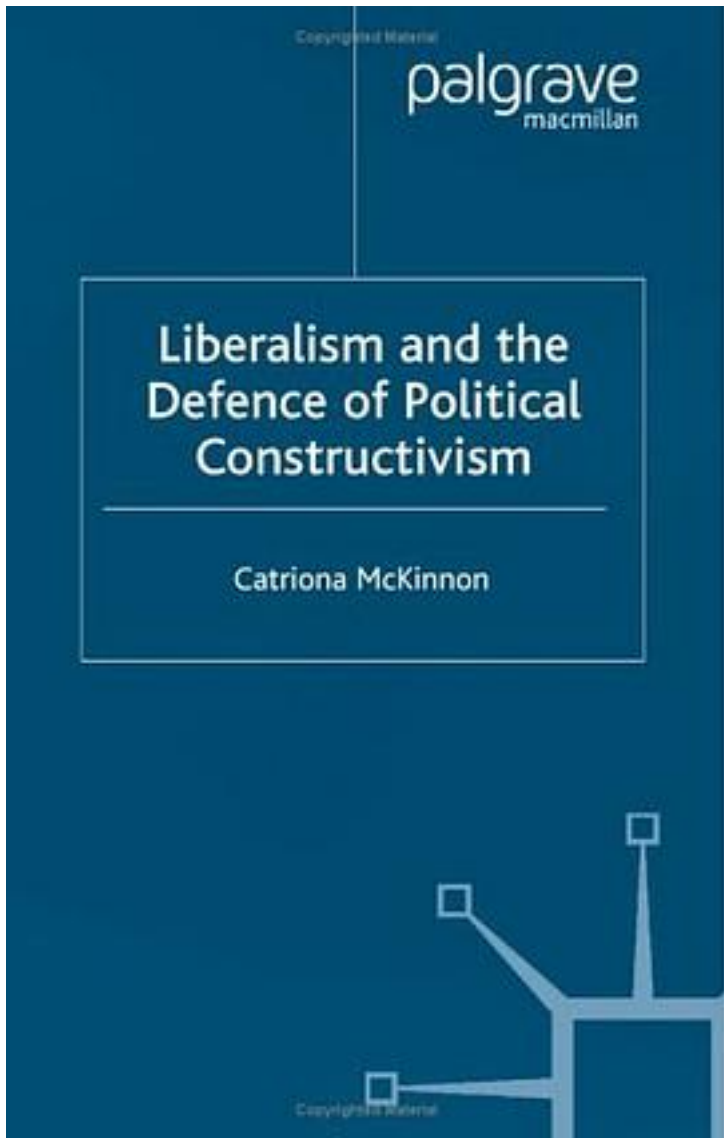


Liberalism and the Defence of Political Constructivism



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Liberal political justification is often accused of preaching to the converted: the values of such justification, it is claimed, are acceptable as values only to those already convinced by arguments in the secular, humanist Enlightenment tradition of political justification. This is the most taxing problem facing contemporary liberal theories of political justification. Catriona McKinnon suggests an interpretation of the 'political constructivism' approach to this problem offered by John Rawls. This interpretation argues that by placing the value of self-respect and its social conditions at the heart of the political constructivist approach to liberal justification, such justification can deliver on its promise to show why liberal principles of toleration and public reason are acceptable even to non-liberal people. A self-respect based constructivist approach to contemporary liberal justification restores to the liberal tradition the radical potential which it has always historically possessed.

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