepens a citizen’s understanding of the worldviews represented in society, especially her own. First, a citizen’s awareness of her internalized worldview bases increases as bases that contrast with hers are brought to public. In particular, attending to different assumptions – e.g., about human nature, free will, the order of the universe, the nature of morality, the limits of human knowledge and understanding, the makeup of the human being, and so on – generates the necessary contrast classes for a citizen to identify and articulate her own assumptions on these issues.

More important, however, I think, is the way in which attending to different worldviews deepens a citizen’s understanding of her own perspective. It is important to mention that a discussion of worldviews in the public forum should not be limited to

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19 Young. (1997), 399

she is correct. Where she is incorrect is in thinking that the exchange and attention to different perspectives are somehow constitutive of the publicity conditions for reaching these outcomes.
simply articulating moral and philosophical assumptions; it should also involve articulating the perspectives (e.g., the ways of seeing and understanding) to which these assumptions give rise. Thus, not only are accounts of human nature, free will, personhood, and good character revealed, but also how these accounts give rise to perspectives on ethical and moral topics. Citizens try to articulate how they see and understand issues such as abortion, same-sex marriage, euthanasia, a worthwhile life, and so on.

Listening to these perspectives provides a citizen with resources to identify her own parochial perspective and differentiate it from others. As Young writes, “Confrontation with different perspectives, interests, and cultural meanings teaches individuals the partiality of their own, and reveals to them their own experience as perspectival. Listening to those differently situated than myself and my close associates teaches me how my situation [and worldview] looks to them.”20 The citizen sees how her internalized beliefs (about human nature, free will, the order of the universe, the nature of morality, and so on) give rise to specific ways of seeing and understanding ethical and moral topics – ways of seeing and understanding not shared by others.

In addition, in a discussion that features sharing worldviews, internalized elements of one’s worldview are brought to consciousness by way of interpersonal inquiry. Being that a citizen who partakes in such a discussion must articulate the details of her worldview, she is answerable to others in the event that a detail is thought to be unclear or poorly articulated. And, as Young writes, “Having to answer to others who

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20 Young. (1997), 403
speak from a different [...] perspective on their social relations exposes their partiality and relative blindness.”21 A discussion in which worldviews are exchanged and attended to takes advantage of the fact that those with different perspectives are both more able and more willing to generate questions about a worldview than the owners of it.

Additionally, previously hidden elements from an individual’s worldview can be brought to the surface during the activity of articulation. As noted above, a discussion that features full disclosure and exchange of worldviews involves articulating all the components – both subtle and less subtle – of one’s worldview. These conscientious efforts to articulate can help reveal to the speaker elements of her worldview that were not previously transparent and left unarticulated. In addition, others may help the speaker uncover these elements either by helping the speaker articulate her worldview more fully or, as indicated above, by asking questions that motivate further articulation or clarification.

Besides a greater understanding of one’s own, attending to worldviews also produces a greater understanding of those held by fellow citizens. As already mentioned, such an understanding gives the citizen a better sense of which of her own assumptions, understandings, and modes of reasoning are objectionable from the standpoint of others. In addition, as will be elaborated below, a rich understanding of the worldviews held by others can be instrumental in helping fellow citizens identify and escape the influences of their worldviews in their deliberations.

21 Young, (1997), 403
The points above detail ways in which exchanging and attending to worldviews in the public forum can generate a citizen body whose members have a richer, deeper, and more expansive understanding of worldviews. Members of this citizen body will be able to articulate their deepest moral and philosophical assumptions, how these assumptions inform their perspective, and so on. They will also be able to identify potential areas in which these elements might influence their reasoning about moral and political questions. In addition, members of this body will be able to articulate these elements as they appear in the worldviews of their fellow citizens. Like for their own worldview bases, they will have a sense of the areas in which the bases belonging to fellow citizens might infiltrate political reasoning. They will also have a sense of what it is like to step inside a different perspective and view their own worldview from this perspective. Finally, members of this body will be able to recognize the limitations of their own worldview as well as the reasonableness of other worldviews.

This understanding of worldviews is certainly a good in itself. Such an understanding, also, can help foster intellectual and moral virtues such as open-mindedness, tolerance, humility, magnanimity, and empathy that promote strong interpersonal relationships between citizens. We will return to this point in the next chapter. As of now, however, the point of significance is that this enhanced understanding of worldviews places a deliberative body in a capable position to arrive at publicly justified political outcomes through public reasoning under the conditions of suggested by the fact of entangling worldviews.
As individuals, citizens with this understanding have a greater awareness of their worldview bases and the possible areas in which these bases might infiltrate political reasoning. Given this greater awareness, citizens will be in a better position to avoid understanding and weighing political values in terms of their worldview content or on the basis of whether these values support already established moral views. More important, citizens will be in position to critically examine their political framework of reasoning, rework its content (if necessary), and work out freestanding paths of reasoning from this framework. In this way, and with the help of others, individual citizens become equipped to offer inputs that are free from parochial worldview bases.

As a collective deliberative body, a citizenry with this understanding of worldviews is in a capable position to generate publicly justified political outcomes after registering and processing individual inputs. Not only will the collective deliberative body more regularly receive untainted inputs, but they will be in position to discern parochial considerations (if there are any) in inputs, being that they have background knowledge of each citizen’s worldview and the kinds of bases that might seep into his or her inputs. This is important in light of the fact that even after an individual citizen identifies her worldview bases, she might still be unable to always escape its influences, despite her conscientious efforts to do so. However, because her fellow citizens have a rich understanding of her worldview and are aware of the bases that might seep into her inputs, they can together function as a reliable collective filter that detects undue worldview bases in the event that these seep in.
In addition, it must also be mentioned that as a collective deliberative body, a citizenry that attends to different worldviews in public discussion is in a better moral position to generate publicly justified political outcomes. Undue biases that might seep into the populace-run collective filter can be more easily checked and detected under conditions in which all (especially the minority) have presented their worldviews as lenses through which to vet the filter. A collective deliberative body that decides policy after attending to different worldviews expresses a commitment to inclusiveness and manifests a greater transparency. All citizens can be confident that the decision arrived at is, in fact, public and not the outcome of a process where partiality is disguised as impartiality.

The above discussion has presented reasons why exchanging and attending to worldviews in the public forum puts a citizen body – deliberating under the conditions suggested by the fact of entangling worldviews – in a capable position to arrive at publicly justified political outcomes through public reasoning under conditions of entangling worldviews. If such a discussion can do this work, there is good reason to implement it into the procedures of a public reason liberal politics.\(^{22}\)

\(^{22}\) After reading this section, one might raise the following worry: “You argue that a full disclosure and attention to worldviews helps citizens overcome these obstacles to reaching publicly justified outcomes, at least better than any other politics. This sounds reasonable. My worry, however, is this: can’t these obstacles be overcome via other means (e.g., multicultural education, discussion in the background culture, etc.) outside of politics? Why does the path to overcoming these obstacles need to go through the public forums of politics?” To this worry, I have two responses. (1) First, given that you grant me the point that the such discussion is relatively efficacious in helping citizens overcome the obstacles, what reasons are there to not embrace it in politics? In fact, why not attempt to overcome these obstacles in education, discussions in the background culture, and politics, just in case the former two are ineffective – or not sufficiently effective – for whatever reason. (2) Second, the jurisdiction of an ethics of citizenship can only go so far. Certainly, an ethics of citizenship applies to citizens as they discuss and decide policy in the public forum, but it does not reach as far as to what citizens should do in the background culture, whether in educational institutions, informal discussion spaces, places of worship, and what not. (Rawls says
4. Discussion of Worldviews in a Public Reason Liberal Politics

So far, it has been argued that exchanging and attending to worldviews are beneficial – and even essential – to reaching publicly justified political outcomes in the public forum, given the conditions suggested by the fact of entangling worldviews.

Exchanging and attending to worldviews in the public forum generates among citizens a richer, deeper, and more expansive understanding of their own worldviews and those held by others. Such a comprehensive understanding, besides being a good in itself, puts the citizen body in an epistemic and moral position to arrive at publicly justified political outcomes under conditions in which each citizen is initially unable to escape the influences of his or her parochial worldview bases.

