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Critical Reflection and the Limits of Parental Authority

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ABSTRACT *In modern pluralist societies, the meaning and value of individual autonomy is highly contested. Typically, some religious groups deny the ideal of leading a self-directed life and regard strict obedience to God's commands as the primary goal of child education. This article pursues the question of whether a liberal state may legitimately interfere with parental authority in order to protect the development of a child's inner capacity for autonomy. It is argued that the ability to critically re-evaluate one's life plan is valuable for the offspring of secular and pious parents alike. Therefore, restrictions on parental rights can be justified within a liberal theoretical framework that is neutral between autonomous and heteronomous conceptions of the good. However, religious parents need not be prepared to call their most important tenets into question; they may foster their children's capacity for critical reflection in other ways. Since the vast majority of religious families meet this requirement, state interventions are rarely warranted.*

1. Introduction

In modern liberal societies, parents are typically granted the right to raise their children in accordance with their own conception of the good. Mainly three reasons can be adduced for conceding parents a privileged position in the upbringing of their children.[1] First, the education of a child is a unique and important experience that plays a central role in the life plans of many people.[2] However, parents will not fully appreciate the relationship to their child if they cannot remain true to their moral or religious convictions. If they have to transmit values they do not share or if they have to conceal their own worldview in order to provide their offspring with a neutral education, they will not (or to a much lesser extent) be able to identify with their educational task.[3] Second, parents typically have strong emotional bonds to their children and possess an intimate knowledge of their particular needs. Thus, entrusting the parents with the education – instead of publicly appointed guardians – is in most cases in the children's best interest. Third, from a liberal perspective, the existence of a plurality of opinions and life schemes has to be accepted as an essential characteristic of a free society.[4] Thus, the state has to refrain from imposing uniform educational standards on families from various cultural and religious backgrounds in order to achieve a more homogenous society.

Although parents usually enjoy wide discretion in the education of their children, their authority is not unrestricted. Basically, within the framework of liberal theory, two types of argument can be presented in order to justify state intervention in family life. On the one hand, one may hold that democratic societies have a crucial interest in the creation of 'good citizens' who support the political institutions and possess specific virtues, such as tolerance and civility. According to this view, the state may take appropriate measures to ensure that children develop the character traits and attitudes a stable democracy

depends on.[5] On the other hand, one may emphasise that parents function as trustees who are obliged to act in their children's best interest until they reach adulthood. If the upbringing negatively affects a child's present or future wellbeing, the parents forfeit their authority and the state may legitimately intervene. Most authors regard – besides the protection of physical integrity – the development of a child's capacity to become an autonomous agent as their key interest. The ability of the future adult to lead an autonomous life crucially depends on two factors: the availability of a sufficient range of options and their inner capacity for making sovereign decisions.

However, the justification of state interference with parental rights that aims at protecting a child's future autonomy faces a serious challenge. In modern pluralist societies, the ideal of leading a reflectively endorsed life is typically not shared by all citizens. Members of religious communities, such as Old Order Amish, ultra-Orthodox Jews, or Quietist Salafists, do not deem the realisation of an autonomous life worthwhile. In their view, strength in faith and strict obedience to God's commands constitute the primary goals of child education. Accordingly, young adults should not learn to see themselves as 'authors' of their lives, who can choose between a variety of different options, but aspire to fulfil their designated roles. In the following, I will examine the question whether, and to what extent, restrictions of the educational authority of religious parents can be vindicated. Although there has been much discussion on the importance of promoting children's future autonomy, the specific requirements that the justification of coercive state policies must meet within a liberal theoretical framework has received relatively little attention. However, state regulations of educational affairs may entail serious encroachments of religious liberties that need to be carefully defended.

Within this article, I cannot deal with all sorts of reasons for state interference with educational rights; in the following, I will exclusively focus on the development of a child's inner capacity for making autonomous decisions. Since I will leave their other interests and society's demand for the creation of democratic citizens out of consideration, the scope of my argument is limited.[6] In the next section, I will first outline the most important characteristics of a person's inner capacity for autonomy and discuss some implications for the religious upbringing of children (Section 2). Thereafter, I will dwell on the schism in modern liberalism between neutralist and perfectionist theories of justification (Section 3). Based on this distinction, I will present an argument for state interference with parent's educational liberties that remains neutral on questions of the good life (Section 4). Finally, I will explore the practical implications of my justification of state policies that intend to protect a child's inner capacity for autonomy. I will demonstrate that – on a neutralist understanding – the state is only allowed to regulate the educational practice of religious parents to a very limited extent (Section 5). In the concluding section, I will briefly summarise the main findings of this article (Section 6).

2. The Inner Capacity for Autonomy

In order to be considered autonomous, persons must meet four requirements: First, they must possess basic mental abilities for reasoning and judgment; second, they must have an adequate range of options; third, they must be capable of evaluating and deciding between given alternatives; and fourth, they must be free from coercion. While the first condition refers to innate faculties and basic social requirements, such as adequate nutrition, the

second and the third factor are importantly influenced by the education a child receives. The range of options between which the future adult can choose greatly depends on the qualifications they acquire during childhood. If parents fail to nurture important competences and prepare their child only for a narrow life perspective, they deprive the child of many opportunities. Moreover, autonomous persons must be able to rationally assess and choose between the options available to them. In the course of education, they have to develop an inner capacity for making well-considered decisions that serve their interests and conform to their values. By contrast, the fourth requirement – freedom from external coercion – relates to the social circumstances under which a decision is made.

In this article, I will exclusively focus on a person's inner capacity for autonomy, which has four characteristics. To begin with, an autonomous person needs a minimum of information about the options between which they can choose. Evidently, if one does not even know about the existence of an alternative, one will not be able to make use of it. Moreover, a rational decision for or against an option is only possible if one has an accurate view of its meaning and consequences. If the information a person has received on an alternative is distorted or misleading, they will not be able to correctly assess its relative benefits.[7] Consequently, if parents are obliged to advance their children's inner capacity for autonomy, they must neither conceal the existence of important options from them nor present these options in a manipulative way. Note, however, that religious parents cannot be blamed for misinforming their children if they take a stand on controversial moral issues. The value conflicts that typically exist in pluralist societies may cause well-founded disagreements that cannot be overcome by reference to empirical facts or an exchange of arguments.[8] Thus, religious parents may explain to their children how they evaluate a given option unless they spread falsehoods. They may, for instance, express the view that divorce is a deep sin but must not state that women have no legal right to end a marriage or that they will be severely punished if they breach their 'marital duties'.

