

RELIGION AND THE
OBLIGATIONS OF
CITIZENSHIP

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Introduction

Religion is one of the most potent political forces in the contemporary world. The recent emergence of religious fundamentalism in many parts of the globe and the rise of religious conservatism in America are developments the political significance of which can hardly be exaggerated. Religion's power to stir passions, nourish social ideals and sustain mass movements makes it of obvious interest to students of politics. My concern is with contemporary liberal democracies and with the many questions we can ask about what role religion may play in their citizens' political decision-making. These are moral questions. The task of answering them falls to political philosophy.

These questions get their purchase because a society's commitment to liberal democracy entails certain moral commitments, commitments which are in some way normative for its citizens. Among the most important of these are commitments to liberty and equality, religious toleration, self-government, majoritarianism, the rule of law, and some measure of church-state separation. The precise content and implications of these commitments are matters of disagreement. Still, I shall assume they are clear and familiar enough that we can see how moral questions about religion and democracy arise, and compelling enough that we do not dismiss the questions out of hand.

Questions about the proper role of religion in liberal democratic decision-making fall into two broad categories. Some seize on the effect religion may have on political *outcomes* and ask how those outcomes square with the commitments of liberal democracy. Thus we can ask quite general questions, like whether state support for a religion, or for all religions equally, or for religion as such, is consistent with liberal democracy. We can ask whether it is permissible for a liberal democratic government purposely to encourage religious belief or the conduct demanded by a particular religion, or whether it may permissibly enforce religious codes of conduct. We can also use questions about religion and

political outcomes to illustrate puzzles about liberal democracy. Thus we can ask whether public school prayer should be permitted if the majority favors it. If so, then it seems that measures which threaten the liberty of the minority can be allowed in the name of a democratic commitment to majoritarianism. If not, then it seems that measures which the majority would like to enact can be frustrated by a liberal commitment to freedom of religion. Or we can ask whether some citizens should be allowed to make ritual use of drugs which are generally proscribed. If so, then it seems that the commitment to the equality of all before the law can, under some circumstances, give way to religious liberty. If not, then it seems that religious liberty can be restricted in the name of treating all as equals before a law which the state has an interest in enforcing.

Another set of questions seizes on religious political *inputs*. Liberal democratic commitments to religious toleration and church–state separation are sometimes thought to be incompatible with citizens’ taking their religiously based political views as the basis of important political decisions. Those who publicly attempt to persuade others of their political positions using religious arguments, who base their own votes and political activity on their religious convictions, and churches and religious organizations which try to form the political preferences of their participants, are all said to betray these commitments and to violate their moral obligations by doing so. And so we can ask: on what grounds should citizens cast their votes? What sorts of arguments and reasons *may* ordinary citizens offer one another on those occasions when they speak in the public forum? What sorts of reasons *must* they offer one another, or be prepared to offer one another, on those occasions? What, if any, relevant differences are there between the public forum and other fora in which citizens express their political views? May religious arguments for policy be offered in public by those who occupy influential social roles like opinion-maker or religious leader? May they be offered by those who seek or who have been chosen for special political roles, like judge, legislator or executive? If ordinary citizens may offer such arguments and public officials may not, what difference between them explains *this* difference?

These questions about religious political inputs are questions about the ethics of citizenship. They are questions about how those who occupy a certain social role – that of the citizen in a liberal democratic society – are to treat one another as they exercise political power to conduct their common business. They are the questions I take up in this book. These questions about the *ethics* of citizenship force us to confront deeper

questions about the *nature* of citizenship. Indeed, as I shall explain shortly, one of the reasons they are so interesting and important, and one of the reasons I pursue them here, is that by forcing us to confront these deeper questions they shed light from a fresh angle on some of the most fundamental issues in political philosophy.

OVERVIEW OF THE ARGUMENT

The conclusions I defend are that citizens may offer exclusively religious arguments in public debate and that they may rely on religious reasons when they cast their votes. More specifically, I shall defend the following two claims, the “provided” clauses of which express *prima facie* obligations of liberal democratic citizenship:

- (5.1) Citizens of a liberal democracy may base their votes on reasons drawn from their comprehensive moral views, including their religious views, without having other reasons which are sufficient for their vote – provided they sincerely believe that their government would be justified in adopting the measures they vote for.
- (5.2) Citizens of a liberal democracy may offer arguments in public political debate which depend upon reasons drawn from their comprehensive moral views, including their religious views, without making them good by appeal to other arguments – provided they believe that their government would be justified in adopting the measures they favor and are prepared to indicate what they think would justify the adoption of the measures.

These are principles of what I shall refer to as “responsible citizenship.” I shall argue that liberal democratic citizens are sometimes under a role-specific duty to vote and advocate responsibly. These principles say what they are permitted to do consistent with that duty. The guiding idea in the argument for them is that how citizens discharge their duty to behave responsibly depends upon the circumstances of their society. This is because voting and advocacy are collective enterprises. What constitutes responsible participation in collective undertakings depends, in part, upon how it is reasonable for participants in it to regard themselves and upon what they may reasonably expect from one another. Citizens of contemporary liberal democracies like the United States are deeply divided on the nature and demands of citizenship, hence deeply divided on how to regard their own citizenship and on what they can expect of each other. Some of their disagreements concern the sort of reasons that can justify political outcomes. Some of *these* disagreements result from the political activity of churches and religious organizations. In some societies

the political activities of churches and religious organizations are very valuable. They are valuable because, to take a phrase from contemporary political science, they are part of what makes liberal democracy “work.” In societies in which this is so, the disagreements that result can, I maintain, be reasonable disagreements. Where such disagreements are reasonable, principles of responsible citizenship should allow citizens latitude in the reasons on which they may rely in voting and in public political advocacy. This is done by (5.1) and (5.2).

Clearly a crucial step in this line of thought is the claim that in some societies churches make valuable contributions to liberal democracy. The arguments I offer for the value of churches’ political activities rely upon claims about what in chapter 1 I shall call “participation” and “full participation” in a liberal democratic society. One argument for the value of churches’ contributions to liberal democracy begins from the value of being able to and knowing that one is able to participate in one important sphere of a liberal democratic society: its political life. In some societies, churches provide the means by which many people gain access to realistically available opportunities to participate in politics and develop a sense of themselves as citizens. A second argument begins from the value of debating the conditions of participation, including full participation, in other spheres of one’s society. Many political debates – including those about abortion and the rights of women, affirmative action, homosexual marriage and domestic partnership benefits, welfare rights, the right to employment, how to treat prisoners, immigrants and the disabled – can, I shall argue, be seen as debates about who should be a full participant and about what goods various levels of participation should confer. There is a great deal at stake in these contests, for their outcomes determine who is accorded full participation, what rights, duties and privileges that status carries with it and what is conferred on those who are participants but not full participants. Vigorous, open and informed contests help to insure that no one is excluded from full participation who deserves to be accorded it and that those who are not full participants are treated with dignity. Churches and their representatives have defended the rights of slaves, immigrants, the poor and the marginalized. In doing so, they have often drawn on interpretations of participation which otherwise would not be articulated. These arguments can, therefore, be valuable contributions to public debate.

Showing how people gain access to opportunities for full participation and develop a sense of themselves as citizens, and showing how churches contribute to debates about participation, requires the presentation and

analysis of empirical material about churches, religious organizations and their role in politics. My arguments for the principles therefore requires a departure from methods which are standard in philosophical inquiry. Philosophy typically proceeds by conceptual argument, by testing definitions, premises and inferences against our intuitions. Argumentation of this kind can take us quite far toward the solution of some philosophical problems. Much of the best work in political philosophy, including work on questions about religion and political decision-making, relies exclusively upon it. But I do not believe that exclusive reliance on conceptual argumentation is the best way to appreciate the role religion may permissibly play in democratic politics. I shall have more to say about my use of empirical data in chapter 2. For now, note that while empirical data cannot solve normative questions, they can suggest that some solutions to those questions are less reasonable than others because of the costs they would exact. They can be used to query presumptions about standard conditions which are implicit in some seemingly plausible solutions. They can also convey information needed to assess the reasonability of deep disagreement.

