Pluralist Partially Comprehensive Doctrines, Moral Motivation, and the Problem of Stability

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Abstract Recent scholarship has drawn attention to John Rawls's concern with stability—a concern that, as Rawls himself notes, motivated Part III of *A Theory of Justice* and some of the more important changes of his political turn. For Rawls, the possibility of achieving 'stability for the right reasons' depends on citizens possessing sufficient moral motivation. I argue, however, that the moral psychology Rawls develops to show how such motivation would be cultivated and sustained does not cohere with his specific descriptions of 'pluralist (partially comprehensive)' doctrines. Considering Rawls's claims that 'most' citizens—both in contemporary liberal democracies and in the well-ordered society—possess such doctrines, this incompatibility threatens to undermine his stability arguments. Despite the enormous importance of pluralist doctrines and the potential difficulties they pose for Rawls's project, remarkably little attention has been paid to them. By critically examining these difficulties, the article begins to address this oversight.

However attractive a conception of justice might be on other grounds, it is seriously defective if the principles of moral psychology are such that it fails to engender in human beings the requisite desire to act upon it.

–John Rawls, A Theory of Justice

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Introduction

Recent scholarship has helped reveal the extent of John Rawls's[1] preoccupation with stability.[2] His peculiar conception, 'stability for the right reasons', only obtains once the citizens of a well-ordered society come to possess sufficient moral motivation and thus 'act from and not merely in accordance with' the political conception of justice (*PL*, p. 302)—that is to say, once citizens willingly uphold the political conception for the right (i.e. moral) reasons, not because they are coerced into doing so by the state.[3] This, of course, far exceeds the scope of a more basic notion of stability as, say, the absence of extra-legal opposition to a given political order.

Much attention has been paid to whether the fully just society Rawls describes is itself capable of achieving stability for the right reasons. Many critics argue that Rawls fails to show that his conception of justice—'justice as fairness'—is compatible with certain, especially religious, 'fully comprehensive and general doctrines'.[4] Expressing his sensitivity to these charges, Rawls asserts that the very question of how a just society is 'to be stable for the right reasons…should be more sharply put this way: How is it possible for those affirming a religious doctrine…also to hold a reasonable political conception that supports a just democratic regime?' (*PL*, p. xxxvii). My aim in this article is not to survey these objections or evaluate Rawls's responses to them. Rather, it is to argue that, by focusing on the threat religious doctrines pose to stability, scholars have overlooked potentially severe problems concerning another type of comprehensive doctrine: what Rawls calls the 'pluralist (partially comprehensive) view'[5] (hereafter, PPC view).

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[1] The following abbreviations are used throughout and are generally cited parenthetically in the text: *A Theory of Justice = TJ* (page references are given to both the 1971 and 1999 editions in the form [1971]/ [1999]); *Political Liberalism = PL*; *Collected Papers = CP*; *Justice as Fairness: A Restatement = JFR*.

[2] Weithman (2010) is perhaps the most notable recent example, but see also, e.g., Barry (1995); Lynch (2009); Banerjee and Bercuson (2015), p. 215 ff.; and Klosko (2015).

[3] Rawls's distinction between 'acting from' and 'acting in accordance with' the political conception is conceptually relevant to my argument here, as only the former is sufficient for stability for the right reasons (see *PL*, pp. 142–143, 302). Both *acting in accordance with* and *acting from* the political conception involve structuring one's actions so that they conform with the principles of justice, whenever appropriate. Yet, truly *acting from* the political conception requires having a sense of justice, which means regarding the principles of justice themselves as reasons for acting; in other words, *acting from* entails having the 'right' kind of motivation. Merely *living in accordance with* the political conception, on the other hand, implies a lack of that kind of motivation. Indeed, one might act in accordance with the political conception simply by being 'prompted by penalties enforced by state power' (*PL*, p. 142).

[4] Emblematic of this line of criticism is Baier (1989) and Wolterstorff (1997). Weithman (2010) also identifies Gray (2000), Klosko (1993), and Jones (1988), as examples. For Weithman's own argument along these lines, see Weithman (2010), pp. 323–327, 312 ff.

[5] Alternatively, Rawls refers to the same doctrine as 'the comprehensive pluralist view', 'the pluralist view', and the 'partially comprehensive view' (see, e.g., *PL*, pp. 145, 155, 160, 170). Note also that Weithman (2010) refers to the view as 'value pluralism'.

Rawls himself says that citizens with PPC views—i.e. value pluralists—are likely to be the majority, both in existing liberal democracies and in the idealized liberal society that forms the subject of his later works (*PL*, pp. 160, 208; *CP*, pp. 471–472; *JFR*, pp. 33, 193).[6] He also contends that these citizens must actively endorse and seek to act from the political conception if an overlapping consensus, rather than a mere modus vivendi, is to be realized and sustained (*PL*, pp. 208, 159–160; *JFR*, pp. 197–198). For these reasons, the success of Rawls's stability argument largely hinges on whether he can show that value pluralists are capable of acquiring and sustaining the moral motivation necessary for upholding the political conception of justice.

I argue that Rawls fails to make a compelling case. I show this, first, by examining his general theory of moral psychology. I argue that the theory lacks clear application to PPC views and is thus unable to demonstrate how value pluralists might develop and sustain the requisite moral motivation (section three). Seeking an alternative account, I turn in section four to Rawls's specific discussions of PPC views. There, I distinguish between two basic types of PPC view and claim that although one type appears to fall short of the psychologically demanding standards required for stability for the right reasons, the other does appear capable of developing the requisite moral motivation, at least under certain favorable conditions. This point notwithstanding, I argue in section five that Rawls does not sufficiently address the possibility of 'reverse slippage'—a process whereby anti-political values, principles, ideals, etc. may come to transform a citizen's PPC view, eventually making it 'unreasonable', in precisely the same way the political conception is said to transform PPC views via (normal) 'slippage', making them reasonable. If reverse slippage of the sort I describe is possible, then institutional coercion may be necessary to maintain value pluralists' compliance with the principles of justice, even in the well-ordered society. This suggests that Rawls falls short of meeting a primary aim in *PL*: demonstrating that even a pluralistic society[7] can be enduringly stable, just, and self-reinforcing in its cultivation of citizens *without* the direct application of state coercion.