More difficult are cases where religious communities dispute well-founded scientific explanations, such as Darwin's theory of evolution. The adherents of creationism do not reject certain ethical values but question the prevailing scientific understanding of the origin of man. In my opinion, religious parents must be allowed to propagate a non-scientific worldview and to teach their children the central tenets of their faith. In modern pluralist societies, people widely disagree on the concept of truth and the correct modes of knowledge acquisition.[9] A ban on the imparting of beliefs that contradict recognised scientific theories would make many forms of religious education impossible. Besides creationism, one would also have to forbid talking about the virgin birth, the ascension of Christ, and many other principal dogmas. Therefore, the dissemination of metaphysical ideas should not be considered misinformation that undermines the ability to make autonomous choices. What one can demand of religious parents, however, is that they do not deny their children access to scientific theories that are in conflict with their beliefs. If they try to prevent their children from learning about, for example, Darwin's theory of evolution, or present it in a misleading form, they fail to meet their informational requirements. Of course, some religious communities will even see the duty to spread a view that contradicts the Holy Bible as a significant burden.

Second, autonomous persons must have a widely coherent set of goals and values that structure the choices they make. Throughout childhood, they must develop a consistent standpoint enabling them to evaluate the existing options in a sensible way. If they lack a

relatively stable set of preferences and make mostly arbitrary decisions, they will fail to be self-governing.[10] A person who mostly follows their momentary whims cannot be considered the author of their life. Although the life of an autonomous person normally exhibits a certain degree of constancy and consistency, it need not lack any spontaneity. One can deliberately decide against too much scheduling and leave room for fortuities and unplanned activities. Thus, an autonomy-oriented education should support a child with developing a sensible evaluative perspective, allowing them to make rational decisions. However, the goals and values that inform a child's choices may be widely shaped by the conception of the good to which their parents adhere. The need for the development of a coherent standpoint is fully compatible with the imparting of a specific worldview.

Third, autonomous persons must be capable of critically rethinking and, possibly, changing their most important projects and ambitions. The goals and values children adopt during their education form not only the basis of their rational decisions but also a potential object of their choices. Hence, autonomous persons must be able to ponder on their higher-order preferences and to revise, even in a radical way, their previous life plan. Although parents are required to support their child's capacity for critical reflection, they need not refrain from imparting their moral or religious convictions. Indeed, nobody can be wholly self-made and develop their own evaluative standpoint without being influenced by some reference persons. To a certain extent, a person's core beliefs have to be formed by others before they can deliberately alter their aims in life.[11] However, parents must not educate their child in a way that precludes them from questioning their teachings when they have reached maturity. They are not entitled to completely predetermine their offspring's further life by suppressing their capacity for critical reflection.

Finally, autonomous persons must be able to act in accordance with their most important preferences. For instance, somebody who frequently responds to short-term incentives, thereby leaving their higher-order goals out of consideration, is mostly governed by external influences. Likewise, somebody who suffers from irrational anxiety or unfounded compunction may feel unable to realise the options they have rationally chosen. In these cases, psychological obstacles rather than external forces prevent the persons concerned from doing what they deem best. Consequently, an education that aims at fostering children's inner capacity for autonomy should – to a certain extent – enable them to rationally control their immediate desires and feelings.[12] Moreover, parents should not use educational methods that are liable to cause a high level of fear, which may impede a child's capacity to pursue their well-considered goals.

However, parents do not have to refrain from warning their children of perils they consider to be particularly grave. For instance, persons who are very worried about the effects of climate change may greatly stress the dangers of global warming in the educational process. Focusing on the possibility of an environmental disaster may motivate their children to accept a frugal life style without much consumption. Evidently, in a pluralist society people disagree on the nature and severity of the risks one should be aware of. Some religious parents are first of all afraid of incurring God's disapproval while they widely disregard worldly dangers. Therefore, they see a primary educational goal in giving their offspring an understanding of the penalties God may inflict on persons who 'stray from the right path'. Although the vision of a wrathful God who eagerly watches over the strict observance of his commandments is liable to cause fear, it need not be withheld from children. The emphasis on punishment and condemnation only thwarts a person's inner

capacity for autonomy if they are so terrorised that they are not able to act in accordance with their rational deliberations. Thus, some religious parents will be required to radically change their educational methods and to forego practices that expose their children to extreme psychological stress, such as particularly cruel forms of punishment. They have, however, many other options of how to convey their beliefs and warn their children of the consequences of a sinful life.

It may be worth noting that the obligation to support a child's inner capacity for autonomy includes some sort of talent discovery. Liam Shields rightly emphasises that the information a person needs in order to rationally evaluate a given option – my first point above – presupposes sufficient knowledge of their talents.[13] For instance, one may not choose a certain career path because one is unaware of one's potential to pursue it successfully. Thus, parents must not deceive their child about their talents and prospects of success that are related to them. Arguably, they should also give their child the opportunity to try out a variety of activities in order to find out where their talents lie. Of course, parents cannot provide their children with experience in all conceivable fields of action, but inevitably they must make a choice. Thereby they enjoy some discretion and may bring their own preferences to bear, unless they limit the variety of options too much or entirely exclude certain areas, such as the natural sciences.

Moreover, parents only need to give their children an adequate idea of their natural abilities but are not obliged to encourage their development and realisation. Based on their conception of the good, they may have weighty reasons for not appreciating the activities that are connected to the talents concerned. For instance, parents may not be willing to promote their child's potential for becoming a successful computer programmer because they regard modern technologies as a sinful distraction from a pious life. They may try to convince their child of their conception of the good and withhold support for the achievement of secular goals. If the child has the opportunity – especially in school – to figure out where their particular talents lie, they are provided with the necessary information to make well-considered decisions later in life. Here one may object that knowing about one's talents is of little value if parents fail to promote them at an early stage. An adolescent or young adult whose extraordinary aptitude for programming has been ignored may complain that now it is too late to reach a high level of proficiency (and income). Note, however, that parents have to make some decision and cannot avoid the risk of being retrospectively criticised by their offspring. Their child might as well blame them later for allowing them to devote so much time to computer programming although they knew how misguided this occupation is.

3. Two Concepts of Liberalism

In modern pluralist societies, the justification of state measures to protect the development of children's inner capacity for autonomy faces the challenge that not every citizen appreciates a reflectively endorsed life. Typically, members of fundamentalist religious communities regard strict compliance with God's revealed words as the highest value.[14] Accordingly, they do not consider the ability to freely choose between a variety of different options a worthwhile educational goal. The advancement of a capacity for critical reflection that may lead an adolescent to rethink and possibly to reject the religious teachings of their community contradicts their conceptions of the good. This disagreement on

the value of autonomy raises the question of whether a liberal state may legitimately interfere with the educational liberties of fundamentalist parents. Although the state is responsible for the protection of children and for making sure that their basic interests are met, parents are trustees for their children and have considerable discretion in determining how to meet their interests. Fundamentalist parents precisely believe that they act in their children's best interests when preparing them for a secluded life dedicated to the fulfilment of their religious duties.