My defense of (5.1) and (5.2) points to the importance of distinguishing those who violate the obligations of citizenship from those whose politics we dislike. There may be many people who use religious arguments to support positions with which we vehemently disagree and candidates whom we hope will lose. It does not follow from this that they violate some obligation of citizenship. This point, though obvious, is worth bearing in mind. Though the philosophical arguments used to defend restrictions on religious political argument and activity are very powerful, the intuitive appeal of these restrictions depends, I believe, upon unspoken assumptions about the policies that religious citizens advocate and vote for, and upon opposition to those policies. In the second chapter I will try to undermine these assumptions by showing that churches and religious citizens of the United States defend a much wider range of positions than popular portrayals would have us believe. Still, there is no doubt that some citizens use religious arguments to defend political positions that others, including myself, consider illiberal or unjust. The fact that they do so shows, not that obligations of citizenship are frequently violated, but that modern societies are characterized by deep disagreements about the primacy of justice, about what justice requires and about what sorts of reasons are good ones for enacting public policy. An account of the reasons on which citizens may rely must take proper account of these disagreements.

THE STANDARD APPROACH

There is an approach to questions about religious political inputs that has become standard. That approach begins with a fundamental claim about the nature of citizenship: citizens of a liberal democracy are free equals. They can enjoy their freedom and equality, it is said, only if government justifies political arrangements, or basic political arrangements, or coercive arrangements, by reasons which are accessible to everyone. For if the reasons provided for these arrangements are accessible to some but not others, those to whom the reasons are not accessible will not be treated as the equals of those to whom they are (because they are not treated as persons to whom accessible reasons are due). Nor will they realize their freedom (because they will perceive basic arrangements as brutally coercive in the absence of a justification accessible to them). Having argued that citizens' freedom and equality require the provision of accessible reasons, those who follow this approach then isolate a class of reasons which, they claim, are accessible to everyone. These are reasons which informed and rational persons recognize or would recognize as good ones for settling questions of the relevant kind. Because these are the reasons government must use to justify political arrangements to citizens, we can call reasons in this class "justifying reasons."

Proponents of this approach go on to argue that whatever other reasons citizens offer each other when they deliberate and whatever other reasons they rely on when they vote, they must also have and be prepared to offer one another justifying reasons. This is because it is incumbent on citizens to participate in politics responsibly. By participating responsibly, they do their part to bring it about that their relations with one another are marked by civility, trust and mutual respect. Participation can be responsible and the quality of citizens' relations maintained, it is said, only if citizens rely and know that everyone else relies on accessible reasons, on reasons that they all recognize or would recognize as good reasons for deciding fundamental questions. Since religious reasons are not accessible to everyone in a pluralistic society, they conclude that appeals to them must be made good by appeal to reasons which are.

The standard approach is a very attractive one, for it is premised on a number of convictions which exercise a powerful grip on modern political thought. Indeed their grip is so powerful, and various elaborations of them so compelling, that the conclusion of the standard approach can seem inescapable. The claim that reasons for political arrangements *can*

be made commonly accessible responds to the conviction that human beings share a common rational capacity. The claim that they *must* be, that the provision of accessible reasons is at the heart of equal treatment, responds to the conviction that that common capacity is what gives us our dignity.¹ The claim that the availability of such reasons is also at the heart of political freedom responds to the conviction that true freedom is realized when we act for reasons we can grasp using the common power of reason. The claim that policy must be supported by accessible reasons responds to another conviction. Exercises of political power are legitimate only if they are transparent to reason's inspection; they are not to be shrouded in mystery, obscured by "reasons of state" or hidden in the manner of government house utilitarianism.² The claim that citizens must be ready to offer one another reasons of the sort the government must offer them – that citizens should conduct themselves as if they were government officials – responds to still another: in a liberal democracy, citizens are really the governors and public officials act on their behalf. Finally, this approach answers to our desire for community amid pluralism. If a liberal society cannot be unified by a shared conception of the good life or by commonly acknowledged ties of blood, it can be held together by citizens' respect for one another's reason. It can be a society in which citizens respect one another as reasonable and show that respect by offering one another reasons they can share.³

These convictions and their implications for political argument seem so compelling because of the view of citizenship that underlies them: the view that citizens are cosovereigns who govern their society collectively using their common powers of reason. When citizens adopt this view of themselves, they develop certain expectations of one another. Thus when they think of themselves as governing their society collectively by their rational powers, it is natural for them to expect that others will offer them arguments which are rationally accessible, to feel disrespected when they are not offered such arguments and to react by withholding trust and civic friendship. Because these expectations are said to be reasonable, others should strive to satisfy them. Hence the standard approach's

¹ See Jeremy Waldron, "Theoretical Foundations of Liberalism," in his *Liberal Rights: Collected Papers 1981–1991* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 35–62.

² The phrase "government house utilitarianism" is Bernard Williams's; see his *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985), p. 108.

³ The phrase "reasons they can share" is adapted from the title of Christine Korsgaard's article "The Reasons We Can Share," *Social Philosophy and Policy* 10 (1993): 24–51. Korsgaard uses the phrase in another connection. My adaptation of the phrase here does not imply that she endorses what I am calling the "standard approach."

conclusion that citizens are obligated to offer one another accessible reasons.

The standard approach is a familiar one to questions about religion's place in political decision-making. Indeed I assume it is so familiar as to be immediately recognizable from the rough profile I have sketched. In one form or another it is amplified, laid out and defended by a number of thinkers in philosophy, law and political theory. John Rawls,⁴ Cass Sunstein,⁵ Joshua Cohen,⁶ Bruce Ackerman, Amy Gutmann and Dennis Thompson,⁷ Charles Larmore,⁸ and Stephen Macedo⁹ all argue that citizens should rely on accessible reasons or connect the use of reasons they regard as appropriate for political argument and action with the legitimacy or justifiability of political outcomes, the maintenance of good relations among citizens, or both. Not all these thinkers address questions about religious arguments and public political debate. But by offering compelling visions of how democratic deliberation should proceed in a pluralistic society, their work forces us to ask whether religious considerations should be accorded any reason-giving force in democratic politics. Reflection on their work, therefore, shows just how high the philosophical stakes are once the status of religious arguments *is* in question.

Despite its many attractions when sketched in broad outline and the many convictions to which it responds, I believe this approach is prey to serious and ultimately telling objections. It attaches far too much importance to maintaining what I have elsewhere called citizens' "reasoned respect" for one another,¹⁰ sometimes using arguments of dubious psychological merit. It attaches very great value to a form of autonomy that is available only when government action is not premised on *any* thick conception of the good life. It does so while ignoring both the fact that some conceptions are more controversial than others and the possibility that *this* form of autonomy, though important, may be less valuable

⁴ John Rawls, *Political Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), pp. 212–54; also his "The Idea of Public Reason Revisited" in John Rawls, *The Law of Peoples* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), pp. 129–80.

⁵ Cass Sunstein, "Beyond the Republican Revival," *Yale Law Journal* 97 (1988): 1539–1590; also his "Naked Preferences and the Constitution," *Columbia Law Review* 84 (1984): 1689–1732.

⁶ Joshua Cohen, "Deliberation and Democratic Legitimacy," in Alan Hamlin and Philip Pettit (eds.), *The Good Polity* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), pp. 17–34, at p. 21.

⁷ Amy Gutmann and Dennis Thompson, *Democracy and Disagreement* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), p. 57.

⁸ Charles Larmore, "Public Reason," in Samuel Freeman (ed.), *Cambridge Companion to Rawls* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming).

⁹ Stephen Macedo, *Liberal Virtue* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), chapter 2.

¹⁰ See the introduction to Paul J. Weithman (ed.), *Religion and Contemporary Liberalism* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997), pp. 1–37.

than forms of political freedom which are available only when it is not. Finally, the crucial notion of accessibility is hardly self-explanatory. The most promising attempts to explain it and to isolate accessible reasons are, I argue, ill-specified or highly controversial.

That there are problems with citizens' purported obligation to rely on accessible reasons can be brought out by counterexamples. These counterexamples show that our intuitions about the propriety of using religious arguments in politics are sensitive to contextual features of which the standard approach is unable to take account. Thus our judgment about someone's use of a religious political argument can vary depending upon his religious background, the outcome for which he argues, the use to which similar arguments have previously been put and even upon whether we think his argument is likely to prevail. I have developed these counterexamples elsewhere and do not want to rehearse them here.¹¹ But while the bulk of this book is devoted to developing arguments for my own view, it will be important to confront the standard approach in its most sophisticated forms. I do this in chapters 6 and 7. There I argue that the accessibility requirement on reasons cannot plausibly be spelled out.