My intention is to contribute to the developing literature on Rawlsian stability by demonstrating the value of redirecting critical attention away from citizens with religious doctrines and toward those with PPC views. This move has implications not just for evaluating Rawls's project, but for engaging 'the basic question' of political liberalism: the question of how to achieve a just and stable society given the presence of value pluralism among, and within, individual citizens.[8] To the extent that Rawls's answer is found lacking, it may be necessary to conceive alternative liberalisms better suited to the task.

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[6] See also Taylor (2011), pp. 272–273; Weithman (2010), p. 306.

[7] A pluralistic society is one comprised of citizens of various comprehensive doctrines.

[8] This slightly amends George Klosko's formulation of the 'basic question' (which he attributes to Rawls): 'how is just moral and political union possible in pluralistic, contemporary societies?' (Klosko (2000), p. vii).

The Comprehensive Pluralist View

Rawls discusses the PPC doctrine in numerous passages throughout his post-*Theory* works. Some of the doctrine's most relevant features for my purposes are as follows. First, PPC views are only *partially comprehensive*,[9] meaning that they lack any general and overarching principle or set of principles with implications for the whole of one's life, as would be the case for a fully comprehensive religious doctrine with a central moral tenet (e.g. the Ten Commandments) (*PL*, pp. 145, 99, 170, 175; *JFR*, pp. 193–194). Second, PPC views are *pluralist*, meaning that they are composed of several, potentially disparate[10] domains of values, none of which 'presuppose the conclusions of [the] others' (Weithman 2010, p. 305). In other words, each domain has values that are meant to apply only to that domain, and the PPC view as a whole is constituted by the conjunction of these several 'freestanding'[11] domains of values (*PL*, p. 170; Weithman 2010, pp. 305–306).

An example may help to clarify. Imagine an individual named Lawrence. Suppose that Lawrence is, among other things, a father, citizen, and faithful religious adherent. Suppose also that Lawrence regards these different roles as generally discrete—for him, each has its own values, ideals, expectations, and so on. Thus, in his capacity as a citizen, Lawrence acts and forms judgments on the basis of his specifically political values and principles, like those specified by justice as fairness. This might mean that, while engaging fellow citizens in public deliberation, Lawrence will abide by the terms of public reason and conduct himself in accordance with the duty of civility. Similarly, with respect to religious matters, Lawrence deliberates and acts in light of his specifically religious values and principles—perhaps those of compassion or piety. At other times and in other contexts, still other domains of values are brought to bear in his reasoning and actions—e.g. those of the familial or the aesthetic. The key point is that the values, ideals, principles, etc. specified by each of these domains are only regulative of Lawrence's behavior and judgments within that domain.

Of course, even should it be possible to demarcate various separate domains of values, as Rawls suggests, some inter-domain overlap and conflict will inevitably occur. And herein lies an important problem: unlike citizens with fully comprehensive doctrines, those with PPC views lack appeal to some absolute principle to settle such conflicts (or questions of priority). They must therefore 'balance' or 'weigh' conflicting considerations against one another on a case-by-base basis (*PL*, pp. 145, 155, 170–171). Rawls does not provide much explanation of what this

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[9] The term 'partially comprehensive doctrine' encompasses the PPC view, though is ostensibly not limited to it (Rawls also identifies various 'null' views as examples of non-pluralist, partially comprehensive doctrines) (*PL*, p. 386 n. 18). However, once a citizen with an only partially comprehensive doctrine adopts an account of values not already present or presupposed by that doctrine (e.g. the political conception), the doctrine *ipso facto* becomes 'pluralist' (*PL*, p. 168).

[10] There is certainly reason to question Rawls's psychological account of the PPC view—in particular, whether the various domains of values are as discrete as he suggests. Pursuing this question exceeds the scope of this paper, however.

[11] An account of values is 'freestanding' when it is 'not presented as derived from any comprehensive doctrine' (*PL*, p. xlii).

involves, apart from registering his 'hope' that, when faced with such conflicts, 'citizens will judge…that political values either outweigh or are normally…ordered prior to whatever nonpolitical values may conflict with them' (*PL*, pp. 392, 155). Beyond asserting that 'the values of the political are very great values and not easily overridden', however, Rawls provides little support for why we might share his hope (*PL*, p. 169).[12]

Another relevant feature of PPC views pertains to how value pluralists come to accept the political conception of justice. Rawls argues that, being only partially comprehensive, PPC views are 'loose', mutable, and incomplete, and thus more amenable to adopting new accounts of values—including those of the political conception. When value pluralists adopt the political conception, they are 'embedding' or 'inserting' it into their partially comprehensive doctrines; the political conception thus becomes one freestanding account of values among others (*PL*, pp. 144–145, 168–171, 386–387; *JFR*, pp. 193–197). Notably, this mode of acceptance does not presuppose any connection or continuity between value pluralist's nonpolitical values and those of the political—a simple *pro tanto* lack of conflict suffices (*PL*, pp. 169, 140, 11).

Rawls regards this last feature as an advantage of PPC views, since it essentially obviates the need for a deeper justification based on one's nonpolitical values. Indeed, he suggests that, when it comes to politics, many value pluralists will simply accept justice as fairness as the right account 'and may not expect, or think they need, greater political understanding than that' (*PL*, p. 156). This, however, means that value pluralists lack the nonpolitical or *in se* moral reasons for affirming the political conception that citizens with fully comprehensive doctrines appear to possess. Thus, while for citizens with fully comprehensive doctrines acceptance of the political conception 'can be said to be *derived from* and to *depend solely on* the comprehensive doctrine' (*PL*, p. 159 [emphasis added]), for value pluralists acceptance occurs wholly 'independently' of the nonpolitical values that comprise their (partially) comprehensive doctrines (*PL*, pp. 168–171, 208, 158–160).

This has significant implications. In lieu of reasons drawn from within their comprehensive doctrines, value pluralists must justify their acceptance of the political conception on the grounds of public reason alone—i.e. by reference either to the conceptions of citizen and society specified by the political conception, or to the goods that this conception helps to secure. Of course, these are grounds that all reasonable citizens accept and share.

