

## **Can Civic and Moral Education Be Distinguished?**

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### **Abstrak**

*Para pengajar pendidikan kewarganegaraan selalu mengalami dilemma antara pengajaran nilai-nilai kewarganegaraan dengan pendidikan moral. Jika terfokus kepada yang pertama, pengajaran hanya akan berupa observasi antropologis terhadap fakta-fakta empiris pada suatu bangsa. Sementara jika menekankan kepada pendidikan moral per se, meskipun normatif tetapi sarat dengan premis-premis metafisik yang kontroversial yang mungkin tidak semua siswa dapat menerimanya. Untuk memecahkannya banyak teori politik dan pendidikan telah dirumuskan diantaranya civic religion dari Gutmann, teori komunitarian Rober N. Bellah dan mungkin yang paling relevan adalah paham libertarian yang bicara soal keadilan dari John Rawls dan lain-lain. Semuanya akan diintegrasikan dalam kurikulum yang bertujuan untuk memberi kemampuan siswa untuk memahami konsensus, bagaimana memahami masyarakat dan memahami hubungan antara merefleksikan hubyungan tersebut serta membangun moral pribadi mereka. Rawls percaya bahwa pendidikan harus mengajak kepada keterlibatan dalam dialog publik mengenai nilai-nilai kewarganegaraan demi merumuskan sebuah moralitas pribadi.*

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

Civic educators seem to be faced with an insoluble set of related problems. For example, they can teach students about the civic ideals of their particular nation as a set of empirical facts, what the people of this particular place at this particular time happen to believe about the political and social roles of government and the obligations of citizens to that government and to one another. Alternatively, to provide a moral foundation for civic education, they can teach students a particular comprehensive moral theory -- Locke's liberalism, Mill's utilitarianism, or Kant's deontology, for example -- from which principles of government, many of which coincide with the nation's civic ideals, can be deduced.

The problem with the first approach is that the resulting civic ideals lack moral authority; they are only anthropological observations about the beliefs that we hold. The problem with the second is that, although the principles thus derived do make genuine normative claims upon students, they are based on controversial metaphysical premises that not all students can accept, especially in a nation of diverse cultures and religions. As a consequence, the second approach threatens to enmesh school in deep and unresolved arguments about whether and how American civic ideals align with the beliefs or particular religious, cultural, and even ethnic groups within the society. In the teeth of this prospect, many civic educators in the public schools opt for the first approach, even though it leaves students without attractive normative justifications for the civic ideals that they teach.

## II. DISCUSSION

To be sure, various political and educational theorists have long sought solutions to this particular problem. One of the most familiar is to regard a nation's civic ideals as a kind of civic religion. (e.g., Aristotle, 1981, and Gutmann, 1999). The values included in those ideals could thus be taught by catechism, as beliefs to be accepted rather than as assertions to be understood. Once accepted, the ideals can be given an internal justification, that is, an explanation of how they are consistent with and mutually reinforce one another. Indeed, these theorists often maintain that little else in the way of justification for normative political beliefs is possible.

In schools, this position coincides with a third approach among civic educators today. It provides for students civic ideal that have moral authority without seeming to raise the issue of their relationship to students = other moral commitments. But this approach has its problems as well. It asks students to develop a divided consciousness with regard to their moral commitments, with their civic morality widely separated from their various personal or cultural moralities. In maintaining such a divided consciousness, however, students have difficulty in attaining a real allegiance to the civic morality unless the nation also seeks to replace their personal moralities with the civic morality. For otherwise such a civic morality does not have the vividness and immediacy of the moralities supported by students' day-to-day contact with their families, churches, and other intimate associations from which they derive their personal moralities.

Hitler, Lenin, and Stalin understood this well, but our commitments to diversity and liberty do not let us travel that path.

Thus, this third strategy is for us a recipe for widespread civic apathy in which students' personal moral commitments far overshadow their civic commitments. As a result, the practices of civic educators today seem to have a common consequence. Those who practice the first approach provide students with knowledge about civic beliefs but do not provide those beliefs with a moral status. Those who practice the third approach provide civic beliefs that have a moral status, but they tend not to generate motivation for action based on students' civic morality. Both these approaches leave us with citizens whose attitudes and action are effectively disengaged from our civic ideal, even though those citizens may profess a belief in them. And almost no one practices the second approach for the sensible reason that it is inconsistent with our civic ideals themselves because it requires public institutions to advocate particular metaphysical assumptions in conflict with many of their citizens' fundamental commitments. This conflict would in turn leave students with an uncertain commitment to the moral foundation of our civic ideals and thus to the civic ideals themselves.

