

**Communication, Identity  
and Culture of Argumentation**



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## **Religious Identity in Democracy: the Difficulties of the Two-Way Protection Theory**

**Abstract:** This article addresses one of the key problems in contemporary political philosophy, in general, and in the doctrine of deliberative democracy, in particular: what is the status of religious identity in the context of the multiculturalism and the pluralism of modern-day democratic societies and what is the role of religious comprehensive principles and arguments in the democratic decision making procedures? I will follow Amy Gutmann, a prominent defender of deliberative democracy, in stating that all the various theoretical answers to this question could be included in one of the following three categories: the strict separation theory, the one-way protection theory and the two-way protection theory. The argumentation of this paper will focus on the critical analysis of the two-way protection theory developed by Amy Gutmann as an alternative conception to the other two doctrines mentioned above. My main objective is to reveal some of the difficulties her conception has to face.

**Keywords:** religious identity, two-way protection, moral faith, truth, deliberative democracy

### **1. Religious identity and democracy: one problem and three solutions**

Contemporary democratic societies are essentially characterized by a religious pluralism and by a difficult relation between all the comprehensive doctrines (religious, metaphysical, political, ethical and so on) and the democratic decision making procedures governed by the principles of liberty, political equality and participation. These principles secure the right of citizens to express their principles and beliefs, but this could result in political decisions that might be considered oppressive by the members of other faiths or by the defenders of different comprehensive conceptions. And, as Nicholas Wolterstorff insists in the article *Why Can't We All Just Get Along with Each Other?*, it is very

unlikely that this conflict will simply disappear: “there is no prospect whatsoever of religion disappearing, or of all determinate religion disappearing, or of all particular religions disappearing, or of all particular religions becoming privatized, or of all adherents of particular religions refraining from using the resources of their own religion in making political decisions” (Wolterstorff 2009, 25-26).

Hence, the religious pluralism of our societies is a fact that modern-day democracies have to cope with. This is a thesis that contemporary political philosophers agree upon. Nevertheless, when it comes to solving the conflict between the various religious identities and the principles of liberal democracy there is a great diversity of theoretical conceptions. In the book *Identity in Democracy* Amy Gutmann classifies the various contemporary solutions to this conflict in three categories: the strict separation theory, the one-way protection theory, and the theory she defends – the two-way protection of religion and democratic laws that guarantee the basic rights of citizens.

In the following sections of this paper I will focus on her argumentation against the other two conceptions and against the idea that religious identity has a unique status in democratic deliberations because of some special features of the religious beliefs: their truth value, their tendency to promote public good, and their connection with the citizens’ conscience which is worthy of respect. I will also mention several objections against her arguments, which emphasize some weaknesses of the two-way protection theory.

The strict separation theory is usually associated with the classical liberal solution to the problem of pluralism that was developed by John Rawls. His conception of “political liberalism” was based on the distinction between a public sphere governed by a set of principles of social justice, and the private sphere of individual and communitarian life governed by specific comprehensive doctrines that establish the principles of a good life, but only for those particular individuals and with no relevance to the political life. However, the origins of this tradition are much older. Gutmann cites the works of John Locke in which he supports the religious liberty and the distinction between the political power of the state and the spiritual power of the various churches and religious communities.

She perceives this doctrine as a bargain between the state and the citizens: the state makes the promise to protect the freedom of conscience and the citizens make the promise to protect the state from the danger of being used for the specific interests of religious groups. But, she believes

that the defenders of strict separation have overlooked one significant problem: “Strict separation has fallen short from the start in not recognizing that a stable state can and should exempt conscientious citizens from some legitimate laws and in so doing respect their conscientious objection without harming other innocent people” (Gutmann 2003, 180). The political decisions and the laws of a state that does not allow such exemptions would be considered oppressive and tyrannical by those citizens who feel that they should be exempted.

Regarding the one-way protection theory, in Gutmann’s view it is a doctrine that would protect religion from the state, and not the state from religion. And, in some interpretations of it would “extend accommodation of religious freedom to freedom of conscience” in order to prevent the discriminations against non-religious citizens. She believes that the regimes based on this kind of theory tend to give priority to the conscientious objections against democratic laws and to extend exemptions from the legal obligations. Moreover, they sometimes tend to ceding political power to the social communities with which the conscious citizens identify. The justification for this attitude is the fact that, according to this conception, we should respect conscience because it represents the ethical identity of citizens that must be protected from the state.