These conclusions, if correct, mandate a change in attitude among public reason liberal theorists toward worldview claims and arguments entering the public forum. As seen in previous chapters, there are general attitudes among these theorists that worldview claims and arguments should have a minimal, if any, role in the public deliberation of free equals in a democratic politics. In their most extreme forms, these attitudes have manifested themselves as wholesale normative restrictions on offering worldview claims and arguments in the public forum. More recently, however, some

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herself that the norms of citizenship, particularly those having to do with public reason, do not apply to individuals in background culture contexts. See Rawls. [2005], 215) As such, it seems that an ethics of citizenship would be overstepping its bounds in setting norms for individuals (as Christians, Muslims, Jews, feminists, secular humanists, and so on) in their background culture activities. Individuals may, in the background culture, partake in discussions in which they exchange and attend to worldviews different from their own, but it is entirely consistent with the norms of citizenship if they do not. (e.g., It is entirely consistent with the norms of citizenship that an individual, in the background culture, spend much of her time in small group Bible study rather than in pluralistic discussion.) Thus, the background culture – and its spaces and institutions – cannot be relied upon to produce citizens who are able and ready to engage in politics as a form of public reasoning.
public reason liberals have taken a less extreme approach, becoming more permissive toward – and even recognizing the circumstantial value of – worldview claims and arguments entering the public forum.\textsuperscript{23}

The conclusions of this chapter, however, call for public reason liberal theorists to go further. Not only should theorists offer norms and procedures that permit worldview claims and arguments to enter the public forum, but they should, to some extent, offer norms and procedures that \textit{necessitate} worldview claims and argument to enter the public forum. To “necessitate” these claims and arguments, obviously, means more than to “permit” them. The former suggests viewing worldview claims and arguments as \textit{essential} to a well-functioning public discussion in a democratic politics. It requires taking the initiative to work formal discussion of worldviews into the design of public political discussion. It requires working out a set of virtues for citizens as they share their parochial worldviews in the public forum.\textsuperscript{24} And it requires detailing the additional benefits (there are many!) that such discussion can have for a democratic politics. Overall, just as there has been much ink spilled on debating the ideas undergirding public reasoning (e.g., What is a public reason? How should the idea of public justification be conceived? How does public reason derive its content? Is the content of public reason

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\begin{enumerate}
\item[23] See, for example, Rawls’s discussion of his “proviso”. Rawls. (2005), 462
\item[24] Once liberals highlight the need for public political discussion dedicated to exchanging and attending to worldviews, much work will need to be done with respect to developing virtues and norms for citizens participating in this discussion. These norms and virtues will fall out of an idea of what is consistent with and furthers the aim of generating a rich, deep, and expansive understanding of worldviews among a diverse citizenry. Though I will not attempt to develop an account of these virtues and norms here, it will be interesting to see how the aim of producing a greater understanding of worldviews shifts the paradigm within which norms and virtues for citizens are worked out. Because the aim of the discussion is to understand rather than to persuade, I suspect that more emphasis will be placed on listening.
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complete?), public reason liberals need to be equally committed to working out the
details of a public discussion that features citizens exchanging and sharing worldviews.

In short, public reason liberal theorists need to work into their public political
discourse substantive discussion of worldviews. I am inclined to think that the most apt
way to do this is to implement into public political discussion a formal segment – that
occurs prior to public reasoning – where each citizen shares in depth what his or her
worldview has to say about the political question under review. During this segment,
citizens attempt to present detailed, well-articulated, philosophically rigorous accounts of
their worldview stance on the political question for the purposes of inviting others to
inquire about and examine their worldviews. The aim of such a discussion is not to
persuade or even to justify, but to generate a rich and detailed understanding of the
worldviews that participants in the public forum hold.

Ideally, this discussion generates the desired understanding of worldviews among
citizens that enhances the citizen’s ability to critically examine her political conception of
justice, rework its content (if necessary), and work out freestanding paths of reasoning
from this conception. With these conditions in place, citizens can then – both as
individuals and as a collective body – determine which laws and policies are capable of
being publicly justified and formulate justifications for each law and policy that are free
from parochial worldview bases. It is at this stage that dialogue in the public forum
mirrors that of liberal public reasoning. Individual citizens will attempt to offer
arguments they think their fellow citizens can accept, and the citizen body will process
these inputs and act as a filter that ensures that inputs are free from worldview bases.
Of course, there are other ways in which a citizen body, after exchanging and attending to worldviews, might try to arrive at publicly justified outcomes. For example, rather than having citizens individually examine, rework the content of, and articulate paths of reasoning from their political conception of justice, a citizen body can take a more collectivist approach in which they, together, work out entire political conceptions of justice from the pool of shared principles, values, and guidelines of inquiry. After these conceptions are worked out, each member of the citizen body can then adopt one of these conceptions for the purposes of deliberating about fundamental political issues.

Admittedly, once public discussion reaches this public reasoning stage, the ethos of public discussion will be such that, if upheld by citizens, fewer claims and arguments that rest on parochial worldview bases will enter the public forum. Citizens who are committed to reaching publicly justified political outcomes will recognize the importance of refined inputs – free from worldview bases – to the process of arriving at such outcomes. Here, the public reason liberal is correct to emphasize the importance of citizens living up to the idea of public reason.

At the same time, however, this does not necessarily imply that a public discussion that has reached the public reasoning stage should close off claims and arguments that rest on parochial worldview bases. Closing off claims and arguments that rest on worldview bases neglects not the speaker’s moral prerogative to say anything she wishes, but the listener’s moral duty\(^\text{25}\) to listen to others in light of the human epistemic limitations and psychological proclivities that are the agents behind the fact of entangling

\(^{25}\) Recent work by Morgan-Olson has expressed the importance of listener duties. See Morgan-Olsen. (2010)
worldviews. The discussion in this chapter shows how individuals might reach the conditions for carrying out an enterprise of public reason in light of these limitations and proclivities, but they do not show how these limitations and proclivities can be eliminated or defeated entirely. Insofar as these limitations and proclivities are undefeated, there is always the danger of worldview bases infiltrating public reasoning.

Because of this, while speakers have a duty to present worldviews only in the spirit of attempting to bring to light parochial worldview bases and not in the spirit of advancing a sectarian agenda, listeners also have a duty to manifest a deliberative humility in the public forum. This requires that citizens are, to some extent, continually committed to sincerely listening to others for the purpose of vetting the publicity of their own deliberations, considerations (including the assumptions, understandings, and concepts from which these considerations are derived), and political conclusions. Thus, rather than immediately dismissing claims and arguments that rest on parochial worldview bases, citizens, to some extent, should attempt to attend to and engage these claims and arguments, even during the public reasoning stage.

5. Unearthing Indeterminacies, Revealing Incompleteness

During the public reasoning stage, there is reason to think that citizens in the public form – after shedding the influences of their worldviews – will sometimes be able to work out solutions that are derived from principles, values, and guidelines of inquiry all can accept as free equals. There will be other situations, however, in which citizens will face fundamental political questions whose solutions require privileging a worldview
base – whether it be a fundamental metaphysical assumption, a specific understanding of a value or concept, a particular weighing of facts, or a manner of determining which considerations are relevant. For these political questions, a freestanding solution is seemingly impossible to reach.

I want to segue into the next chapter by suggesting that the discussion of worldviews proposed in this chapter can contribute significantly to – if not provide an essential condition for – members of the citizen body to recognize the limits of public reason (including its gaps and indeterminacies). Identifying where public reason ends and parochial reason begins is benefited by – if not presupposes – a rich understanding of both one’s own parochial bases and those of fellow citizens. Members of a citizen body who have such an understanding are more likely to acknowledge that competing political opinions are not backed by Reason (with a capital ‘R’) or an impartial rendering of the public political culture and its fundamental ideas, but, instead, are the product of the diverse parochial perspectives found in a pluralistic democracy. Once citizens acknowledge this, they can proceed accordingly.
Chapter 4: Incompleteness and Publicly Justified Outcomes

Chapter 3 specified changes to public reason liberalism in light of the conditions suggested by the fact of entangling worldviews. It was argued that discussing worldviews is essential to reaching publicly justified political outcomes in the public forum and, therefore, must be worked into the procedures of a public reason liberal politics. Chapter 4 attempts a similar project as chapter 3, this time with the focus on the conditions suggested by the fact of incompleteness. It is argued that public reason liberalism must be refined in light of the fact of incompleteness and the conditions this fact might present for a deliberative body in a democratic politics.