THE PHILOSOPHICAL AND POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROBLEM

One of the reasons for my interest in the standard approach and its shortcomings is that proponents of the standard approach offer powerful and systematic defenses of their restrictions. The second reason is related to the first. The standard approach is the one that can be most systematically defended because, as I said when I introduced it, it is the approach which follows most directly from views at the heart of much contemporary liberal political philosophy. The connection between the standard approach and the core commitments of liberal political thought therefore make it the most philosophically interesting rival to the view I want to defend. Because this approach is tied to accounts of political legitimacy and civic friendship, modifying the account of what public deliberation can look like may lead us to rethink our views about what democratic legitimacy and civility require.

Questions about religion's role in political decision-making are important for another reason as well, one that is more social and political than

¹¹ Paul Weithman, "Citizenship and Public Reason," in Robert P. George and Christopher Wolfe (eds.), *Liberal Public Reason, Natural Law and Morality* (Washington: Georgetown University Press, 2000), pp. 125–70.

philosophical. This is a reason which can be illustrated by episodes in American history. In the course of that history, doubts have been raised about the good citizenship of many minority groups: Jews, Quakers, Baptists, Catholics, immigrant groups, to name just some. Often, as this list suggests, these groups have been religious ones whose convictions were thought to stand in the way of their members' good citizenship. In the middle decades of the twentieth century, for example, the question of whether Roman Catholics could be good American citizens, committed to church-state separation, was elevated to national prominence by the rise of Franco in Spain and his commitment to a Catholic state, by the attempt to secure federal support for Catholic schools during the 1940s, and by the presidential candidacies of Catholics Al Smith and John Kennedy. The debate that followed turned, in part, on the empirical questions of whether Catholic Americans could demonstrate their loyalty and could participate in the common culture thought necessary for sustaining democratic institutions. But it also turned on deep philosophical questions about the nature of intellectual freedom, the moral and intellectual foundations of democracy, and the core commitments of a liberal state.¹² The course of that debate suggests two things that might be meant by asking whether participants of some group can be good citizens. Both ultimately raise just the questions about religious political argument with which I am concerned.

One thing someone might have in mind when asking whether members of a religious group can be good citizens is whether they can enter into the sort of relations that he thinks ought to hold among fellow citizens. Someone might wonder whether participants of that group can enter into a relationship of mutual respect, trust or civic friendship with other citizens, or whether they will always be alien and their loyalty in doubt. This question presupposes the availability of some criterion by which the relationship among citizens is to be assessed. As we saw in the discussion of what I called the "standard approach," good relations are sometimes thought to depend upon the generalized willingness to use reasons of the right kind in debating political questions. Clearly, then, the question of who can be a good citizen in this first sense turns on the question of what those reasons are.

Alternatively, in asking whether participants of a given group can be good citizens of a liberal democracy, someone might be asking whether they share the values, goals and norms that unite citizens of a country

¹² John McGreevy, "Thinking on One's Own: Catholicism in the American Intellectual Imagination, 1928-1960," *Journal of American History* 84 (1997): 97-131.

and make them a people. For someone who has this question in mind, it would be natural to ask whether participants of that group know how to participate in self-governance on the basis of those values and norms, whether they know how to honor them in practice and join with others in applying them to new conditions. It would be natural, that is, for her to ask whether they know how to conduct themselves properly in public deliberation.

The naturalness of this line of questioning receives some confirmation from the history of the debate about American Catholicism that I mentioned earlier. In the 1950s and early 1960s the Jesuit theologian John Courtney Murray argued, against neo-nativist sentiment, that Catholics *can* be good Americans. He defended this conclusion by showing that Catholics can participate in what he called the “public consensus.” By this he meant that Catholics can accept the shared values and norms that justify American constitutional democracy. He was at pains to argue that among the norms American Catholics can accept are those norms of civility which ought to govern participation in “civil conversation.”¹³ Whether Murray was correct about this and whether he correctly identified the norms of civility are matters of scholarly controversy which are beside my present concern.¹⁴ Murray’s work illustrates a more general point. I am interested in a variant of the question that preoccupied Murray: how can religious believers be good liberal democratic citizens? As Murray recognized, good citizenship depends in part upon a willingness to participate in public debate in the right way. It therefore depends upon what “the right way” is. It depends, that is, upon what sorts of arguments citizens must offer or be prepared to offer each other.

The importance of who can be a good citizen, and how religious believers can be good citizens, thus lends significance to the questions I want to take up. But why is the question of who can be a good citizen such an important one? Liberal democracies publicly proclaim an ethics of equality. Many citizens of liberal democracies care deeply about being accepted as equals by others. They resent the suggestions that they are untrustworthy or disloyal, are free riders or are less worthy of citizenship than others. They are especially and understandably resentful when these suggestions are based on matters central to their identity, like their religion. Stigmata of this kind have profound effects on the way they

¹³ John Courtney Murray, SJ, *We Hold These Truths* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1960), especially pp. 97–124.

¹⁴ See, for example, “Theology and Public Philosophy: A Symposium on John Courtney Murray’s Unfinished Agenda,” *Theological Studies* 40 (1979): 700–15.

think of themselves. They also have profound effects on their relations with others, especially when the stigmatizing claims are widely believed. Members of groups thought to be incapable of good citizenship are generally *not* accepted as equals. They may be subject to exclusion from opportunities, economically and politically if not legally; at least they may be treated with disdain or condescension. Thus the questions of who can be a good citizen and of how religious believers can be good citizens have implications for many people's self-respect and social status.

When I sketched the arguments for my own view, I said that it is important to be sensitive both to the contributions that religion can make to public debate and to the fact that liberal democratic citizenship is an achievement that churches and religious organizations help to bring about. To make good these claims I need to provide an analytical framework for locating and evaluating the contributions religion and churches make to democracy. Locating those contributions requires the use of categories that are not now part of the standard repertoire of democratic theory. In the next chapter I develop those categories and lay out the framework for presenting the empirical data that follow.

CHAPTER I

Participation, full participation and realized citizenship

Aristotle offered the most famous definition of citizenship when he defined a citizen as someone who takes part in ruling and being ruled. Since my target is the ethics of political participation, Aristotle's definition is the natural place to begin. Thus I use the term "citizen" to denote someone who is both affected by political outcomes and who is entitled to take part in bringing them about. In modern liberal democracies, the citizen's entitlement is a legal one.¹ That entitlement can exist *merely* in law. Alternatively, someone who is a citizen can have real opportunities to participate in political decision-making by affecting political outcomes. She need not have the opportunity to seek high office. But if she has the real opportunity to take part in decision-making, she must have real opportunities to vote, to inform herself about public affairs, to express her political opinions, to petition her representatives without reprisal, and to join with others in holding them accountable. The provision of these opportunities to all those who are legally entitled to take part in decision-making is a great achievement for a liberal democracy. But in calling citizenship an achievement, I have something more in mind. Citizenship is a social role. The achievement of citizenship requires that those who are entitled to play it be equipped to do so.

REALIZED CITIZENSHIP

All of us simultaneously occupy a variety of social roles associated with our places in our families, our occupations, our associations and our society – parent, child, spouse, physician, student, bureaucrat, cleric and so on. Learning to play a role involves learning to honor the obligations that one has in virtue of occupying that role, the role-specific duties. It

¹ On the emergence of citizenship as a legal status, see J. G. A. Pocock, "The Ideal of Citizenship Since Classical Times," in Ronald Beiner (ed.), *Theorizing Citizenship* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1995), pp. 29–52.

may also include learning to live up to various ideals, ideals realized by excellent performance of the activities normally associated with that role. The activities and duties associated with our roles are often not explicitly codified. What we acquire as we learn a role is not the explicit command of a systematically connected body of practical knowledge. It is more often an unsystematic welter of ideas, convictions, aspirations, entitlements, role models and rules of thumb. That as many people learn to play social roles as do is remarkable. Its remarkability should not blind us to a fact which stands in even greater need of explanation: that our occupancy of roles can be motivational. This is especially puzzling in the case of roles like citizenship, in which we find ourselves without any undertaking on our part, rather than roles like spouse, which we voluntarily and publicly assume, typically by acts of promising.