However, Gutmann argues that the one-way protection theory does not provide a similar protection to the state, to the democratic legitimate laws and ultimately to the basic rights of citizens which are based on them:

“What one way protectionists are reluctant to recognize is that a democratic government cannot maximize respect for individual conscience, regardless of its content, without undermining the purposes of democratic government. (...) This is a fundamental weakness of one way protection: it does not give due regard to democratically authorized laws and the political freedoms that create them” (Gutmann 2003, 183).

So, in her opinion this kind of protection would have the perverse effect of granting the religious and other communities of conscientious citizens not only the spiritual, but also the political power over their members and to allow the oppression of the members from within the communities.

These objections that the theories of strict separation and one-way protections have to face motivated her to develop an alternative conception: the two-way protection theory. Her explanation of this theory is as follows: “A democratic settlement that aims to protect individual

freedom of religion in exchange for protecting politics from the power of organized religion is what I call ‘two-way protection’. Two-way protection has two parts: it aims both to secure the free exercise of religion for all individuals and to separate church and state” (Gutmann 2003, 152-153).

Hence, she tries to provide a theoretical explanation for the relation between religious identity and democracy according to which religious arguments should have neither an advantaged or disadvantaged status in democracy. The exemptions from obeying democratic laws could be granted only if their supporters could advance valid arguments in their behalf that are capable of convincing other citizens. She insists that this kind of religious ideas and arguments should be conceived as open to criticism: “Seeking accommodation of one’s conscience in democratic politics should not be without risk of criticism. Those who expect their conscientious commitments to be protected from political criticism have no better alternative than to keep their commitments out of politics” (Gutmann 2003, 187).

She mentions four arguments in favor of the mutual accommodation of conscience and democracy: complete non-accommodation expresses a lack of respect for persons; non-accommodation would discriminate against non-mainstream conscientious objectors (and sometimes the laws reflect main-stream consciences); if conscience would be conceived as absolute, then anarchy or tyranny would threaten; and accommodation diminishes the conflict between conscientious citizens and democracy.

Anticipating an objection regarding the criterion of the distinction between legitimate and illegitimate accommodations, Gutmann replies that the separation line should be understood as permeable. In her view, the process of drawing this line depends both on ethical argument and democratic deliberation. So, the result of the process could be different depending on the various democratic contexts. She states that the most important element is the reciprocity between conscientious citizens and the democratic government that represents them, a reciprocity that is “the life-blood of democratic justice” (Gutmann 2003, 190-191).

In the final part of this section I want to emphasize the fact that her line of argument in favor of the two-way protection theory is based upon the statement that her conception is preferable to the other two. And she claims that her theory is superior to the strict separation theory because it allows for legitimate exemptions that would enhance the level of democratic justice and it is superior to the one-way protection theory because it does not allow for illegitimate exemptions that would decrease

the level of democratic justice in that society. Consequently, the justification of the two-way protection theory depends on the justification she provides for the distinction between legitimate and illegitimate exemptions.

Nevertheless, I believe that the talk about the “permeability” of the line of separation between legitimate and illegitimate accommodations is rather puzzling if we take into consideration the important role this distinction has to play in her argumentation. Because, I think we could ask: What are the contributions of ethical argument and of democratic deliberation in this process? Is one of these dimensions more important than the other? How will the defenders of different comprehensive views come to transcend the substantial differences between them in order to reach a unique solution regarding this line of separation? In other words, how will they establish a unique set of standards that would *express* the conditions of democratic justice?

Unfortunately, she does not address these questions in a direct and unambiguous way. However, her critique of the one-way protection theory is much more extensive than the one against the strict separation theory. She is more interested in arguing that religious identity does not have a unique status in relation to other substantial commitments. And, I believe that some of the arguments she uses in the course of this argumentation offer us a sketch of an answer to the aforementioned questions. In the following section I will present this solution and her line of argument against the doctrine of the special status of religious identity, and I will mention some important objections it has to face.