Unlike value pluralists, however, citizens with fully comprehensive doctrines have additional, *nonpublic* moral reasons for endorsing the political conception. As Rawls describes, when 'appealing to reasons based on the political conception, citizens [with fully comprehensive doctrines] are appealing not only to what is publicly seen to be reasonable, but also to what all see as the correct moral reasons from within their own comprehensive view' (*PL*, p. 127). These private, *in se* moral reasons may be based on, e.g. the belief that the political conception resembles

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[12] A defense might be made, however, by appealing to the various political goods that the political conception helps citizens to realize—e.g. the fair terms of social cooperation, full political autonomy, and so on (see, e.g., *PL*, pp. 201 ff., 160–164; see further, Gaus 2014). This point is considered more carefully in the second part of section four, below.

one's favored notion of 'moral truth'; or that the ideal of citizenship accords with one's religious ideal of a faithful adherent (*PL*, pp. 126–127, 169, respectively; see further, *PL*, pp. 145 ff., 169–170, 392–393). Whatever the case may be, Rawls believes that citizens with (reasonable) fully comprehensive doctrines will be able to justify their affirmation of the political conception by appeal to their nonpolitical moral commitments and values, thereby endowing it with a powerful sense of moral conviction (*PL*, p. 392). Value pluralists, on the other hand, lack a similarly deep justificatory basis. I consider below what effect this might have on the strength of their allegiance to the political conception.[13]

Additional questions might be raised by distinguishing between the justificatory basis citizens have for accepting the political conception and the separate issue of motivation.[14] If value pluralists' acceptance and justification of the political conception are *not* based on reasons specified by their comprehensive doctrines, then what provides for their moral motivation instead? What impels them to sustain allegiance to the political conception, especially when doing so conflicts with their nonpolitical values, commitments, or desires?

One response might be that, assuming a 'normal' lack of conflict between their nonpolitical and political values, value pluralists will (at least initially) base their acceptance and justification on an appreciation of how the political conception 'works' and 'the good' it accomplishes (*JFR*, p. 197; *PL*, p. 160). In time, so the argument goes, recognition of the 'very great' values of the political conception will generate powerful, independent reasons to affirm and continue acting from the principles of justice. But are these reasons alone—unaided by the kind of deep 'religious, philosophical, and moral' convictions present in the motivational sets of citizens with fully comprehensive doctrines—adequate sources of moral motivation? If so, how? To answer these questions, Rawls's theory of moral-psychological development must plausibly describe how value pluralists come to endorse and act from the values of the political conception.

Rawls's Moral Psychology and the Pluralist View

Rawls articulates his moral psychology primarily in *TJ*, chap. VIII, and *PL,* II:7. As we will see, however, it only clearly applies to citizens with fully comprehensive doctrines—a shortcoming that persists in his later works perhaps due to his preoccupation with pre-empting the kinds of religious objections leveled against *TJ*.[15] Consequently, Rawls's moral psychology does little to further our understanding of what motivates citizens *without* fully comprehensive doctrines—for our purposes, value pluralists[16]—to accept and 'act from' the principles of justice. It is helpful to consider one example of this shortcoming in depth.

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[13] On this point, see *PL*, pp. 147, 160–162, 168, 183–186; *JFR*, pp. 194–195.

[14] I am grateful to George Klosko for helping me to articulate this point.

[15] See *PL*, pp. xxxvii–xxxviii. For the sake of space, I can only suggest this as an explanation here.

[16] See endnote 9.

In *TJ*, Rawls argues that acquiring a sense of justice (and the motivation to act from it) is the end result of a three-stage process of moral development, which progresses through the moralities of 'authority', 'association', and 'principles', respectively (*TJ*, pp. 462–478/405–420). These moralities endow one's allegiance to the principles of justice with a kind of normative, social, and quasi-metaphysical weightiness, respectively. Thus, one is led to act justly: first, by filial devotion to one's parents; later, by the social expectations conferred by one's associations and associates; and, finally, by recognizing the good intrinsic to the political conception of justice itself. Only at this last stage, Rawls maintains, does a person attain a complete sense of justice.

Of the various elements of Rawls's model of moral development that survive his political turn, two are particularly relevant here: the idea of 'conception-dependent desires', and the linkage between motivation and stability. According to Rawls, conception-dependent desires 'can be described by saying that the principles we desire to act from are seen as belonging to, and as helping to articulate, a certain rational or reasonable conception, or a political ideal' (*PL*, p. 84). Although this term is not employed until *PL*, we find virtually the same idea in *TJ*:

> [W]e may…suppose that the newer members of the association recognize moral exemplars, that is, persons who are in various ways admired and who exhibit to a high degree the ideal corresponding to their position. These individuals display skills and abilities, and virtues of character and temperament, that attract our fancy and arouse in us the desire that we should be like them, and able to do the same things. (*TJ*, pp. 471/413)

Note, though, that the conception-dependent desire Rawls describes in this passage presupposes some level of congruence between one's notion of rightness and goodness, since what guides one toward moral rightness is a particular and appealing vision of the good (or of what it is good to be) vested in the personage of the moral exemplar. This blending of right and good contributes directly to the conception's motivational power.

In his later works, however, Rawls confines the scope of justice as fairness to considerations of what it is right to do—and, in particular, what it is right to do within the domain of the political (*PL*, pp. xv–xvii, xli–xlii). Consequently, political conception-dependent desires in *PL* lack a congruent vision of the good, and thus operate more as cognitive desires (rather than, e.g., aesthetic-affective or appetitive ones). That is to say, according to the account given in *PL*, conception-dependent desires form through our cognitive capacities for 'reason and judgment' and the explicit understanding of complex conceptions of right or good such capacities produce.[17] Moreover, the object of conception-dependent desires is to seek out and express, in 'thought and deliberation', those principles and ideals that best articulate

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[17] At least this is what Rawls suggests where he writes: 'To speak of our having conception-dependent desires we must be able to form the corresponding conception and to see how the principles belong to and help to articulate it' (*PL*, p. 84). Note, however, that on the next page he appears to contradict this, claiming that conception-dependent desires have their source (at least 'superficially') in the public political culture (*PL*, p. 85 n. 33). I thank an anonymous reviewer for drawing my attention to this apparent contradiction.

our rational or reasonable conceptions (like that of justice as fairness). In these respects it appears that the motivational power of political conception-dependent desires is like that of rational morality—founded more on sound reasoning than affective allure.

Yet, if conception-dependent desires are to have sufficient motivational power, it would seem that they should arouse feelings similar to those described in the passage quoted above: feelings that follow naturally from a sense of congruence between one's comprehensive notions of right and good. In *PL*, however, Rawls abandons the idea that everyone—especially citizens with fully comprehensive religious doctrines—can achieve congruence in recognition of 'the fact of reasonable pluralism'. What, then, might be substituted to sustain citizens' motivation?