In modern liberalism, there is a wide divergence between neutralist and perfectionist theories of justification.[15] A neutralist version of modern liberalism has most prominently been defended by John Rawls. According to Rawls, liberal theory should consider the plurality of competing worldviews to be an inevitable and permanent fact of free societies.[16] In his view, even citizens who are open-minded to argument and discussion are often unable to reach an agreement on contentious moral and religious issues. Therefore, political liberalism should accept the fact of pluralism and avoid taking sides with a specific conception of the good. However, a liberal state only has to justify its basic institutions and policies to the adherents of reasonable comprehensive doctrines that embrace some form of tolerance and do not oppose a free society. To qualify as reasonable in Rawls' sense, moral or religious doctrines must meet three requirements: first, they are required to support fair terms of cooperation, provided others are vice versa willing to abide by them; second, they must regard citizens as free and equal; and, third, they have to renounce the use of political power to repress persons who do not share their views.[17]

It has to be stressed that the affirmation of some moral ideal, such as the accomplishment of an autonomous life, is not a necessary condition for being reasonable. Some fundamentalist religious communities who aspire to realise a heteronomous form of life conform with the three requirements mentioned above. In this case, their members qualify as reasonable in the relevant sense and must be addressed in the justification of state policies. Rawls' neutralist theory is based on a rather undemanding interpretation of autonomy that mainly refers to the basic liberties of citizens.[18] His political understanding of autonomy 'must be distinguished from the ethical values of autonomy and individuality, which may apply to the whole of life, both social and individual, as expressed by the comprehensive liberalism of Kant and Mill. Justice as fairness emphasizes this contrast: it affirms political autonomy for all but leaves the weight of ethical autonomy to be decided by citizens severally in light of their comprehensive doctrines'.[19] Consequently, Rawls does not deem a liberal state responsible for actively promoting the ideal of leading an autonomous life.

Rawls' political theory of liberalism subscribes to two interpretations of the idea of state neutrality. First, the vindication of important state institutions and policies should not draw on any specific conception of the good. Thus, neutrality of justification requires giving reasons that can be accepted from the perspective of every reasonable comprehensive doctrine. This implies *inter alia* that the arguments advanced in the process of justification have to accord with the shared value of regarding citizens as being free and equal. Second, a liberal state must not pursue the goal of promoting certain moral or religious teachings while placing others at a disadvantage. Hence, neutrality of aim demands from the state not to design basic institutions or to implement policies with the intention to favour or impair specific conceptions of the good. However, a liberal state cannot guarantee that every reasonable comprehensive

doctrine is equally successful with gaining and binding adherents. The normative principles regulating a liberal society have the effect of making some ways of life more difficult to realise than others. Since citizens may freely decide whether they wish to join or leave the various communities, their relative strength is likely to change over time. Consequently, a liberal state should not strive for neutrality of effect because this ideal is inconsistent with granting basic individual liberties.[20]

The political liberalism suggested by Rawls contrasts with perfectionist theories which explicitly advocate a particular conception of the good.[21] Most prominently, Joseph Raz has argued that liberalism is intrinsically linked to the ideal of leading an autonomous life, which he portrays as follows: 'The autonomous person is a (part) author of his own life. The ideal of personal autonomy is the vision of people controlling, to some degree, their own destiny, fashioning it through successive decisions throughout their lives'.[22] It is important to note that the conception of the good defended by Raz is compatible with a wide range of different life plans. Since the focus of his ideal is on the free and independent choices of a person, it does not prescribe any specific goals or values. However, Raz excludes life plans that are not 'morally acceptable' or 'worthwhile' to pursue.[23] Moreover, his perfectionist version of liberalism rejects autonomy-negating doctrines even if they are reasonable in the sense explicated above. In his view, a liberal state is responsible for enabling every citizen to lead an autonomous life and should not tolerate groups which oppose this ideal.

From Raz's perspective, the permissibility of state educational policies that aim at protecting the development of a child's inner capacity for autonomy is beyond question. However, perfectionist theories are exposed to serious objections that make them seem inappropriate as a basis for my argument. Within the scope of this article, I am unable to discuss in detail the problems associated with liberal perfectionism; I can only make mention of two important concerns. First, it seems implausible to maintain that critical reflection and recurrent decision-making are indispensable components of a fulfilling life. Evidently, many people appreciate the safety and orientation they gain from following widely heteronomous conceptions of the good.[24] Second, perfectionist theories, at least implicitly, endorse the assimilation of fundamentalist religious communities whose members supposedly lead a narrow and impoverished life. Thus, they tend to disregard religious freedoms in a way that goes far beyond the restriction of educational rights.[25] Given these – and other – problems, it seems desirable to develop a justification for state interference with the educational authority of fundamentalist parents that does not rely on perfectionist assumptions.

However, from the perspective of a neutralist understanding of liberalism, the justification of state intervention in the educational authority of fundamentalist parents meets with considerable obstacles. The adherents of religious doctrines which are indifferent or even hostile to the ideal of individual autonomy can nevertheless maintain that they prepare their children for a valuable life. Typically, they impart a consistent set of goals and values, clearly defined role expectations and a conception of meaningful activities to their offspring. If the education is successful, the future adults will appreciate the religious teachings and enjoy their participation in community life. They will be adequately prepared for the realisation of a reasonable comprehensive doctrine that has to be accepted in a truly pluralist society. In sum, the children of fundamentalist parents will not be deprived of the opportunity to accomplish a meaningful life if their education does not focus on the advancement of their autonomy.

4. The Importance of a Capacity for Critical Reflection

The argument for a state obligation to protect the development of a child's inner capacity for autonomy, I will outline below, takes no stand on questions of the good life. Consequently, I do not challenge the claim of fundamentalist parents that they act in their children's best interest when preparing them for heteronomous life forms. If the educational efforts of fundamentalist parents were always successful in shaping the whole life of their offspring, state intervention would be unwarranted. However, although fundamentalist religious communities typically try to distance themselves from the majority society, they cannot completely eliminate influences that are contrary to their views. They are unable to guarantee that their members will never experience a crisis of faith in which they become unsatisfied with their lives and feel a need for reorientation. Such a divide between an individual and the religious community they grew up in can result from a variety of reasons. To begin with, a person's view of their parents or other important attachment figures who imparted the community's conception of the good and impersonate its values may radically change. For instance, if one has a very negative experience with one's father, such as domestic violence, or if one finds out that he fails to practice what he preaches, one's confidence in the whole doctrine may be undermined. Moreover, the religious teachings one has received may conflict with one's own observations or even prove to be wrong. For instance, if a community predicts doomsday for a certain date but the end of the world fails to materialise, its members are likely to lose faith in its whole interpretation of the Holy Scripture.[26] Finally, and most importantly, in a liberal society that guarantees individual freedoms fundamentalist groups cannot completely shield their members from other ideas and life practices. Thus, some individuals may feel attracted by competing conceptions of the good and gradually turn away from their community's goals and values.