Though relatively few people assume the role of citizen by explicit consent, a great many people are moved by the ideals of citizenship and by the injunction to be a good citizen, hold themselves to the norms and obligations of citizenship. They feel entitled to its benefits and pride themselves on their status as citizens. In order for our citizenship to be motivational in these ways, we must think of ourselves as citizens. We must recognize the associated norms, ideals, benefits and opportunities as ours, as applying to us or as open to us. We must also think of ourselves, at least implicitly, as having the characteristic rights, interests, duties and powers of citizens. In sum we must, as I shall put it, *identify* with our citizenship. Acting on our identity as citizens to satisfy our obligations, assert our rights or take part in politics requires confidence that our actions will be effective. It may require courage in the face of dangers and obstacles. As a first approximation, let us say that someone who has a sense of herself, even an implicit sense of herself, as a citizen and the psychological resources to act on her identity as such *effectively identifies* with her citizenship.

Effective identification is one condition – the subjective condition – of what I shall call *realized citizenship*. Realized citizenship as I understand it has an objective condition as well. Someone who realizes her citizenship has the legally guaranteed opportunities to participate of which I spoke earlier. What makes those opportunities *real* opportunities – to employ the phrase I used above – is that she has the resources of information, skills, networks and influence to take advantage of them. The conjunction of opportunity and resources is the objective condition of realized citizenship. When I speak of citizenship as a social and political achievement, it is realized citizenship I have in mind. In this chapter I offer a preliminary argument for the claim that a commitment to liberal democracy

provides grounds for valuing realized citizenship. That argument prepares the ground for chapter 2, where I suggest that churches contribute to democracy by promoting realized citizenship, and for chapter 3, where I vindicate the conclusions of this chapter and chapter 2 by appealing to various theories of democracy. Thus I shall have more to say about realized citizenship in the next two chapters. For now, I simply want to clarify the notion of realized citizenship somewhat by saying something more about the subjective and objective conditions of realized citizenship and by drawing some important distinctions.

I said that someone's identification with her citizenship is effective when she has the psychological resources to act on her sense of herself as a citizen. Let me try to make this more precise. There are some activities of citizenship – such as speaking up at a public meeting, protesting, confronting public officials – that draw on initiative, confidence or even courage, and a sense of efficacy or empowerment. Casting a vote requires the motivation to vote, which as we shall see in the next chapter is often connected with an effective sense of civic duty. Initiative, confidence, courage and the sense of empowerment, an effective sense of civic duty, are psychological resources on which citizens draw when they perform these activities of citizenship. These resources have a dispositional component. The presence and strength of the dispositions depends upon a number of highly complex factors. Some of these no doubt vary from individual to individual, so that identically placed individuals would develop the dispositions to different degrees. There are certain identifiable conditions which are normally conducive to the development of these dispositions. These include the regular exposure to the teaching that citizens can be efficacious if they act in concert and to the teaching that voting is a civic duty, and transmission of the collective memory of empowerment that came with a group's previous experiences of successful political action. These are the bases of the dispositions. When such bases of psychological resources are made available to someone, she has been provided with the *bases* of effective identification with her citizenship. She has therefore been provided with the bases for satisfying the subjective condition of realized citizenship.

The objective condition of realized citizenship is the conjunction of the legally guaranteed opportunity to participate in political decision-making and the resources to take advantage of opportunity. Democratic equality is sometimes said to require that citizens have equal chances to influence political outcomes. Since the realization of citizenship is supposed to be an accomplishment of liberal democracies, it might seem

that that achievement requires satisfaction or approximation of this condition of democratic equality. This, in turn, might be thought to suggest an account of realized citizenship according to which citizens fully realize their citizenship only if each enjoys an equal chance of influencing political outcomes and each individual realizes her citizenship to the extent that her chance of influencing outcomes approaches what it would be if all had equal chances. But this characterization ignores the subjective condition and so ignores an important condition of realized citizenship as I understand it. Moreover, it makes the extent to which someone realizes her citizenship dependent upon the extent to which others do. This makes even gross, qualitative assessments of realized citizenship dependent upon information that would be very difficult to obtain. A more usable characterization of realized citizenship is that it is a measure of absolute access to resources. These include the psychological resources of which I spoke above. They also include the other resources needed to take advantage of legally guaranteed opportunities to participate in political decision-making: information, skills, networks and financial resources.

Realized citizenship is not the same as *active* citizenship. Someone may satisfy the subjective and objective requirements of realized citizenship, yet be politically inactive. But though realized citizenship and active citizenship are different, they often have a common cause. This is because the only or the best ways to provide someone with access to information and political networks, for example, and to foster her sense of herself as a citizen, may be to provide her with those resources and to encourage her to participate. Thus it may be that the only or the best way to promote realized citizenship is to promote active citizenship. Nonetheless I want to maintain that realized citizenship is the more fundamental notion in this sense. Part of what makes the encouragement of active citizenship valuable is that it is the encouragement of realized citizenship.

Realized citizenship is not the same as *good* citizenship, if by “good citizenship” is meant a disposition to promote the common good or to advance justice. Clearly someone can have a vivid sense of herself as a citizen but use her resources to advance self-, group- or class-interested aims, even when these are contrary to the demands of justice. Nor is realized citizenship to be explained in terms of good citizenship in the sense in which I discussed it at the end of the introduction, as including a disposition to participate in public discussion in the right way or to vote on the right grounds. This is not simply because someone can realize her citizenship while being mistaken about what norms of argument good

citizenship require. It is because norms of argument purport to express role-specific duties. What those duties are depends, I argue, upon the conditions of realized citizenship and not the other way around.

It might seem clear enough that realized citizenship as I have described it is valuable and that the achievement of realized citizenship by large numbers of citizens is a great accomplishment for a democracy. I do not, however, want to take its value for granted. Realized citizenship is one element of what I shall call *full participation* in one's society. Indeed in my own view it is the value of full participation which accounts for the value of realized citizenship. Once we see this and see why realized citizenship is valuable, we will be in a better position to see why realized citizenship is an achievement and what churches and religious organizations contribute to it. Introducing the notion of full participation, and the notion of participation *simpliciter*, also lays the groundwork for the argument that religion can make valuable contributions to public debate. Some of its most valuable contributions, I shall maintain, are arguments about who should be a full participant, and about what rights, privileges and entitlements participation and full participation in a society should confer. One difficulty with the line of thought I want to pursue is that the concepts of participation and full participation are not part of the standard conceptual repertoire of political theory. To show that, appearances notwithstanding, these concepts are politically important and theoretically illuminating, it is useful to distinguish the concepts of participation and full participation from various conceptions of them.²

PARTICIPATION AND FULL PARTICIPATION

It is sometimes said that a *concept* is given by the meaning of the term which denotes it, while *conceptions* are given by different standards for the term's application. Thus the concept of justice is said to be given by the meaning of the term *justice*, while different conceptions of justice are given by different normative principles for deciding whether states of affairs are just. Unfortunately, explaining the distinction between concepts and conceptions by appeal to linguistic meaning raises problems and questions in the philosophy of language that it is better to avoid. I shall therefore think of conceptions, in the usual way, as given by different standards for applying the term in question. In the case of participation and full participation, these standards are of two sorts. Because different

² The distinction between concepts and conceptions is found in John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 1971), p. 5f.

categories of participant receive different benefits, these standards determine who is in each category, including the category of full participant, and what set of benefits, responsibilities, entitlements and recognition go with each. Different *conceptions* of participant are therefore given by different sets of these standards. The *concept* of participation, I shall assume, is what is presupposed by disagreements about which conception is the right one. As I suggest below, the fact that people adhere to different conceptions of full participation explains certain aspects of political history, and the presence and persistence of certain political controversies. These explanations presuppose that there is a shared concept about whose application contesting parties disagree. This is the concept of full participation.³ In the remainder of this section, I shall give an initial characterization of its content by contrasting it with participation. I shall then defend three claims about it which will, I hope, make its content and importance more clear.

Any modern liberal democracy has a richly varied economic, cultural, political and associational life. I do not want to exaggerate the unity of liberal democracies, but I shall assume that these spheres of life hang together sufficiently within contemporary nation-states that there are societies which are picked out by national political divisions. Thus I assume that it makes sense to distinguish American society from French, British, German or Brazilian society. Society, as I am using the term here, is comprised of all the activities, institutions and practices which comprise national life. Thus it includes not only economic life and political life, but what is commonly called “civil society” as well. It is society in this broad sense, rather than political or economic life alone, that participants participate in. To get some sense of what it is to be a full participant, it is helpful to look at a couple of things that might be meant by calling someone a participant in his society.