John Rawls's political philosophy may provide civic educators with an alternative response to these disturbing conclusions. At least that is the possibility that I will explore in this essay. In *A Theory of justice*, originally published in 1971, Rawls (1999) lays out a complicated argument for a particular conception of justice, that is, his renowned two principles of justice, the substance of which will not figure prominently in this essay. However, as part of that argument, Rawls outlines a strategy, called the method of reflective equilibrium, for developing principles to govern a society, of which the particular argument in that book is an example. This strategy, rather than the specific application of it in *A Theory of justice*, is the point of departure for this analysis. Indeed, his subsequent book, *Political Liberalism*, Rawls (1996) generalizes about and elaborates on this strategy of moral reasoning.

For Rawls, a politically liberal society is one in which citizens are free within reasonable limits to adopt for themselves the particular conceptions of the good that seem most appropriate to them as individuals and as members of cultures, communities, and other associations. In other words, they can determine the purpose and ways of living that seem to them to be most meaningful. For

this reason, the members of a liberal society are likely to be in considerable disagreement over their most fundamental moral and intellectual commitments and in particular about the metaphysical premises that justify those commitments.

The civic ideals for this kind of society pose a special problem since one cannot rely on an existing consensus about the moral foundation of those ideals. After all, citizens of a liberal society may, by definition, have widely disparate commitments about that foundation depending upon the particular conceptions of the good they find satisfactory. The difficulties and contradictions described at the beginning of this essay illustrate some of the apparent problems in rendering civic ideals consistent with this assumption about a liberal society: seemingly civic ideals will have to be merely facts about what citizens of a liberal society happen to agree about at a particular time ; otherwise, those ideals will be moral claims that compete with or displace citizens' existing moral commitments. Nevertheless, Rawls suggests, it may still be possible to create a *political* agreement about the principles that are to govern their larger association by seeking what he calls an "overlapping consensus".

Superficially, an overlapping consensus may appear to be simply the beliefs about government that citizens happen to hold in common. However, what keeps Rawls's overlapping consensus from being a simple catalogue of what citizens happen to agree about politically is the way in which it is established. In *A Theory of Justice*, Rawls appeals initially to citizens' intuitions of fairness and their settled convictions of justice. The former is what people in a particular society believe to be necessary conditions for a decision or a choice to be fair, such as, that those who make the decision should not have a personal stake in the result, or if they do that they should be capable of setting their personal interests aside in making the decision. The latter is the specific shared judgments that people reach about the justice or injustice of particular social practices, such as the currently widespread conviction of most Americans that slavery is wrong. Both intuitions of fairness and settled convictions of justice are examples of what people happen to believe.

However, Rawls is not satisfied to derive principles of justice on the basis of those beliefs alone for the good reason that such beliefs almost certainly conflict with one another. Thus, for example, Americans' widely held commitment to equality of opportunity implies that a government should interfere in families' otherwise unobjectionable childrearing practices if they produce

significantly different life outcomes for different children, especially different outcomes that cannot be corrected by extra-familial public institution. However, such interference blatantly conflict with the equally widely held belief that parents have a right to communicate their moral and social beliefs to their children as long as they do not abuse them in the process. According to Rawls, the very purpose of political thought is, by means of the process of reflective equilibrium, to resolve these conflicts by ascertaining and prioritizing principles that can generate such intuitions and convictions.

In doing so, the principles do not necessarily simply leave the initial conflicting intuitions and convictions entirely or even substantially intact. The resulting principles and the priorities among them almost certainly will adjust some beliefs to preserve citizens' most central commitments while avoiding some other logical implications of those convictions with which citizens find it most difficult to live. Responding to the example above, Rawls formulates a principle of liberty that does not imply parents' right to abuse their children, and he assigns to this restricted principle of liberty a priority above that of equal opportunity. Such principles, and not the raw intuitions themselves, represent for Rawls a genuine overlapping consensus in that they attempt to develop a special sort of consistency among our beliefs, that is, an equilibrium among our intuitions achieved by our careful reflection upon the applications of those intuitions that we hold to be inviolable and the applications that are less important to us. Indeed, noticing that some applications of our beliefs violate other important convictions is a good reason for us to modify or restrict our initial beliefs.

