Public Reason and the Religious Integrity Objection: Engaging Rawls and Gandhi

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Public spaces in contemporary Western democracies are increasingly becoming arenas of hitherto unknown expressions of radical pluralism. One of the critical constituents in John Rawls's political liberalism in responding to radical pluralism is the use of public reason – reason not rooted in any secular or religious comprehensive doctrines – while engaging in the public political forum. The integrity objection[1] is a prominent objection against the requirement of Rawls's public reason. It is deeply rooted in the disposition of religious believers who must comply with the restrictions of public reason whilst engaging in the public political forum. The problem raised by the integrity objection leads to the unworkability of the layers of the Rawlsian project. For comparative purposes, I engage with Mohandas Karamchand (Mahatma) Gandhi to investigate his stake in the integrity objection and to explore a contrasting dimension to Rawls.

In this article, through the medium of the integrity objection against public reason, I explore Rawls's and Gandhi's contrasting and complementary realms of divergence and convergence. The integrity objection of a religious believer who is a free and equal citizen of a liberal democracy merits attention. Taking Gandhi as a representative of a religious believer, some of his ideas are brought into the framework of political liberalism through the integrity objection to see how

1 Apart from the integrity objection, there are other objections against public reason such as the incompleteness objection, the denial of truth objection, the fairness objection, and the divisiveness objection. For the purposes of this article, I will focus only on the integrity objection. For an overview of the objections see: Patrick Neal 2009, 159–71; Kevin Vallier 2014, 45–78.

they might challenge that framework. Furthermore, this article probes whether Rawlsian political liberalism can offer a principled response to the integrity objection in general and Gandhi's ideas in particular. The evaluation of Rawls's and Gandhi's approaches highlights their points of concord and contention.

I begin by briefly outlining the source of radical pluralism based on Charles Taylor and Josè Casanova. I then sketch Rawls's response to radical pluralism by focusing on public reason. Subsequently, I present the integrity objection against public reason in general and, in particular, by focusing on Gandhi's stance. This is followed by the response of Rawls and Rawlsians to the integrity objection. Finally, I evaluate the Rawlsian and Gandhian responses toward the integrity objection.

Sources of Radical Pluralism

The source of radical pluralism can be understood from diverse perspectives. For instance, as Charles Taylor indicates in *A Secular Age*, it can be a sum total of cultural, religious, philosophical, and scientific developments leading to a "buffered self," setting off an "age of authenticity" (Taylor 2007, 475), where the individual is free to explore diverse expressions of good without conforming to any external demands. This unprecedented expression of pluralism is characterised by a public space where varieties of "belief and unbelief jostle" (Taylor 2007, 531). Taylor underlines the potency of this unique situation stating, "it is marked by an unheard pluralism of outlooks, religious and non- and anti-religious, in which the number of possible positions seems to be increasing without end" (Taylor 2007, 437).

Jose Casanova adds the reality of increasing globalisation as another factor contributing to a radically plural public space. Globalisation provides the opportunity for "deterritorialising" or the movement of religions from the places of origin to new territories and "facilitates the return of the old civilisations and world religions" (Casanova 2001, 430) and "many new forms of hybrid globalised religions" (Casanova 2008, 118). Administering a radically pluralised democratic liberal society can be a demanding task taking into account the assurance of rights and demands of citizens.

Rawls, Pluralism, and Public Reason

Rawls anticipates the radicality of the contemporary public sphere and attempts to secure the forts of liberal democracy through his political liberalism. In contrast to Taylor and Casanova, who engage in historical, philosophical, and sociological analysis to understand the source of plurality and grasp the depth of its reality, Rawls merely underlines the obviousness of pluralism owing to the nature of liberal democratic societies. He recognises the pluralism of religious and secular comprehensive doctrines as "a permanent feature of the public culture of democracy" (Rawls 1996, 36). Notably, he characterises this as "the fact of *reasonable* pluralism."[2] Unlike "the fact of pluralism" arising from narrow-minded individual or group interests, the fact of reasonable pluralism is the outcome of "free practical reason within the framework of free institutions" (Rawls 1996, 37). Hence, ensuring stability in such a radically plural society involves both secular and religious reasonable comprehensive doctrines overlapping on a political conception of justice.

