

Article

The Family System: A Complexity Perspective

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Abstract: Analyzing the family through the different modes of systemic evolution-self-organization and hetero-organization-offers a novel perspective for understanding family issues, with self-organization being the key to a healthy family. Traditional patriarchal society represents a hetero-organized system, using patriarchal culture as its informational model. Such hetero-organized systems preclude the possibility of dynamic hierarchical transitions within the system. On one hand, this severs the potential for the family's self-organizing evolution; on the other hand, it turns the family into a quasi-closed system isolated from the public sphere, erasing its openness, flexibility, and the individual freedom of its members. The construction of a self-organizing family emphasizes the long-range coherence of information through the division of labor among family members, akin to the high degree of differentiation and specialization seen in tissues and cells within a multicellular life system. A self-organizing family requires agile and transparent information transmission and communication among its members. Each individual, through such communication, finds their position within the family, plays their role effectively, fulfills their tasks and responsibilities, and remains prepared to shoulder various familial duties in times of unexpected events. Naturally, self-organizing families also have their drawbacks. Ultimately, familial harmony and happiness do not lie in-nor is it possible to achieve-a complete separation between the two modes of hetero-organization and self-organization. Instead, they depend on mutual communication and information construction among family members, as well as co-evolution with the self-organizing society as the environment. Only then can reconciliation, cooperation, tolerance, and fulfillment be achieved.

Keywords: Self-Organization; Hetero-Organization; the Philosophy of Information; Justice in the Family

1. Family Issues: A Comprehensive Overview

The concept of the family is a very ancient one. Originating from human society as its basic unit, the family has undergone prolonged transition and evolution, and to this day, no single definition can precisely delineate it. Initially, the concept of the family was closely linked to blood relations, cohabitation, and marriage. From a political standpoint, Anthony Giddens (1938–) considers the family an ideology, a stereotype constructed for purposes of social control [1]. (p. 22)

Philosophical studies of the family are abundant in the West. Notably, Karl Heinrich Marx (1818–1883) and Friedrich Engels (1820–1895) provided meticulous analyses of the family concept. In investigating the essence of the family, they drew upon data from archaeology, anthropology, history, and other disciplines, incorporating the formation and evolution of family structures in Ancient Greece, Rome, and among Germanic peoples. They also engaged with the philosophical thoughts and research of figures like Lewis Henry Morgan (1818–1881), Johann Jakob Bachofen (1815–1887), and John Ferguson McLennan (1827–1881). Critiquing creationist and static views of the family from a scientific and historical materialist perspective, they argued that the family is not static or immutable but rather a crucial social relation of humanity that continuously changes with

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societal development. The two key elements in this definition-change and relation-profoundly underscore the philosophical connotation of the family. Regarding family justice, scholars such as Carole Pateman (1940–), Nancy Fraser (1947–), and Martha Nussbaum (1947–) have each contributed relevant research from their respective perspectives. Previous studies on the family and family justice have largely concentrated within sociology, ethics, and law, and these approaches entail numerous problems.

Defining the family from a societal, particularly legal, perspective narrows its conceptual scope. Law imposes a normative construction on the family, giving rise to the form of the legally sanctioned marital family, which facilitates legal enforcement and social regulation but significantly reduces inclusivity. Many family forms become marginalized, such as single-person households, human-pet families, cohabiting arrangements, same-sex families, non-marital cohabitation, childless couples (DINK families), single-parent families, and long-distance families.

The definitions of the family mentioned thus far are primarily approached from a societal angle. Although they may involve political, economic, or legal domains, or propose numerous definitions based on different focal points, these definitions often suffer from explanatory inadequacy and mutual conflict. Of course, sociology also offers more inclusive definitions: for instance, defining the family as a sharing production and consumption implies a relationship of mutual cooperation and shared life, thereby potentially extending the family concept into a more inclusive and systemic realm.

The Shuowen Jiezi (Explaining Simple and Analyzing Compound Characters) states: "jiā, a dwelling place. From the radical mián." This indicates that the family also encompasses the crucial symbolic environment of a dwelling. *The Book of Rites* records: "Therefore, the sage can take the world as one family, and all within the states as one person, and only then can he act accordingly." This achieves an analogical unification of the concepts of the individual, family, state, and world. Thus, from the perspective of Chinese culture, the family simultaneously represents a systemic relationship and an ethical relationship, expressing a philosophical worldview that understands the world as a hierarchical, progressive system of the individual, family, state, and heaven. Furthermore, the family is not an exclusively human concept; numerous pets enter human families as family members. Advances in animal philosophy have led to the discovery and study of extensive sociality in animals, revealing that they possess not only complex social relationships such as families, mates, and companions, but also prosocial moral behaviors [2]. (p. 5-9)