In crisis situations such as those described above, an inner capacity for autonomy proves to be an important prerequisite for successfully adapting one's life plan. Nobody can know in advance whether at some point in their life they will feel alienated from the teachings of their community. Unless one is able to rethink the conception of the good with which one has come to identify, one cannot comprehend one's estrangement. Moreover, one must be able to imagine and evaluate alternative ways of life in order to develop new perspectives. Therefore, parents act against the interests of their children if they do not enable them to revise their life goals by critically reflecting on other options. It seems, however, important to note that the process of re-evaluation does not necessarily lead to the rejection of fundamentalist beliefs.[27] Persons who rethink the religious teachings of their parents may reach different conclusions; not all of them will eventually break with the community. Typically, family members and other fellow believers will be anxious to help those who entertain grave doubts to overcome their crisis. Thus, for at least some sceptics the process of critical reflection will result in strengthening their attachment to the religious doctrine and the fundamentalist community.

Although I have emphasised the need to anticipate a possible crisis of faith, I do not think that parents are obliged to prepare their children for every difficult situation they may face later in life. They are only required to make provision for emergencies that cause a significant level of harm and pose a realistic threat. For instance, parents do not have to take out expensive dental insurance which ensures that their children receive the best possible aesthetic care. Even if the likelihood for a need of dental treatment at a later point in time is relatively high, the damage of having to forego a high-priced therapy is not serious

enough to establish a moral obligation. Likewise, parents need not arrange for survival training that enables their children to stay alive in the wilderness without any technical equipment. Although a collapse of modern civilisation would pose a tremendous challenge, it seems very unlikely that it will eventuate in the near future. Therefore, devoting a high amount of time and resources to the development of survival skills (at the cost of promoting other abilities necessary for a successful life in present-day society) would not be in the children's interest.

By contrast, for members of fundamentalist religious communities the possibility to experience a crisis of faith poses a significant and realistic threat. To break with a religious doctrine which hitherto has determined all aspects of one's life causes a high level of uncertainty and discomfort. If one lacks the ability to reflect on one's situation and to identify new goals and values, one may be doomed to permanently remain in a state of alienation. As regards the probability of a damaging event, it is, of course, difficult to stipulate with any precision the threshold at which precautionary measures are imperative. It seems, however, clear that preparing the offspring of fundamentalist families for a crisis of faith answers to a much more realistic threat than the survival training mentioned in the example above. In liberal pluralist societies, fundamentalist religious communities are surrounded by a largely secularised majority culture that offers visible alternatives to their way of life. Their members are unavoidably confronted with persons who do not bother about the observance of religious rules and enjoy many pleasures that are kept away from them. Although empirical findings on the frequency of crisis situations are missing, it seems plausible to assume that the presence of competing habits and ideals increases their likelihood.[28]

Typically, the members of fundamentalist religious communities are well aware of the dangers they face in modern pluralist societies. They are generally very keen to avoid contact with outsiders and have in many cases protested against compulsory schooling or similar requirements. Moreover, there are many reports of (or about) persons who experienced a crisis of faith that describe the manifold difficulties they encounter while trying to break with the community.[29] The low dropout rates of some fundamentalist communities are no proof that their members are immune to religious doubts and worldly temptations. Since their integration into the larger society meets with many obstacles, it is likely that they often decide against leaving their parish. Nevertheless, a capacity for internal autonomy is of prime importance, as it enables them to think clearly about the advantages and disadvantages of different options and to adjust their goals accordingly.

To understand my argument correctly, it is important to note that I do not attribute intrinsic value to a practice of autonomous decision-making. Contrary to Brighouse and Swift, I do not hold that 'there is independent value to being an author of one's life'.[30] Thus, my argument does not rest on a perfectionist ideal of autonomy that is not shared by the adherents of every reasonable comprehensive doctrine. Instead, I assert that the development of an inner capacity for autonomy is instrumentally valuable for the children of liberal and fundamentalist parents alike. However, the instrumental argument I have presented above should be distinguished from two other ways of how one may consider autonomy to be a basic prerequisite for leading a valuable life. First, one may take the view that autonomous deliberation and decision-making significantly contribute to a person's wellbeing. For instance, one may generally assume that people attach great importance to being their own master and feel frustrated if (benevolent) others decide on their behalf. Second, one may hold the opinion that autonomy is instrumentally valuable for the

identification and selection of a suitable life plan. One may, for instance, believe that every individual has privileged knowledge of their specific inclinations and desires and is, therefore, best able to make a sensible choice between the available conceptions of the good.

Although both views of the instrumental value of autonomy certainly apply to many people, they do not go without exception. Some persons seem to reach a high level of well-being in traditional religious communities because they appreciate the safety and orientation they obtain in heteronomous life forms. Moreover, the ability to reorient in a crisis situation is important because it allows the person concerned to critically reflect on their values and to develop life perspectives that accord with their changed convictions. However, the new way of life that results from such a reflective process does not necessarily increase the person's wellbeing. Think, for instance, of a person who comes to believe that their consumption-oriented lifestyle significantly contributes to environmental degradation and feels, therefore, obliged to forego any comfort. Of course, the awareness that they meet their own moral standards is likely to cause a feeling of satisfaction. Nevertheless, the overall wellbeing may decrease if the newly adopted values demand they dispense with many pleasurable activities. As regards the second alternative, it is important to note that even persons who did not choose their life plans but uncritically adopted the perspectives of their social environment can lead a worthwhile life. Unreflective persons who have never questioned the religious values they received from their parents may, nevertheless, experience a rich and fulfilling life.[31] By contrast, my argument for the instrumental value of autonomous deliberation and decision-making focuses on the possible need to reorient in a crisis situation. The ability to evaluate and choose between different options proves to be a crucial competence when one stops identifying with the teachings of one's community. Since in modern pluralist societies every conception of the good may lose its persuasiveness in the course of time, the advancement of the power to revise one's life plan is in the interest of every person.[32]