One of the reasons for Rawls's "political turn" is the fact of reasonable pluralism. In conceiving a well-ordered society in a *Theory of Justice*, Rawls presumed that his political conception of justice, namely, justice as fairness, chosen behind the "veil of ignorance," would be acceptable to everyone based on the same reasons. With reasonable pluralism, he acknowledges that it is "impossible" (Rawls 1999c, 179) to expect all citizens to rely on the same reasons based on a Kantian understanding of the human person as free and equal rational beings. In *Political Liberalism*, Rawls maintains the core concepts of *A Theory of Justice* but places it within a new "political" framework (Rawls 1996, xliiin8). Responding to the fact of reasonable pluralism, the centrality of a moral autonomy framework in the *Theory of Justice* gives way to political autonomy in Political Liberalism. The primary focus is oriented on the human person as a citizen or a "...political person of a modern democracy with the political rights and duties of citizenship, and standing in a political relation with other citizens" (Rawls 1996, xlv). Having "adjusted to the fact of reasonable pluralism" (Rawls 1996, xxxviii) by setting up the

2 My emphasis.

political framework, Rawls delves into showing how coercive laws can be publicly justified to the citizens of a radically plural society.

Given the background of "irreconcilable comprehensive doctrines" (Rawls 1999c, 132), public justification of coercive laws cannot be based on either religious or secular reasons. Hence, Rawls relies on the use of public reason towards public justification through which free and equal citizens can "publicly endorse [coercive laws] in the light of their own reason" (Rawls 1999c, 90–91). Justification through public reason is limited to deliberations in the public political forum on "constitutional essentials and matters of basic justice" (Rawls 1996, 227–30). In contrast to non-public reasons derived from comprehensive doctrines, the content of public reason is given by a political conception of justice. A political conception of justice is a "freestanding view" or a "module" that is "...expounded apart from, or without reference to any [...] wider background" (Rawls 1996, 12). In order to ensure non-conflicting content for a political conception of justice, Rawls restricts himself to "certain fundamental ideas[3] seen as implicit in the public political culture of a democratic society" (Rawls 1996, 13). A political conception of justice consists of "substantive principles of justice" such as "justice as fairness" and "guidelines of inquiry." Guidelines of inquiry guide the deliberations to apply principles of justice in practice by providing "principles of reasoning and rules of evidence." Public reason is a political value that makes the "inquiry free and public" (Rawls 1996, 224–25). In sum, public reason in a democratic society is "... the reason of equal citizens who, as a collective body, exercise final political and coercive power over one another in enacting laws and in amending their constitution" (Rawls 1996, 214).

According to Rawls, public reason is a moral duty and not a legal duty. In this context, he points to the "ideal of public reason" that fulfils the "duty of civility." The ideal of public reason applies to the legislative, executive, and judiciary as well as citizens. The government officials fulfil their duty of civility when they base their decisions on public reason and explain this to the citizens. Citizens fulfil their duty of civility when they act "as if they were legislators" and satisfy "the criterion of reciprocity" (Rawls 1999c, 135). Rawls explains the criterion of reciprocity as follows:

3 The three fundamental ideas are: "[The idea of] society as a fair system of cooperation over time, from one generation to the next, [...] the idea of citizens [...] as free and equal persons [...] [and] the idea of a well-ordered society as a society regulated by a political conception of justice" (Rawls 1996, 14–22).