## **2. Gutmann’s arguments against the special status of religious identity**

Gutmann acknowledges the fact that, if she wants to succeed in her case for the two-way protection theory, she has to demonstrate that religious identities are not unique compared with other ultimate ethical commitments. The reason for this is the fact that if religious identities were unique, then the defenders of one-way protection theory would be right after all: all the demands for conscientious exemptions on religious basis should have been accepted. So, she investigates the problem of the justification for the special status of the religious beliefs: what is the basis on which this special status is supposed to rely on? She identifies three main answers to this question: special status based on truth value, on public good or on the respect for citizens conscience. Rejecting the idea

of the unique status, she nevertheless sustains that religious commitments are as special as any ethical commitments and they should be treated as such by the state when this preferential treatment does not undermine its own authority to make laws and the basic rights of individuals.

*2.1. Is there a special status based on truth value?*

The first answer she investigates is the theory according to which the unique status of religious identity relies on the truth value of religious beliefs. To this solution she objects that we cannot justify the freedom of religion on this ground because of the many differences and sometimes even contradictions between various religions, which therefore cannot all be true. And she adds that we find contradictions even between different interpretations of the same religion and consequently “we cannot coherently claim that a single major religion is simply true” (Gutmann 2003, 155).

A possible reply to this objection that she takes into consideration is the theory that the unique status of religious identity relies on the fact that some religion must be true even if we cannot be sure which one is true (we will presumably find out at a latter moment such as the Judgment Day). So the reasonable attitude will be to treat all of them as special given our current ignorance regarding their truth value. Hence, a follower of a particular religion would have an incentive to adopt this attitude because of the special status his faith would enjoy, even if he does not really believe in the truth value of all the religions.

To this line of argument she replies by citing Richard John Neuhaus and his rejection of the use of “private truths” in public political arena because they are not mutually justifiable and we cannot reasonably expect them to be accepted by citizens who do not share our religious faith. In her opinion, we should accept the fallible nature of all our ethical beliefs including the religious ones: “Our ethical beliefs must be held together with the knowledge that there is a sense in which ‘we could be wrong’. Even though we could be wrong, strongly held convictions about free speech and freedom of conscience are essential to public morality in a democratic society” (Gutmann, 2003, 158). And she adds that secular and religious citizens need a reasonable “moral faith” that is not irrational, it is compatible with the best methods of reasoning and it is open to reasonable challenges. This moral faith is defined by a commitment to standards like the need to treat all people as moral agents, as equal and free citizens, the respect for all persons and for human dignity and so on. But none of these standards are “resistant to reasonable doubt”. So these

principles are not based only on faith: all of them gain rational support by being open to reasonable doubt.

She argues that religious faith and secular doctrines alike must be evaluated in the light of these standards associated with “any plausible conception of democratic justice”. And we might come to the conclusion that some religious faiths that encourage people to kill others and some secular doctrines that encourage similar violent actions are unreasonable in the light of these standards.

I believe that this talk about the “openness” of the moral standards to reasonable doubt makes Gutmann’s theory vulnerable to one significant objection. Because I believe we must ask: how will the supporters of different and sometimes contradictory substantial views come to the “mutual acceptance” of these standards? An answer to this problem that she seems to suggest is that the citizens will simply debate and the result of this debate will be the lists of the rational standard that are “mutually acceptable” (Gutmann, 2003, 160). In other words, as she and Dennis Thomson insist in *Why Deliberative Democracy?*, the solution to this problem is to assume that the standards are politically provisional. They should be open to revision in an ongoing process of moral and political deliberation (Gutmann and Thompson, 2004: 25-26).

However, I believe that this answer does not really solve the problem we mentioned. First we should note that the reasonable character of the standards themselves must be assessed in the light of some *meta-standards* regarding what is reasonable and what is unreasonable to sustain in a public and democratic debate. The rational debate is only a process in which the citizens apply these meta-standards: they do not establish the meta-standards themselves. If they did, they would face the threat of infinite regress. Second, these meta-standards should be *normative* in character. They are not only procedural rules that secure the possibility of the democratic debate between different substantial moral doctrines, debate that aims at establishing what is reasonable. The meta-standards must *express* and *establish* what is reasonable or not. Hence, her view needs a substantial and robust conception of “moral faith” which contains the set of meta-standards that express the conditions of reasonability. Moreover, this conception must be unique and common to all the citizens regardless of their specific religious or ethical belief.

In my opinion such a solution is very improbable to say the least: in order to play its role this “moral faith” should be conceived by every citizen as more important than all his religious and ethical commitments. But religious and other conscientious citizens just do not believe that

there is any such “higher” moral faith that would have priority over their comprehensive conception. And, in my opinion, the alternative to this very implausible solution would be only some kind of forced agreement imposed on the defenders of different religious and ethical views.