Some adherents of fundamentalist religious communities may object to the above stated argument that strict obedience to God's word is of crucial importance. From their perspective, even persons who renounce 'the only true faith' should continue to fulfil their religious duties. What ultimately matters – so they may argue – is not the sincerity of religious convictions but the actual conformity with God's commandments. Thus, children should not be enabled to revise their life plans in order to engage in profane activities that are in conflict with their preordained goals. Persons who hold this opinion may doubt the neutrality of the justification for restricting the educational rights of fundamentalist parents that I have given above. To be sure, my argument does not subscribe to the view that a heteronomous life is less valuable than an autonomous one. It assumes, however, that the ability to overcome a crisis of faith and to develop new convictions is more important than the fulfilment of one's religious duties. Therefore, it possibly contradicts religious teachings that are primarily concerned with the observance of codes of conduct and fails to provide a neutral vindication for state educational policies.[33]

Here it is important to recall that, within the framework of liberal neutralism, a justification for coercive state policies is only owed to adherents of reasonable conceptions of the good. To qualify as being reasonable, a religious doctrine has to accept the three core elements of political liberalism I have specified in the previous section. The fundamentalist doctrines under consideration fail to meet the second requirement – they do not regard citizens as being free and equal – and in many cases they are also in conflict with the third requirement, as they cannot credibly renounce the use of political power to repress

persons who do not share their views. In order to properly understand the first problem, it is especially important to clarify what the requirement to regard citizens as being free implies. A neutralist liberal theory cannot interpret the term free in a way that excludes heteronomous life plans from the outset. Thus, viewing citizens as being free cannot imply the vision of an autonomous life that is characterised by a practice of self-determined choices. Neither can the notion free refer to a deliberate decision that at some point citizens have made on their respective life plans. Many people – liberals and members of fundamentalist groups alike – adopt the customs and values of their social environment without subjecting them to critical examination. Consequently, the requirement to have made an independent decision on one's way of life would apply an unrealistically high standard on the freedom of citizens.

A more appropriate understanding of freedom highlights the fact that citizens must be able to form a conception of the good that corresponds with their feelings, attitudes, and values. Persons who, in a crisis of faith, are incapable of rethinking their previous lives and developing new perspectives inescapably depend on the community. Since they cannot imagine viable alternatives outside their faith group, they are doomed to continue a life that they do not reflectively endorse. They are 'captured' by a comprehensive doctrine from which they have turned away without any chance to orient themselves toward new goals. If fundamentalist parents hinder the development of a capacity for critical reflection in order to prevent their children from leaving the community, they fail to respect them as free persons. They deny their children the freedom to choose a conception of the good that adequately expresses their changed views and enables them to lead a meaningful life.[34]

Of course, members of fundamentalist communities may help their fellow brethren to overcome a crisis of faith and encourage them to stay on the right path. They may, for instance, point out that continued compliance with religious laws in a situation of uncertainty often results in renewed faith. Even if it proves impossible to overcome one's doubts – so they may add – the only way to find salvation in the world to come is strict obedience. Here it is important to note that the conviction that God's commandments should be followed even without belief is not in itself unreasonable in Rawls' sense. Unreasonable is only the view that parents are authorised to withhold the capacity for critical reflection from their children that this conviction may suggest. As long as fundamentalist parents are prepared to equip their children with the ability to reorient themselves in a crisis of faith, they may remain true to their beliefs. In particular, they may strongly advise those who entertain grave doubts to abide by religious rules that have lost any significance to them.

However, another concern with the religious communities in question is that many of them are unable to accept a pluralistic society for the right reasons. The fact that they demand of their own children the observance of religious duties even after they have apostatised raises the question whether they are prepared to tolerate other non-believers. The only difference between these two groups seems to be a practical one: while they are able to exercise power over their own children, other citizens are beyond their reach. However, many fundamentalist groups seem to have no principled reasons for exempting persons outside the community from keeping with God's commandments. Only communities who believe themselves to be a 'chosen people', having a special relationship to God, may strictly differentiate between members and non-members. Of course, small religious minorities in a widely secularised society typically have strong strategic motives for tolerating persons who do not share their beliefs. However, Rawls' political liberalism does not

settle for a mere *modus vivendi*, i.e. a strategic compromise, but aims at a normative agreement.[35] To count as reasonable, fundamentalist communities need to accept the fact of pluralism from the perspective of their own conception of the good. They must be willing to tolerate non-believers under all circumstances, even if they could gain sufficient political power to impose their way of life on them.[36]

5. The Scope of Parental Authorities

Based on the findings of the previous sections, I will now elaborate on the restrictions a liberal state may impose on the educational authority of fundamentalist parents. Some practical implications of the account of a person's inner capacity for autonomy, which I outlined in the second section, are rather obvious. Fundamentalist parents are obliged to provide their children with basic information about their legal rights and options that are available outside their religious community. They must also allow their children to try out an adequate range of activities in order to discover their specific inclinations and talents. Consequently, a liberal state is entitled to prescribe a basic curriculum to ensure the provision of core knowledge for every adolescent. Members of fundamentalist communities are, however, free to run confessional schools or to homeschool their children on condition that they accept the state guidelines. Moreover, fundamentalist parents have to refrain from using educational methods likely to produce a level of fear that prevents their children from acting in accordance with their well-considered preferences. Therefore, corporal punishment and other mentally stressful penalties practiced in some fundamentalist communities may (and should) be forbidden by law.[37]

As regards the question of talent discovery, it seems important to distinguish between skills that are likely to facilitate the process of reorientation in a crisis situation and those that are not. Arguably, being aware of one's musical or sporting talents will be of little help if one tries to develop new life perspectives outside a fundamentalist religious community. Typically, one will not be able to earn a living as a professional musician or athlete unless the relevant skills have been cultivated from a very early age. By the time a person experiences a crisis of faith, the chance to capitalise on these talents will in most cases be already missed. In contrast, knowing about one's mathematical or technical skills may make the idea of leaving one's religious community seem more realistic. Awareness of these talents may give a person the confidence that they will be able to successfully integrate in the wider society even at a later point in life. Thus, although fundamentalist parents may exempt their children from school sports, they cannot refuse them the opportunity to experience their technological potential.

As already mentioned in the second section, this requirement does not prevent fundamentalist parents from expressing their religious beliefs to their children. They may, for instance, let their offspring know that they regard any interest in modern technologies as a worthless distraction from a pious life. Moreover, as I argued in the second section, they need not actively support a possible desire of their children to learn more about computer programming, for example. Nevertheless, some adherents of fundamentalist doctrines may principally oppose that their children – as part of school education – are given the opportunity to discover their aptitude for computer programming. Not without good reason, they may fear they will encounter more problems with the upbringing of their children once they have come into contact with modern technologies. However, if my

argument for the development of an inner capacity for autonomy has been correct, fundamentalist parents cannot be spared this burden. Within the framework of political liberalism, the justification of educational policies does not require the actual consent of every person or group concerned.[38] A neutral argumentation only has to make sure that it is not biased by implicitly relying on a comprehensive conception of the good.