"our exercise of political power is proper only when we sincerely believe that the reasons we offer for our political action may reasonably be accepted by other citizens as a justification of those actions" (Rawls 1996, xlvi). By fulfilling the criterion of reciprocity, citizens also satisfy the "the liberal principle of legitimacy."[4] Notably, the restriction to introduce non-public reasons in the public political forum leads to what Kevin Vallier calls "principles of restraint" (Vallier 2014, 4, 33–38).

The awareness of Rawls on this demanding requirement of restraint and his attempt to overcome it is clear from his revisions on the requirements of public reason. He shifts from a strict exclusive view to an inclusive view and, finally, to a "wide view of public political culture." While the exclusive view prohibits the introduction of non-public reasons in the public political forum, the inclusive view does permit this provided it strengthens the ideal of public reason, for example, such as the use of religious arguments against slavery given by Martin Luther King, Jr. during the abolitionist movement (Rawls 1996, 247–52). The wide view of public political culture allows for the introduction of arguments from religious or non-religious comprehensive doctrines in the public sphere provided a *proviso* is satisfied. The *proviso* is fulfilled when "proper political reasons" are given in "*due course*" to support the arguments (Rawls 1999c, 152). Even though Rawls makes room to introduce non-public reasons (such as religious arguments) in the public political forum, the requirement to accompany this with public reason in *due course* remains. Hence, there are objections against public reason, especially from the perspective of religious believers.

The Integrity Objection

As mentioned, one of the prominent objections raised against public reason by religious citizens is the integrity objection. Even though public reason makes the same demand on religious and non-religious citizens, the effect of the restraint

4 This principle states that "…our exercise of political power is proper and hence justifiable only when it is exercised in accordance with a constitution the essentials of which all citizens may reasonably be expected to endorse in the light of principles and ideals acceptable to them as reasonable and rational" (Rawls 1996, 217).

is more pronounced in the lives of religious citizens. According to Patrick Neal, restraint of public reason imposes a "heavier burden" and makes it "genuinely difficult" for religious citizens. A reason for this disparity lies in the fact that, unlike secular citizens, several sacred, normative, and authoritative narratives and texts regulate the lives of religious citizens. Deliberations based on these fall under the ambit of restraint imposed by the public reason (Neal 2009, 165–66). The integrity objection of religious citizens is one of the outcomes of the restraint requirement of public reason.

The integrity objection reflects the concern of religious citizens to compromise their convictions for the sake of public reason. The meaning of integrity from the perspective of a religious citizen is the "fidelity to those projects and principles that are constitutive of one's core identity" (Calhoun 2016, 123). Cécile Laborde gives further clarity to the term integrity stating that "the value of integrity is grounded in the values of identity, autonomy, moral agency, and self-respect" (Laborde 2017, 204). The integrity objection, according to Benjamin R. Hertzberg, stems from the obligations associated with religion that can be characterised as "totalising and overriding." The notion of totalising points to the impossibility of separating the political from the personal, and overriding indicates the priority of religious obligations in all circumstances (Hertzberg 2019, 39).

Two of the most prominent critics who raise the integrity objection are Nicholas Wolterstorff and Michael Perry. Wolterstorff provides one of the most incisive formulations of the integrity objection: "It belongs to the religious convictions of a good many religious people in our society that they ought to base their decisions concerning fundamental issues of justice on their religious convictions. They do not view it as an option whether or not to do so. It is their conviction that they ought to strive for wholeness, integrity, integration, in their lives [...]. Their religion is not, for them, about something other than their social and political existence; it is also about their social and political existence" (Wolterstorff 1997, 105). Perry takes the criticism further forward by observing that the call to "bracket" religious convictions and obligations forces a religious citizen to act as if one is a totally different person during public deliberations (Perry 1988, 181–82). According to these critiques, public reason fails to uphold the integrity of religious citizens.