From the perspective of complexity information theory, one can transcend the limitations of sociology and place the family concept within the entire information system, thereby providing a systemic conceptualization. The scope of the family's definition can vary dramatically based on the strictness or looseness of the defining constraints. It could be confined to a self-sufficient single-person household composed of an individual life form and its appropriate environment, or it could expand to an ecological "big family" comprising multiple symbiotic species and their environment. Therefore, from a complexity perspective, the family should be understood as an ecological community composed of life forms and their environment, an information interaction network, and a complex information system. However, these descriptions alone are insufficient. To explore a precise definition of the family, it must also be distinguished from other similar concepts, highlighting its unique characteristics. It should be a subordinate concept to terms like ecology, society, population, and community, serving to describe the subsystems that constitute these larger systems. Understanding the family should neither be confined to single, simple relationships such as blood ties, activity scope, emotions, gender, or legal statutes; nor should it be limited by the identity or number of its members; least of all should it be restricted to the narrow context of human society. Instead, it should be understood from the perspective of a special type of information interaction system.

Susan Moller Okin (1946–2004) launched a series of critiques against traditional theories of family justice, particularly the treatment of the family within John Rawls's (1921–2002) theory of justice, which generated significant reverberation at the time. Her

critique was primarily from a feminist perspective, targeting both traditional family justice and the prevailing mainstream theories. The awakening and flourishing of egalitarian consciousness and movements for equal rights greatly propelled the development of feminism. Beginning with the Enlightenment, calls for women's rights and gender equality emerged and grew increasingly powerful. Feminist thought represents a complex array of phenomena and ideas aimed at concerning women's status, safeguarding women's equality and rights, and redefining women in the modern era.

Rawls's theory of justice primarily focused on the dimension of social justice, treating the family merely as part of the "basic structure of society." While acknowledging its foundational role for social justice, his theory concentrated solely on the family's impact on the public sphere, failing to deeply analyze the injustices of its internal gender division of labor and power relations. Scholars like Susan Moller Okin and Carole Pateman pointed out that Rawls's theory presupposes equality within the family and tacitly accepts traditional gender divisions, leading to a systematic blind spot in liberal principles of justice regarding gender issues. Rawls is not alone; the theories of others, such as the American thinker Michael Walzer's (1935–) pluralism, complex equality, and theories of group rights, also contain numerous issues worthy of reflection and critique.

2. Reflections on Family Justice Theory from a Complexity Perspective

As discussed above, the family should first be defined from the perspective of information systems, with the human family representing merely one type among many. Second, the concept of family must be distinguished from related notions such as society and ethnic group to highlight its unique characteristics. We may begin by understanding the family as a self-organizing system, exploring its emergence, evolution, and distinctive features. Research on complexity and self-organization has permeated various disciplines and fields of study—for instance, self-organizing phenomena in traffic flow, including congestion and collective perturbations; [3] self-organized clubs established by the elderly for recreational activities; [4] self-organized constructivist learning and play communities among children; [5] biological self-organization in development and cell migration, from single-cell movement to the construction of living tissues; [6] and the exploration of self-organizing mechanisms of consciousness, where self-organized criticality models of brain information processing serve as an innovative theory explaining how consciousness emerges [7]. Simultaneously, self-organized criticality theory can also be employed to explain and predict the evolution and bifurcation of social systems.

2.1. The Family under Hetero-Organization and Self-Organization

The family has long been described as the cell of the social organism or as a form of social organization. If society is understood as a complex system, then the family constitutes one of its subsystems. Historically, primitive social forms originated from the family. Each family is an orderly, complex system composed of social individuals; the family is a dynamic organizational form. Thus, distinguishing families by their degree of organization yields two modes: hetero-organized and self-organized families.

Whether in inorganic nature, living systems, or society, the formation of all ordered structures can be viewed as a dynamic organizational process. Within these processes, two fundamentally different modes of dynamic organization emerge: self-organization and hetero-organization. From the perspective of complexity information theory, hetero-organization can be understood as a process in which model information is directly introduced from outside the system, and the system's structure is constructed according to this model. Such model information may also originate from within the system; for example, when a system has identifiable organizers and those being organized, where the organizers issue command information and the organized receive and execute it to maintain or alter the system's ordered structure, this too qualifies as hetero-organization [8]. (p. 136) This closely resembles the system composed of a controlling and a controlled party described in Norbert Wiener's cybernetics [9]. Examples include constructing a building according to blueprints, managing an army through top-down commands,

educating based on textbook knowledge, or arranging marriages-and thus constructing families-according to parental authority and matchmakers' words.