The argument in this chapter will involve more than simply offering procedural suggestions for a public reason liberal politics; more profoundly, it will involve tinkering with the ideas that underlie and inform these procedures. Specifically, my argument suggests that a public reason liberal politics work into its theoretical structure a specific conception of public justification whose definitional criteria can be fulfilled under the conditions suggested by the fact of incompleteness. This conception of public justification can subsequently inform deliberative procedures that are capable of reaching publicly justified political outcomes under the conditions suggested by the fact of incompleteness.

The argument of this chapter proceeds as follows. Section 1 defines “the conditions suggested by the fact of incompleteness” and makes explicit the problem these conditions present for a public reason liberal politics. Section 2 presents a response by
two public reason liberal theorists to this problem. It then shows that such a response entails sacrificing important virtues that a public reason liberal politics originally embodied. Section 3 offers a different solution in light of the shortcomings of the response detailed in section 2. It is suggested that a public reason liberal politics work into its theoretical structure a convergence conception of public justification. Such a conception can then inform deliberative procedures capable of generating publicly justified political outcomes under the conditions suggested by the fact of incompleteness. Section 4 addresses the worry that a deliberative politics informed by convergence will fall short of its aim, given the deep moral, philosophical, and religious differences that characterize a free democracy. Finally, Section 5 examines how the discussion of worldviews in the public forum advanced in chapter 3 can help establish the preconditions for reaching political outcomes that are justified on the basis of convergence.

1. The Conditions Suggested by the Fact of Incompleteness

Before beginning, it is necessary to specify what this chapter means by “the conditions suggested by the fact of incompleteness” and make explicit the problem these conditions present for a public reason liberal politics. In chapter 2, it is recalled, it was argued that the political conceptions of justice that provide the content of a public reason liberal politics were incomplete. While frameworks of reasoning provided by political conceptions of justice that consisted of values, principles, and guidelines of inquiry that all free equals could share, ideally constructed, were sufficiently rich to arrive at
determinate solutions to some fundamental political questions, arriving at determinate
solutions to other fundamental questions required maneuvers to which these political
conceptions of justice could not always provide direction.

In particular, the case was made that political conceptions of justice could not
always provide direction when it came to ordering public values, determining which
values are relevant, interpreting relevant values and concepts, determining the
significance and weight of empirical facts, invoking a standard of reasonableness, and
operating from a specific framing of the political issue. Thus, at least some of the time,
carrying out these maneuvers required appealing to a worldview. It was concluded that
the content of a public reason liberalism – provided by a family of reasonable political
conceptions of justice – was incomplete with respect to certain fundamental political
questions.

The fact of incompleteness, thus, states that the political conceptions of justice
that provide the content of a public reason liberal politics are incomplete. That is, they
are incapable, on their own, of arriving at determinate solutions to some fundamental
political questions.¹ Having said this, the conditions suggested by the fact of
incompleteness, as this chapter defines it, refers specifically to situations in which
citizens are deliberating in the public political forum about a political question, q,² toward
which political conceptions of justice are incomplete. Furthermore, citizens are aware of
the fact that these political conceptions of justice are incomplete with respect to q.

¹ They are incapable in theory, and not simply because they have been poorly constructed.
² Question q in this chapter will refer generally to any political question toward which the political
conceptions of justice are incomplete.
As we can see, the conditions suggested by the fact of incompleteness makes an epistemic assumption about citizens, specifically regarding their awareness of the situation they are in. How this knowledge is realized is not important. Perhaps over time, after partaking in the kind of dialogue specified in chapter 3, they discover that the freestanding political conceptions of justice that give the content to their politics are unable to arrive at a determinate solution concerning political question q. They become aware of the manners in which their worldviews infuse their political reasoning, and they recognize that removing these worldviews would lead to indeterminacy with respect to arriving at a solution to q.

Having described the conditions suggested by the fact of incompleteness in some detail, it is important to make explicit the problem these conditions present for a public reason liberal politics as it currently stands. Let us remember that a public reason liberal politics is supposed to express the commitment to reaching publicly justified political outcomes. It is a liberal politics worked out specifically for the purposes of reaching these outcomes. As such, a public reason liberal politics is supposed to serve as a vehicle for public justification – it is through the deliberative processes of this politics that a free democracy (1) arrives at political outcomes that are capable of being publicly justified and (2) offers a public justification for these outcomes to citizens.

A public reason liberal politics, however, as it currently stands, seems to be incapable of generating these outcomes under conditions of incompleteness. A public reason liberal politics, it is recalled, insists that a justification for a law appeal only to values, principles, and guidelines of inquiry all can share as free equals. It appears,
however, that a (complete, non-specious) political justification that meets this criterion cannot be achieved or presented by a deliberative body in the public forum for a solution under conditions suggested by the fact of incompleteness. The justificatory bases that all can share as free equals, unfortunately, are the same values, principles, and guidelines of inquiry that are unable, in principle, to generate a determinate solution under such conditions. As a result, a political justification that limits itself to the bases all can share as free equals will be incomplete; just as there will be a gap in a chain of reasoning to a determinate solution under these conditions, there will be a gap in the justification for a solution.

Thus, the conditions suggested by the fact of incompleteness are conditions in which a public reason liberal politics appears to fail as a vehicle for public justification. It is important, however, that public reason liberalism, as a liberal response to the problem of setting laws and policies in a pluralistic democracy, be able to arrive at (complete, non-specious) political justifications that citizens can accept under all conditions in which political outcomes are reached, if possible. Let us remember that a political justification that all citizens can accept is a basic condition for the legitimacy of a law or policy – a basic condition that a public reason liberal politics is supposed to help a free democracy meet. If public reason liberalism cannot generate these justifications, it fails to do the work asked of it by liberal theorists.

In light of this challenge, a few public reason liberal theorists have offered a response, which will be examined in the following section. While such a response manages to articulate a vehicle through which political outcomes can be publicly justified
under conditions suggested by the fact of incompleteness, this response entails sacrificing important virtues that a public reason liberal politics originally embodied. Because of this, there is reason to search for a more promising solution to the problem. Presenting this solution is the task of section 3.

2. The Second-Order Procedure Response

In light of the above challenge, some public reason liberal theorists have suggested that their politics turn to a second-order procedure such as a majority rule vote or a randomized device under conditions suggested by the fact of incompleteness. “[P]erhaps public reason,” Williams writes, “includes procedural solutions to any indeterminacy produced by conflicts between substantive political values.”

Schwartzman writes, “[T]here are second-order decision-making strategies that may enable citizens to cope with cases of indeterminacy.”

Here, I want to be clear about how this second-order procedure response tries to address the challenge of generating publicly justified outcomes under conditions suggested by the fact of incompleteness. This response concedes that the set of first-order public reasons is incomplete in terms of its ability to generate and justify determinate solutions. However, it proposes that a public reason liberal politics include an alternative vehicle – such as a majority rule vote or a coin flip – through which political outcomes can be generated and publicly justified.

3 Williams. (2000), 210

4 Schwartzman. (2004), 209
Specifically, the second-order procedure response proposes using a second-order procedure that can be authorized using first-order public reasons. Because such a procedure can be authorized using first-order public reasons, this procedure and its authority could plausibly be worked into the content of public reason. The authority of that second-order method, then, would become a legitimate second-tier public reason that can be appealed to in favor of a political outcome under specified conditions such as those when first-order values and principles fall short. Given this, a political outcome that is generated by the second-order method under conditions suggested by the fact of incompleteness would, *prima facie*, be publicly justified, since the ultimate justification for that outcome would pass through the preapproved, publicly justified authority of the second-order method.

As intimated above, there are two specific procedural solutions that have appeared in the literature. One such method is a democratic procedure that generates political outcomes through a majority rule vote. It might be argued that a majority rule decision procedure is not only an efficient means for determining political outcomes in the event of a stalemate, but that it also embodies moral values such as fairness, equality, and inclusiveness under such conditions. Having said this, it appears that there are salient public reasons (appealing to values such as fairness, equality, inclusiveness, efficiency, and so on) that can be proposed in favor of adopting a majority rule decision procedure.