In his later works, Rawls suggests that much of the motivational power adherent to the political conception will derive from the affinity the conception has with a citizen's more fundamental (nonpolitical) values, since the latter provide the reason *why* he/she might accept or affirm it (*PL*, pp. 148, 171). This is clearly the case for citizens with fully comprehensive (religious, moral, or philosophical) doctrines. They are moved by the belief that their (nonpolitical) values are related to (i.e. 'derived from', 'congruent with', or 'supportive of') the values specified by the political conception (*PL*, p. 169; *JFR*, p. 187). In this way, citizens with fully comprehensive doctrines come to regard the political conception as an extension of their 'natural attachments' (*TJ*, p. 434). As Rawls explains:

> For those who hold well-articulated, highly systematic, comprehensive doctrines, it is from within such a doctrine…that those citizens affirm the political conception of justice. *The fundamental concepts, principles, and virtues of the political conception are theorems, as it were, of their comprehensive views.* (Emphasis added; *JFR*, p. 33)

In other words, for citizens with fully comprehensive doctrines, the desire to act from the principles of justice is an expression of their desire to adhere to their 'higher' or 'deeper' (nonpolitical) moral commitments (Hedrick 2010, p. 25; see further, *PL*, p. 126).

This model is ill-fitted to citizens with PPC views, however. Recall that, as Rawls himself describes, such citizens may not perceive 'any particular connection, one way or the other' between their nonpolitical values and those of the political, and thus may simply adopt the political conception as 'an adjunct to' their partially comprehensive doctrines without any real reflection (*PL*, p. 160). It follows from this that value pluralists do *not* recruit moral motivation from within their comprehensive doctrines. What, then, accounts for their moral motivation?

One possibility is that value pluralists will simply desire to 'act from' the principles of justice and uphold the 'fair terms of social cooperation' 'for their own sake' (*PL*, p. 54). But this is unsatisfying for at least two reasons. First, it is not apparent that the motivations associated with acquiring a sense of justice are necessarily very strong. In other words, absent any 'higher' or 'deeper' reasons for action, it is at least possible that value pluralists will be only weakly motivated to do the right thing (e.g. adhere to the principles of justice). Jürgen Habermas makes

something like this point when he writes of 'the weak force of good reasons'. According to Habermas, motivation based on the cognitive recognition of 'the good reasons' one has for doing what ought to be done (and vice versa) is relatively weak, particularly when it comes to fostering 'morally guided, collective action' (2012, pp. 74–75). This, of course, would not *necessarily* be the case, but Rawls must show why not.

Second, recall that Rawls's general account of moral development relies on establishing a principled congruence between citizens' comprehensive notions of good and right.[18] Considering, however, that PPC views lack a comprehensive notion of the good,[19] and also that (post-*TJ*) justice as fairness no longer provides one itself, it is ambiguous how (or even *if*) value pluralists might achieve congruence. It therefore remains to be seen exactly *what*—if not independent ideas of, e.g., salvation, the categorical imperative, the greatest good for the greatest number—serves as their basis of moral motivation.

Passive and Active Motivational Dispositions

Another way to approach this question is to look beyond Rawls's general account of moral motivation to his more specific discussions of the PPC view. Doing so suggests various (albeit not always consistent) ways we might understand the moral psychology of value pluralists. For conceptual clarity, we can distinguish between two motivational dispositions suggested by Rawls's descriptions: the first I call 'passive', the second 'active'.[20] The key distinction consists in the different ways in which the two types come to accept and sustain allegiance to the political conception.[21] In what follows, I examine both dispositions, calling attention to motivational issues with each.[22] I argue that these issues are particularly grave for

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[18] NB. Although Rawls invokes *TJ*'s theory of moral development in *PL* (pp. 143 n. 9, 49 n. 2), he does not specify how it should be adapted following his political turn. Thus, here again, it is unclear how Rawls might account for PPC views.

[19] By this I mean a PPC view lacks a notion of the good with implications for the whole of one's life. Instead, each PPC view is a conjunction of several 'freestanding' conceptions of value, including that of the political (*PL*, pp. 155, 40; Weithman 2010, p. 305).

[20] NB: 'Motivational sets' refers to specific elements of motivation (e.g. ideals, beliefs, desires, coercive force), while 'motivational dispositions' refer to broader modalities of motivation (i.e. 'active' and 'passive').

[21] These types are used to help isolate distinctive features of PPC views. It is likely that some admixture of the two would characterize the actual motivational dispositions of real-life value pluralists.

[22] Robert Taylor also notes that Rawls's descriptions of the PPC view suggests two variants (2011, pp. 272–275). And his distinction between 'principled' and 'unprincipled partially comprehensive doctrines' parallels the one I make between PPC views with 'active' and 'passive' motivational dispositions. A key difference between our two accounts, however, is that Taylor focuses narrowly on variations in the coherence or consistency of the two types of PPC doctrine, whereas, in addition to this, I analyze the motivational differences that this variation entails. Extending the argument in this way is essential because, as Rawls himself repeatedly insists, *PL*'s stability argument requires successfully addressing the question of motivation. In what follows, I attempt to show how Rawls's various descriptions of the PPC view undermine his stability argument on precisely this ground.

the passive disposition, though several important questions remain unanswered with respect to the active disposition as well.

Passive Motivation

The passive motivational disposition is foremost characterized by an unreflective and uncritical acceptance of the political conception. This feature is captured by Rawls's claim that some value pluralists 'come to affirm the principles of justice incorporated into their constitution and political practice without seeing any particular connection, one way or the other, between those principles and their other views' (*PL*, p. 160). It is perhaps for this reason that Rawls sometimes associates value pluralists with a kind of indifference, effectively reducing their acceptance of the political conception to acquiescence and their continued allegiance to compliance.[23]

   This is clear, for instance, in Rawls's claim that some citizens simply adopt the political conception as a matter of convention without being able to account for why they feel compelled to do so (*PL*, p. 160).[24] Far from regarding this as problematic, Rawls asserts that these citizens 'may not expect, or think they need, greater political understanding than that' (*PL*, p. 156). Paul Weithman registers essentially the same point, noting that, for value pluralists, '[w]hen it comes to politics, they just accept the political conception as the right account'. He thus concludes that Rawls's general understanding of the process of acceptance only 'trivially' applies to value pluralists (Weithman 2010, p. 306).

   Another characteristic of the passive motivational disposition is its narrow perception of the principles of justice and the institutions that uphold them as things that *ought not to be violated*. Notably, this view of things does not require the belief that violating the principles of justice would undermine one's values or one's sincere desire to live up to the political conception. Rather, as Rawls suggests, it might simply involve the 'desire to conform to what is expected and normally done' (*PL*, p. 161); or to avoid the (social or punitive) consequences of failing to do so.[25]

   The passive motivational disposition, so described, falls short of the deliberate and 'wholehearted'[26] commitment to the principles of justice Rawls considers

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[23] Commentators have also taken note of this: see Weithman (2010), p. 306; Taylor (2011), pp. 272–275.