Gandhi and the Integrity Objection

The context of increasing globalisation and the reality of thriving "multiple modernities" (Eisenstadt 2000) necessitates a non-Western critique of Rawls's public reason. Gandhi is one of the fitting candidates to undertake this critique. Gandhi agrees with Rawls that religion should have a role in a radically public sphere. However, Gandhi and Rawls conceive the role of religion in different ways. While Gandhi undertakes a religious approach, Rawls relies on a political liberal approach. As discussed above, Rawls's public reason-oriented approach leads to various objections, such as the integrity objection. As we will see, Gandhi's religious approach provides a new dimension to the critique of public reason on behalf of religious believers and dovetails with the Western critiques of public reason raising the integrity objection.

Gandhi treats the engagement of human persons in diverse activities in the public sphere as an "indivisible whole" and considers it impossible to place diverse activities such as religion and politics in "watertight compartments." Moreover, religion is indispensable as it ensures a "moral basis" guiding human action (Gandhi 1938, 393). However, given the context of radical pluralism, the question arises regarding the feasibility of upholding the inseparability of religion and politics. Rawls's solution centres on the public political forum with a freestanding "political" conception of justice guided by political values that have no basis in comprehensive doctrines such as religion. On the other hand, Gandhi critiques the exclusive institution-centred approaches offered by Rawls, which ignores the potentialities of the background culture. According to Rawls, the background culture of civil society consists of all comprehensive doctrines such as religion (Rawls 1996, 14). Gandhi bases his position on the background culture and explores the possibilities offered by diverse religions to initiate self- and societal-transformations. These transformations act as an internal rather than an external restraint imposed by public reason on citizens.

The first dimension of Gandhi's critique points to the limited possibilities offered by Rawls to engage with the background culture. For Gandhi, the background culture with its diverse religions and worldviews is the nucleus of society. Furthermore, truth and the search for truth in the background culture is foundational. However,

Rawls's "method of avoidance" excludes the focus on truth. For Rawls, the practice of the method of avoidance "...neither...[asserts] nor...[denies] any religious, philosophical, or moral views, or their associated philosophical accounts of truth and the status of values" (Rawls 1999b, 434). In contrast, reflecting on the future of an independent India, Gandhi states that we have two choices: "...either to introduce the Western principles of 'Might is Right' or to uphold the Eastern principle that Truth alone conquers..." (Gandhi 1920, 7). According to Gandhi, truth is not given but must be discovered by each person situated in the background culture through his or her own comprehensive doctrines.

Contrary to Rawls's fears, Gandhi's orientation towards truth does not exclude a variety of relative paths towards truth and even non-believers. Gandhi acknowledges the value of relative truths and the possibility of experimentation. For him, one has to uphold "relative Truth as ...[one] has conceived it" until ... [one has] realised absolute truth and till then, the relative Truth become ones "beacon [...] shield and buckler" (Gandhi 1996, xi). For Raghavan N. Iyer, this distinction between absolute and relative Truth is significant because it indicates "...the need for a corrective process of experimentation with our own experience, and this presupposes our readiness to admit openly our errors and to learn from them" (Iyer 2000, 160). These experimentations in Gandhi's life are immortalised in his autobiography *The Story of My Experiments with Truth*. Furthermore, Gandhi puts forward the formulation that "Truth is God" rather than "God is Truth." One of the reasons for this change is to accommodate atheists who are open to the truth but have denied the existence of God (Gandhi 1931, 428). Thus, Gandhi's approach considers the possibility of a contemporary plural public space experimenting with religious and secular perspectives and recognises the integrity of these diverse paths towards the good.