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5 Rawls calls for a majority rule vote in the event that public reason fails to arrive at a single best outcome. See Rawls. (2005), 241, 478-479. It must be mentioned, however, that textual evidence suggests that Rawls had in mind conditions in which public reason is *inconclusive*, not conditions in which it is *incomplete* (or indeterminate). For a discussion between the two, see Schwartzman. (2004).
My worry about a majority rule vote, however, is that it sacrifices the interpersonal elements that make a public reason liberal politics so attractive, especially for a deeply divided society. A significant virtue of a public reason liberal politics is that its deliberative processes for deciding policy embody reciprocity and respect for reasonable pluralism. Citizens demonstrate respect for the reasonableness of their fellow citizens’ point of view in the public forum by presenting reasons that are directly responsive to that view and by refusing to support policies that cannot be justified using these reasons. In doing so, they demonstrate to others that their views are on equal footing and, under conditions of reasonable pluralism, should not be privileged over those belonging to fellow citizens.

In a majority rule decision procedure under conditions of incompleteness, in contrast, citizens do not demonstrate the same regard for their fellow citizens’ point of view. Citizens neither present decisive reasons that are directly responsive to that view nor do they refrain from supporting a policy if it cannot be supported using these reasons. In fact, in relying on their worldviews and hoping that their favored policy wins once the votes are tallied, citizens conduct themselves in spite of the views their fellow citizens hold, not in respectful regard to them. While this does not necessarily undermine the political outcome as publicly justified (assuming that the authority of a majority rule vote decision procedure is endorsed by a deliberative body on the basis of first-order public reasons), it does sacrifice the interpersonal values whose expression in politics is (rightfully!) a significant desideratum in contemporary political philosophy.
In light of the shortcomings of a majority rule decision procedure, another procedure that has been proposed is one that determines solutions arbitrarily. Such a procedure can take the form of any randomized device such as a lottery or a coin flip. Williams and Schwartzman advocate for this kind of procedure on the grounds that it generates determinate solutions without requiring citizens to rely on their comprehensive worldviews. Williams and Schwartzman believe that a randomized device is superior to a procedure – such as a majority vote – that involves citizens relying on their worldviews. “The most reasonable political conception,” Williams writes, “might authorize employing some kind of randomizing device in order to break ties between political values on the ground that it is more legitimate to be ruled by chance than by either religion or atheism [or any other comprehensive doctrine].”6 Schwartzman echoes Williams’s proposal, suggesting that “appeals to nonpublic reasons should be rejected in favour of a fair, second-order decision-making procedure, such as a lottery.”7

Williams and Schwartzman’s second-order procedure, unlike a majority vote, seems to preserve (as best one can) the commitment to realizing interpersonal values such as reciprocity and respect for reasonable pluralism in politics. By refraining from appealing to worldview bases, and letting arbitrary mechanisms determine the outcome, citizens show respect for others and demonstrate their commitment to reciprocity and civic friendship. They demonstrate to others that under conditions of reasonable

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6 Williams. (2000), 210
7 Schwartzman. (2004), 208
pluralism, their worldviews are on equal footing and should not be privileged over those belonging to fellow citizens.

My worry, however, about a second-order procedure that generates political outcomes arbitrarily is this: such a procedure fails to generate political outcomes in a way that is responsive to the fundamental interest of free equals that motivates the liberal conception of legitimacy to begin with. Liberal legitimacy and its public justification condition respond to the fundamental interest free equals have in being governed by laws and policies that are grounded in reasons with which they can identify. This interest derives from the more general one that free equals have in acting for reasons that they can accept. Indeed, it is precisely because liberalism is committed to respecting this interest that it specifies that laws and policies must always be capable of being justified on grounds all citizens can accept.

A procedure that is responsive to this interest, it would seem, would somehow register or track the reasons all citizens have and attempt to generate political outcomes that are responsive to these reasons. Such a procedure would embody the idea that these reasons matter in determining which coercive laws and policies are to be implemented in a free democracy. With this said, a public reason liberal politics, once again, showcases its virtues. The deliberative process for coming to political outcomes that public reason liberalism specifies tracks the reasons citizens have and attempts to generate political outcomes that are responsive to these reasons. The deliberative body listens to, reflects on, and addresses the reasons each citizen presents for the purposes of generating political outcomes that are capable of being justified to all. Williams and Schwartzman’s
proposal for a randomizing device, in contrast, fails in this regard, given that citizens’ reasons are ignored entirely in the processes of generating political outcomes. No attempt is made in carrying out a randomized device to respect the fundamental interests free equals have in acting for reasons that they can accept.

In the end, my point is that the turn to second-order procedures – or at least the ones that have appeared in the literature – entails biting a large bullet. I have shown that the turn to these procedures entails sacrificing important virtues that a public reason liberal politics originally embodied. On the one hand, resolving deadlocks through a majority rule vote entails sacrificing the reciprocity and respect for reasonable pluralism that a public reason liberal politics initially embodied. On the other hand, resolving deadlocks through a randomized device entails sacrificing the commitment to embody respect for a fundamental interest of free equals in the processes for deciding policy. In addition, we must also consider the negative sentiments that might follow if fundamental political questions were determined using second-order procedures such as the ones above. These sentiments might range anywhere from resentment for fellow citizens to a loss in public confidence in the political institutions and processes.

Though significant costs, it might be thought that these sacrifices are necessary bumps in the road to coming to publicly justified laws and policies under conditions of incompleteness. While the deliberative processes of a public reason liberal politics offer a normatively rich vehicle through which political outcomes can be publicly justified under “normal” conditions, such deliberative processes offer no such vehicle when the bases free equals can share are incomplete. Deliberative processes that serve as a vehicle
for public justification under normal conditions, plain and simple, run out of justificatory resources when the bases free equals can share are incomplete. Overall, then, faced with either (i) sticking with deliberative processes that fail to secure a public justification for political outcomes or (ii) turning to a non-deliberative procedure that secures a public justification for political outcomes, the right move is to opt for the latter.

I believe, however, that the choice between (i) and (ii) above is a false dilemma. Public deliberation under conditions of incompleteness, I claim, can serve as a vehicle through which political outcomes are publicly justified. If such a deliberative process exists, there would be strong reasons to embrace it. Such a process would not only generate determinate solutions that are publicly justified, but it would also give expression to interpersonal values such as respect, reciprocity, and civic friendship while tracking the reasons all citizens have and attempting to generate political outcomes that are responsive to these reasons.

3. A Call for Convergence Justification

We saw above that second-order procedures can provide public reason liberal politics with a vehicle through which political outcomes are publicly justified when the reservoir of values and principles that citizens share runs dry. The turn to these procedures, however, is not without its costs. Such a turn, I argued above, sacrifices important virtues that the idea of deciding and justifying laws and policies through public deliberation embodied.
These sacrifices are, at best, undesirable and, at worst, unacceptable. In my mind, they are weighty enough to mandate a rethinking of the feature of public reason liberalism that disables its deliberative processes as a vehicle through which political outcomes can be publicly justified under conditions of incompleteness. The particular feature in mind is its conception of public justification. We saw in chapter 1 that public reason liberal theorists believe that:

A public justification for some proposal, \( P \), is a rationale that appeals to values, principles, and guidelines of inquiry that reasonable and rational free equals can share.

Of particular significance is this conception’s requirement that a justification invoke only values, principles, and guidelines of inquiry all can share as free equals. This idea of public justification and the shareability requirement it motivates are important parts of public reason liberalism’s deliberative solution to reaching publicly justified political outcomes in a pluralistic free democracy under “normal” conditions. However, when carried over to conditions of incompleteness, this conception of public justification defeats itself. In motivating a shareability requirement for the justificatory bases, such a conception undermines its ability to be realized under conditions in which the set of shared bases are incomplete.

Thus, carrying over this conception of public justification to conditions of incompleteness undermines public deliberation as a vehicle through which public
justifications can be achieved under conditions of incompleteness. This leads some public reason liberal theorists to abandon public deliberation in favor of second-order procedures. Given the costs of this move, however, rather than lending unconditional support for this idea of public justification and resigning themselves to second-order procedures, I argue that public reason liberal theorists should preserve public deliberation by supplementing their current conception of public justification with another conception that does not defeat itself under conditions suggested by the fact of incompleteness.