[24] Their motivation may also be moral, if weakly so. Consider, for instance, where Rawls notes that even for citizens 'who cannot fully explain' their reasons for adopting the political conception, they may still affirm their decision on the ground that 'when they adopt [the public political culture's] framework of deliberation, their judgments converge sufficiently so that political cooperation on the basis of mutual respect can be maintained' (*PL*, p. 156). I thank an anonymous reviewer for alerting me to this possibility.

[25] The negative desire is an implicit element of the social conditioning in Rawls's account of moral development (*TJ*, §70–72).

[26] *PL*, pp. xl, xxxviii, 54. For Rawls, 'wholehearted support' derives from citizens affirming the political conception from within their comprehensive doctrines—i.e. on the grounds of a perceived relationship between their nonpolitical values and those of the political—since these doctrines are constitutive of citizens' most fundamental and deeply held 'religious, philosophical, and moral' 'convictions' (*PL*, p. 392). In this way, citizens come to view the political conception as not only 'reasonable' but '*true*', thereby affording their commitment to it a greater measure of aesthetic-affective depth and meaningfulness, and, undoubtedly, motivational power (*PL*, pp. 386, 126–128).

necessary to achieve stability for the right reasons. Furthermore, the passive disposition is inconsistent with Rawls's general theory of moral development—specifically, with the third and final 'morality of principles' stage. As Rawls explains, the morality of principles is predicated on a firm 'knowledge of the standards of justice' such that the 'conception of acting justly, and of advancing just institutions' become deeply attractive endeavors for their own sake (*TJ*, pp. 473/414). In other words, achieving the morality of principles requires the formation of a kind of concord between one's reason-based affirmation of the political conception, on the one hand, and one's 'moral emotions' and desires to live up to the ideals specified by those principles, on the other. Realizing such concord presupposes establishing (at least the possibility of) congruence between one's notion of the good and sense of justice (*TJ*, pp. 472–475/414–415, 567–568/497–499, 576/505).

The passive motivational disposition, however, lacks the capacity for congruence. Acceptance is not based on 'firm knowledge' of the principles of justice but rather is unreflective. Motivation does not derive from the proper alignment of one's moral emotions and the desire to live up to certain ideals but from a desire to acquiesce to convention or to avoid the costs of noncompliance.[27] Thus, crucially, passively motivated dispositions lack a capacity for congruence, as congruence requires a relationship between one's comprehensive (nonpolitical) notions of the good and the political conception of justice (which encompasses some ideals of the right). Given these incompatibilities, it is unclear whether passively motivated value pluralists will ever be able to acquire a complete sense of justice. Yet, Rawls's account of stability for the right reasons presupposes that all 'not unreasonable' citizens can and will acquire and act from a sense of justice (indeed, this is part of the 'first moral power' he ascribes to every citizen in *PL*) (*PL*, pp. 49–50 n. 2, 84, 103). It is therefore unclear how passively motivated value pluralists will come to possess the moral motivation necessary for stability for the right reasons to be possible.

Moreover, even if passively motivated value pluralists do not pose a direct threat to stability—by, e.g., actively rejecting the political conception—it may well be the case that coercion is necessary to secure their continued allegiance.[28] One reason for this is that there is always the possibility that passively motivated value pluralists will simply fall away from the political conception, just as unreflectively as they came to abide by it;[29] in such cases, coercion would almost certainly be necessary to secure their compliance. And this of course is problematic since stability for the right reasons only obtains once the direct threat of state sanction no longer serves as a primary driver of moral action for most citizens.

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[27] In this respect, it seems that they are guided less by rational and explicit conception-dependent desires and more by 'object-dependent desires', which, as Rawls notes, 'govern[] by custom and habit' (*PL*, p. 84).

[28] Indeed, insofar as coercion aims at adjusting habit and custom, this may be normally necessary, since habit comprises a chief part of the passive motivational disposition.

[29] Perhaps by a process of 'reverse slippage', which I describe below in the first part of section five.

Active Motivation

The active motivational disposition is based on the recognition that the political conception is (a) conducive to, or at least 'not in conflict with', the pursuit of one's 'essential interests'—i.e. one's nonpolitical values, desires, ends, and/or notions of the good (*PL*, pp. 160, 169, 170; *JFR*, p. 197); and (b) reasonable in itself, and thus 'morally correct' with respect to political questions (*PL*, pp. 126–127).

The desire to pursue, acquire, or maintain one's 'essential interests' provides the external grounds upon which actively motivated value pluralists justify their *initial* acceptance[30] of the political conception. Note, however, that although this initial basis of motivation generates moral behavior and action, it does not itself constitute a moral reason for action. Rather, motivation of this sort might be more aptly defined as prudential. That is, so long as acting in accordance with the political conception furthers their (nonpolitical) pursuits, actively motivated value pluralists will continue to uphold it.

Yet, Rawls believes that by acting in accordance with the political conception all reflective citizens—actively motivated value pluralists included—will, over time, come to see the very great (moral) goods it secures, including, e.g., the fair terms of social cooperation, civil social relations, just institutions, and so on (*PL*, pp. 160–164). And this will, in turn, generate recognition of the fact that the political conception is reasonable and worth upholding for its own sake. Such recognition, Rawls believes, will provide a strong basis for ensuring sustained allegiance (*PL*, p. 160).

This process might be made clearer by considering an analogy.[31] Suppose Isabella is introduced to the game of soccer, but only reluctantly agrees to play.[32] Suppose also that, at first, her willingness to take part is entirely conditional on a promised reward—e.g. $5 at the end of each game, and an additional $5 for every match she wins. Under these circumstances, her motivation for playing (and winning) will be entirely external to the game itself. Moreover, she will have no reason not to cheat, assuming at least that cheating could help her to win.

Nevertheless, it seems reasonable to 'hope'[33] that as Isabella continues to play (say, over several years) she will develop a sense of fair play and begin to discover goods internal to the game itself. Thus, over time, she might come to find satisfaction in a fairly played match, with or without a pecuniary reward. Now, importantly, in the course of Isabella's athletic moral development, there is no

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[30] Note that I distinguish here between initial acceptance and subsequent, continued affirmation of the political conception. My basic claim is that the motivation that initially prompts acceptance may be different than that which later sustains allegiance. For the textual grounds of this view, see *PL*, p. 160 n. 25.

