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**Confucianism and Public Political Discussion**

Franz Mang, The Chinese University of Hong Kong

**Introduction**

What role, if any, should Confucianism play in the politics of our time? With the continuing growth of East Asia’s political influence—in particular, China’s political influence—contemporary Confucian scholars are contemplating how Confucian values might shape modern politics and political thought. Confucianism developed from the teachings of Confucius (551–479 BCE), an ancient thinker and politician of the Spring and Autumn period in China. While Confucian scholars do not hold the exact same views on ethics and politics, they invariably think that political leaders as well as political authorities are morally obligated to promote the material welfare and moral virtue of the people. Some contemporary Confucian political theorists have recently argued that a modern state may promote Confucian values with the aim of achieving social justice and improving personal well-being (e.g., Chan, 2014; Jiang, 2013; Kim, 2016). Notably, Joseph Chan (2014) has argued that we can merge Confucianism with a particular moderate version of state perfectionism such that a modern liberal state may promote various Confucian values in a piecemeal way without coercing its people to endorse them.[[1]](#footnote-1)

In some of my previous writings (Mang, 2018; 2019; 2021), I argued that modern liberal states may not promote Confucian values on the basis of their intrinsic merits, given that citizens living in liberal societies endorse diverge comprehensive conceptions of the good life.[[2]](#footnote-2) Yet, drawing certain insights from Chan’s (2000) moderate state perfectionism and John Rawls’s wide view of public political culture (2005, pp. 462–466), I proposed the “wide view of moderate perfectionism” (Mang, 2018, pp. 44–48). According to this novel view, in public political discussion, citizens should be allowed to deliberate whether and how Confucianism, among other reasonable moral doctrines, can make positive contributions to their social and political thinking and public policymaking, provided that certain conditions are met.

The wide view of moderate perfectionism that I propose has drawn some criticisms. In particular, Zhuoyao Li (2022) points out that it is unclear why citizens should be concerned with considering whether and how Confucianism can make positive contributions to the politics and social development of our time. In addition, Li thinks that the practice of the wide view of moderate perfectionism would inevitably undermine civility.

In this paper, I clarify and develop the wide view of moderate perfectionism and respond to Li’s criticisms. At the outset, however, the following concrete hypothetical example may be useful in visualizing the disagreement among Chan, Li, and me.

Suppose that a certain country needs to decide whether or not its current healthcare system should be reformed in such a way that all taxpayers will receive more financial support (in the form of a tax exemption, for example) for looking after their parents who are over 70 years old or suffer from prolonged illness. The proposal has proven highly controversial as the reform would put a heavy burden on public expenditure. Many citizens, especially those of East Asian origin, endorse the reform. They think that *xiao*, which is a typical Confucian value commonly translated as “filial piety,” is extremely important.[[3]](#footnote-3) To settle the dispute, a citizens’ assembly of several hundred citizens is summoned.[[4]](#footnote-4) It will decide two issues: (1) whether or not the reform should be made, and (2) whether or not the government should promote Confucian values—in particular, filial piety. Yet, at least a third of the citizen representatives know very little about Confucianism and are not inclined to endorse any Confucian value.

We can thus visualize the disagreement among Chan, Li, and me in the following way. First, given that Confucianism is a comprehensive moral doctrine that consists of numerous ideas on ethics, politics, etiquette, metaphysics, and other subjects, Chan would say that the government in question should not seek to promote Confucianism as a comprehensive moral doctrine because the promotion of such a doctrine is bound to be highly controversial and would undermine civility among citizens. However, the government may promote any Confucian value insofar as its significance is not dependent on the truth of the entire Confucian doctrine. Additionally, citizen representatives may appeal to Confucian values to justify their stances in public deliberations, provided that their appeals are not based on the truth of the whole Confucian doctrine.

Contrary to Chan, I would argue that, on the grounds of civility and fairness, a modern liberal state is not permitted to promote any Confucian value on the basis of its intrinsic merits. However, those citizen representatives should be allowed to consider carefully whether and how Confucianism as a complex and comprehensive doctrine can give insights into their debate over the healthcare reform proposal as well as other policy matters. In contrast, Li would maintain that citizen representatives should not be allowed to draw insights from Confucianism in public deliberation, considering the importance of civility and mutual trust. But Li would agree with me (and against Chan) that a modern liberal state may not promote any Confucian value on the basis of its intrinsic merits.