It is recalled that chapter 1, section 5 suggested that while there is general agreement about what the concept of public justification entails, there can be flexibility with respect to adopting a conception of public justification. That there can be some flexibility with respect to choosing a conception of public justification, it is recalled, proceeds from the fact that the general definition of a public justification – as “a rationale or rationales that all citizens, suitably construed, can accept as reasonable” – is vague and ambiguous. Even with certain definitional and normative parameters in place, the concept of public justification remains open to different interpretations. The phrase “a public justification for proposal \( P \)” can mean a number of things:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Empirical vs. Normative</th>
<th>Empirical: justification of ( P ) to citizens as they are</th>
<th>Normative: justification of ( P ) to idealized citizens</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consensus vs. Convergence</td>
<td>Consensus: justification of ( P ) on the basis of considerations on which there is a consensus</td>
<td>Convergence: justification of ( P ) on the basis of convergence of diverse considerations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract citizens</td>
<td>Abstract citizens: justification of ( P ) to</td>
<td>Particular citizens: justification of ( P ) to</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
vs. particular citizens | citizens who have abstracted away from their worldviews | citizens as particulars (worldviews, concrete identities, and so on)

Referring to this taxonomy, the demand that the justificatory bases be those that free equals can share is a consequence of adopting a consensus conception of public justification that construes citizens as abstract free equals. Chapter 1, it is recalled, examined some of the distinct advantages of such a conception, and there is reason to think that such a conception is to be favored under “normal” conditions. However, as we saw above, the demands of a consensus conception are unduly stringent under the conditions suggested by the fact of incompleteness. These demands under such conditions undermine deliberative processes as a vehicle for reaching publicly justified political outcomes, forcing theorists to settle for a path to publicly justified political outcomes that sacrifices virtues that a pluralistic politics should realize.

Given the problems with this path, I propose a different option for the conditions suggested by the fact of incompleteness. Instead of limiting a public reason liberal politics to a conception of public justification whose justificatory resources consist of

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8 A consensus conception, it is worth repeating from chapter 1, offers greater transparency in light of a law or policy’s application, elaboration, and extension. In the event that such extension is necessary, the shared values, principles, and so on invoked in a consensus-type rationale for the law or policy can be used to carry out this extension, enabling citizens to better assess whether the law or policy has been properly extended. However, while embracing a consensus conception has an advantage under “normal” conditions, no such advantage is preserved by maintaining a consensus conception (and turning to second-order procedures) under the conditions suggested by the fact of incompleteness. Obviously, when the set of shared bases is incomplete, a consensus-type rationale that can promote greater transparency in extending laws and policies cannot be reached. As a result, the original advantages of embracing a consensus conception of public justification are nugatory under the conditions suggested by the fact of incompleteness. Unlike under “normal” conditions, thus, there is no presumption in favor of a consensus conception of public justification under the conditions suggested by the fact of incompleteness. For more on the advantages of consensus, see Macedo, “Why Public Reason? Citizens’ Reasons and the Constitution of the Public Sphere”, (unpublished).
values, principles, and guidelines of inquiry all can share as abstract free equals, why not embrace a conception that expands these resources to include that which appears within the worldview of the addressee of a justification? Why not permit the use of premises, vocabularies, and convictions belonging to a fellow citizen’s worldviews to generate justifications that she can accept for solutions to political questions?

Here, a convergence conception fits the bill. Up until now, public reason liberals have largely neglected this conception of public justification. The attention this conception has received in the literature has largely been by faith friendly philosophers attempting to argue for fewer restrictions on religious speech and argument in a liberal politics. If I am correct, however, a convergence conception can be useful in another way. Working convergence into the theoretical structure undergirding a public reason liberal politics, I contend, equips such a politics with the resources to reach proper justifications for political outcomes through deliberative processes under the conditions suggested by the fact of incompleteness. For this reason, I claim that public reason liberal theorists need to work into the theoretical structure of public reason liberalism a convergence conception.

A convergence conception, it is recalled from chapter 1, provides a different path to public justification than a consensus conception. A political outcome, X, is publicly justified on the basis of convergence if each citizen views X as reasonable from his or her parochial view – Citizen1 (a Christian) views X as reasonable for R1 (Christian) reasons,

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9 Though Jeffrey Stout was the first to argue for the basic idea behind convergence, convergence has gained momentum among faith friendly philosophers as of late due to the work of Gaus and Vallier. See Gaus and Vallier. (2009). As far as I know, Vallier has forthcoming articles defending a convergence conception of public justification.
Citizen2 (a secular feminist) views X as reasonable for R2 (secular feminist) reasons, Citizen3 (a libertarian) views X as reasonable for R3 (libertarian) reasons, and so on. Provided that each rationale shows that X is reasonable to its respective addressee, the commitment to public justification is honored. In the end, the law or policy is viewed as reasonable from the point of view of all who are subject to them, and, therefore, the coercive power that backs that law or policy is legitimate.

Like the deliberative processes of a public reason liberal politics informed by a consensus conception, the deliberative processes informed by a convergence conception involve citizens attempting to come to laws and policies backed by rationales each citizen can accept. Such processes involve citizens justifying laws and policies using reasons their fellow citizens can accept through a process of exchanging reasons, listening to arguments, and responding to counterarguments. As a result, like the original idea, citizens partaking in this deliberative enterprise directly honor the idea that their fellow citizens are owed a justification that they can accept for the laws and policies that govern their lives. These citizens, in addition, manifest reciprocity and a respect for reasonable pluralism – they express the idea that their worldviews are on equal footing and, under conditions of reasonable pluralism, should not be privileged over those belonging to fellow citizens.

Unlike deliberative processes informed by consensus, however, citizens partaking in public deliberation aimed at convergence do not appeal to bases all can share, but bases that appear in fellow citizens’ worldviews. Citizens attend to, reflect on, and expand on each other’s worldviews in an attempt to justify political outcomes using the
resources of these worldviews. Since the justificatory bases are not restricted to bases all can share, a deliberative process aimed at convergence does not defeat its own ability to reach publicly justify political outcomes. As a result, a deliberative process aimed at convergence holds more promise than one aimed at consensus as a vehicle for public justification under these conditions.

4. Convergence as a Practical Possibility

It might be worried that the prospects for success of a deliberative enterprise informed by convergence publicly justifying laws and policies under conditions of incompleteness, though more promising than a deliberative enterprise informed by consensus, remain quite low in a society characterized by deep moral, philosophical, and religious differences. Citizens in such a society possess drastically different worldviews, and because of this, they will not come to view the same political outcomes – or set of outcomes – as reasonable. As a result, my solution of a deliberative enterprise informed by convergence will fail as a vehicle for public justification, forcing the return to second-order non-deliberative procedures.

In response to this worry, I want to make three points which are meant to be taken together to show that the prospects of convergence justification are not as dismal as the worry suggests. First, it is worth emphasizing that showing others that a solution is reasonable from their own worldview, even if only barely so, does not involve convincing them that the solution is the correct one. Public deliberation informed by a convergence conception does not require agreement on which solution is best to succeed.
In this respect, public deliberation informed by convergence and public deliberation informed by consensus are similar. Consider what Freeman says about a public reason informed by a consensus conception: “The role of public reason is not so much to eliminate or even diminish actual political disagreement, as it is to provide democratic citizens with reasons and arguments that, if valid and sound, they can accept […]”\textsuperscript{10}

Similarly, the role of public deliberation informed by convergence is not so much to eliminate or even diminish actual political disagreement. Rather, it is to provide citizens with reasons and arguments they can accept using the resources of their respective worldview. The aim is to stretch imaginations so that each citizen can view solutions that differ from their own as reasonable via resources familiar to them. In the end, of course, some citizens may reject the solution and argue and lobby against it. At the same time, however, they can recognize it as legitimate law enacted and, thus, not resist it with force.\textsuperscript{11}

Second, I want to visit a point about worldviews made by Rawls in his discussion of how liberal principles, initially accepted reluctantly for the purposes of social peace (i.e., as a modus vivendi), are gradually assimilated by citizens into their worldviews. In this discussion, Rawls emphasizes the “slippage” and “looseness” of the worldviews held by citizens:

\textsuperscript{10} Freeman. (2000), 405

\textsuperscript{11} See Rawls. (2005), 480. Also see Rawls. (2005), 446, where he says that a political decision “may not be thought the most reasonable, or the most appropriate, by each, but it is politically (morally) binding on him or her as a citizen and is to be accepted as such.”
At this point, a certain looseness in our comprehensive views, as well as their not being fully comprehensive, may be particularly significant [...] Most people’s religious, philosophical, and moral doctrines are not seen by them as fully general or comprehensive, and these aspects admit of variations of degree. There is lots of slippage, so to speak, many ways for liberal principles of justice to cohere loosely with those (partially) comprehensive views [...]\textsuperscript{12}

Along with Rawls, the point I wish to make is that worldviews are \textit{not} fixed, inflexible, coherent systems of thought closed off to outside influence. Its resources are not exhausted by immutable premise or propositions; often times, those who subscribe to worldviews embrace narratives, literatures, vocabularies, symbols, thinkers, and exemplars. This is significant because narratives and literatures manifest a confluence of different themes and morals; thinkers and exemplars embody a plurality of different values; and vocabularies and symbolisms lend themselves several interpretations.