[31] This analogy is partially adapted from Alasdair MacIntyre's example of a chess-playing child (1984, p. 188).

[32] Rawls notes that engaging with other citizens in a society marked by a fair political conception may at first be done only 'reluctantly' (*PL*, pp. 159, 163, 246).

[33] As Rawls says, after 'citizens embed their shared political conception' into their broader comprehensive doctrine, 'we hope that [they] will judge…that political values either outweigh or are normally (though not always) ordered prior to whatever nonpolitical values may conflict with them' (*PL*, p. 392).

reason to suppose that she would have to ground the good of the game or the value of fair play on a comprehensive doctrine in order to find them worth preserving. Rather, it could simply be the case that she comes to regard the values, principles, and ideals of sportsmanship as valuable in themselves, regardless of how they relate to (or do not relate to) other spheres of her life. Assuming this was the case, Isabella would be properly considered a value pluralist; yet she would also be someone strongly inclined to play fairly and value the game for its own sake.

This analogy suggests how deontic norms and the valuing of certain goods internal to a practice might grow in tandem within a single domain of one's life, in a way that is psychologically independent from one's experiences in other domains. Of course, what is true of soccer and fair play would seem to be true for other areas of life as well—including, for instance, that of the political. Thus, we might expect a sense of justice and recognition of the goods internal to the political conception to spring up in a person in much the same way.[34] Likewise, as with Isabella's later attachment to the game and the value of fair play, we might reasonably expect the values of the political conception to be motivationally effective, regardless of whether or not they are supported by a fully comprehensive doctrine. If this is right, then we have a plausible account of how actively motivated value pluralists could come to 'act from (and not merely in accordance with)' the political conception of justice, and to do so for reasons internal to the political conception itself.

Yet, this is not the end of the story—for over the period during which Isabella's motivation shifted from external prudential grounds to more substantively moral ones internal to the game, there undoubtedly would have been some instances of value conflict (e.g. temptations to violate fair play rules in order to win more money). As Rawls readily admits, this will also be the case for value pluralists as they slowly work the political conception into their pluralist doctrines and begin to uphold it for its own sake. In other words, this process of moral-motivational development happens very 'gradually' and in the meanwhile conflicts may arise between these citizens' nonpolitical values and those of the political conception (*PL*, pp. 160 n. 25, 208, 169–170). How actively motivated value pluralists handle these conflicts will largely depend on the extent of their moral-motivational development and the strength of the temptation to defect. As Rawls explains, for the 'comprehensive pluralist view, the political conception is affirmed by balancing judgments that support the great values of the political against whatever values normally conflict with them'. (*PL*, p. 170). Notably, this deliberative process of 'balancing' is not refereed in light of some comprehensive moral ideal (as is the case for those with fully comprehensive doctrines); rather, it involves ascertaining the relative weight of each competing value or domain of values. (This is perhaps why Rawls insists that the values of the political are 'very great values'—i.e. in order to suggest that they hold *very great weight* [*PL*, p. 169].)

Should it be the case that a given value pluralist recognizes this, she may very well take the values of the political to outweigh other values that oppose them, thereby siding with justice. Yet, should this be otherwise—should such recognition be absent and rational positive incentives for sustained compliance be lacking (if

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[34] Rawls calls this process 'slippage', about which much more in the following section.

even temporarily)—the same value pluralist (just some time earlier) may instead defect from the principles of justice and the institutions that uphold them (assuming, at least, that defection would be more conducive to advancing her interests or maintaining her nonpolitical commitments).

Now, of course, for Rawls's stability arguments to work, he need not show that this kind of defection is impossible. Rather, he only needs to demonstrate (a) that it is at least possible for value pluralists to acquire adequate moral motivation, and (b) that after the point of initial acceptance they will not *normally* defect.[35] As the soccer analogy makes clear, Rawls has a plausible case for (a), at least with respect to actively motivated value pluralists. What we must determine is whether he can also show (b).

One potential obstacle to this involves the account of societal-level moral development that Rawls provides alongside his individual-level account.[36] Briefly, Rawls argues that for a society to develop into an overlapping consensus characterized by stability for the right reasons, a sufficient mass of its citizens— and, in particular, its value pluralist citizens (*PL*, pp. 208, 159–160; *JFR*, pp. 197–198)—must come to possess the moral motivation needed to 'act from (and not merely in accordance with)' the political conception of justice. With respect to actively motivated value pluralists, this means showing that for some extended period of time—perhaps even 'generations' (*PL*, p. 204)—citizens will continue to (i) be attracted by the goods the political conception provides or helps them to secure; and (ii) successfully overcome value conflicts that might disrupt the transformation of their motivational sets (which, again, shade from prudential to moral over time).

That this could happen en masse is of course *possible*. But whether or not it is *plausible* will depend on how much stock one puts in the average citizen's ability to successfully navigate the temptations and conflicts that threaten to prevent the transformation of his/her comprehensive doctrines (from 'unreasonable to reasonable') and, by extension, deliver society from 'simple pluralism to reasonable pluralism' (*PL*, pp. 244, 164). Of course, such temptations are manifold and ever-present: excessive self-interestedness, jingoism, religious extremism, free-market fundamentalism, resource scarcity and hoarding, etc. can and regularly do induce individuals to violate precepts of justice and right.

Whether or not these temptations can ever be generally overcome by a sufficient mass of citizens roughly contemporaneously is, ultimately, an empirical question, though one that cannot be answered definitively unless and until it happens. This may strike some as something of a messianic stand to hang one's hat on, and perhaps it is. Yet, Rawls may also be right that, at least given the 'favorable conditions that make a constitutional democracy possible', such conflicts will become sufficiently rare over time (*PL*, p. 155). Either way, the matter cannot be settled here, but this does not belie the point that there are plausible grounds for doubt. And so long as such doubt persists Rawls's stability argument remains uncertain.

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[35] I thank both anonymous reviewers for pressing this point.

[36] This is discussed in greater detail in the next section.