I will flesh out the disagreement among Chan, Li, and me. Let me first explain how Confucianism and perfectionism are closely related.

**Confucianism and (State) Perfectionism**

As I have said, Confucians share the view that political leaders and political authorities are morally obligated to promote the material welfare and moral virtue of the people. Thus, in the parlance of contemporary political philosophy, Confucianism is a *perfectionist* doctrine. Perfectionism, or state perfectionism, is the view that the state may, or should, promote valuable conceptions of the good life and discourage conceptions that are bad or worthless. Confucians, to borrow Rawls’s words, hold systematic views of “what is of value in human life, and ideals of personal character, as well as ideals of friendship and of familial and associational relationships, and much else that is to inform our conduct, and in the limit to our life as a whole” (2005, p. 13). Therefore, we may regard Confucianism as a comprehensive perfectionism consisting of a particular Confucian comprehensive moral doctrine.[[5]](#footnote-5)

It should be noted that contemporary Confucians generally do not claim that a modern state should seek to promote Confucianism *as a comprehensive moral doctrine*.[[6]](#footnote-6) They are aware that people living in modern societies hold divergent ethical and religious views, and thus the state’s promotion of any comprehensive moral doctrine is likely to backfire and harm civility. For many of them, if Confucianism is to make any positive contribution to the modern world, then those aspects of it that are unsuitable (no matter what “unsuitable” here means) for the modern world must be bracketed, modified, rectified, or simply abandoned.[[7]](#footnote-7)

It is against such a background that Chan’s Confucian perfectionism makes original contributions. Chan regards Confucian perfectionism as “an unusual project,” since it is “a critical reconstruction of certain Confucian political ideas of the classical period for modern times” (2014, p. xi). In fact, Chan’s project is not just unusual but also ambitious: It seeks to explore the implications of Confucianism for some of the most fundamental issues in politics, including political authority, civil liberties, human rights, and socioeconomic justice. The ultimate goal of Confucian perfectionism, as Chan understands it, is to provide “an attractive philosophical alternative to liberal democratic theory” ( 014, p. 23).

For our purposes, however, let us focus on one crucial problem with Chan’s Confucian perfectionism. The problem is: How should Confucian perfectionism be brought to bear on a state’s legislation and public policy? To Chan, Confucian perfectionism should take the form of *moderate* perfectionism (2014, pp. 14, 23, 203). He argues: “Confucianism can be actively and publicly promoted,” but in public political discussions, citizens and officials “should not present Confucianism as a complete and packaged conception and ask citizens to accept policy proposals as implications of that package” (Chan, 2014, pp. 200, 203).

Chan has compared this moderate approach with *extreme* perfectionism (2014, pp. 200–204). Extreme perfectionism claims that the state ought to adopt a comprehensive moral doctrine, such as a Confucian comprehensive doctrine, as the basis of state policy. Chan rejects extreme perfectionism and favors moderate perfectionism; his main reason is that the state’s pursuit of any comprehensive moral doctrine will easily damage civility, which is the attitude of fellow citizens toward each other that shows a concern for the common bond despite differing opinions. Given that citizens can reasonably and persistently disagree over a wide range of moral and political issues, civility requires citizens to care for each other’s sense of self-worth and to justify their views in a way that others can reasonably be expected to accept.

How, then, is one to promote Confucianism in the form of moderate perfectionism? Chan has given the following example: In public political discussions, one should not argue that the state should promote filial piety *because* it is a central element in Confucianism; to argue in such a way is to expect other people to accept the authority or truth of the whole Confucian doctrine (2014, pp. 203–204). In his view, people who want to appeal to Confucian values in public political discussions need to justify these values in terms of reasons that are freestanding from Confucianism and other comprehensive doctrines. We can call these *freestanding reasons*.