By contrast, self-organization can be understood as a process in which each element within a system spontaneously constructs a unified information model, subsequently forming an internal ordered structure in accordance with this model. Examples include naturally occurring currents and vortices, spontaneously generated life patterns, armies where every soldier actively coordinates and cooperates in combat, factories operating through collective production and tacit collaboration, and family models characterized by active adaptation, mutual understanding, collective problem-solving, and shared progress.

The key distinction between hetero-organization and self-organization lies in the origin of the information model guiding the dynamic construction of the system. In hetero-organization, the information model either comes from outside the system or consists of pre-existing models used by organizers within the system; because the organized parties do not participate in designing the information model, a gap exists between them and the organizers. In self-organization, however, the information model emerges from the information interactions among all system elements; thus, a self-organizing system not only constructs its own organizational model but also generates, through interaction, the information model that builds the system. Consequently, the creation of any new ordered structural model is achieved through self-organization. Self-organization is the general mechanism for generating new models, whereas hetero-organization typically implements, imitates, or replicates existing information models.

Both hetero-organization and self-organization are processes through which systems dynamically evolve, generate, or maintain ordered structures; they carry no inherent value-based or ethical distinctions of good or bad, right or wrong, and both depend on the system's internal dynamic connections and external openness. In the evolutionary process of any system, hetero-organization and self-organization often co-occur, interpenetrate, and complement each other, with no absolute boundary between them. This has led some scholars to coin compound terms such as "self-other organization." [10] When we examine the family from the perspective of its mode of construction, we find that different modes yield different advantages and disadvantages.

2.2. Reflections on and Critiques of the Traditional Family from a Complexity Perspective

From ancient Greece onward, traditional conceptions of justice have treated the family as a private sphere, distinct from the public sphere, and have presupposed an unequal division of labor between men and women within the family system in areas such as religion, culture, education, and politics. Under patriarchal tradition, men naturally acquired dominance and decision-making power in society and the family; they were implicitly recognized as the higher level within the social and familial system, relegating women, children, and other vulnerable groups to its lower levels. The family system thus exhibited a top-down hetero-organized relationship of domination.

To ensure that the organized parties-under patriarchal tradition, women and others-believed in and submitted to patriarchal culture and its narratives, the organizers (men) created a rigorous theoretical logic and set of rules within religion, culture, education, politics, and ethics to serve as ideological support. Immersed in this information, women became self-organizers within what was originally a hetero-organized system; they internalized traditional culture and education, accepted their identity and gender-based division of labor. This explains why many women have actively cooperated with and defended old traditions and patriarchy, becoming a mainstay in perpetuating religious and traditional culture and joining the ranks of the system's organizers.

Yet such a hetero-organized system cannot be simplistically characterized as good or evil, for we must respect individuals' freedom of belief and choice. Moreover, when an entire populace endorses the prevailing information model of social organization, society may enter a state of self-organization under hetero-organization; even ignorance, prejudice, and backwardness can become people's beliefs and sources of existential

support. All individuals coexist with the cultural information in which they are immersed: people both create social information and serve as its carriers.

John Rawls responded to Okin on this issue: "It is not possible to envisage a simple command establishing an equal gender division of labor in the family... because the division of labor is linked to basic rights and liberties, including religious freedom." [11] (p. 30) Will Kymlicka (1962-) has also discussed issues such as the division of domestic labor and the wearing of veils among Muslim women, emphasizing that rights involving religious and cultural freedom are inviolable.

It may be said that such hetero-organized systems preclude the possibility of dynamic hierarchical transitions within the system. On one hand, they sever the potential for self-organizing evolution within the family; on the other, they transform the family into a quasi-closed system isolated from the public sphere, eradicating the family system's openness, vitality, and individual autonomy. Such systems ultimately tend toward closure and rigidity, constraining the healthy self-organized development of all system elements.

At the same time, hetero-organized families exhibit remarkable stability within the hetero-organized societies that generate their information models—a stability purchased at the cost of sacrificing each element's autonomy. Over time, such sacrifices often become habitual, eventually giving rise to a phenomenon resembling self-organization under hetero-organization. This explains why families and marriages in traditional societies were extremely stable, social customs and family concepts were conservative, defenders of rules were numerous, and family dissolution through divorce or estrangement rarely occurred.

2.3. The Complexity of Constructing Self-Organizing Families

With the development of complexity science, human understanding of the world has broken through anthropocentric limitations and begun to re-examine the world from a systemic and evolutionary perspective. ¹² A family endowed with greater vitality and potential, conducive to the healthy development of all its members, must necessarily be self-organizing. Yet constructing such a self-organizing family is a complex process requiring multifaceted efforts and comprehensive transformation across social, religious, cultural, educational, political, and ethical dimensions.