The Problem of Slippage and the Necessity of Coercion

To briefly recount, I have argued that the depth of passively motivated value pluralists' moral motivation may fall short of the psychologically demanding standards required for stability for the right reasons. On the other hand, actively motivated value pluralists do appear capable of acquiring the requisite moral motivation through a gradual process by which initially prudential motivations come to be supplemented (and perhaps supplanted) by moral ones—a process that mirrors (and indeed drives) the societal shift from a modus vivendi to an overlapping consensus. Yet, through the course of this moral development, temptations to defect from the principles of justice might delay or derail the realization of stability for the right reasons. And while it may be possible that such temptations could be generally overcome or made sufficiently rare such that stability for the right reasons would be achievable, there is no way to verify this possibility unless and until it occurs.

I now turn to another motivational issue that concerns value pluralists of both dispositions. This issue follows from a peculiar feature of value-pluralist moral psychology: PPC views' propensity for what Rawls calls 'slippage'. Unlike the motivational problems discussed above, the problems stemming from slippage could also occur within the fully just society. Thus, the challenge advanced in this section pertains not only to the possibility of ever achieving stability for the right reasons but also to the possibility of sustaining it (assuming it could be achieved).

After examining this issue, I consider what may be the only viable corrective: state coercive power. I argue that the exercise of such power may be necessary not only to indirectly facilitate moral action by promoting trust and confidence in the system (as Rawls contends[37]), but also to directly motivate particular citizens to comply with the principles of justice and the institutions that uphold them. If this is right, then we have strong reason to doubt whether achieving and sustaining stability for the right reasons is possible, even in the fully just society Rawls describes.

Reverse Slippage

The motivational issue in question involves the idea of slippage. For Rawls, slippage denotes the process whereby the political conception comes to 'cohere loosely' with a citizen's partially comprehensive doctrine, slowly 'bend[ing the doctrine] toward itself' (*PL*, pp. 160, 246; *JFR*, pp. 33, 193; *CP*, pp. 441 ff.).[38] This 'bending' occurs as a partially comprehensive doctrine comes to include, and is transformed by including, a new set of values—e.g. those specified by the political conception.

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[37] Rawls views coercive mechanisms as one element of a background condition meant to resolve the 'assurance problem' (*TJ*, pp. 267 ff./236 ff., 577/505). I challenge this view below.

[38] This process is intimated above (see pp. 7, 19–22). For further discussion, see Taylor (2011), pp. 274–275; Weithman (2010), pp. 311, 306.

As noted previously, when this individual-level phenomenon proliferates within a given society, the society transitions from a state of 'simple pluralism' to one of 'reasonable pluralism' (*PL*, p. 164). This very 'gradual' process and accumulation of individual development is of very great value (*PL*, pp. 160 n. 25, 204, 208; *JFR*, pp. 198, 33)—indeed, as Rawls has it, such change over time comprises a society's 'political capital' (*JFR*, p. 198; *PL*, pp. 157, 160, 246). In this sense, PPC views serve as the raw commodity into which the political conception is first invested (via slippage) and through which society's 'political capital' matures.

As it matures—i.e. as more and more value pluralists accept and accord regulative priority to the political conception—society shifts slowly from a 'mere *modus vivendi*', to a constitutional consensus, and finally to an 'overlapping consensus of reasonable comprehensive doctrines'.[39] Hence Rawls's assertion that 'much depend[s] on the fact that most people' have 'only partially comprehensive' doctrines, which are permeable through slippage—the very possibility of an overlapping consensus stands or falls on this (*PL*, pp. 208, 159–160; *JFR*, pp. 197–198).

In describing this process, though, nowhere does Rawls suggest that such macro-level changes presuppose or prompt fundamental change in the structure or content of PPC views. We may therefore presume that, even in the well-ordered society, PPC views will retain a propensity for slippage. But if this is right, it may present difficulties. For if PPC doctrines—which, again, *most* citizens are supposed to possess—remain basically unaltered in the context of an overlapping consensus, then it is imperative that Rawls be able to demonstrate that slippage will not cut the other way and endanger value pluralists' allegiance to the political conception. In other words, Rawls must provide a plausible argument for why value pluralists will not, by dint of their openness to slippage, be especially susceptible to the influence of anti-political conceptions, ideals, or values[40] capable of undercutting their moral-political motivation and, by extension, jeopardizing the stability of an overlapping consensus.

Of course, 'reverse slippage' of this sort may be common. Consider the manifold historical instances in which aesthetic values or ideals have come to influence or predominate over, and thus undermine, ethical and political values (Kateb 2000). Examples of this kind of slippage are arguably manifest in the works of thinkers as diverse as Edmund Burke, Martin Heidegger, and Ezra Pound—all of whom were potentially induced to adopt (sometimes extreme) political stances by dint of their aesthetic predilections (see, respectively: White 1994; Kateb 1992, pp. 146–171; Taylor 1989, pp. 456–495).

To establish that this need not be a concern, it would have to be shown that such anti-political conceptions either would (a) not exist in the just society, or (b) be consistently outweighed in value pluralists' balancing judgments by the 'very great values' of the political conception. Any defense of (a) would require either making

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[39] The process whereby this occurs is difficult to describe concisely, and the details need not concern us here. For Rawls's description, see *PL*, pp. 157–168, 208; *JFR*, pp. 193–198.

[40] For my purposes here, anti-political values are simply those that conflict with Rawlsian political values (as defined by the political conception of justice).

the implausible empirical claim that such conceptions would never arise in the just society, even given free speech; or resorting to a mode of socialization[41] wildly out of sync with Rawls's own.

While more plausible, (b) is likewise problematic. As I argued above, there are clear grounds for believing that value pluralists will be able to successfully navigate value conflicts, given that they are far enough along in their process of moral development. Yet, if this is not the case—if sufficient moral development has not been realized—the same citizens may defect, perhaps especially if the temptation to do so connects with their initial (prudential) reasons for accepting the political conception.[42] Additionally, (b) assumes that taking on anti-political values will result in a value conflict at the level of conscious reflection. But, particularly for passively motivated value pluralists, it seems wholly possible that anti-political values could be absorbed into their comprehensive doctrines very gradually, without them registering any incompatibilities. And if such incompatibilities are later exposed, the passively motivated value pluralist may (as was the case with the political conception) simply 'conform' to the behavior of those around them, even if this means abandoning the values of justice as fairness.

Another option would be to argue that slippage does not work as I have described. But this would entail demonstrating that slippage either only works one way (i.e. *toward* the political conception), or that it only occurs in societies that have not yet achieved an overlapping consensus. Both options are problematic. The former requires showing that Rawls understands PPC views' 'looseness' and propensity for change very narrowly, as something like amenability to the political conception; this reading, however, lacks clear textual support. The latter option requires arguing that an overlapping consensus is somehow immune from future depreciation, or at least depreciation stemming from extra-political sources. Beyond the immediate implausibility of such a claim, here again one is confronted with Rawls's own statements to the contrary—including, e.g., his claim that 'like capital, [political] virtues depreciate, as it were, and must be constantly renewed by being reaffirmed and acted from in the present' (*PL*, p. 157 n. 23).