The second dimension of Gandhi's critique points to Rawls's approach of overlooking the resources within a religion or side-lining the possibilities offered by religion for reasonable engagement in the public political forum. From a Gandhian perspective, Rawls's argument of acquiring "a sense of justice" by living under a liberal democratic regime may not be a source of lasting motivation for citizens to comply with the demands of public reason. Rawls's pursuit for uncontroversial solutions shuts many potential doors of self-transformation in the background

culture. Furthermore, Rawls's approach is part of a larger problem in modern politics. According to Uday Singh Mehta, modern politics focuses primarily on the interaction between the individual and the state and does not explore the possibilities of self-transformation. Consequently, "...it [modern politics] is largely indifferent to that which is solely in the individual interest, or what one might think of as his or her being, i.e. the quality of integrity" (Mehta 2010, 362). Bhikhu C. Parekh highlights another drawback of the centralised liberal-democratic approach from a Gandhian perspective, where the state abstracts and concentrates the power from the people and returns it to them in their new incarnation as citizens (Parekh 1989, 115–16).

Gandhi points to the need for constant self-transformation using religious resources from the background culture to enhance citizens' engagement in the public political forum. Self-transformation is one of the meanings of Gandhi's concept of *swaraj* (self-rule). According to Gandhi's vision shared in *Hind Swaraj*, personal self-transformation is essential to attain poorna swaraj or political independence of India: "...if we become free, India is free. And in this thought, you have a definition of Swaraj. It is Swaraj when we learn to rule ourselves [...]. Swaraj has to be experienced, by each one for himself" (Gandhi 2009, 53). The "pilgrimage to *swaraj*" (Gandhi 1925, 177) consists of societal transformation and individuals attaining self-mastery through self-discipline and self-restraint. Notably, instead of an external demand of restraint required by public reason in Rawls, Gandhi focuses on generating an internal restraint among the citizens that will reflect in their interactions in the public space: "The word swaraj is a sacred word, a Vedic word, meaning self-rule and self-restraint and not freedom from all restraint which 'independence' often means" (Gandhi 1971, 45; 263–64). In outlining the ways to attain *swaraj*, Gandhi explores various religious resources within the Indian tradition that can pass the test of *satya* (truth), *ahimsa* (non-violence), and reason. Gandhi thinks that other religious traditions also are replete with such resources.

According to Gandhi, there are instrumentalities of varying degrees to attain swaraj, cutting across intellectual, religious, and economic disparities and diversities in a society. For instance, it extends from a relatively easy act of

chanting *Ramanama*[5] and singing *Ramdhun*[6] to the rather difficult practice of vows.[7] Mehta recognises the uniqueness of the Gandhian approaches, especially *swaraj*, "...as a function of character and self-discipline and not predicated on traditional markers of education, gender or property ownership" (Mehta 2010, 357).

The third dimension of Gandhi's critique highlights the limitedness of Rawls's political approach in confronting conflicting situations in society and highlights the possibilities of dialogue offered by *satyagraha*. Furthermore, through this critique, Gandhi shows how upholding the integrity of a religious citizen can lead to societal-transformation. The individual self-transformation attained through swaraj is further extended to the societal realm through the practice of *satyagraha*. *Satyagraha* means "truth-force."[8] Each human person, through his or her comprehensive doctrines in their background culture, pursues truth. However, truth escapes the human capacity to capture it. Hence, politics must bring people together to pursue the discovery of truth together. This requires open-ended conversations among people. The self-transformation attained through swaraj makes one well-disposed to engage in open-ended exchanges to discover truth. This quest for truth or *satyagraha* offers the possibility to start dialogue, even with fascists.

From a Gandhian perspective, the practise of *satyagraha* – an expression of self-transformed citizens – provides an alternative for the restraint requirement of public reason. For instance, *satyagraha*, with its "master keys" (i.e., truth and non-violence), orients a citizen to identify the ethical core of religions and worldviews

5 On the relevance of Ramanama, see: Gandhi 1969, 31:511; Gandhi clarifies that the reference to Rama is not to the historical Rama but stands for one of the names of omnipotent and omnipresent God. Furthermore, the chants can involve using the name of other gods, provided harmony of the sound is not disturbed (1981, 83:364).