In addition, fundamentalist parents may complain that the educational requirements they have to meet put their children at a greater risk of plunging into a crisis of faith. The more the children are exposed to alternative ways of life, the more likely they are to question the religious teachings of their parents. Consequently, a growing number of persons will begin to doubt the traditional customs and beliefs and may eventually leave the community. These concerns are well-founded. An education that seeks to endow children with the capacity to master a crisis of faith may very well increase the likelihood of its occurrence. They fail, however, to invalidate my argument. Persons who have a capacity for critical reflection are in a good position to reorient themselves and to find a way out of their crisis of faith. Typically, after a while they will be able to define new goals (or to reaffirm former ones) and to overcome their inner conflicts. By contrast, persons who lack the relevant capacity may remain, possibly their whole life, in a state of disorientation and despair. Therefore, they are likely to suffer much more than persons who are able to cope with their doubts and to develop new life perspectives. Adherents of fundamentalist religions may, nonetheless, reply that, from their point of view, 'eternal damnation' is a greater evil that should be averted at any price. There is, however, yet another consideration that does not depend on a controversial comparison of different degrees and modes of suffering. As I have argued above, fundamentalist parents who hamper the inner autonomy of their children fail to respect them as free citizens. By not enabling their children to ponder on alternative life goals in a crisis situation, they deny them the freedom to develop a conception of the good that adequately expresses their changed feelings and thoughts. Within the framework of political liberalism, the protection of individual freedoms must be given lexical priority over other concerns, such as the reduction of welfare. Hence, the development of an inner capacity for autonomy is of primary importance although the necessary educational measures may increase the number of persons who experience a crisis of faith.

In what follows, it still needs to be clarified what requirements fundamentalist parents must meet in order to respect their offspring's interest in developing a capacity for critical reflection. In the third section I have emphasised that I seek to provide a neutral justification for possible state restrictions of educational rights. Consequently, I have to present an account of the advancement of a child's capacity for critical reflection that avoids perfectionist assumptions. More specifically, I must not presuppose that an autonomous life – a life characterised by self-directed decision-making – is superior to other conceptions of the good. The requirement to nurture a child's capacity for critical reflection poses a major challenge for a neutralist theory of state educational policies. It is – as I will explain in more detail below – difficult to reconcile with the ambition of fundamentalist parents to prepare their offspring for a pious life.

To correctly understand the educational goal of promoting a child's capacity for critical reflection, it must be carefully distinguished from two other concepts that can easily be confounded. First, the possession of a capacity for critical reflection does not presuppose the possibility to reorganise one's life in view of newly adopted goals and values. A person can be able to reassess their past life and to contemplate alternatives without actually

having the opportunity to realise the options they prefer after due consideration. Think, for instance, of a philosopher who, after careful reflection, takes the view that they would have done a better service to humanity if they had become a physician. Thereby they would revise their conception of the good and critically re-evaluate their previous life, but – having reached a certain age – they might be incapable of achieving their new ideal. Thus, persons who lack the prerequisites for acting in accordance with their altered preferences may still have the inner capacity for critical reflection.[39]

Typically, members of fundamentalist religious communities meet with high obstacles when considering radical changes to their lives. Most important, they may fear the 'practice of shunning' which implicates a complete break with one's family and friends.[40] Moreover, they may be uncertain whether they will succeed in integrating into the modern society and may see a high risk of ending up in poverty and isolation. In consideration of these worries, some persons may shy away from irreversibly breaking with their religious community. However, although they feel unable to alter their way of life, they can have a capacity for critical reflection, allowing them to re-evaluate traditional beliefs. Here one may object that the children of fundamentalist parents need more than the ability to ponder on a variety of different options. Their education – so one may argue – should also provide them with the skills needed to master the emotional aspects of an unsurmountable crisis of faith. However, in my view, it is hardly possible to raise children in a way that enables them to experience a radical reorientation in their lives as a less dramatic turning point. Note that children of liberal families who seek to radically distance themselves from the secular lifestyle of their parents will, at least in some cases, face similar difficulties. A person who considers joining, e.g. a Salafist community, may rightly fear that their family and friends will cut off contact with them. Profoundly changing one's way of life necessarily involves high emotional costs that cannot be avoided by a responsible education that seeks to establish intimate familial bonds.[41]

Second, and more importantly, a person's capacity for critical reflection must be distinguished from their practice of autonomous decision-making. Clearly, the ability to critically reflect and revise a given conception of the good does not necessarily result in the actual modification of one's life plan.[42] For instance, a person who experiences a crisis of faith may ponder on alternative life goals but ultimately revert to their original creed. Moreover, one can be capable of rethinking and eventually changing one's most basic convictions without ever seeing sufficient reason for doing so. Members of fundamentalist religious communities who never question the teachings of their parents may nevertheless be capable of critical reflection. Therefore, one is not entitled to conclude that fundamentalist communities, which have very low drop-out rates or whose members show no critical engagement with their religious doctrines, fail to generate autonomous persons in the above specified sense. The absence of a reflective practice can, at most, ground an initial suspicion of an autonomy deficit that needs to be further substantiated.

To the above given account, it may be objected that the capacity for critical reflection and the practice of autonomous decision-making are not completely independent of each other. A person may only be able to develop their ability to ponder on a variety of options if they regularly make their own choices. Moreover, a continual practice of deliberation and decision-making may be necessary in order to preserve one's previously acquired capacity for critical reflection.[43] Thus, one may doubt whether members of fundamentalist religious communities who have never questioned the teachings of their parents can be

capable of critical reflection. Persons who are constantly admonished not to stray from the right path may fail to develop (or lose) their potential to consider and appraise alternative options. On this assumption a liberal state should regulate the education in fundamentalist communities which do not exhibit a sufficient practice of critical reflection.

The objection at hand calls into question the project of providing a neutral justification for state interference with parental prerogatives. In the previous section, I have argued that the development of a capacity for critical reflection is instrumentally valuable for the adherents of every reasonable comprehensive doctrine. Neither liberal nor fundamentalist parents can guarantee their offspring's constant adherence to the goals and values they have imparted to them. Every child may later in life face a situation in which they wish to distance themself from the teachings of their parents and to discover new perspectives. Since the capacity for critical reflection can be used to revise every life plan, it does not favour any specific conception of the good and can be supported on neutral grounds. By contrast, a practice of autonomy is characterised by rethinking one's goals and projects from time to time and by regularly making one's own decisions. An autonomous way of life is, in other words, a specific exercise of one's capacity for autonomy which need not be endorsed by every reasonable person. Hence, the preparation of one's children for a practice of autonomy goes beyond what political liberalism can legitimately demand of fundamentalist parents.