(a) Participation of one sort is common to everyone, or very nearly everyone, in a society. Each society generates what is commonly called a “social product,” the set of available goods which exceeds the sum individuals in a society could have produced on their own. Some of these goods are common goods and others are not. They include the material and economic goods which result from collective effort. They include political goods like rights, liberties, collective security, and the benefits which follow from solving assurance and coordination problems. They include goods of culture, leisure and association, including the goods

³ Rawls explains the concept of justice by appeal to the social role of conceptions at *ibid.*, p. 6; he explains the concept by appeal to the meaning of justice at *Political Liberalism*, p. 14, note 15.

of friendship. Participation in the first sense has two conditions. First, someone who participates *contributes* to the social product. This contribution can and typically does assume a number of forms. Someone can contribute to the social product by joining and helping to sustain associations, by her economic activity, by even minimal political participation. Second, someone who participates in this sense *partakes* of the social product. She benefits from the goods made possible by social life. Thus to call someone a participant in this first sense is merely to say that he partakes of and contributes to the social product. Let us call what she does “mere participation.”

Mere participation is a broader notion than cooperation in this sense: people can be mere participants in a society even if they are not engaged in social cooperation. Someone who cooperates with others consciously and voluntarily coordinates her plans with others, or acts from rules which coordinate her activities with those of others. Someone can participate even if she is incapable of cooperation, like children and the severely mentally disabled, or even if the voluntariness of her participation is in question, like a prisoner's. Children, the severely disabled and prisoners can contribute to the social product by entering into the relational life of their society. Those whose social position relative to others is so unequal that it is inappropriate to describe their efforts as cooperative can also participate in this sense.

(b) The term *participant* can also be used to ascribe a certain standing or social-cum-moral status to people in virtue of what I have called their “mere participation” in society. This status carries with it entitlements and responsibilities. When we say that someone is a participant in this sense, what we have in mind is that she is *entitled* to contribute to and partake of the social product in morally appropriate ways, and that she ought to be acknowledged by others as a person who enjoys that standing. Used this way, “participant” is a status term. Taking it as one adds a third condition – a recognition condition – to the two conditions of mere participation. It also adds an evaluative element, that of moral appropriateness, to the contribution and partaking conditions. Someone who has the status of participant should contribute to and is entitled to partake of the social product in morally appropriate ways. Thus in calling someone a participant, we can assert that she is entitled to certain rights and privileges, that she has certain responsibilities toward her society, and that she deserves certain forms of respect from government and in civil society. In what follows I shall use the term “participant” in this second sense.

Not all who have the status of participant are legally or politically equal. Some rights and privileges are reserved for adults, or for those who are legally citizens. A society's participants include those who are entitled to these rights and privileges, as well as children, refugees, stateless persons, prisoners, legal and illegal immigrants and those too severely mentally disabled or disturbed to exercise the rights and privileges of sane, competent adults. The status of participant may seem too inclusive. Yet this inclusiveness is why I begin with the category of participant rather than with the more commonly used categories of "free and equal citizens" or "persons capable of social cooperation." Since I regard citizenship as an achievement, it is important for my purposes to ask how people come effectively to identify with their citizenship. Beginning with the assumption that people are free and equal citizens or are capable of cooperation can prevent us from asking this question because these descriptions can presuppose that the requisite view of themselves is already in place. Furthermore, every society includes large numbers of people who lack the capacity for or status of citizenship, either temporarily or permanently. Their presence occasions political debate about what rights, resources and opportunities they are to be accorded. These are debates, I suggest, to which religion can make important contributions.

(c) Some participants in a society are *full* participants. Like "participant," the term "full participant" is a status term. Like the status ascribed by "participant," that ascribed by "full participant" has three conditions: a contribution condition, a partaking condition, and a recognition condition. There are duties to, and responsibilities and opportunities for, contributing to society which are appropriate to those who have the status of full participant. There are also rights, liberties, entitlements and privileges which are appropriate to full participants. For example, in a liberal democracy full participants are citizens in the Aristotelian sense. They are entitled to vote and to seek and hold political office. Thus the status of full participation is opposed to minority of age, to alienage, bondage, statelessness and disenfranchisement. But it is opposed to second-class citizenship as well. The term "full participant" is used to underline this, for I use the term "*full* participant" to emphasize that this is the highest status a democratic society can publicly bestow and that each person who has this status is as much a participant as anyone else who has it. Furthermore, according to some views, those who are entitled to full participation as I understand it are those who freely engage in, or are capable of freely engaging in, social cooperation. Full participants

are therefore free and, by important measures, equals. Finally, this status ought to be acknowledged by others. Those who have the status of full participant are therefore entitled to be treated or respected as free equals by other full participants. This recognition should be accorded in political and economic life, and in important interactions within civil society as well.

When we ask about what benefits, burdens and conduct should be associated with a valued status, we can ask about what someone who enjoys that status has a right to or is entitled to, but our inquiry usually raises other questions as well. A valued status is typically thought to be a status with dignity. Indeed this is why those who hold the status should be recognized as holding it, for to accord someone recognition is to treat her as someone with dignity. Because a valued status confers dignity, some things are befitting persons of that status while others are beneath them. And so we can ask what privileges, burdens or standard of living are congruent with that dignity or befit someone who has that status. Because the status of participant in a liberal democracy is a valued status, it is natural to ask what rights, privileges or conditions of material life befit someone who is a participant of such a society or are worthy of someone who is a participant. And it is natural for us to criticize a democratic society in which many live in want for failing to address living conditions that are beneath the dignity of free and equal citizens. Questions about what benefits should accompany participation are therefore questions which typically require us to reason about a wide range of moral values – not only the values of liberty and equality, but also those of dignity, worth, and moral fittingness as well. I argue later that one of the ways religion can contribute to public deliberation is by bringing rich interpretations of those values to bear on questions about what is owed to participants.

My characterization of participation and full participation may seem worryingly broad, for it is unclear who occupies them or what each status confers. The breadth is, however, essential, for participation and full participation are contested concepts.⁴ Too much fixity would not allow for the range of positions taken in the contests.

I have distinguished full participation from other sorts of participation because the status of full participant is particularly important in democratic theory and practice. I now want to make plausible three claims about the status of full participant in liberal democratic societies.

⁴ Whether they are “essentially contested concepts” in the sense of MacIntyre is a question I leave aside; see Alasdair MacIntyre, “On the Essential Contestability of Some Social Concepts,” *Ethics* 89 (1973): 1–9.

- (1.1) The concept of full participation is widely held in liberal democracies and being a full participant of society is highly valued by citizens.
- (1.2) The standards of full participation are politically contested. That is, which conception of full participation is correct or is the most reasonable, is a subject of disagreements which are played out in politics.
- (1.3) The extension of full participation to everyone who should enjoy it, so that they are and know they are full participants in their society, is a great social and political achievement.

Establishing the first and second of these claims shows how much political debate concerns participation and full participation, and raises questions about how such debates should be settled. This, in turn, makes it possible to show what churches contribute to the debate. Establishing the third makes it possible to show that churches make valuable contributions to liberal democracy by promoting an important element of full participation: realized citizenship.

THE ARGUMENT FOR (1.1)

Conclusively establishing (1.1) would take a great deal of historical, sociological and cross-cultural argument that I cannot offer here. I shall have to content myself with establishing its plausibility in a couple of important instances. (1.1) seems to me to be amply verified in the American case by the history of movement politics in the United States. The abolitionist movement, the movement for women's suffrage, the labor movement, the civil rights movement, the feminist movement, the gay rights movement, can all be seen as struggles by members of these groups for a fuller measure of inclusion and recognition in American life. Indeed the political assertiveness of the religious right, the activities of which did much to spark interest in questions about religion and political decision-making, may itself be part of a struggle for recognition.⁵

These movements may have been focused most immediately on obtaining freedom from slavery, the vote, better working conditions, a fuller range of civil and political rights, liberation from the perceived constraints of traditional gender roles and the range of benefits and rights sought by gay and lesbian Americans. Though these may have been the immediate goals, fully to understand these movements requires further reflection on why these goals were sought.

One reason for seeking them was surely that freedom, liberation, better working conditions, and the vote were all valued in their own right.

⁵ See Justin Watson, *The Christian Coalition: Dreams of Restoration, Demands for Recognition* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997).