6 *Ramanama* literally means the name of Lord Rama. He is the epic Hindu warrior and Vishnu's avatar. Ramdhun is a popular devotional song that begins with the words "*Raghupati Raghav Raja Ram*." The song is themed on Lord Rama and was sung during meetings attended by Gandhi.

7 Gandhi states: "[m]y faith in self-purification tells me that these vows if carried out to the full will bring us many steps nearer our goal [of *swaraj*]" (Gandhi 1971, 45:248). However, Gandhi warns that the efficacy of vows are not demonstrable through reason but are efficient in attaining swaraj (Gandhi 1971, 45:249).

8 Gandhi states: "Its [*satyagraha's*] root meaning is holding on to truth, hence truth-force. I have also called it love-force or soul-force" (Gandhi 1965, 16:358).

in society. Gandhi states: "...if it is proper and necessary to discover an underlying unity among all religions, a master-key is needed. That master-key is that of truth and nonviolence" (Gandhi 1978, 72:254). Furthermore, *satyagraha* equips citizens to face conflicting situations in society and with citizens whom Rawls calls "unreasonable." Gandhi states that practising *satyagraha* involves fulfilling three conditions: "(1) The Satyagrahi should not have any hatred in his heart against the opponent. (2) The issue must be true and substantial. (3) The Satyagrahi must be prepared to suffer till the end for his cause."[9] According to Thomas Pantham, *satyagraha* can be a catalyst in societal-transformation, especially in conflicting situations through three steps: persuasive efforts by reasoning with the opponent, listening, and being open to their counter-arguments; evoking the opponent's response through self-suffering; and the practice of non-cooperation and civil disobedience (Pantham 1983, 179).

The Rawlsian Reply to the Integrity Objection

Rawls's political liberalism agrees with Gandhi and other critiques who raise the integrity objection about the intensity of the demand that religious comprehensive doctrines make on a religious citizen. Rawls's concern for the religious citizen is clearly expressed in some of the questions raised and discussed in *Political Liberalism*: "How is it possible for those affirming a religious doctrine that is based on a religious authority, for example, the Church or the Bible, also to hold a reasonable political conception that supports a just democratic regime?" (Rawls 1996, xxxix). Furthermore, Rawls asks specifically: "[W]hy should citizens in discussing and voting on the most fundamental political question honour the limits of public reason?" (Rawls 1996, 216). By discussing the arguments in support of his political liberalism, Rawls disagrees that the restraint requirement of public reason jeopardises the integrity of a religious citizen. Notably, he argues that public reason secures the framework of living integrated lives in a plural public sphere.

9 Quoted in Nayyar 1946, 64.

One aspect of a Rawlsian reply to the Gandhian perspective of the integrity objection highlights the inappropriateness in outlining one concrete path, such as Gandhi's swaraj in the political realm. Even though Gandhi's path outlined in swaraj is not strictly comprehensive and is open to citizens who practice religious and secular comprehensive doctrines, there could be various other paths with similar openness in society. Pragmatically, the state will not be in a position to judge one path over the other. Hence, Rawls's approach constructs a political framework based on a political conception of justice, thereby securing and sustaining secular and religious comprehensive doctrines and ensuring the integrity of citizens. He outlines the problem of political liberalism as working out "...a political conception of political justice for a (liberal) constitutional democratic regime that a plurality of reasonable doctrines, both religious and non-religious, liberal and non-liberal may endorse for right reasons" (Rawls 1996, xli). The first principle of the political conception of justice guarantees the integrity of citizens. One of the equal basic liberties guaranteed by this first principle includes "the freedoms specified by the liberty and integrity of the person" (Rawls 1996, 291). Rawls guarantees the political liberty that ensures citizens can undertake the path they choose to attain integrity but does not specify a particular path. For instance, even though Rawls follows a method of avoidance or, as he writes in *Political Liberalism*, conceives a political conception "without the concept of truth" (Rawls 1996, 94), he does not ignore diverse truth claims in society. Jonathan Quong argues that Rawls treats truth in the "mundane sense" in his political liberalism and not in the "metaphysical sense" (Quong 2011, 223–55). Truth in the mundane sense does not appeal to secular or religious comprehensive doctrines of truth and refers to those aspects that cannot be both just and unjust, such as tyranny and exploitation. On the other hand, truth in the metaphysical sense refers to the ultimate foundations and nature of truth, resulting in reasonable disagreements among reasonable citizens. Therefore, Rawls neither grounds his political liberalism in any of these theories of truth nor does he appeal to them. Instead, he "passes the buck" on the role of truth to reasonable citizens. It is the task of each citizen to connect a political conception of justice to his or her understanding of truth. According to Quong, the unfamiliarity of Rawls's approach in political philosophy is the source of confusion (Quong 2011, 226).