It is possible to infer a number of erroneous conclusions about this process of reflective equilibrium. First, it might seem that this process aims at a permanent and immutable state of belief. However, it is likely that any equilibrium that is achieved will be the occasion of new experiences and reflections that invite further modifications of our beliefs. After all, an equilibrated set of beliefs become a new set of intuitions that initially direct action in ways that generate new social arrangement and, therefore, unfamiliar experiences that in turn help us discover contradictions in our beliefs that were previously obscure. Such experiences and our subsequent reflection upon them motivate further elaborations and modifications of beliefs toward new equilibrium. Second, it might seem that this process is essentially solitary, involving each citizen

in an inward-directed examination of the consistency and acceptability of his or her beliefs and their logical implications.

There are, however, two reasons why this process is significantly public. One is that the new arrangements to which our equilibrated beliefs direct us have important public effects in that they naturally evoke responses from others, responses that help us understand their meaning and consequence. In adopting a restricted interpretation of principle of liberty, for instance, I will come to regard some previously accepted arrangements as objectionable and others that were optional as now required. Further, this change in my expectations and actions is widely shared by others because it reflects an overlapping consensus. Therefore, the equilibrium produces a new social and ideological milieu in which even the thoughts and actions not directly implicated by the modified beliefs may have unanticipated consequences and interpretations. As noted, some of these results can become the motivation for continuing the process of modification and equilibration of belief. Third, and as a consequence, the process of reflective equilibrium might seem detached from individuals' most central moral commitments, operating entirely in an arena of political negotiation and compromise. However, this putative conclusion radically misrepresents the nature of the process. For the initial intuitions upon which the process is based are inevitably aligned with individuals' personal metaphysical commitments, that is, their own conceptions of the good.

Thus, while those intuitions are shared, they are also deeply connected with the various non public beliefs that a liberal society enables to flourish and that citizens have considerable freedom to adopt and modify. A change in those intuitions requires one to consider not only one's reactions to others' responses, actions, and experiences but also the consistency of those beliefs with one's own prior metaphysical commitments. This consideration, in turn, can be the occasion for a revision of one's conception of the good. My adopting a restricted principle of liberty can cause me to reconsider whether and how, for instance, my religious commitments are compatible with that modification in belief, which can further lead me, for example, to modify in appropriate ways the theology at the core of my conception of the good. Thus, the process of reflective equilibrium is continuous and can be simultaneously both inherently public and intensely personal.

What emerges, then, from Rawls's conception of the overlapping consensus is a distinctive view of liberal politics. On

this view politics involves significant intellectual and social activity that implicates and influences what citizens believe both about their relationship with other citizens and about themselves. As we have seen, what people believe about themselves and their relationships is modified by a simultaneous process of public and private reasoning. In this process, the political principles that emerge have a moral status because of their connection with what come to be publicly shared and mutually reasonable beliefs and because of their integration with individual's various conceptions of the good.

These principles are in essence civic ideals that are not simply facts about people's beliefs, not are they merely a codification of a national civic creed that competes with or displaces citizens' metaphysical commitments. Because of the way that they are continuously developed and renewed, those ideals influence and are influenced by private commitments, but because they do not embrace any particular metaphysical foundation, they do pose a direct challenge to such beliefs. In a real sense, citizens take up the task of seeking and construction such foundations for themselves and in their own cultural and community associations, but any foundation that they develop do not become part of a society-wide public belief system. Of course, an emerging and evolving overlapping consensus certainly influences such private belief systems, but there is no reason to suppose that those systems converge into a single set of metaphysical commitments held by all citizens. Given citizens' initially divergent private beliefs and the commitment of a liberal society to freedom of conscience, in fact, such convergence is unlikely. Thus, an overlapping consensus is compatible both in principle and in fact with a wide diversity of private metaphysical structures of belief and justification. In this way, an overlapping consensus constitutes a set of evolving moral commitments about a nation's civic ideals that is nevertheless harmonious with a wide variation in citizens' private moralities.

The public education system of such a liberal society can be understood as, in part, a set of government institution and practices that enable and promote the constitutional emergence of an overlapping consensus. From this perspective, civic education in public school is the element of the public education system that undertakes and accomplishes this task for the young. This education is not adequately conceived as simply a vehicle for informing the young about adults' civic beliefs, for such information is at most only one element of what children need to learn in order to participate in the development of an overlapping consensus. Nor is

such civic education adequately conceived as the enforcement on the young of an authoritative and determinate civic doctrine, for no such doctrine is characteristic of an overlapping consensus because its principles are subject to constant reconsideration and modification.