In some of my writings (Mang, 2013; 2018; 2021), I point out that although Chan’s moderate perfectionism is largely convincing, it cannot support the state’s promotion of Confucian values. In other words, while I endorse moderate perfectionism, I have some serious reservations about Chan’s moderate *Confucian* perfectionism. I think that any modern liberal state will easily overstep the limits of moderate perfectionism if it seeks to promote Confucianism *or* Confucian values. In essence, my main argument against Chan is this: For reasons of civility and fairness, moderate perfectionism does not support the state’s promotion of *any* comprehensive moral doctrine; any typical Confucian value (such as filial piety) is closely associated with Confucianism; and, therefore, a moderate perfectionist state should not seek to promote any typical Confucian value.[[8]](#footnote-8)

**The Wide View of Moderate Perfectionism**

Though I consider that no modern liberal state is permitted to promote Confucian values on the basis of their intrinsic values, I have proposed the wide view of moderate perfectionism (Mang, 2018). This view enables citizens to deliberate whether and how Confucianism can make positive contributions to their social and political thinking. In what follows, I clarify and develop this view, and I address Li’s criticisms of it.

Rawls has proposed “the wide view of public political culture” (2005, p. 462). In his view, citizens may appeal to any reasonable comprehensive doctrine in the process of public political discussion, provided that their stances are already supported by sufficient public reasons that all reasonable citizens can share. But, for Rawls, public reasons do not involve any judgment about what makes a life go well or badly (2005, pp. 452–454).

Moderate perfectionists, Chan and I included, endorse Rawls’s idea that citizens should justify their political stances in terms of reasons that are not bound up with any comprehensive moral doctrine. However, they think that some piecemeal judgments about the good life exist that are convincing and not tied to any particular comprehensive moral doctrine. These piecemeal judgments may include the following: that deep personal relations contribute to a person’s good life, that aesthetic experience contributes to a person’s good life, and that understanding contributes to a person’s good life (Chan, 2000; Mang, 2021). These judgments about the good life can serve as freestandingperfectionist reasons for the purposes of public political deliberation.

And I have taken a further step to argue: “Citizens may appeal to any reasonable and fully comprehensive doctrine to [further] support their positions in political justification, given that their positions are already supported by sufficient reasons [perfectionist or nonperfectionist] whose validity does not rely on the truth of any particular comprehensive doctrine” (Mang, 2018, p. 45). I called this view the *wide view of moderate perfectionism*. To illustrate its importance, let us think about humanity-based moral education.

Humanity-based moral education concerns the cultivation of individuals’ moral and intellectual character. It aims to cultivate human excellences, such as practical wisdom, compassion, courage, and a sense of responsibility. This kind of education differs from what might be called citizen-based civic education; the latter has a narrower focus, as it aims to educate citizens to be responsible and reasonable social members. Chan and I both think that humanity-based moral education is superior (Chan, 2014, pp. 94–100; Mang, 2018, p. 46). Interestingly, from the perspective of traditional Confucianism, one should also see humanity-based moral education as superior, considering that ancient Confucians were concerned with the cultivation of human virtue, not only the attainment of the qualities of good citizens (Chan, 2014, pp. 94–100). To these Confucians, one can hardly be a good political leader or a good citizen if one is not a virtuous human in the first place. However, to support humanity-based moral education, it seems unnecessary to appeal to the truth of the entire Confucian moral doctrine. Sufficient freestanding reasons—perfectionist and nonperfectionist—seem to exist that can be adduced to support humanity-based education (Mang, 2018, p. 46; forthcoming b). So, for example, even though John Dewey and Wilhelm von Humboldt may not embrace Confucianism, they would probably think that there are sufficient reasons for believing that humanity-based moral education is of great importance and that it is superior to citizen-based civic education (Dewey, 1916; von Humboldt, 1854/1994, esp. chap. 6).

How, then, is the above discussion of humanity-based moral education related to the wide view of moderate perfectionism? According to the wide view, if a certain citizen believes that the state should support humanity-based moral education, then he or she needs, first, to show that there are sufficient freestanding reasons that justify humanity-based moral education. Call this kind of public political justification *freestanding justification*. Given that that a citizen has done freestanding justification in a respectable way, he or she is permitted to draw insights from their favored comprehensive moral doctrine to support his or herstance or reflect further on the subject under discussion. Call this *additional deliberation*. For example, that citizen can argue that from the viewpoint of traditional Confucianism, moral excellences such as prudence and benevolence are intrinsically valuable and of crucial importance for citizens to engage in meaningful political discourse. If additional deliberation is *not* allowed, citizens would lose the valuable opportunity for deliberating together about how Confucianism, among other reasonable moral doctrines, might offer insights into the pressing ethical, social, and political issues of our time. These issues may include civic responsibility, university education, legitimate authority, human rights, and socioeconomic justice.[[9]](#footnote-9) That would be a great loss.