A similar argument against the procedural approach (more precisely against the Rawlsian arguments of *modus vivendi* and overlapping consensus) is presented by Raymond Plant in the article *Citizens, Religion and Political Liberalism*. He argues that if we consider the Rawlsian *modus vivendi* argument we have to acknowledge that there is no agreement between the defenders of different substantial (ethical, metaphysical, religious and so on) doctrines to adhere to a unique set of comprehensive principles. Hence, as Plant argues, “the approach is rooted in a prudential calculation of the limits of the power of the groups that each side represents, and the recognition that neither side is going to prevail” (Plant 2009, 42). However, such a *modus vivendi* agreement will not be stable since the balance of power might change and one part might come to believe that it could prevail after all. Against the overlapping consensus argument he argues that there is a paradox within this proceduralist model because this conception affirms that we should not accept comprehensive or substantial principles and arguments in the political public sphere, but is nevertheless committed to a specific substantial doctrine concerning social and democratic justice based on the principles of justice and liberty that dictate whether the arguments are reasonable or not: “The problem is clear: to arrive at an overlapping consensus, the idea of reasonableness has to be accepted by or imposed on contending comprehensive doctrines” (Plant 2009, 55).

Returning to Gutmann’s argumentation, I believe we should conclude this section by noticing that she tries to solve the problem of the pluralism and multiculturalism of contemporary society by arguing that the differences between the substantial views (religious or secular) could be solved by invoking a common “moral faith” that would contain only the principles that are mutually acceptable for all the citizens of a democratic society. However, as I mentioned above, this moral faith is not achievable by procedural methods. I think it is unreasonable to sustain that a unique set of principles could be established by the means of a procedure. The essential element of any debate understood as a reasoning process is the set of substantial standards we apply in the debating process. But it is very unlikely that a substantial agreement regarding such standards will ever be established, and the alternative of imposing such an agreement would be non-democratic and thus unacceptable.

## *2.2. Is there a special status based on public good?*

Another theory that she analyses is the one that supports the unique status of religious identity on the base of the special contribution it makes to the public good. And she mentions the theory held by De Tocqueville according to which “religious believers are public-regarding citizens because a taste of infinite restrains the excessive and exclusive taste for one’s own well-being that otherwise dominates democracies” (Gutmann 2003, 162).

However, in Gutmann’s opinion religious belief can also have a negative effect on public-good when it promotes an intolerant and aggressive kind of collectivism. For this reason, she sustains that “religious identity per se is therefore not good or bad for democracy” (Gutmann 2003, 163). Moreover, the social capital created by the religious associations is not based on the religious character of these associations, but is common to all voluntary associations. And, in her opinion, even between various religious communities there are great differences regarding their commitment to public good.

Gutmann mentions another important question related to the one stated above: do arguments based on religion play a special role in the political debates regarding law and public policy in democracy? There are some examples like Martin Luther King’s defense of civil rights that seem to suggest an affirmative answer to this question. However, she presents a number of religious arguments from Christians, Jews and Muslims that are examples of a non-tolerant and aggressive attitude towards the members of other religious communities. And this is the kind of religious arguments that justify the liberal thesis according to which we should tolerate, but we should not welcome religious arguments in democratic debate.

Nevertheless, in her opinion this is not the right attitude because, on one hand, it suggests that all religious arguments are of this type and, on the other hand, it encourages us to tolerate some forms of religious or secular reasoning that constitute a direct threat to basic human rights. Her solution to this problem relies on the notion of “reciprocity among citizens”. In her view, whenever a religious or secular argument supports the reciprocity it represents a valuable form of political reasoning. The advantage of this strategy which relies on the notion of reciprocity is that “reciprocity does not require agreement among citizens or arguments on the same secular or religious terms” and it is compatible with reasonable disagreement (Gutmann 2003, 167).