Another was that achieving these goals secured something of great instrumental value. In the case of suffrage movements for African-Americans and women, success meant obtaining the means for protecting and securing other goods through adequate political representation. But it is also plausible that those who joined in movement politics sought the goals they did because they believed that decent working conditions, freedom and the vote were things that befitted their dignity as individuals and as citizens. Groups deprived of them were relegated to second-class status and denied a badge of their dignity. Deprivation, they thought, indicated that second-class status was the status others thought members of their group deserved. Thus groups sought these things because without them they would not feel as if they were regarded as worthy of full inclusion in American life. The sense of being regarded as worthy of full inclusion is what the recognition condition of full participation is meant to capture. A condition of being a full participant is being recognized as an equal by those whom one regards as full participants. This is part of the aim of movement politics. Claiming that the notion of full participation is widely held and that the status of full participation is highly valued thus helps to explain important movements in American political history.⁶

To turn to a second case, T. H. Marshall famously outlined a developmental history of British citizenship according to which citizenship in Britain came to confer a greater array of rights and benefits from the seventeenth to the twentieth century and was extended to ever more British subjects.⁷ What drove the development was, Marshall thought, political pressure to achieve what he called “full membership” for everyone. He did not distinguish the concept of full membership from various conceptions of it, nor did he distinguish full from partial membership in British society as I have distinguished participation from full participation. Still, I believe that what Marshall meant by “full membership” is roughly what I mean by “full participation.” I also believe he thought that the notion of full membership was a contested one and that the political contests which resulted in the expansion of full membership were contests about what conception ought to determine the distribution of rights and privileges to British subjects. His history of the expansion of membership, though extremely sketchy, is interesting and not implausible. What

⁶ In this paragraph I follow the guiding idea of Judith Shklar, *American Citizenship: the Quest for Inclusion* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991).

⁷ See the title chapter of T. H. Marshall, *Citizenship and Social Class and Other Essays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1950), p. 8. For an introduction to Marshall's thought I am enormously indebted to Jeremy Waldron, “Social Rights and the Welfare Provision,” in his *Liberal Rights*, pp. 271–308.

matters for present purposes is that the notion which answers to full participation can play the explanatory role it does in Marshall's history, as full participation can play the role I assigned it in American political history, only if the concept is widely shared and the status of full participation is highly valued. That is, it can play that role only if (1.1) is true.

The truth of (1.1) should not be surprising. In their public documents and in their political rhetoric, liberal democracies stress that they are societies in which everyone can participate on a footing of equality. They thus hold out the promise of full participation for all citizens and emphasize its value. They are surely right to emphasize the value of being a full participant, for being a full participant in one's society is a very great good. So, too, is having a well-founded sense of one's full participation, a sense of one's full participation that is not based on illusion, misperception or false consciousness. This is because all of us live, at least to some extent, in the eyes of others. How we think they view us affects how we think of ourselves. How we think of ourselves, in turn, conditions our ability to form, value and proceed with our plans. If others view us and treat us as full participants in society, as equals worthy of respect, this helps us to carry on with confidence, and without resentment of our society or alienation from it. It is especially important for citizens of liberal democracies to have a well-founded sense of their full participation. These, I have suggested, are societies which seem to promise full participation to all citizens. People who do not have a status they have been led to believe they would and should enjoy are likely to experience the sentiments that accompany frustrated expectations. These sentiments, if sufficiently intense, will deform their plans and their views of themselves.

THE ARGUMENT FOR (1.2)

That the standards of full participation are politically contested – that (1.2) is true – is borne out by the same evidence that shows the concept of full participation is widely shared: the history of movement politics. These movements encountered opposition, and indeed had to be pursued by movements in the first place, precisely because of deep disagreement about what the status of full participation should confer and about who should enjoy that status. That these movements were *political* movements as well as social ones shows that the disagreements about full participation were played out in politics.

The truth of (1.2) is also suggested by the fact that some contemporary political contests can helpfully be described as contests about what “full

participant” ought to confer. I cannot show this in detail, but it seems plausible that the debate about abortion rights can be seen as a debate about whether women’s full inclusion in society requires that they have the right to terminate their pregnancies. This seems especially apparent in debates about whether abortion is a requirement of women’s political equality, rather than of their liberty or privacy. For the argument that reproductive rights are conditions of women’s equality raises questions about just what is to be equalized. Pointing to the unequal burdens of child-bearing is not a sufficient answer, since it would still have to be shown exactly what these burdens impede or prevent women from doing. The answer offered by proponents of the equality argument – by, for example, Justices Souter, O’Connor and Kennedy in their opinion in *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*⁸ – is that women need reproductive rights in order to participate in economic, political and social life as the equals of men. Since the men in question are full participants, their answer is that women need reproductive rights to be full participants in their society. Some debates about whether society should guarantee full employment can, I believe, be seen as debates about whether full participation requires that everyone has the opportunity to participate in the economy by having meaningful work. Debates about welfare reform can be seen, in part, as debates about whether the dignity of citizenship is compatible with dependence upon a welfare state on the one hand, or with lives of abject poverty on the other. They are, therefore, debates about what full participation ought to confer.

Political contests about what the status of full participant ought to confer and about who ought to enjoy that status are only to be expected. One obvious reason for this is that a claim to full participation is a claim upon resources. For example, the debate about whether citizens ought to be guaranteed some minimal economic support and what the minimum should be is a debate about scarce fiscal resources. When the allocation of scarce but valued resources is at stake, it is natural that people will disagree. Another obvious reason is that a group’s demand for full participation for its members is a demand to be admitted to a status that may be jealously guarded by those who already enjoy it. They may be threatened by the prospect of extending that status to those they are accustomed to regarding as their social or political inferiors. There is still another reason why political contests about full participation are to be expected. I want to examine it at somewhat greater length. Doing so will bring to light the need for decision procedures which satisfy certain

⁸ See 505 US 833, pp. 855–56.

conditions I shall identify in the next chapter. After identifying them, I shall argue that churches and religious organizations help to bring it about that some of these conditions are satisfied.

The questions of who should be admitted to the status of full participant and what benefits full participation ought to confer are moral questions. Attempts to answer them will be affected by all the diversity and disagreement that characterize any pressing moral debate in a pluralistic society. Some of these disagreements will be political disagreements, disagreements which are played out in politics. The presence of these disagreements has important consequences. To show what they are, I need to say something more about them and about how they are appropriately settled. Since these disagreements are often disagreements about what expectations of and demands on the state are to be satisfied, let me begin by saying something about the formation of expectations and their consequences for political disagreement.

A society can create expectations that its citizens will enjoy certain rights and privileges or a certain level of material well-being, and it can lead them to associate a certain level of well-being with the minimum necessary for living like a full participant. It can do so by publicly promulgating ideals of political and social equality. A society with a market economy can also form its citizens' expectations by the driving force of consumer capitalism: the continual creation and manipulation of needs, including basic needs. Furthermore, the processes by which a society forms expectations can *raise* them, so that people associate full participation in their society with continual access to the benefits of changing technology, with increasing liberty or with an ever higher level of material well-being.⁹ A society's overall economic productivity may increase dramatically enough that people expect more than what was once an acceptable minimum income, both in absolute terms and as a percentage of what others earn.

The phenomenon of changing – and rising – expectations helps to show why *political* contests about the benefits of full participation are to be expected. It is natural for citizens who acquire new expectations about what the status of full participant ought to confer to expect the state to satisfy some of them. They can be expected to advance their claims in

⁹ See Robert H. Frank, "Why Living in a Rich Society Makes Us Feel Poor," *New York Times Magazine*, October 15, 2000. Frank's essay raises the very interesting question of whether material wellbeing, as measured in income and wealth, should be assessed in absolute or relative terms. On this, see Jeremy Waldron, "John Rawls and the Social Minimum", *Liberal Rights*, pp. 250–70 and Paul J. Weithman, "Waldron on Political Legitimacy and the Social Minimum," *Philosophical Quarterly* 45 (1995): 218–24.

politics, joining movements or pressing elected officials to satisfy them. But not everyone will accept those claims as worthy of satisfaction. Political conflict will be the result. The connection between rising expectations and political contests about full participation is especially clear when expectations change as a result of political debate itself. This can happen when claims about what the status of full participant ought to confer – universal health care, a decent minimum wage or guaranteed employment, for example – are advanced by a prominent political figure whose electoral fortunes are tied to the success of his proposals. Political disagreements about full participation can also be disagreements about who should enjoy the status of full participant. Immigrants, resident aliens or guest workers may come to believe that they should be extended all or many of the benefits of full participation. They may press their own case for political changes by demonstrating or striking, or their cause may be taken up by ordinary citizens, by secondary associations and by politicians who are sympathetic to their cause.