 Li (2022) has serious reservations about the wide view that I propose. He argues:

One might wonder why citizens feel the need to take the extra step of appealing to their comprehensive doctrine when they are required [to] and already can justify their positions in terms of reasons that are freestanding from any particular reasonable comprehensive doctrine…. If some citizens decide to promote certain positions supported by freestanding reasons but also cite reasons associated with specific reasonable comprehensive doctrines as further support, then it is unclear what the intention of these citizens truly is. (p. 8)

Admittedly, in my previous writings, I did not explain clearly why citizens would feel the need to appeal to any comprehensive doctrine to further support their positions when they have already justified their positions in terms of freestanding reasons. Here, I have several points to make. First, the wide view does not expect, not to say require, all citizens to appeal to their favored comprehensive doctrines to support their positions. Second, while I think that the wide view enables people to discuss whether and how Confucianism can make positive contributions to their social and political thinking (Mang, 2018; 2021), I do not claim that the wide view should favor Confucianism over other comprehensive moral doctrines in public political discussion. Li asserts that in giving citizens the opportunity to appreciate the merits of Confucianism, the wide view is “subject to the same criticism Mang levies against Chan’s version of moderate [Confucian] perfectionism” (2022, p. 9), namely, that it undermines civility in favoring Confucianism over other comprehensive doctrines. This criticism is unfounded; in fact, I have already pointed out that in public political discussion “many other comprehensive doctrines such as Marxism, Christianity, and utilitarianism can also contribute to our understanding of politics, morality, and the good life” (Mang, 2018, p. 47).[[10]](#footnote-10)

 Nevertheless, Li (2022) thinks that the practice of the wide view of moderate perfectionism would harm civility. He argues:

If a Supreme Court Justice tries to first justify the Court’s decision in neutral language by appealing to freestanding political reasons, and then add that parts of her reasonable comprehensive doctrine, which others need not fully embrace, can also lend a justificatory hand, what would citizens feel about this two-step explanation? I think many would suspect that the Justice is probably not sincere in her freestanding justification in the first step. Moreover, one might also argue that by allowing the second step to be incorporated into the general justificatory process, citizens and state officials might be motivated to either disguise their private reasons with neutral language or abandon the first step of freestanding justification altogether…. All these are likely to undermine the degree of civility established by appealing to freestanding justification in the first place, which is foundational for a well-ordered liberal democracy. (pp. 8–9)

This criticism deserves some serious attention. Let me first clarify: When I was proposing the wide view, I thought only about how ordinary citizens and citizen representatives of certain kinds (including citizen representatives of a citizens’ assembly and legislators selected by popular vote) might practice the wide view, and I did not intend to argue that Supreme Court judges, heads of state, and the highest officials of a government may practice the wide view.

But why shouldn’t Supreme Court judges, heads of state, and some others be allowed to practice the wide view? Why can’t they argue about how Confucianism might support their political stances? Wouldn’t ordinary citizens and citizen representatives also harm civility in practicing additional deliberation, if it is the case that court judges, heads of state, and others would harm civility by doing the same thing?

To answer these questions, let us go back to our earlier example of the citizens’ assembly: The citizens’ assembly is entrusted with the task of deciding whether or not the state should reform its national healthcare system, such that each and every taxpayer is provided with more financial support to take care of their old or ill parents. Let us assume that among the several hundreds of citizen representatives, many of them want to appeal to the value of filial piety to argue that the government should make this reform. For example, some citizen representatives endorse the following view stated in the Confucian classic *The Record of Rituals*:

Therefore when it is said that (the ruler being) a sage can look on all under the sky as one family, and on all in the Middle states as one man, this does not mean that he will do so on premeditation and purpose. He must know men’s feelings, lay open to them what they consider right, show clearly to them what is advantageous, and comprehend what are their calamities. Being so furnished, he is then able to effect the thing. *What are the feelings of men? They are joy, anger, sadness, fear, love, disliking and liking. These seven feelings belong to men without their need of learning them. What are “the things which men consider right?” Kindness on the part of the father, and filial duty on that of the son*; gentleness on the part of the elder brother, and obedience on that of the younger; righteousness on the part of the husband, and submission on that of the wife; kindness on the part of elders, and deference on that of juniors; with benevolence on the part of the ruler, and loyalty on that of the minister—these ten are the things which men consider to be right. (Legge, 1885, pp. 379–380; emphasis added)[[11]](#footnote-11)