The assertion that a person's capacity for critical reflection is intrinsically linked to the practice of rethinking their fundamental beliefs poses a major challenge to my argument. On this assumption, members of fundamentalist religious communities would have to keep pondering alternative life goals in order to develop and maintain a capacity for critical reflection. Consequently, they would have to conform to the ideal of leading an autonomous life that contradicts their conception of the good. Of course, the requirement of a practice of critical reflection is not irreconcilable with every form of religious education. The children concerned may still be able to lead a pious life if they again and again – after carefully considering other options – decide for participating in their community of faith. However, this understanding of religion as a matter of continuous individual choice is not shared by many fundamentalist communities. From their perspective, individuals are not entitled to choose between different conceptions of the good, thereby treating God's will as one option among others. Therefore, a parental obligation to encourage children's critical engagement with their religion is in conflict with reasonable fundamentalist doctrines.

There is, however, another way to respond to the above stated objection that is in line with a neutral justification of state educational policies. It is plausible to assume that children need some leeway with decision-making in order to develop and maintain a capacity for critical reflection. However, the required practice of autonomous deliberation does not have to concern the religious goals and values that their parents have imparted to them. The capacity for critical reflection is content neutral; for acquiring it one need not ponder on specific questions. Thus, parents do not have to incite their children to ponder competing conceptions of the good – they must only grant them some scope for decision-making. The children may, for instance, be allowed to decide how they spend their leisure time or with whom they form a friendship. Thereby, they learn to weigh the advantages and disadvantages of different alternatives and to rethink (and possibly alter) choices they have made before. Although such exercises in critical reflection concern rather minor issues, they will most likely be sufficient to cultivate the relevant qualities. If later in life

children experience a crisis of faith, they will be able to question and to re-evaluate the religious doctrines of their communities.

According to the above sketched view, fundamentalist parents are obliged to leave their children sufficient room for deliberation and decision-making. However, this requirement is not predicated on the perfectionist ideal of realising an autonomous life and can be justified on neutralist grounds. The practice of critical reflection is considered to be valuable only insofar as it is necessary for the development and preservation of the relevant capacity. The here defended view does not presume that a person's whole life should be characterised by self-directed decision-making. Moreover, fundamentalist parents need not compromise their conception of the good in order to fulfil their educational duties. The exercises in critical reflection that they have to allow their children need not relate to the core values and provisions of their religion. Accordingly, they may teach their children that compliance with God's commands is absolutely binding and not a matter of individual choice.

The above discussion has shown that the advancement of a child's inner capacity for autonomy entails – besides the provision of information and the rejection of problematic educational methods – still another educational duty. In addition, parents must give their children the opportunity to acquire a capacity for critical reflection by allowing them to make their own decisions on a range of issues. Most probably, this requirement will only in a few cases justify state interference with the educational practice of fundamentalist parents. Typically, fundamentalist religious communities concede their members some scope for decision-making concerning the way in which they comply with religious norms or in areas which are not fraught with religious provisions. Although they try to determine the lives of their members to a much wider extent than the liberal majority society, they do not regulate everything. For instance, many professions and activities that are available for the offspring of liberal families may be discredited within fundamentalist communities. However, this does not mean that the children of fundamentalist parents enjoy no discretion regarding their occupational choice or the use of their leisure time.

6. Conclusion

Children have an important interest in the development of their capacity for autonomous deliberation and decision-making. Since alienation from the teachings of their parents is an unavoidable risk, they should be able to rethink and revise their life plans. The significance of an inner capacity for autonomy does not depend on the acceptance of a specific conception of the good; it is not predicated on the vision of the individual as being the 'author' of their life. Therefore, state regulations that aim at protecting the future autonomy of children can be justified within the framework of liberal neutralism. State interference with parents' educational authority may be warranted if they fail to meet one (or more) of the following requirements: First, they must grant their children access to an adequate range of information on their rights and options outside their community; second, they have to refrain from educational methods, such as severe intimidation, that are likely to inhibit the realisation of rationally chosen goals; and, third, they must give their children sufficient opportunity for critical reflection and sovereign decision-making.

Importantly, the required practice of critical reflection may concern mundane questions that do not compromise the religious doctrine the parents adhere to. Although the

children have to be informed about the existence of 'heretic worldviews', they need not be encouraged to deliberate on them. On the contrary, fundamentalist parents (and fundamentalist private schools) may take a clear stance against 'false doctrines' that contradict their beliefs. The children only need to know that there are different options to which they can turn should they ever get into a serious crisis of faith. This restriction may disappoint proponents of liberalism who wish to equip children with a sceptical attitude towards traditional customs and religious tenets. However, a justificatory theory that takes a neutral stance to reasonable conceptions of the good has to content itself with more modest demands.

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NOTES

1 The term parent is used here to denote a person who is primarily responsible for raising a child, whether or not they are genetically connected to that child.
2 Brighouse, Harry, and Harry Swift. 2014. *Family Values: The Ethics of Parent-Child Relationships*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, pp. 87–93.
3 A parental duty to refrain from imparting a specific worldview to one's children has been defended in Clayton, Matthew. 2006. *Justice and Legitimacy in Upbringing*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
4 According to John Stuart Mill, a liberal society even benefits from a free competition of ideas and lifestyles that protects its public culture from stagnation and dogmatism. Mill, John Stuart. 1991 [1859]. *On Liberty and Other Essays*, edited by John Gray. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
5 Rawls, John. 1993. *Political Liberalism*. New York: Columbia University Press, pp. 190–5.
6 I criticise arguments for the restriction of parental rights that draw on a societal need for the creation of democratic citizens or a child's interest in being provided with a sufficient range of options in Dietrich, Frank. 2017. "Civic Education in Pluralist Democracies." *Annual Review of Law and Ethics* 25: 3–21 and Dietrich, Frank. 2020. "Liberalism, Neutrality, and the Child's Right to an Open Future." *Journal of Social Philosophy* 51(1): 104–28, respectively.
7 Dworkin, Gerald. 1988. *The Theory and Practice of Autonomy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 14.
8 According to Rawls op. cit., pp. 54–8, even persons who are willing to reach an agreement are fraught with burdens of judgment – i.e. unclear empirical evidence, vague moral and political notions, and deep value conflicts – that may hinder a conclusive clarification of controversial issues.
9 As I will explain in the next section, the concept of political liberalism advocated by John Rawls does not take a stand on controversial metaphysical issues. Within this theoretical framework, the justification of educational policies cannot take a specific understanding of truth, such as a scientific worldview, for granted; see Schaefer, Alexander, and Robert Weston Siscoe. 2020. "Incoherent But Reasonable: A Defense of Truth-Abstinence in Political Liberalism." *Social Theory and Practice* 46(3): 573–603, 589–91. Consequently, in Rawls' view, political liberalism merely requires that children are adequately informed about basic societal facts, especially their 'constitutional and civil rights', Rawls op. cit., p. 199.
10 Raz, Joseph. 1986. *The Morality of Freedom*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 383–5.
11 Feinberg, Joel. 1986. *Harm to Self: The Moral Limits of the Criminal Law*, Vol. 3. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 33–5.
12 Betzler, Monika. 2015. "Enhancing the Capacity for Autonomy: What Parents Owe Their Children to Make Their Lives Go Well." In *The Nature of Child's Well-Being*, edited by Alexander Bagattini and Colin Macleod, 65–84. Dordrecht: Springer, pp. 68–72.
13 Shields, Liam. 2016. *Just Enough. Sufficiency as a Demand of Justice*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, pp. 97–109.
14 The term fundamentalist, as it is used here, denotes religious communities who engage in ways of life that are widely incompatible with the modern majority culture. However, characterising a group as fundamentalist does not imply any readiness to use coercion or violence against persons who do not share their faith.