Another aspect of a Rawlsian response to Gandhi indicates the positive acknowledgement of the inner disposition of the citizens. While Gandhi focuses on nurturing religious disposition, Rawls appeals to an already cultivated political disposition in a liberal democratic society, or what he calls "a sense of justice." A sense of justice disposes and motivates citizens to engage in the discussions in the public political forum using public reason. According to Rawls, the moral disposition towards a sense of justice develops in three steps. It begins with the morality of authority, followed by the morality of association, and ends finally with the morality of principles. The disposition of the morality of authority is experienced when children follow certain precepts out of their love and care of their parents. The morality of association develop as one experiences the benefits of cooperative endeavours of a group such as a school, neighbourhood, and sports. The culmination of the preceding two steps is the morality of principles that disposes one to honour the commitments of the principles of justice. These steps indicate the development of a sense of justice that disposes one to act based on what is "right" rather than unpredictable individual or group interests (Rawls 1999a, 405–19). A sense of justice characterises the reasonableness of a citizen willing to propose and abide by fair terms of cooperation provided others also do so and recognises the burdens of judgment and upholds political legitimacy by using public reason (Rawls 1996, 54). Notably, Rawls is appealing to a disposition free from comprehensive doctrines so that it is acceptable to citizens in a pluralistic society to maintain the integrity of their political identity.

The third aspect of Rawls's response to the integrity objection points to the need for securing a "public or institutional identity" rather than a "non-institutional or moral identity." As discussed before, Gandhi is concerned with the background culture from where one derives a non-institutional moral identity from their "deeper aims and commitments" (Rawls 1996, 30). However, Rawls centres his position on the public or institutional identity that does not exhaust other identities but secures the possibility of following any non-institutional identity of one's choice, such as a religious identity. By referring to the conversion of Saul of Tarsus to Paul the Apostle, Rawls shows that such a conversion changed his personal identity, but his public institutional identity remained the same (Rawls 1996, 30–31). Stephen Mulhall and Adam Swift observe that Rawls recognises the importance of values and commitments associated with religious and secular

comprehensive doctrines, but he does not deem them appropriate in the political realm (Mulhall and Swift 2003, 466). According to James Boettcher, even though public reason goes against a citizen's "fully religiously integrated existence," the rejection of public reason involves a coercive attempt to fashion the basic institutional structure using reasons that others cannot reasonably endorse and goes against the higher-order interest[10] of other citizens (Boettcher 2007, 246). Cheshire Calhoun's idea of integrity as a "social virtue" (Calhoun 2016, 123–53) is relevant here because it encourages us to go beyond the limited understanding of integrity as a personal virtue. The understanding of integrity as a social virtue asks us to consider our convictions and the convictions of others when there is a dispute regarding "what is worth doing." "Integrity calls us simultaneously to stand behind our convictions and to take seriously the doubts of others about them. Thus, neither ambivalence nor compromise seems inevitable to betoken a lack of integrity " (Calhoun 2016, 152). Hence, the restraint of public reason also symbolises respect for the comprehensive doctrines of fellow citizens and their integrity. Hence, the restraint of public reason also symbolises respect for the comprehensive doctrines of fellow citizens and their integrity.