In my opinion, although this answer seems to offer a solution to the aforementioned problem, when we analyze it more carefully the answer

proves to be unsatisfactory. The key element of her solution is the notion of “reciprocity among citizens”. It appears to be a standard which must be applied in order to decide if a religious argument is tolerated (or even promoted as something important and significant) in a deliberative procedure. But if we want it to serve in this manner we have to explain what it means for any argument to support reciprocity. Which are the features that allow it to do so? Once again I insist on the idea that this standard should be conceived as *normative* rather than descriptive. The tendency to promote reciprocity is not a factual feature that some arguments (religious or secular) enjoy and others do not. The term reciprocity refers to nothing else than the mutual acceptability of the arguments. And the arguments are mutually acceptable if the citizens agree on them on the basis of some *normative* standards regarding what is and what is not acceptable.

A possible answer suggested in her argumentation is that these standards are established by the means of the deliberative procedure, which is a fallible and open-ended process of public reasoning. Hence, the results of this procedure could be revised in the course of future deliberations. However, as I argued in another work (Țuțui 2011, 20-21), if we maintain that the deliberation is an authentic reasoning process and not only a chaotic and unreasonable substitution of a set of standards with another set of standards, we have to explain why the new set is preferable to the old one. And this would demand a set of meta-standards as the one mentioned in the previous section, meta-standards that would govern all the reasoning processes associated with all the deliberative procedures.

### *2.3. Is there a special status based on the respect for citizens' conscience?*

Gutmann continues her argumentation against the special character of religious identity with the rejection of the conception according to which the religious arguments are special because they are the expression of the human conscience regarded as a special feature of ethical personhood. And she defines this term as follows: “Conscience, as I am using the term here, designates a person’s ultimate ethical commitments: ethical percepts that are experienced as binding on those who believe in them. Their source is thought to be an ethical authority that is variously identified as God, nature, reason, or human individuality itself” (Gutmann 2003, 168).

Sometimes the religious commitments request that the individual should not respect some legal demands like mandatory military service. And in some cases justice courts have exempted some groups of citizens from some legal obligations by taking into account the fact that satisfying

that obligation would contradict the religious convictions that are an essential part of their conscience. And if the state would fail to do so, then it would fail to respect the conscience of those citizens which is an essential part of respecting their ethical identity.

Hence, in her opinion, the state should strive to respect the conscience of its citizens. However, she sustains that respect for conscience is not an absolute value for democracy because it can conflict with other basic democratic principles like the principle of equal liberty. And she adds that “conscience is ethically fallible, and therefore respect for it may be overridden when it would clearly produce greater injustice” (Gutmann 2003, 171). Therefore, she affirms that respect for conscience is not a substitute for respect of the democratic governments and the laws that they adopt. In the same time, the latter kind of respect is not a substitute for the first kind. Both kinds of respect are necessary and neither is sufficient for democratic justice.

The solution she recommends is once again in the spirit of the two-way protection: to “supplement” the respect for democratic laws with the respect for conscience only when this would produce greater justice instead of injustice. She believes that the insistence on only one dimension, the law or the conscience (one way protection), or the strict separation of these dimensions does not take into consideration the fact that “when conscience contests democratic laws, one imperfect ethics confronts another, and no credible ideal of democratic justice can assume that the claim of law or conscience will always be more just” (Gutmann 2003, 173). So, in correspondence with the spirit of the two-way protection, she holds that it is not reasonable to grant conscience (religious or secular) such a special status that would have democratic governments defer to it constantly, but at the same time it is not a viable option to deem it insignificant and ignore it systematically.

I believe that the solution mentioned above is problematic because it suggest that apart from the two “imperfect ethics” associated with democratic laws and conscience, there is another superior ethics that somehow transcends their imperfections and allows us to solve the conflicts that may well occur between them. The reason for this is the fact that we need some standards of democratic justice in order to establish if the exemptions from legal obligations based on the respect for citizens’ conscience tend to produce greater justice or greater injustice. But, I think we must ask: what would be the nature and the justification of these standards that would provide “a credible ideal of democratic justice”? She does not offer even a sketch of an explanation regarding the principles

and standards contained in the superior ethics, and I believe that she could not provide one. Because, once again, she would have to establish if these standards are of a substantial or procedural nature, and all the objections we mentioned regarding this problem would reappear.

Another objection that her conception has to face is related to her view concerning the nature of the commitments that characterize the conscience of religious believers. First, I do not agree with her thesis according to which religious beliefs are nothing more than a particular kind of ethical commitments. Even if we admit that there are some common features of religious and ethical commitments, we have to acknowledge that there are also some significant differences. As Gutmann herself sustains, our ethical beliefs must be held together with the understanding of the fact that they are open to reasonable challenges. However, this is not the case with the beliefs associated with the most important religious faiths. Religious citizens do not perceive the commitments of their faith as rationally revisable.