15 For the distinction between liberal neutralism and liberal perfectionism, see Wall, Steven, and George Klosko (Eds). 2003. *Perfectionism and Neutrality. Essays in Liberal Theory*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield and Quong, Jonathan. 2011. *Liberalism without Perfection*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 12–44.
16 Rawls op. cit., pp. 36–8.
17 Rawls op. cit., pp. 54–61 and Quong op. cit., pp. 290–1.
18 Audard, Catherine. 2015. "Autonomy, Political." In *The Cambridge Rawls Lexicon*, edited by Jon Mandle and David A. Reidy, 27–31. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
19 Rawls op. cit., p. 78.
20 Rawls op. cit., pp. 190–5. Since the term neutrality is often understood in the latter sense, Rawls op. cit., p. 194, recommends avoiding its use.
21 Perfectionist theories of liberalism have been defended, *inter alia*, by Hurka, Thomas. 1993. *Perfectionism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press; Sher, George. 1997. *Beyond Neutrality. Perfectionism and Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; and Kramer, Matthew H. 2017. *Liberalism with Excellence*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
22 Raz op. cit., p. 369.
23 Raz op. cit., pp. 378–81.
24 Although Raz – unlike other advocates of perfectionism – understands autonomy as a context-dependent value that has meaning only for modern societies, he cannot easily escape the above-mentioned problem. Apparently, the members of traditional religious communities need not experience their lives as unrewarding or pointless if they succeed with secluding themselves from the modern majority culture.
25 With regard to autonomy-negating communities, Raz op. cit., p. 424, explicitly states that a liberal state is justified 'in taking action to assimilate the minority group, at the cost of letting its culture die or at least be considerably changed by absorption'.
26 Stein, Stephen J. 2000. *Communities of Dissent. A History of Alternative Religions in America*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 69–84.
27 Schouten, Gina. 2018. "Political Liberalism and Autonomy Education: Are Citizenship-Based Arguments Enough?" *Philosophical Studies* 175(5): 1071–93, pp. 1074–5.
28 It is important to note that, according to the instrumentalist argument I defend in this article, parents need not support the development of a capacity for critical reflection if a crisis of faith is extremely unlikely to occur. I take, however, the view that in modern pluralist societies, where various religious and moral doctrines compete, such a crisis poses a real threat for which children must be adequately prepared.
29 Davidman, Lynn. 2015. *Becoming Un-Orthodox. Stories of Ex-Hasidic Jews*. Oxford: Oxford University Press and Enstedt, Daniel, Göran Larsson, and Teemu T. Mantsinen (Eds). 2020. *Handbook of Leaving Religion*. Leiden & Boston, MA: Brill.
30 According to Brighouse and Swift op. cit., pp. 166–7, the case for autonomy is over-determined, as it can be supported by intrinsic reasons *and* by instrumental reasons that refer to its significance for a person's wellbeing.
31 Brighouse, Harry. 2000. *Social Choice and Social Justice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 67–9.
32 For instructive discussions of the instrumental value of autonomy, see MacMullen, Ian. 2007. *Faith in Schools? Autonomy, Citizenship, and Religious Education in the Liberal State*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press and Zwarthoed, Danielle. 2017. "The Principle of Sufficient Autonomy and Mandatory Autonomy Education." *Law, Ethics and Philosophy* 5: 175–88.
33 Scott Altman provided an insightful discussion of this position in the context of his reformulation of Joel Feinberg's open-future argument. See Altman, Scott. 2018. "Reinterpreting the Right to an Open Future: From Autonomy to Authenticity." *Law and Philosophy* 37(4): 415–36, pp. 426–9 and Feinberg, Joel. 1980. "The Child's Right to an Open Future." In *Whose Child? Children's Rights, Parental Authority, and State Power*, edited by William Aiken and Hugh LaFollette, 124–53. Totowa, NJ: Littlefield, Adams & Co.
34 According to Rawls op. cit., p. 30, citizens are not 'inevitably tied to the pursuit of the particular conception of the good that they affirm at any given time. […] As free persons, citizens claim the right to view their persons as independent from and not identified with any particular such conception with its scheme of final ends'. See also Rawls op. cit., pp. 310–5.
35 Rawls op. cit., pp. 144–50.
36 As Quong op. cit., pp. 290–8, has persuasively argued, excluding unreasonable persons from public justification does not mean that they are not entitled to 'the general rights and benefits of citizenship'.

37 Since fundamentalist religious communities typically impart a coherent set of goals and values to the younger generation, the development of an evaluative standpoint – the second characteristic of a person's inner capacity for autonomy – is not a matter of concern.
38 Quong op. cit., p. 144.
39 According to Rawls op. cit., pp. 180–3, persons who are unable to realise their revised conception of the good must, nevertheless, have access to primary goods that enable them to make use of their freedoms.
40 Hostetler, John A. 1993. *Amish Society*, 4th edn. Baltimore, MD & London: John Hopkins University Press, pp. 85–7.
41 Of course, the educational practice of fundamentalist religious communities may be criticised for restricting children to a very narrow range of options, see Feinberg 1980 op. cit. The violation of a child's presumed right to an open future is, however, a different concern that goes beyond the scope of the present analysis. For an important critique of the idea that options can be individuated and counted in a neutral way, i.e. without reference to a specific conception of the good, see Mills, Claudia. 2003. "The Child's Right to an Open Future?" *Journal of Social Philosophy* 34(4): 499–509, pp. 500–1.
42 Brighouse, Harry. 1998. "Civic Education and Liberal Legitimacy." *Ethics* 108(4): 719–45, pp. 733–4.
43 Sherman, Nancy. 1989. *The Fabric of Character. Aristotle's Theory of Virtue*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, pp. 174–83.