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## **On the Presence of Educated Religious Beliefs in the Public Sphere**

**Abstract:** Discursive liberal democracy might not be the best of all possible forms of government, yet in Europe it is largely accepted as such. The attractors of liberal democracy (majority rule, political equality, reasonable self-determination and an ideological framework built in a tentative manner) as well as an adequate dose of secularization (according to the doctrine of religious restraint) provide both secularist and educated religious people with the most convenient ideological framework. Unfortunately, many promoters of ideological secularization take too strong a stance against the manifestation of religiosity in the public sphere. They claim that people may discuss, debate or adopt (coercive) laws and regularities only by means of secular public reasons and secular motivation. We argue that these secular restraints on the ideological framework are unfairly biased against religion, counterproductive and unreasonable. The exaggerated secular restrictions create a strict secular public sphere that appears to be a Pickwickian world suitable just for inoffensive, dull and lethargic people. Deliberately separated from the idea of truth, secular public reasons cannot sustain a complex adaptive system like discursive liberal democracy. Liberal democracy needs citizens with a strong sense of truth and with a sufficient will-power to follow both a personal ideal and a collective ideal. Religious beliefs provide people with just such a sense of truth and with the desire to have a certain kind of character. In the secularized public sphere of liberal democracy, people can manifest just educated religious beliefs that correspond to the real world and respect the principle of peaceable conduct. In the final part of the article we support the assertion that believers could and should educate their religious belief before expressing them in the public sphere. Educated religious beliefs have a wide enough propositional content, obey the moral imperative of William Clifford, are purged from all propositional components against which there is strong evidence and are consciously cultivated by the mechanism of suggestion.

**Keywords:** discursive liberal democracy, secularization, public sphere, public reason, religious belief, educated belief.