However, as we have assumed, at least a third of citizen representatives know very little about Confucianism and are not inclined to endorse any Confucian value. Should those citizen representatives who endorse filial piety be allowed to justify their position in terms of filial piety? Following the wide view of moderate perfectionism, they should first do freestanding justification in a respectable way, showing carefully that reasons (perfectionist and nonperfectionist) that are not tied to any Confucian value are sufficient to justify the proposed healthcare reform. Then, they are permitted to draw insights from Confucianism for reflecting on the importance of the reform. For example, they can argue that Confucianism can certainly help people to understand the nature of human feelings and to treasure the values of empathy, compassion, deep human relationships, and the happiness of family life.[[12]](#footnote-12)

In my view, unlike what it would allow for Supreme Court judges, heads of state, and some others, society should allow those citizen representatives to deliberate and decide on behalf of people who embrace Confucian values, provided that they have done freestanding justification in a respectable way and do not disregard the interests and stakes of others who may not share their views. They do not have to comply with the strict standards of impartiality applied to Supreme Court judges and heads of state; after all, judges and heads of state are not supposed to act or deliberate on behalf of any specific group of people, such as those who embrace Confucian values. And if heads of state are in any sense representatives of their citizens, then they must represent all citizens, not only those who endorse Confucianism.

Yet, wouldn’t those citizen representatives harm civility and public trust if they discuss the insights of Confucianism in public political discussion? It seems difficult to deny that some citizen representatives, to borrow Li’s words, “might be motivated to disguise their private reasons with neutral language or abandon the first step of freestanding justification altogether.” In my view, however, the mere possibility that some representatives might abuse the wide view is not a principled reason against it. I have two points to make.

First, normally, citizen representatives in our example and ordinary citizens are not nearly as powerful as a Supreme Court judge or a head of state. Thus, the harm to civility that some deviant citizen representatives or ordinary citizens could cause pales in comparison to the harm to civility that a deviant head of state or a deviant Supreme Court judge could bring about. Second, importantly, when the wide view is being practiced, all citizens should examine the words *and deeds* of each participant in the wide view, in order to ensure that each participant takes freestanding justification seriously. As some political theorists have pointed out, mutual trust in public deliberation is created through talks *and deeds*—talk may be cheap sometimes, but deeds seldom cheat (Wong & Li, 2023). To be sure, it is impossible to know precisely what people have in their minds, but it is not always very difficult to judge whether a person, such as a politician, is intellectually honest and responsible.[[13]](#footnote-13)

**Conclusion**

Let me conclude my discussion with some reflections on Confucianism and authoritarianism. Confucianism has often been regarded as a doctrine that is no more, and no less, than one that suppresses personal autonomy and legitimizes authoritarianism. To my own understanding, this interpretation of Confucianism is biased; it is reasonable to think that ancient Chinese Confucianism contains some *anti*-authoritarian ideas.[[14]](#footnote-14) I am not able to discuss this important topic further here, but I would like to emphasize that the wide view of moderate perfectionism that I propose would work best in democratic societies where people are allowed to discuss *freely* both the positive and negative aspects of Confucianism. For one thing, I am concerned that Confucianism can easily be abused at the hands of authoritarian rulers—particularly those in East Asia, where Confucianism has had and continues to have formative influences on East Asia’s historical development and many people are still subject to authoritarian politics.[[15]](#footnote-15) For another, as I have pointed out, public deliberation is crucial for the practice of the wide view of moderate perfectionism. Participants in public deliberation should be allowed to criticize authoritarianism based on Confucian values and to criticize any serious attempt—official or nonofficial—that justifies authoritarian rule in the name of Confucianism.