Finally, an adequate civic education is certainly not instruction in a particular metaphysical system of belief, even one with specific civic content or purpose, for such instruction confuses public with private education. Of course, a fully adequate system of civic education almost certainly includes elements that address adults of various ages and in various public roles, but the primary function of the remainder of this essay will be to elaborate to the extent possible the school-based curriculum and instructional procedures appropriate to this conception of civic education.

Before considering the implications of this view for school curriculum and instruction, we are now able to confront the question posed in the title of this essay, that is, can civic and moral education be distinguished from one another? Civic education is certainly a kind of moral education in that it promotes and supports a public morality, that is, the agreements about the principles governing citizens' relationships with and obligations to one another that emerge from the process of reflective equilibrium outlined above. However, two observations about this answer are in order. First, civic education takes place in a liberal society. Obviously, there is also moral education guided by private metaphysical commitments and conducted by families, churches, communities, and other associations. And, as we will see below, there is also another kind of moral education to which public schools can contribute, namely, an education for personal liberty. Second, the morality involved in civic education is concerned as much with citizens' commitment to the process of public and private reasoning from which an overlapping consensus emerges as it is with the substance of the principles that issue from it.

Thus, a civic education that aims simply at children's knowledge and acceptance of the current version of citizens' agreements about principles is clearly insufficient in that would not enable them to maintain awareness of and allegiance to the principles as they are modified by citizens' subsequent experience and reflection. Such an education would, indeed, be tantamount to an education in a particular civic doctrine. It could, moreover, mark the beginning of the collapse of an overlapping consensus in that the children so instructed would become citizens who are unable or



unwilling to modify the consensus in reasonable ways that reflect their experience with the consequences of those principles. Such citizens would find that the principles were no longer capable of making adequate sense of some of their experience and would be driven to find that meaning based exclusively on their private moralities. In this way, the public consensus could gradually fragment into competing private commitments to and justifications for citizens' obligations to one another. Thus, a good deal is at stake in public schools' efforts at civic education, namely, the future public coherence of the society as a whole.

The aims of the curriculum for such a civic education are relatively straightforward. But in formulating those aims, we must place them in the context of the schools' full contribution to children's moral education. I have argued elsewhere (Bull, 2002) that it is incumbent upon a liberal society to provide an education that makes it possible for each child to become his or her own person, an education for personal liberty. Without going into details, such an education includes meaningful exposure to conception of the good beyond that of the family and immediate community, the child's coming to know about his or her own talents and proclivities, and instruction that enables the child to make reasonable judgments about available conceptions of the good in light of that knowledge (Bull, Fruehling, and Chattergy, 1992). In this way, public schools make a contribution to the developing private morality of children without determining the substance of that morality. Civic education must operate in conjunction with this education for liberty in developing children's private moralities.

Against this background, civic education =s curriculum aims, first, to enable children to learn about the current state of the overlapping consensus—the civic principles of their society and how they derive from widely held intuitions about the relationship and obligations among citizens. Second, such curriculum must enable children to learn about the meaning and consequences of those principles—how they have been interpreted in the society, the institutions and social practices in which they are instantiated, and the outcomes of those laws and practices, both intended and otherwise.

Third, the curriculum must enable children to reflect on the relationship between, on the one hand, those principles and their consequences and , on the other, the overlapping consensus and their developing private moralities. If the curriculum succeeds in achieving these aims of helping children to understand the origin,

meaning, consequences, and personal implications of the society's civic principles, children should emerge from the public school system with the ability to take part as adult citizens in the evolution of the overlapping consensus by means of a process of reflective equilibrium. However, not only must citizens have this ability, but they also must be inclined to make use of it. Finally, then an adequate civic education curriculum must, in addition, enable children to see and appreciate the public purpose and personal meaning of what after all is an intellectually and morally demanding set of activities.

Many particular configurations of curricular content can enable public schools to achieve these aims of civic education, and the content appropriate to them may vary from one locality to the other, depending on the diverse initial socialization and circumstances of children. In other words, one cannot deduce a specific content or structure of the curriculum from these general philosophical considerations; they provide only a framework for constructing and evaluating particular proposals for the curriculum. Moreover, much of the school curriculum that has not traditionally been understood as part of civic education makes an indirect contribution to accomplishing these aims. Language instruction and logical training, for example, provide children with skills that facilitate the requisite learning. This section will, therefore, analyze only some general aspects of the school curriculum that are relevant to the specifically civic content appropriate to achieving these aims.