Coercion

One obvious solution to this problem would be to introduce coercive sanctions as a kind of rational deterrent to violating the principles of justice.[43] Applying state power in this manner would, however, exceed the narrow use of coercion Rawls permits in the just society. For Rawls, coercion is only acceptable as a way of resolving the 'assurance problem'.[44] The details of this problem and Rawls's solution to it need not concern us here, except to note that Rawls proposes the establishment of a limited 'system of sanctions' with the narrow goal of fostering

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[41] For instance, one like Plato's or Hobbes's, wherein education is strictly confined to bowdlerized ideals that accord with the political conception.

[42] This is suggested in the discussion at pp. 21–23, above.

[43] I conceive of coercion here, broadly, as the use of state power to promote compliance with just laws.

[44] On the assurance problem, see *TJ*, pp. 267 ff./236 ff., and Weithman (2010), pp. 46–47.

confidence and trust in the system. The system achieves this by providing public assurance to each citizen that all others have, at minimum, a prudential reason to act justly and contribute their fair share. Thus, the sanctions serve as citizens' 'security to one another', ensuring the continued 'stability of social cooperation' across society (*TJ*, pp. 240/211, 267 ff./237 ff., 576/505).

For Rawls, then, state coercion plays an indirect, systemic role. It is not intended to motivate anyone *directly*,[45] but rather to establish the conditions under which certain moral behaviors (e.g. fair reciprocity) become possible. Underpinning this is the idea that citizens always *want* to act morally, so long as others can be expected to do the same. In this sense, Rawls's treatment of the assurance problem shows us how persons with *in se*, moral reasons to obey the law might come to have prudential reasons as well. It does *not* show us, however, how persons with initially only prudential reasons to obey the law—e.g. some value pluralists—might also come to have moral reasons.

Without showing this, Rawls's assertion that coercive mechanisms may 'never be applied' is unfounded (*TJ*, pp. 267/237). This is especially the case since, as Rawls himself identifies, the possibility of such limited coercion is (again) contingent on citizens achieving congruence between their notions of the right and the good:

> For our good depends upon the sorts of persons we are, the kinds of wants and aspirations we have and are capable of. It can even happen that there are many who do not find a sense of justice for their good; but if so, the forces making for stability are weaker. Under such conditions penal devices will play a much larger role in the social system. The greater the lack of congruence, the greater the likelihood, other things equal, of instability with its attendant evils. (*TJ*, pp. 576/505)

Yet, as I noted above, congruence appears to be lacking for passively motivated value pluralists and is achieved very gradually for actively motivated ones (*PL*, p. 169).

As there may be many instances in which value pluralists will lack a sense of congruence between their pursuit of the good and the demands of justice, the presence of punitive mechanisms is likely to play a significant and direct motivational role in ensuring their adherence to the political conception. That is to say, it appears that coercion is and must be a significant component in the motivational sets of value pluralists. This conclusion is clearly problematic for Rawls's stability arguments, which depend on convincingly demonstrating that citizens will (at least normally) uphold the political conception for 'the right reasons'—viz. not from fear of sanctions. It portends even more severely, however, when we recall Rawls's claim that 'most' citizens are value pluralists (*PL*, pp. 208, 160; *JFR*, pp. 33, 193). If this is right, then coercion may indeed 'play a much larger role in the social system' and even come to be an oft-employed mechanism for ensuring continued allegiance to the political conception.

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[45] And thus 'impose' stability through enforcement; nor is state coercion meant to serve as some form of 'retributive or denunciatory' punishment (*TJ*, pp. 240–241/211–212, 267/237); rather, its 'purpose is to underwrite citizens' trust in one another' (*TJ*, pp. 576/505).

In light of the above, to maintain that stability for the right reasons is still possible, one must provide a compelling account as to why value pluralists will (a) be moved to adopt or affirm the values and principles of the political conception for their own sake, *and* (b) be morally motivated to sustain their allegiance to those principles and values, even in instances of conflict. As I have argued above, however, there are significant reasons to doubt that (a) and (b) can be established from within Rawls's theoretical framework.

Conclusion

In *A Theory of Justice,* Rawls identifies the extent to which his stability arguments hinge on his ability to establish an adequate account of moral motivation:

> The stability of a conception depends upon a balance of motives: the sense of justice that it cultivates and the aims that it encourages must normally win out against propensities toward injustice. To estimate the stability of a conception of justice (and the well-ordered society that it defines), one must examine the relative strength of these opposing tendencies. (*TJ*, pp. 454–455/398)

Weithman emphasizes the same point: Rawls's stability arguments crucially 'depend on the educative or formative work of just institutions in a WOS [well-ordered society]' and can 'succeed only if those institutions bring about members' enduring convergence…on certain ends [and]…foster effective motives to pursue those ends' (Weithman 2010, p. 230; see further, *PL*, p. 208). I have argued that Rawls does not provide an adequate account of how value pluralists might acquire and sustain such motivation. We therefore have reason to doubt whether his theory passes the stability test he sets out.

Underlying this problem are the manifold incompatibilities between Rawls's general theory of moral psychology and his particular descriptions of PPC views. Because Rawls does not resolve these tensions, it remains unclear whether value pluralists will possess the moral motivation necessary for affirming and maintaining allegiance to the political conception of justice. Conception-dependent desires to act as justice as fairness requires alone do not suffice, since it remains to be shown whether all value pluralists are capable of developing these desires, and whether these desires can ordinarily prevail against potentially more salient ones opposing them. As George Klosko writes:

> Rawls does not provide evidence for his crucial claim that the motivating force of moral principles with particular content is greater than that of other factors. Even if we concede that the factor he notes plays a role in influencing behavior, he does not address the question of how this factor interacts with others that also influence conduct, such as self-interest, religion, and national identification. In order for stability in his sense to be a central considera-tion…it must play a significant role in stimulating cooperative behavior, but this Rawls has not shown. (Klosko 1997, p. 645)

Considering Rawls's claim that *most* citizens in liberal societies are value pluralists, clearly more depends on this group than on any other. Until a satisfying account of their motivation has been established, the prospect of any society realizing or sustaining 'stability for the right reasons' remains elusive.

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