The fact that worldviews are rich and multitudinous in this way – but neither coherent nor closed off systems of thought – opens the possibility for a deliberative enterprise to get citizens to perceive and think about an issue in a different light, using resources familiar to them. An in-depth, honest public discussion might be able to stretch the imaginations of individuals using their own concepts, beliefs, values, vocabularies, and frameworks, inviting them to view solutions that differ from their own as reasonable on terms they can accept, even if only barely so.

\textsuperscript{12} Rawls. (2005), 159-60
Third, we must not ignore the invariably human dynamics working in the background. Worldviews may be philosophical doctrines, but they are doctrines held by human beings who partake in relationships with other human beings. And it would be wrong to overlook the idea that these relationships can generate (or undermine) conditions that make possible – and even encourage – a disposition to come to view different positions as reasonable from within one’s respective worldview.

A factor that must be considered when entertaining the plausibility of citizens coming to view other positions as such is the social conditions in place. The idea of citizens viewing other positions as reasonable may seem far-fetched in a political climate dominated by invective, caricature, and incivility, such as the current climate in the United States. Indeed, it would be naïve to think that individuals will try to view as reasonable the positions of those who characterize them as “irrational”, “bigots”, “nihilists”, “libertines”, and so on. Different conditions, however, are more favorable to citizens making efforts to view other positions as reasonable from their own worldview – conditions that, for example, include respectful inter-worldview dialogue, a more civil public media, and a better informed citizenry.

The positive effects of citizens becoming more closely acquainted with others with different positions concerning a political question must also be considered. One cannot discount the idea that as citizens develop stronger personal relationships with those with different positions, their disposition to make room in their worldviews for regarding these positions – and their host worldviews – as reasonable will be further

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13 In fact, under these toxic conditions, it is likely that individuals will invoke the resources of their worldviews to characterize the positions of their opponents as unreasonable.
developed. Again, it is worth repeating, the claim is not that they will fundamentally change their beliefs so as to come to agree with these positions; they may still continue to argue and lobby against them. The claim, rather, is that they can come to regard these positions as reasonable, even if only barely so – perhaps by moderating their beliefs and convictions; by entertaining the possibility of different interpretations, weighings, or applications of their beliefs, values, principles, vocabularies; or even by tolerating a cognitive dissonance in their belief structure.

Recent work by sociologist Robert Putnam illustrates the effect interpersonal relationships between those of different religious faiths can have on interreligious acceptance. An important idea in his work is the Aunt Susan Principle, which demonstrates the effect strong relationships can have on beliefs about salvation. In a recent interview, Putnam says:

All Americans have an Aunt Susan. Aunt Susan is someone you know in your extended family. She’s Jewish, and you’re Baptist, or she’s Methodist and you’re Catholic, or she’s none and you’re, you know, Mormon or whatever. And you know that your faith says, sadly, Aunt Susan is not going to heaven because she’s not in the right religion. But, come on, it’s Aunt Susan. You know, if anybody is going to heaven, it’s Aunt Susan. She’s made for heaven.14

Putnam shows how strong relationships with those of different faiths can motivate a disposition to modify one’s beliefs about salvation or, at the very least, entertain two incompatible beliefs about salvation: the belief that only persons of one’s own faith go to heaven and the belief that Aunt Susan (and others like her) will go to heaven.

But whatever her religious background (or lack thereof), you know that Aunt Susan is destined for heaven. And if she is going to heaven, what does this say about other people who share her religion or lack her religion? Maybe they can go to heaven too. To put the Aunt Susan Principle in more technical terms: We are suggesting that having a religiously diverse social network leads to a more positive assessment of religious groups [and a] positive effect on interreligious acceptance.15

Admittedly, moderating one’s beliefs about salvation to accommodate Aunt Susan (and others like her) in heaven is different, in many respects, from moderating one’s beliefs about political issues in light a strong relationship with Aunt Susan. What Putnam’s work does show, however, is a manifestation of an idea that I believe is possible – the idea that strong relationships can provide the catalyst for individuals to moderate their beliefs (even a belief as deep as who is saved!) or make room in their worldviews to accommodate the reasonableness of the convictions of those close to

them. If strong interpersonal relationships can motivate citizens to moderate their views about salvation – or at least entertain two incompatible beliefs about salvation – cannot similar interpersonal dynamics motivate citizens to moderate their views, stretch their conception of what their worldview says, or tolerate a cognitive dissonance about political issues?

Take another example in which similar interpersonal dynamics are at play. In 1995, shortly after a vicious shooting at the Planned Parenthood Clinic in Brookline, Massachusetts, the Public Conversations Project (PCP), an organization that aims to facilitate respectful dialogue about contentious issues, invited six individuals (three pro-choice, three pro-life), each of whom leaders of organizations, to participate in talks under certain PCP ground rules. Per these ground rules, participants would not argue for their views. The goals of the conversation, rather, “would be to communicate openly

16 It is important here to distinguish two ways in which moderation can lead a citizen to view a fellow citizen’s political conviction, x, as reasonable. (1) The ad hoc route: moderation can lead the citizen to view x, by itself and in isolation, as reasonable; (2) The comprehensive route: Moderation can lead the citizen to view as reasonable her fellow citizen’s entire political framework that supports x. Under this second route, perhaps a citizen views her fellow citizen’s political conception and its framework of reasoning as mostly reasonable, and then proceeds to loosen her worldview (or tolerate a cognitive dissonance) to accommodate parts of that framework (e.g., a specific interpretation of concepts, ordering of values, and so on) that support x.


18 The following excerpt, written by the participants, delineates the ground rules for the meetings: “To help us listen and speak across this divide, ground rules were critical. We would seek to use terms acceptable (or at least tolerable) to all participants. We would not interrupt, grandstand, or make personal attacks. We would speak for ourselves, not as representatives of organizations […] We also made a commitment that some of us still find agonizingly difficult: to shift our focus away from arguing for our cause. This agreement was designed to prevent rancorous debates. And indeed, we believe this ground rule has been essential to the long life of our dialogue. Knowing that our ideas would be challenged, but not attacked, we have been able to listen openly and speak candidly. Our ground rules also required us to refrain from polarizing rhetoric. In one early session, we generated a list of “hot buttons” – words and phrases that make
with our opponents […] to build relationships of mutual respect and understanding; to help deescalate the rhetoric of the abortion controversy; and, of course, to reduce the risk of future shootings.”¹⁹ The meetings lasted for over five years and were kept private until an article, co-written by the participants, was released in The Boston Globe in 2001.

The participants describe themselves as being “stretched intellectually” by the talks, becoming “more knowledgeable about [their] political opponents” and learning to see their opponents’ dignity and goodness. “Despite the strains of these early meetings,” the article writes, “we grew closer to each other. At one session, each of us told the group why she had devoted so much of her time, energy, and talents to the abortion issue. These accounts – all deeply personal – enlightened and moved us […] As our mutual understanding increased, our respect and affection for one another grew.”²⁰ The Globe article concludes with allusion to a new possibility: “a way in which people can disagree frankly and passionately, become clearer in heart and mind about their activism, and, at the same time, contribute to a more civil and compassionate society.”²¹

Frankly, I do not see how one can dismiss the idea that discussions such as the PCP talks about abortion can provide the catalyst for individuals to use the resources of their worldviews to expand their perception of what is reasonable. In my eyes, relatively


²⁰ Public Conversations Project. (2001)

²¹ Public Conversations Project. (2001)
favorable social conditions, in-depth inter-worldview dialogue, and strengthened personal relationships between those with different worldviews can lead to widespread attitudes such as the following:

Bob is my good friend. He is a reasonable, intelligent, and astute – not to mention an unequivocally good human being. In fact, in many ways, he exemplifies goodness. Bob, however, is also a Catholic who believes that abortion is morally wrong and that access to abortion in this country should be significantly restricted. I believe, on the other hand, that a woman has a right to choose and that restriction on access to abortions fundamentally infringes on this right. On abortion, we are at odds. Yet, discussions with Bob on abortion have had an impact on me. I don’t know how to explain it, but in some sense they have caused me to moderate my views on abortion. Perhaps they have produced in me a cognitive dissonance, where I have come, in some degree, to incorporate his way of looking at things into my own worldview. And though I stand by my view on abortion, I also view his (and arguments for it) as reasonable.