Moreover, while the demands of justice and reciprocity are highly relevant for any ethical debate, they are not as relevant for religious debates. As a consequence, religious citizens are not willing to abandon their beliefs for the sake of “democratic justice”, “reciprocity” or other such value. As Linda Hogan sustains in the *Introduction* to the volume *Religious Voices in Public Places*, “religious believers expect to have the opportunity to express their views on matters of critical public interest within the usual deliberative processes of the polis” (Hogan 2009, 2). And they feel that they have the right to express their authentic religious beliefs and that no other “higher” ethical commitment should prevail. And this is required by what Hogan calls “the dominant understanding of the nature of political participation” (Hogan 2009, 3).

In the article *Why Can't We All Just Get Along with Each Other?*, Nicholas Wolterstorff provides an interesting suggestion for solving this problem. In his view, there could be an agreement between the main religious traditions regarding the acceptance of the principles that secure basic rights for citizens associated with liberal democracy because all these faiths attach a high significance to the *worth of persons*: “Jews, Christians, and Muslims alike hold that worth is the worth of a creature made by God in God’s own image. When one focuses on the worth of the person, and on the sorts of things that violate that worth, then liberal democracy begins to look to the religious person not strange but mandatory” (Wolterstorff 2009, 35-36). And this combined with the fact of religious pluralism will also justify the acceptance of liberal principles

like the institutional separation between church and state, the non-discriminatory attitude of in its treatment of citizens on account of their religion or lack thereof, and the non-discriminatory attitude in its treatment of citizens in “their right to voice in the conduct and personnel of the state on account of their religion or lack thereof” (Wolterstorff 2009, 34).

Although this suggestion seems promising, I fear that Wolterstorff overlooks some significant problems. First, the principle regarding the “worth of persons” is sufficiently abstract and quite vague in its “trans-religion” form indicated above. Secondly, there is an important difference between this abstract (religious, ethical or metaphysical) principle and the more mundane and pragmatic problem of how to apply it in the political decision making process. Consequently, in this political sphere the most important problem would be: what is the *right interpretation* of the principle? And, I think that there will not be much agreement on this matter between the religious believers from different traditions.

Thirdly, in my opinion, this principle concerning the worth of persons can and often does conflict with other religious principles from the same religious traditions. For example, Jews, Christians, and Muslims alike sustain that all humans must obey a set of divine commands and that people differ greatly in their obedience and faith: some of them are better than others. Because, in some important interpretations of the aforementioned principle, Jews, Christians, and Muslims alike sustain that the God’s image within all of us is a *potentiality*, and we have to make every effort to make it our *actual* nature. Hence, all these religious traditions hold that all people are created by God in God’s image, but this is only a part of the story. The other part is one that allows (and in some interpretations even recommends) discriminatory treatment of people. Hence, this more substantial view according to which the agreement between the major religious traditions (somehow) already exists is also unconvincing.

### **3. Conclusions**

From all the arguments mentioned so far we can conclude that Amy Gutmann does not provide a convincing justification for the two-way protection theory. We argued that, if she wants to maintain that her theory is superior to strict separation or to one-way protection, she has no other option than to present a very clear criterion for the distinction between legitimate and illegitimate exemptions based on religious and other

conscientious commitments. However, we observed that instead of an unambiguous criterion for the distinction, she offers only a vague description of a deliberation process between citizens and their governmental representatives, a process guided by an even more ambiguous standard: reciprocity.

In my opinion, the problems of the two-way protection theory are caused by a paradox which affects any such attempt to solve the conflict between the various religious identities and the fundamental principles of democracy (political equality, liberty and so on): Any solution to this conflict should be flexible enough in order to allow the liberty of religion and of other comprehensive views, but, on the other hand, it should be inflexible enough in order to secure a unique set of basic rights for all the citizens regardless of their religious or secular comprehensive commitments.

Acknowledging, the significance of both dimensions, Gutmann tries to grant them equal consideration and significance for a democratic society. However, I believe she underestimates the conflicts that might (and quite often do) occur between them. Hence, we can conclude that the problem of accommodating the expression of religious and other substantial beliefs in the political forums of a democratic society remains an open problem and a difficult challenge of contemporary political philosophy.

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