I have argued elsewhere (Bull, in press) that teaching children to understand and appreciate other cultures in their nation is an important element in education for personal liberty in that it enables children to consider for themselves conceptions of the good as alternatives to those available in their families and immediate communities. Therefore, it expands their freedom to become their own persons rather than persons determined entirely by their immediate social environment. Such teaching simultaneously strengthens the entire system of personal liberty by helping children to appreciate others' cultures as real possibilities for their own lives, not just as alien curiosities to be benevolently or perhaps grudgingly tolerated. In addition, teaching about cultures also makes an important contribution to civic education for an overlapping consensus but for reasons at odds with those most frequently cited in the civic education literature, namely, to facilitate democratic deliberation by helping children to understand, anticipate, and negotiate the disagreements that they are likely to

encounter in democratic societies (Gutmann and Thompson, 1996). Learning about other cultures in their society can also enable children to understand the commonalities as well as the divergences in belief among the members of those cultures. In this way, such teaching can provide children with a knowledge of the current overlapping consensus about political principles and of the shared moral intuitions from which it derives. Thus, the content of an adequate civic education emphasizes whatever unity of belief that may exist across cultural differences rather than the differences themselves. Combined with instruction that emphasizes our diversity in order to foster and strengthen personal liberty, the content of the school curriculum, therefore, provides a rebuts conception of multiculturalism in the society, a conception that expresses both what unifies the nation's citizens and what divides them.

Undoubtedly it is inherently valuable for children to learn about their own and other nations' histories, but the content of history also has a special relevance to civic education for an overlapping consensus. For it presents the opportunity to consider at a remove in time and place the relationship between nations' cultures, their civic ideals, and the results of the policies adopted to achieve those ideals. Especially when the nations under study are liberal societies adapted, history can reveal the tensions among those three factors the way in which the societies adapted their ideals and policies in light of those tensions. And when the nation under study is one's own, history reveals to children the mutable nature of the overlapping consensus and the reasons in the national experience for the changes that have taken place in the nation's civic aspirations and ideals. These lessons are crucial for children's gaining an accurate understanding of the nature of an overlapping consensus and for providing them with an appropriate perspective on the tentative status and justifiability of one's own nation's current political principles and policies. Without such a perspective, children might come to regard their nation's commitments to be either absolute or entirely culturally relative, neither of which would prepare them to take part seriously in the continuous reconstitution of the overlapping consensus. It is clear that learning about the changes that have taken place in a nation's civic ideals and their policy interpretations is an important corrective to the assumption that they are infallible. But also learning that those changes can be seen as rational, if sometimes mistaken, responses to experience also corrects the assumption that those ideals and

policies are nothing but an expression of the majority's untutored cultural preferences. Either of these assumptions actively discourages children from taking the formulation of a nation's overlapping consensus seriously, for on the first there is seemingly no need to do so, and on the second there is no point in expending one's energy on a matter that is immune from conscious influence.

As one possible example, the history curriculum in American schools might consider the social, economic, and religious controversies involved in the debate over slavery prior to and during the U.S. Civil war and the evolving public policies and policy proposals to which they led. Such a study of the evolving overlapping consensus during this time, the changing public policies in which it was instantiated, the social and economic consequences of those policies, and the various private and public reactions to those consequences can illustrate to children both the tentative nature of civic ideals and patterns of reasoning employed by citizens at the time to reconcile their private moralities, aspirations, and experiences with those of their fellow citizens.

Admittedly, this curriculum involves a particularly intellectualized view of history, for it entails the perspective that human reason and understanding play a significant role in the shaping of national ideas and the events that flow from them. And for that reason, it will not be easy for children to master. Nonetheless, it reveals just how profoundly intellectual the task of civic education for an overlapping consensus is.

This intellectual quality of the curriculum is equally on display in another crucial and related aspect of its content. For an overlapping consensus is the reasonable confluence of popular belief about abstract principles of government and the obligations of citizenship, not merely shared opinions or intuition about what should be done in particular circumstances. For children to view the rights and duties of citizens as resulting from such principles, the civic education curriculum must also include a philosophical element, in its widest sense. The purpose of this element is to enable children to view their and others' action as instance of the application of, to use Immanuel Kant's phrase, maxims of action (Kant, 1785/1985). Seeing one's actions as following such general rules involves and develops children's capacity to abstract from particular actions and to see patterns in them. It may also be one of humans' fundamental logical and moral capacities. Of course, in developing this capacity, one must avoid enforcing Kant's metaphysical doctrines about such maxims—such as, that the only