Overall, I have argued that convergence justification in a democratic politics is not practically impossible to reach under the conditions suggested by the fact of incompleteness. Having said this, the success of a deliberative enterprise aimed at convergence as a vehicle for public justification may very well rest on the realization of certain citizen virtues, dispositions, and social conditions. If this is true, there is good
reason to investigate these virtues, dispositions, and conditions, given what the deliberative enterprise informed by convergence offers – both on its own and as an alternative to second-order procedures – as a vehicle for public justification when the reservoir of shared bases runs dry. Indeed, and I am sure public reason liberal theorists would agree, deliberative processes for arriving at and publicly justifying political outcomes are worth preserving, even if doing so entails some effort. 22

5. Exchanging and Attending to Worldviews

So far, this chapter has offered a convergence conception of public justification that can inform deliberative processes capable of generating publicly justified political outcomes under the conditions suggested by the fact of incompleteness. These deliberative processes provide a normatively richer vehicle for arriving at publicly justified outcomes than the second-order procedures currently proposed by public reason liberal theorists for such conditions; they feature the processes of interpersonal justification that makes a public reason liberal politics attractive in the first place. As a result, it was argued, public reason liberal theorists need to work into the theoretical structure of their politics a convergence conception so that the deliberative processes of a

22 Andy Reath has suggested to me that perhaps the idea of convergence on laws and policies can provide the basis for extending the idea of an overlapping consensus. Recall that Rawls thinks that citizens in a free democracy can reach – from their own worldviews – an overlapping consensus on freestanding political conceptions of justice whose principles and inquiry guidelines can generate solutions to all fundamental political questions. While I am committed (by virtue of affirming the fact of incompleteness) to denying the possibility of reaching an overlapping consensus on political conceptions that are complete in this way, there is still room for me to affirm the possibility of reaching an overlapping consensus on political conceptions whose principles and guidelines are incomplete but consist of a handful of conclusions that are justified separately using convergence. Extending the idea of an overlapping consensus in this way helps reconcile the idea of convergence justification with important parts of the public reason liberal narrative.
public reason liberal politics can adapt when the set of shared bases is shown to be incomplete.

The previous section showed that reaching political outcomes that are justified on the basis of convergence can be reached in practice, though doing so may depend on realizing certain citizen virtues, dispositions, and social conditions. I now want to show how the substantive discussion of worldviews in public deliberation detailed in chapter 3 can help establish some of these conditions. Doing so expands our understanding of the purpose – and benefits – of such a discussion. Chapter 3 focused on how a substantive discussion of worldviews can help a citizen body weed out parochial bases from public reasoning. Below, it will be shown how such a discussion can help realize specific preconditions for the success of reaching political outcomes justified on the basis of convergence.

There are two preconditions on which this section will focus. (1) First, citizens must have proper knowledge of the justificatory bases. (2) Second, citizens must have developed an internal disposition that I label as “magnanimity”: a disposition to make room in their worldview for others. The first is a necessary *epistemic* condition for a deliberative body in the public forum to reach convergence justifications for political outcomes. The second is a necessary *moral* condition for a deliberative body in the public forum to reach these types of justifications.

*Condition 1 – Knowledge of the justificatory bases*
Gaus and Vallier point out that the justificatory processes of a deliberative enterprise informed by convergence depends crucially upon a citizenry whose members have a rich understanding of worldviews that differ from their own. This is because worldviews constitute the justificatory resources on which citizens draw when justifying a law or policy to others. Under a convergence conception, let us remember, citizens justify political outcomes to fellow citizens by appealing to the latter’s concepts, beliefs, values, vocabularies, frameworks, and so on. The more robust their understanding of other worldviews, the better grasp citizens will have of the justificatory bases of their politics. “Given convergence justification,” Gaus and Vallier write, “[a citizen] needs to know the personal and local knowledge of others: what are different people’s proposals, what are their values, and what defeaters have they come across for various proposals?”

How is this information to be properly transmitted to citizens? Following Gaus and Vallier, I suggest that the means by which citizens are to acquire the requisite knowledge of the justificatory bases is through an open discussion of worldviews in the public forum. Such a discussion disseminates valuable information about each citizen’s worldview to members of the citizen body, revealing the bases of justification on which citizens can rely when arguing for a law or policy. In addition to transmitting this information, such a discussion sharpens each citizen’s understanding of this information. As citizens exchange and attend to different worldviews, they develop a richer and more

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23 Gaus and Vallier. (2009), 68
nuanced understanding of the worldviews held by each citizen, enabling them to better work with the justificatory bases of their politics. 24

Discussion in the public forum seems to be the most sensible means by which information about the justificatory bases is to be transmitted. However, some might argue that the spaces and institutions of the background culture are more appropriate in terms of transmitting to citizens the requisite information. Citizens can acquire such knowledge, for example, through educational institutions, participation in lectures and private discussion, reading books, or attending services that honor worldviews that differ from their own. However, as stated in the previous chapter, the jurisdiction of an ethics of citizenship can only go so far. Individuals may, in the background culture, partake in discussions (or read books, audit seminars, attend services, and so on) in which they learn about worldviews different from their own, but it is entirely consistent with the norms of citizenship if they do not. It is entirely consistent with the norms of citizenship that an individual, in the background culture, spend much of her time in small group Bible study rather than in pluralistic discussion, attending lectures, and so on.

Moreover, even if it is accepted that citizens ought to acquire knowledge of the justificatory bases in the background culture, it does not follow that discussion of worldviews in the public forum is unnecessary, let alone deserving of restriction. To suggest that citizens ought to acquire knowledge of the justificatory bases in the background culture instead of the public forum wrongly assumes that the only role of

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24 Such a discussion should be as open as possible. Any norm that restricts such discussion will function to limit the citizen body’s understanding of the justificatory bases, depriving citizens of the information needed reach justifications for outcomes on the basis of convergence.
discussion of worldviews in the public forum, as I have presented it, is to transmit
information about static, fixed justificatory bases. The problem with this assumption is
that discussion of worldviews in the public forum is important not only because it
transmits information about the current justificatory bases, but also because it can
*transform* these bases. As earlier stated, worldviews are not fixed, inflexible, coherent
systems of thought closed off to outside influence; they can be stretched, moderated, or
altered as citizens deliberate with others. Discussion of worldviews in the public forum,
thus, offers the medium through which this transformation can occur.

Overall, then, there is good reason to think that citizens are to acquire the requisite
knowledge of the justificatory bases through an open discussion of worldviews in the
public forum. Once requisite knowledge of the justificatory bases is achieved, citizens
can try to justify their favored proposals and generate objections to proposals with which
they disagree using the resources of their fellow citizens’ worldviews. The ultimate aim
is, of course, is to reach laws and policies that are viewed as reasonable from the
distinctive, parochial standpoints of all.

Observe the kinds of conversations below, which would be commonplace in a
convergence politics:

I am not a Christian, but as a Christian you practice forgiveness and compassion
for others. The Lord and Savior Jesus Christ was an exemplar of these virtues,
which were beautifully exhibited in John verses 7:53-8:11 – verses that, I am sure,
you take to heart – in which Jesus responds to those who threaten to stone an
adulterous woman, “Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.” While I know your stance on capital punishment, and I do not expect it to change right now, I ask you, what implications might these virtues have for your perception and attitudes toward capital punishment and those who have sinned? Are we not all – including yourself – helpless sinners and subjects of compassion for whom Jesus died?

Benedict, the Catholic Church has endorsed redistributive proposals for centuries in order to aid the poor and they do so because they believe it is demanded by the teachings of Jesus Christ. Since you are a member of this Church body, don’t you have the same reasons? I mean, I’m a secularist but I was thinking that you too have good reasons to support this proposal.25

The same emotions that drove both of us, you as a progressive liberal and me as an orthodox Catholic, to stand up for the disenfranchised, destitute, and most helpless members of society – the same compassion that we both felt for these members – is what causes me to speak out as I do on the abortion issue. Both of us believed, and still do believe, that one’s race, status, intellectual or physical ability, wealth, location, or any other contingent feature does not detract from the fact that that a human being – whether helpless, hungry, or handicapped – is a subject that deserves our compassion and defense from grave injustices. As it

happens, I cannot bring myself not to feel this compassion for – and a duty to defend – the human entity (perhaps not a “child”, fine, but a human nonetheless) that resides in the womb. This compassion stems from my love for humanity – a love and compassion that you and I share.