Thus political disagreements about full participation will be continual because of continually changing expectations. These changes can be brought about by new ideas about full participation which gain currency in civil society and which eventually make their way into political debate, by technological innovation which promises dramatic improvement in the quality of life, by changing demographic conditions such as a rapidly aging population or a large influx of immigrants, or by increasing familiarity with benefits provided by other welfare states. Once we appreciate the role of changing expectations in shaping the political agenda, the truth of (1.2) – the claim that standards of full participation are politically contested – should not be surprising.

How are these contests to be resolved? A politically legitimate solution to these contests requires those who are responsible for political decision-making to determine which expectations of the state are legitimate and how weighty a claim those who hold legitimate expectations is to their satisfaction. The problem is to make these determinations without giving too much weight to expectations that are based on either extravagant or adaptive preferences,¹⁰ and to make them in such a way that those affected can be assured that neither sort of expectation was unduly weighted. At the minimum, this requires that the determinations be made on the basis of informed political debate in which the interests of citizens are adequately represented. In the next chapter, I lay down

¹⁰ For the notion of adaptive preferences, see Jon Elster, *Sour Grapes: Studies in the Subversion of Rationality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp. 109–40.

some conditions of political debate, conditions that must be satisfied if debate is to meet this minimum requirement.

When I introduced the notion of full participation, I said that the notion is important to liberal democratic theory and practice. In fact, it might be argued, the importance liberal democratic theories attach to full participation tells against my claim that religious arguments about the requirements of full participation are useful. Liberal democratic theories regard full participation as so important and have devoted so much attention to it, it might be said, that they have developed all the normative resources necessary to deliberate about fundamental political questions bearing on full participation. Appeals to religious reasons and arguments are unnecessary.

The plausibility of this claim is one of the reasons the standard approach to questions about religion and political decision-making seems so compelling. According to that approach, deliberations about fundamental political questions are to be conducted and settled by appeal to accessible reasons. What reasons are accessible is a philosophical question, one to be answered by liberal democratic theories. And, it might be said, it is one liberal democratic theorists have answered. Accessible reasons are identified in their extensive and nuanced discussions of autonomy, equality, rights, liberties, social cooperation and well-being. This set of reasons is sufficient for settling fundamental questions about full participation because full participants are properly regarded as free and equal bearers of rights, capable of autonomy and social cooperation. Thus John Rawls says that political conceptions of justice like justice as fairness should be “complete.” “This means,” he says, “that the values specified by that conception can be suitably balanced or combined or otherwise united, as the case may be, so that those values alone give a reasonable public answer to all, or to nearly all, questions involving the constitutional essentials and basic questions of justice.”¹¹

But even if this line of argument is correct, it is not clear that liberal democratic theories provide the resources needed to deliberate about those who either are not full participants in society or who never can be.¹² These are people who either temporarily or permanently lack the capacity for autonomy, or who face disabilities, whether legal or intellectual, which keep them from full participation. They include children and the

¹¹ Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, p. 225.

¹² See Allen Buchanan, “Justice as Reciprocity and Subject-Centered Justice,” *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 19 (1990): 227–53.

severely disabled. They also include refugees, and legal and illegal immigrants, all of whose continued presence in liberal democracies is assured by the increasing ease of international travel, the increasing permeability of national borders and the political and economic instability of regimes around the world. I shall argue that religious political argument makes especially valuable contributions to public deliberations about those who are participants but not full participants.

THE ARGUMENT FOR (1.3)

The truth of (1.3) and the magnitude of the accomplishment it asserts can best be appreciated by looking at what the status of full participant in a liberal democracy ought to confer and at how someone's sense of her own full participant can be engendered. To be a full participant of a society, I said earlier, is to contribute to and to partake in its life and to be accorded a certain status in political life, economic life and in civil society. The attempt to specify full participation any further seems to face a problem. Full participation is a fluid and contested notion. It might therefore seem misguided to try pinning down what full participation requires with any precision. But though the requirements of full participation are subject to political contestation, something more specific can be said about them. Seeing what more can be said enables us to see that what I called "realized citizenship" is an especially important element of full participation. Establishing this, in turn, lays the groundwork for the argument that churches contribute to the achievement of full participation by promoting realized citizenship.

Any modern liberal society, I stressed, has a richly varied economic, educational, cultural, associational and political life. While these might not add up to a common project with a single end, they hang together sufficiently that they can be said to constitute a national form of life which can be marked off from those of other nation-states. Full participation in the society of a modern liberal nation-state, I want to suggest, is the full and secure integration into the national life. Despite deep disagreements, there are prerequisites for integration into that life that are valued as minimal requirements of full participation. At minimum, someone who can participate in the life of a liberal society securely must enjoy legal rights and protections, and must be able to seek redress in the legal and criminal court for wrongs done to her. She must be able exercise some measure of control over her society's political life by helping to hold public officials accountable. She must be able to receive an education.

If she is physically and mentally able to participate in economic life, she must be able to earn a living and contribute to economic life through meaningful work. If someone is to be integrated into her society's life, these opportunities cannot exist merely in theory or on paper. Rather, they must be *realistically available*. To have these goods realistically available – to have them, as it were, within one's reach – is required if one is to be a full participant of one's society.

This interpretation of full participation has the advantage of allowing us to distinguish two things which seem importantly different: *full* participation and *active* participation. As I mentioned when I introduced the term *full participant*, it refers to a status in one's society. There are appropriate and inappropriate ways for those who have that status to contribute to and partake of the social product. Still, it seems intuitively plausible that someone can have that status without being more than minimally active in her society's economic life or civil society, and without being at all active in its political life. Explaining full participation by reference to realistically available opportunities, rather than by reference to opportunities of which someone has availed herself or of which she has taken advantage, enables us to accommodate the intuition.

Being able to participate fully in the life of one's society is an important element of well-being. The *sense* that one can participate fully and that others recognize one as a person entitled to full participation is an important ingredient of *subjective* well-being, well-being as it seems from the inside. It can normally be expected to have psychological consequences. Thus when someone knows even implicitly that she can participate fully in her society's economic, political and educational life she will normally, as John Rawls has argued, reciprocate.¹³ She will develop some sense of allegiance to the society that holds out those opportunities, give it her support and loyalty and affirm her membership in it. In this way she will come tacitly to identify with her status as full participant. Furthermore, the provision of full participation is not a matter on which a society can be neutral. If it does not take steps to insure that certain economic, educational and political opportunities are available to everyone, this will be well known. In the face of the obviously unredressed lack of realistically available opportunities, society will seem to prefer those who have the opportunities to those who do not. Its action – or rather, its inaction – will drive home and publicly sanction the fact that some are full participants and others are not. This, in turn, can be expected to engender a sense of alienation.

¹³ See Rawls, *Theory*, pp. 472ff., 494ff.

The concept of full participation is, as I have stressed, a contested one. This way of understanding full participation is still incompletely specified, open to political contest and amenable to development through social and political debate and decision-making. It leaves open, for example, what economic, educational and social opportunities are requirements of full participation. Thus we can debate whether everyone should be guaranteed meaningful employment, whether employers should provide domestic partnership benefits to unmarried and homosexual couples, or whether a college education should now be an entitlement.¹⁴ It leaves open questions about who is owed the status of full participant and about how to treat those who are temporarily or permanently incapable of enjoying it. Thus we can ask whether the public education of children should be education for autonomy, and how the developmentally disabled are to be treated. It leaves open what the criteria of realistic availability are. Thus we can debate whether preferential hiring and affirmative action programs are necessary if minorities and women are to be full participants. It leaves open the question of whether a society can be described as “democratic” when large numbers of people are not full participants or feel alienated from their society. Finally, it leaves open questions about what the role of the state is in extending full participation.