genuinely moral maxims are universal and unconditional—because public education is not to indoctrinate children to accept controversial metaphysical positions. Nevertheless, it is possible to teach children this way of viewing human actions without any particular metaphysical accompaniment. In doing so, one enables children to analyze the actions of government and their citizens as following from general principles, which they can then formulate, reflect on, and perhaps criticize, reinterpret, or reformulate on the basis of their and other's experience and their own private moralities. Indeed, these philosophical abilities can be developed in part in the context of the history curriculum as it has been conceived above. Children can be invited and encouraged to conceptualize, for example, the principles of government and their rationales that may have emerged from the commitments and circumstances of various social groups during the Civil War era. These abilities are crucial to children's eventual participation in the process of reflective equilibrium as I, following Rawls, have conceived it, for they make it possible to see actions, practices, and policies as serving principles.

This characterization of the content of the civic education curriculum as involving multicultural, historical, and philosophical elements is, no doubt, incomplete. But it demonstrates the kind of analysis necessary for formulating such a curriculum. However, there is one central element of civic education to which the content I have outlined does not necessarily speak, namely, children's motivation to involve themselves in the reflective process through which the overlapping consensus emerges. This aim, I believe, is less a matter of curricular content than of the instructional procedures through which that content is presented and learned.

Perhaps the key to such motivation is to enable children to explore the connection between the formulation of and adherence to civic principles, on the one hand, and their emerging private moralities, on the other. By this, I do not mean what consequences the principles have for the selfish interest of children, for private moralities, which are usually based in culture, are not inherently or even usually self-directed. Rather, what I do mean is what consequences these principles have for children's own self-defined interests, which are not necessarily interests in themselves. Nor do I mean that such an exploration should focus only on the teleological outcomes of the principles, for children's emerging moralities can have deontological as well as teleological components. In short, this

exploration involves the connection between the civic principles and what children are coming to believe is right and good.

To accomplish this exploration, it seems necessary to encourage children to assess from their own perspectives the principles that they are discovering in the overlapping consensus. In other words, the teaching about cultures, history, and principles must at some point make room for and facilitate children's reaching their own judgments about the nature and justification of the overlapping consensus. In part this means that children must be encouraged to be active and independent in the search for the civic meaning of current governmental and social policies and practices. That is, they must be encouraged to formulate hypotheses about such matters, but they must also be encouraged to take seriously the hypotheses of others, including adults and other children. For what they are ultimately seeking is not their own private interpretations but an understanding of civic principles that can stand up to public scrutiny. But equally important, they must be encouraged to formulate their own judgments about the adequacy of these principles, judgments based in part on what is publicly known about the principles' consequences but also on what their emerging private moralities make of those consequences. What emerges from these observations is a portrait of a civic education classroom in which children are mutually engaged in the search for the formulation and meaning of their civic ideals and that is respectful of the judgments that children form about them.

### **III. CONCLUSIONS**

This analysis suggests that Rawls's conceptions of an overlapping and of the process of reflective equilibrium from which that consensus emerges offer a solution to the problems of civic education with which this essay began. The aims, content, and instructional procedures of a civic education for an overlapping consensus do not require teachers to provide instruction in a metaphysical theory of public morality. While such an education takes note of what citizens happen to believe about the nature and significance of their civic ideals, it does not leave children without the capability of reaching moral judgments about those ideals. Moreover, the judgments that children reach are not simply the application of an established and official civic doctrine but are the result of a thoughtful analysis of the public meaning of civic principles and of an assessment of those principles= capability of

meeting the requirements of children's emerging private moralities. And because of that analysis and assessment, children have self-and public-referential reasons to engage honestly and actively with their society's civic ideals, to take seriously the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

On this account, then, civic education contributes simultaneously to the construction of the self and to the construction of one's society, and it does so interactively, so that the emerging self is neither simply a matter of internalizing norms that are supplied from without, as a civic religion might imply, nor simply a matter of applying one's own conception of the good to the principles, policies, and institutions of society, as one's private morality might bid one to do. In this way, civic education can be a complex kind of moral education in which students learn from and teach themselves and other. And contrary to the claims of deliberative democrats (Gutmann, 1999) and communitarians (Bellah et al., 1991) the political liberalism that Rawls envisions makes possible an attractive if demanding civic education that is much more public than they believe possible in a liberal society. Rather than an irresistibly privatizing civic morality, Rawls's brand of liberalism implies, as we have seen, an education for involvement in public dialogue about civic values that nevertheless does not require that the demands of private morality are ignored or eclipsed entirely.

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