Stout calls this form of dialogue “immanent criticism”, and he likens it to Socratic practices in Platonic dialogues: “[Socrates] does not appeal simply to reasons that no reasonable person could not reasonably reject. He concerns himself first with what one person who has certain antecedent commitments would have reason to conclude, then with another person who has somewhat different antecedent commitments.”

According to Stout, immanent criticism is a legitimate form of political discourse in which citizens respect each other in his or her particularity. “As I see it,” Stout writes, “immanent criticism is […] one of the most effective ways of showing respect for fellow citizens who hold differing points of view.”

Still, in my view, Stout’s label “immanent criticism” is misleading. Such a label suggests that citizens embark on the project of exposing logical inconsistencies and errors of reasoning within their opponent’s system of beliefs. Unfortunately, as Richard Paul writes, “A line of reasoning can rarely be refuted by an individual charge of fallacy, however well-supported. The charge of fallacy […] virtually never refutes an organized

\[26\] Stout. (2005), 165

\[27\] Stout. (2005), 167
way of looking at things.”\textsuperscript{28} While exposing inconsistencies and errors of reasoning within a worldview might have its place in a convergence politics, there is the danger that doing so will be ineffective and unduly adversarial.

Instead, citizens should engage in immanent \textit{dialogue} in which they invoke the resources of their fellow citizens’ worldviews as a gradual attempt to encourage them to entertain different ways of seeing the issue, different understandings of key values and concepts, and different weighings of relevant values. Such would be a piecemeal method for making a position palpable from the standpoints of others who disagree and for changing their hearts, minds, and attitudes about the issue so that they view the position as reasonable, if only barely so.

\textit{Condition 2 – Magnanimity: A disposition to make room in one’s worldview for others}

Reaching a justification based on convergence requires that members of the deliberative body are intellectually, psychologically, and morally disposed to view, from within their own worldview, positions that differ from their own as reasonable, even if only barely so. While in certain circumstances, there might be enough overlap between worldviews for citizens to do this without much effort, in other (perhaps the majority of) circumstances, doing so will require citizens to be \textit{magnanimous} toward others – whether this involves moderating their existing beliefs and convictions; allowing different interpretations, weighings, or applications of their own beliefs, values, principles,

vocabularies; or even tolerating a cognitive dissonance in their belief structure. In short, there will be times in which citizens will have to make room in their worldviews for positions that differ from their own.

While some may be inclined to view what I have called “magnanimity” as the object of a normative prescription for citizens in public deliberation, there is a sense in which magnanimity cannot be prescribed, but must be cultivated. Magnanimity presupposes having certain (positive) attitudes and affections toward others that cannot “be made the substance of normative expectations”\textsuperscript{29}. That said, while it is certainly true that these attitudes and affections may be gradually cultivated in civil society as institutions become more heterogeneous and interaction between citizens with different worldviews increases,\textsuperscript{30} it is also important that public discussion be able to generate – or at least contribute to the generation of – this basic moral condition on which it depends for its flourishing. Public discussion itself must contribute to the cultivation of the attitudes and affections that are at the root of magnanimity.

Here, an open discussion in which citizens exchange and attend to worldviews is important. Such a discussion can help cultivate the attitudes and affections that are presupposed by and motivate magnanimity by illuminating to citizens two things: (1) the reasonableness of different positions; (2) the human narrative behind these positions.

\textsuperscript{29}That is, these attitudes and affections cannot be \textit{obligated}. See Habermas. “Religion in the Public Sphere”, in \textit{European Journal of Philosophy}, 14:1, (2006), 13

\textsuperscript{30}These attitudes and affections, in an important sense, are partly fostered through increased social interaction in the background culture between individuals with different worldviews. As the spaces and institutions of the background culture – including social clubs, universities, community organizations, men’s and women’s groups, and so on – become more heterogeneous, these bonds and connections are likely to increase.
First, as citizens share their worldviews, answer questions about them, and trace their intellectual and personal origins, the burdens to moral judgment and the epistemic limitations of human beings are illuminated. Citizens see that fellow citizens with different positions are reasonable, well-intentioned, morally decent individuals reasoning under conditions characterized by complex evidence, ambiguity in weight of relevant considerations, vague concepts, and so on. Second, exchanging and attending to worldviews illuminate the human narrative behind different positions. Citizens see that the roots of positions with which they disagree are not wickedness, ignorance, or ill-intention, but different upbringings, economic and social circumstances, personal experiences, and so on.

At the very least, the widespread recognition of (1) and (2) provide the context in which attitudes and affections such as empathy, benevolence, and good will for those with different worldviews can grow. These attitudes and affections are the roots of magnanimity. At the most, the widespread recognition of (1) and (2) are sufficient to generate a disposition of magnanimity in full among citizens. My assumption here about human psychology is that there is a close connection between the recognition of (1) and (2) above and the attitudes and affections that underlie and motivate magnanimity. I do not know how to show this connection, but I do not believe that it is an implausible one. In fact, the connection seems to be manifested by the PCP abortion talks discussed above.

31 Frankly, I do not believe that I am making psychological assumptions that depart from those made by public reason liberalism. Indeed, there is a discernible link in the public reason liberal project between a citizen’s recognition of the fact of pluralism and the attitudes that motivate her to set aside her conception of the whole truth as she sees it. Might not the same attitudes motivate one to make room in one’s worldview for the reasonableness of other positions?
in which two sides, deeply opposed on abortion, grew closer as talks progressed.

“Despite the strains of these early meetings,” the two sides wrote in a joint statement, “we grew closer to each other. At one session, each of us told the group why she had devoted so much of her time, energy, and talents to the abortion issue. These accounts—all deeply personal—enlightened and moved us […] As our mutual understanding increased, our respect and affection for one another grew.”

6. A Multifaceted Public Reason Liberal Politics

Overall, the above section reinforced the importance of a substantive discussion of worldviews in a public reason liberal politics. Not only can such a discussion help a citizen body weed out parochial bases from public reasoning, but it can help realize the preconditions for reaching political outcomes that are justified on the basis of convergence. Specifically, such a discussion disseminates information about worldviews necessary for reaching convergence justification and cultivates the attitudes and affections that underlie and motivate magnanimity.

I wish to wrap up by bringing together the conclusions of this chapter with those of chapter 3. Chapter 3 concluded that a public reason liberal politics must work into its procedures a substantive discussion involving exchanging and attending to worldviews. Chapter 4 concluded that a public reason liberal politics must work into its theoretical structure a convergence conception of public justification that can inform deliberative procedures capable of reaching publicly justified outcomes when the shared set of bases

32 Public Conversations Project. (2001)
is incomplete. Incidentally, this move reinforced the importance of the discussion of worldviews detailed in chapter 3, illuminating additional ways in which such a discussion is valuable to a democratic politics.

In offering this revised public reason liberal politics, it has been shown that a public reason liberal politics, en route to publicly justified outcomes, must embrace additional roles that demand more than simply the justificatory processes on which theorists have focused most of their attention. The revised public reason liberal politics proposed, like its original version, aims at publicly justified political outcomes through deliberative processes but recognizes the importance of establishing strong interpersonal relationships and a rich understanding of different worldviews among the citizen body along the way. It acknowledges the role that parochial worldviews can play in the path to publicly justified political outcomes and, therefore, encourages citizens to share their worldviews in the public forum. It prioritizes a mode of justification that invokes shared bases, but possesses the flexibility to adapt when shared based run out. In short, while its ultimate end is to reach publicly justified political outcomes through public deliberation, it embodies the fact that reaching these outcomes is a more multifaceted process than public reason liberal theorists currently acknowledge.

Given that the move toward this more multifaceted politics is needed, public reason liberal theorists – in focusing primarily on the justificatory processes of public deliberation – have detailed only a fragment of a public reason liberal politics. To be certain, processes in which citizens justify laws and policies is a key part to a flourishing public reason liberal politics, but to focus exclusively on this part is to attend to only a
piece of the project. This dissertation has illuminated additional pieces, pointing to the need for theorists to turn their attention to – and emphasize puzzles concerning – cultivating in the public forum strong interpersonal relationships and a rich understanding of different worldviews among the citizen body.
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