Some Confucian political theorists think that modern states, particularly those in East Asia, may promote Confucianism as a comprehensive doctrine or at least as a set of Confucian values. I find such a view implausible and have argued against it. Li (2020, esp. chaps. 7, 8) has also argued against it, but, as we have seen, he also rejects the wide view of moderate perfectionism.[[16]](#footnote-16) In this article, I develop the wide view and defend it against Li’s criticisms. The wide view, recall, does not authorize any state or government to propagate Confucian values; it only allows citizens to explore whether and how Confucianism, among other comprehensive moral doctrines, can provide insights into a broad range of social and political issues and in such a way enrich public discourse on these issues. In short, while the wide view is not a Confucian perfectionist doctrine, it enables citizens to take Confucian ideas and values seriously from a contemporary perspective in public political discussion and thus is a novel attempt to advance the social and political thinking of our time.

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1. Generally understood, state perfectionism, or perfectionism, is the view that the state may, or should, promote valuable conceptions of the good life and discourage conceptions that are bad or worthless. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Some government might promote Confucian values for the purposes of developing tourism, but this is *not* a case of promoting Confucian values in light of their intrinsic merits. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. “孝” (*xiao*). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Since this is only a hypothetical example, it is not necessary for me to explain how one may select citizen representatives in a fair way. For an excellent discussion of citizen representation, though, see Mark Warren (2008). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. This is based on Rawls’s definition of a comprehensive moral doctrine; see Rawls (2005, p. 13). Considering that different Confucian scholars hold similar yet divergent views of the good life and of politics, we may say that *any* Confucianism is a comprehensive perfectionism consisting of a particular Confucian comprehensive moral doctrine. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. For an exception, see Jiang Qing (2013). [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. For useful recent discussions, see Elton Chan (2020); Yutang Jin (2020); Kyung Rok Kwon (2022, esp. chap. 5); and Baldwin Wong (2021). [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. For more details of this line of argument, see Mang (2018, pp. 37–44; forthcoming a). [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Chan (2014) has provided his own account of how Confucianism gives insights into a broad range of social and political issues. But I think that he has not emphasized enough the importance of citizens’ public deliberation for finding out whether and how Confucianism can make positive contributions to their social and political thinking. I will stress the importance of free public deliberation in the conclusion of this article. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Considering that Confucianism has had great influence on East Asia’s historical development, it is reasonable to anticipate that when East Asian people are given the chance to take seriously the wide view of moderate perfectionism, Confucianism will have more influence than most other comprehensive moral doctrines, such as Christianity and Taoism, in public political discussions. This is because of the contingent fact of the great historical influence of Confucianism in East Asia, not because the wide view has a built-in partiality toward Confucianism. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. The original text reads as follows: 故聖人耐以天下為一家，以中國為一人者，非意之也，必知其情，辟於其義，明於其利，達於其患，然後能為之。何謂人情？喜怒哀懼愛惡欲七者，弗學而能。何謂人義？父慈、子孝、兄良、弟弟、夫義、婦聽、長惠、 幼順、君仁、臣忠十者，謂之人義。 [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. See Shaun O’Dwyer (2019, chap. 4) for an excellent discussion of how filial piety can be understood as a virtue based on certain *universal* moral psychological traits. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. For useful discussions, see Quassim Cassam (2019) and Alessandra Tanesini (2021). [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. See, for example, Kevin K. W. Ip (2022). [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. It strikes me as obvious that many prominent Confucian theorists of our time are not very anxious about the real possibility of the political abuse of Confucianism. I have discussed some of the related issues in Mang (2020). For a valuable discussion of how some Chinese officials attempted to promote Confucianism with the aim of consolidating their rule, see Yi-Huah Jiang (2018). [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. It may also be worth noting that although Li considers himself as a liberal neutralist rather than a moderate perfectionist (2020; 2022), he has proposed what he calls “a modified Rawlsian proviso,” which allows citizens to appeal to (some?) moderate perfectionist values (i.e., perfectionist values that are not associated with any particular comprehensive moral doctrine) in public political discussions; see Li (2022, p. 14). However, I think that most liberal neutralists would regard Li’s modified Rawlsian proviso as conceding too much to perfectionism. For a very useful analysis of the idea of liberal neutrality and the idea of perfectionism, see Jonathan Quong (2011, chap. 1). See also Mang and Chan (2022, part 1: “Perfectionism in Political Philosophy”), where we discuss the concept of perfectionism in some detail. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)