Evaluating Religious and Political Responses

A critique of public reason based on the integrity objection from a Gandhian perspective and Rawls's response reveals one of the dominant tensions in a radical plural public space. Gandhi and Rawls come up with cogent arguments to uphold the integrity of citizens, albeit rooted in their religious and political liberal perspectives, respectively. The difference in their rootedness is expressed in their emphases as they conceive the identity of human persons, the foundation of their disposition, and their engagement in society. Gandhi's arguments presuppose the primacy of the religious identity and identify resources within religions and traditions of the background culture that are palatable to other members of the society. Contrastingly, Rawls presupposes the importance of securing a political identity or a public/institutional identity where the focus is on understanding the

10 Higher-order interests consist of developing and exercising the two moral powers, namely, a capacity for a sense of justice and a capacity for a conception of the good. Furthermore, a third higher-order interest consists of protecting and advancing a person's conception of good (Rawls 1996, 74).

human person as a reasonable autonomous citizen in the public political forum. Based on this distinction, the Gandhian integrity objection critiques the ease with which Rawls presupposes a religious citizen to switch over to a new identity when engaging in the public political forum. On the other hand, a Rawlsian response underlines the importance of securing a political identity of citizens that ensures them of their rights to pursue the good of their choice in society.

Being true to their respective foundations, Rawls and Gandhi recognise the importance of well-disposed citizens in society. Gandhi recognises the importance of self-discipline and self-transformed human persons to engage in reasonable public deliberations without an external requirement of public reason. To that end, he refines religious and traditional resources that can be practised by and be acceptable to the elite and ordinary, and the religious and secular, reflected in the concept of swaraj. However, a Rawlsian response points to the inappropriateness in projecting a predominantly religious path in a pluralistic society. Instead, he relies on freestanding dispositions cultivated within a citizen as they live in a liberal democratic society conceptualised in a sense of justice that orients citizens to offer public reasons and uphold the liberal principle of legitimacy. A Gandhian integrity objection also indicates the limitedness of Rawls's political approach as it side-lines many possible resources within society to resolve conflicts among reasonable and religious comprehensive doctrines. The centrality of dialogue in Gandhi, which is approached by everyone from their background culture and informed by *satyagraha*, shows the need to engage the agonistic with reasonable arguments and pre-rational expressions of self-suffering and love. However, Rawls does not question the efficacy of the resources in the background culture but is sceptical of its effectiveness in the public political forum given the fact of reasonable pluralism. He does not guarantee one reasonable solution; rather, sticking to his political framework, he provides the possibility of many reasonable solutions justifiable to reasonable citizens.

The fact of reasonable pluralism and the reality of radical pluralism in contemporary society necessitates exploring complementarities in Rawls's and Gandhi's diverging approaches reflected in their understanding of religious and political integrity. A religious understanding of integrity needs the guarantee of political integrity so that society maintains citizens' freedom and does not fall

into the lure of the populist dream of homogeneity or become attracted to the ideology of violent religious fundamentalists. Furthermore, instead of remaining buffered to the resources in background culture, the public political forum can be selectively porous in better grasping the reality and appropriating resources for better engagement among citizens. Finally, a political and freestanding disposition of a sense of justice is deeply rooted in a liberal democratic society; however, it may need to be supplemented by using resources from the background culture, such as religious resources.

In summary, bringing together the perspectives of Rawls and Gandhi opens up new spaces for reimagining the relationship between religious believers and the political liberal framework in the context of radical pluralism. By confronting Rawls's political liberalism with Gandhi's ideas and *vice versa*, this article teases out tensions and possibilities for employing their works in completely different contexts than they were originally imagined. Notably, the comparison of their perspectives results in overlaps and separations that are germane to research in the contemporary context of radical plural societies.

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