Some theorists of democracy and some political actors deny that a democratic society has any compelling interest in removing even great inequalities of political, economic or educational opportunity. Others have more demanding views of democracy. T. H. Marshall, for example, seems to have thought that the promise of democracy is the promise of full participation for everyone who has the legal status of citizen. He thought that there could be certain deep and enduring inequalities among full participants; inequalities of class are what interested him most. Nonetheless he intimates that the equality democracy promises is equality of a certain legal and social status. It is the equality that comes with full participation in, and having a sense of one’s full participation in, one’s society. In the face of the obstacles posed by economically differentiated, multiracial and multiethnic societies, making every citizen a full participant – according every citizen the realistic opportunity to participate in her society’s economic, political, cultural, and educational life – would, as (1.3) asserts, be an enormous social and political achievement.¹⁵

¹⁴ See Todd S. Purdum, “California enacts expensive college aid program,” *New York Times*, September 12, 2000.

¹⁵ Indeed Hannah Arendt seems to have thought it impossible. See Jean Cohen, “Rights, Citizenship and the Modern Form of the Social: Dilemmas of Arendtian Republicanism,” *Constellations* 3 (1996): 164–89, at 167.

Given the power of the forces likely to be arrayed against it, it would be a precarious one as well. Yet it is one to which democratic societies have good reason to aspire, at least on moderately robust understandings of democracy.

For present purposes I shall assume such an understanding of democracy. I shall assume, that is, that liberal democratic societies have a strong interest in according all their sane, competent adult citizens the status of full participant. Furthermore, I assume that this is an interest they have by virtue of their commitment to liberal democracy. That commitment provides good reason to regard full participation by citizens, not just as highly valued by them – as (1.1) asserts – but also as valuable. Thus if a commitment to democracy provides good reason to regard full participation by citizens as valuable, it follows that their realized citizenship is as well. If this is so and if churches contribute to or promote realized citizenship, then they make valuable contributions to liberal democracy.

THE ACHIEVEMENT OF REALIZED CITIZENSHIP

Full participation, I have suggested, requires that the opportunity to participate in various spheres of life be realistically available. Of these opportunities, the opportunities to participate in political life – to exercise citizenship in the Aristotelian sense – have a special place. And of the opportunities associated with participation in political life, those opened by the right to vote are particularly important. In modern democracies it is those who have the right to vote who are eligible for full participation, whether or not they ever cast a ballot. This is because many educational and economic opportunities are legally open only to those who have this status, or who will have it automatically when they come of age. Possession of this legal status therefore makes it possible for them to gain access to other opportunities associated with the status of full participant. This status also helps people protect their access to these opportunities against government interference or unfavorable legislation. By voting or withholding their votes and by joining with others who take to the streets in protest, they can exercise their status as people whose voices must be heard by those in power. This requires that the opportunities to vote, to petition government officials and to protest are realistically available to them.

But the realistic availability of such opportunities for political participation, while necessary, is not sufficient to make someone a full participant. Full participation includes not just realistically available access to

opportunities but also *secure* access. It requires someone to know that those opportunities are hers, that they are realistically available to her and will continue to be so. Thus the secure access to opportunities to participate in the life of one's society also requires that someone knows she can protect her opportunities by holding government officials accountable in these ways and that she has the confidence to do so. Those who can hold public officials accountable must have a sense of themselves, perhaps an implicit sense of themselves, as persons with this status. They must, that is, realize their citizenship.

The importance of realized citizenship is especially evident when we appreciate one of the conclusions I reached in the last section. There I argued that the legitimate resolution of political conflicts about the rights, privileges and entitlements of participation requires informed public debate. Whether public deliberation is conducted by citizens themselves or by elected officials, the interests of citizens must be adequately represented. Their interests will be adequately represented only if citizens, or a critical mass of them, either participate in politics themselves or hold officials accountable for taking due account of their views and legitimate expectations. Citizens will participate or hold officials accountable only if they have realistically available opportunities to take part in politics, to petition officials, to reelect them or vote them out of office and to make themselves heard. The legitimate solution of political conflicts about participation and full participation therefore requires that members of society realize their citizenship.

As I noted at the beginning of this chapter, realized citizenship requires that people effectively identify with their citizenship. Bringing about this mass self-identification is an important condition of extending the status of full participant to every citizen. It is often lamented that citizens of modern democracies embrace their rights but not their responsibilities. What truth there is to the lament should not blind us to an important fact. The extent to which people think of themselves as bearers of rights, worthy of being treated as such by a society and government which are in some sense theirs, is itself a signal accomplishment of modern society. It requires the regular transmission of a great deal of information about constitutionalism, democracy and citizenship. It also requires the transmission of attitudes toward symbols, icons and myths that are central to political culture.¹⁶ When this transmission is successful, citizens acquire

¹⁶ On this important point, see the sources cited at note 34 of Will Kymlicka and Wayne Norman, "Return of the Citizen: a Survey of Recent Work on Citizenship Theory," *Ethics* 104 (1994): 352–81.

a working knowledge of their society's commitment to honoring rights, liberties and democratic political outcomes. The successful transmission of this knowledge and culture, and the self-identification that results, are important parts of what I meant earlier when I said that citizenship is an achievement. The value of the achievement depends, I suggested, upon the value of being a full participant and of the opportunities and the recognition which come with possession of that status.

How is this achievement won? How are large numbers of people brought effectively to identify with their citizenship? I suggested earlier that a sense of full participation is an important component of subjective well-being. Liberal democratic government, I am supposing, has interests in providing some of the conditions of full participation and in insuring that social conditions are in place for knowing that those conditions are satisfied. Government certainly has interests in treating those who enjoy the legal status of citizenship as voters and constituents, in guaranteeing that their rights to vote are not infringed upon, that their votes are not unjustly diluted, and that they can petition officials with their grievances. When it is known that government acts on these interests, it affects the ways citizens think of themselves.

But government action is not the only mechanism by which people develop a sense of themselves as citizens. The formation of citizens takes place in civil society as well. In the contemporary United States, for example, much of the formation of citizens is effected through people's involvement in churches and religious organizations. There is ample empirical evidence to show that many people become interested in politics, informed about it and active in it through their churches. Churches convey political information to their congregants, and convey the sense that liberal democratic government is legitimate and is responsive to voters. They also convey the psychological concomitants of citizenship, including senses of empowerment and self-worth. This is especially so for the poor and for minorities. Churches can also foster attitudes toward the symbols and myths which are central to a nation's political culture. In these ways, churches make important contributions to many people's sense of themselves as citizens. They therefore make important contributions to many people's sense of themselves as full participants in their society.

As a consequence, there are often inferential and motivational links between people's political positions and their religious views. The political positions they adopt may be those favored by their churches. The arguments for those positions that come to them most readily may be those

they have learned there. These may include religious or natural law arguments for policy positions on abortion, physician-assisted suicide, domestic partnership, the conduct of war, economic questions and the death penalty.¹⁷ Citizens may come to regard voting as a religious duty and may develop religious reasons for being politically active. They may think of their citizenship and its duties in connection with their society's common good, a good they conceive in terms drawn from their religious tradition. Thus they may think of themselves as bearing part of a collective responsibility for attaining ends like the respect for God-given rights or for certain central precepts of the natural law. When they identify with their citizenship, the self-identification may be with a view to citizenship described in religious terms. At times when the proper place of religion in political decision-making is the subject of intense debate, as it is at present, they may also acquire views about the propriety of relying on their religious convictions in politics. All this is a natural consequence of the social mechanisms by which people realize their citizenship. Hence it is a consequence of the ways in which they come to realize one of the most important conditions of full participation in their society.

I assumed for purposes of argument that liberal democracy provides good reason to value full participation. This assumption made it possible for me to argue that realized citizenship is valuable. The next chapter presents empirical data on the contributions churches make to realized citizenship. If my assumption about the value of full participation is plausible, then those who are committed to liberal democracy would have reason to value the contributions churches make. In my view, the assumption is correct. Nonetheless, in the third chapter I will dispense with that assumption. There I will defend the conclusions of chapter 2 on the basis of weaker claims drawn from various theories of democracy. I have also tried to show that important political debates are debates about what participation and full participation should confer. Seeing questions about participation and full participation as the subject matter of political debate helps us to see how churches contribute to that debate. Or so I shall argue.

¹⁷ On abortion and assisted suicide, see for example Pope John Paul II and the American Catholic Bishops, *Life Issues and Political Responsibility* (New Hope, KY: Catholics United for Life, 2000). On the death penalty, see for example *Talking About the Death Penalty* (Indianapolis: Indiana Catholic Conference, 2000). I have chosen these two publications from many possible examples.