2.3.1. The Social Dimension of Constructing Self-Organizing Families

At the societal level, building a social system characterized by gender equality, robust human rights, and minimal class disparities provides the foundation for promoting the harmonious development of self-organizing families.

Early education is hetero-organized, as all initial education involves learning, memorizing, and internalizing existing theories, knowledge, and other information models. These models are constructed prior to organizational activity, not generated during it; thus, such education and socialization constitute a hetero-organized process. However, only individuals shaped by hetero-organization can acquire the capacity, within the broader social environment, for self-organizing their own lives and co-constructing various groups with others through self-organization.

Society needs to cultivate talents adapted to its needs. Such adaptation primarily involves two aspects: first, possessing the relevant social skills necessary for survival and participation in the social division of labor; second, having the ability to engage in self-organizing construction with others in society. This capacity must first be rooted in individuals through education, which imparts society's self-organizing rules. Every historical social formation has been accompanied by corresponding educational models with distinct characteristics—for instance, various social models based on religion, ethnicity, political parties, or political philosophies. Educational models across societies include religious doctrines, national histories and identities, cultural traditions, party regulations, and various political philosophies, all serving as hetero-organized foundations that enable individuals to engage in self-organizing activities. As society evolves and transforms, responding to diverse needs for social construction, corresponding educational activities

also change. The more advanced and progressive a society's education, the more advanced and competitive that society becomes.

Education is integral to society; only an advanced society can generate advanced educational concepts and content. Conversely, only advanced educational concepts and content can promote social development and progress. The two are mutually nested and co-evolutionary. Social environments that are more inclusive, freer, richer in resources, and more equitable in distribution are more conducive to the evolution of self-organizing systems. Thus, the key to education lies not in altering its hetero-organized essence but in flexibly adapting educational information models to diverse circumstances, avoiding rigidity and obsolescence, and fostering innovation, self-reflection, and critique. The healthy construction of self-organizing families urgently requires a societal foundation, yet social construction itself is a complex, arduous, and long-term task.

2.3.2. The Individual Dimension of Constructing Self-Organizing Families

At the level of individual cultivation, as noted earlier, individuals must undergo hetero-organized socialization before they can further engage in self-organizing activities with others in society, constructing various groups-including associations, political parties, institutions, enterprises, and, of course, families.

We need to shape social actors capable of participating in social self-organization: individuals who can develop freely according to their own strengths; possess a profound commitment to equal rights; embody compassion and gratitude; maintain optimism through lifelong learning; dare to face change; and embrace cooperation and altruism. Although cultivating these abilities is crucial, meeting these requirements is exceedingly difficult.

Martha Nussbaum has proposed ten core capabilities based on human dignity and freedom: (1) life; (2) bodily health; (3) bodily integrity; (4) senses, imagination, and thought; (5) emotions; (6) practical reason; (7) affiliation; (8) concern for and relation with other species; (9) play; and (10) control over one's material and political environment. These, as Nussbaum notes, are merely basic capabilities, yet many individuals already exhibit deficiencies in them. Cultivating the advanced capabilities required for family self-organization-discussed earlier-is even more challenging. A self-organizing family, precisely because of its uniqueness, must withstand multiple pressures and impacts from individuals, others, and society, posing significant challenges for every member of such a family.

2.3.3. Constructing Self-Organizing Families Free from Constraint

The family model is an ancient and natural biological self-organizing model, far predating society, morality, and legislation. Thus, societal, moral, and legal definitions, constraints, and regulations concerning the family are products of later stages of human society.

As society develops, family models naturally undergo self-organizing evolution and change; diverse family forms emerge. Yet the moral and legal frameworks pertaining to families often lag behind, sometimes conflicting with or obstructing contemporary families themselves. Consequently, the "legal family" represents a narrow understanding of family, incapable of encompassing the full spectrum of familial forms and unable to genuinely promote self-organizing family construction. Law can only serve as an auxiliary; families cannot be constructed solely on the basis of legal rules.

Each family is unique because its members differ, and their identities vary. Human beings are free and unique, and the families they naturally construct are likewise unique. The uniqueness of each family's integrative construction should be respected, and diverse-even conflicting-family models should be accommodated. Simultaneously, the freedom of families to deconstruct and dissolve should be respected, and the inevitable collapse of self-organizing systems should be faced rationally, granting every self-organizing individual the right to freely pursue happiness. The essence of the family should be to serve human happiness, not to function as an instrument of constraint.

In China, for example, it is common for older generations to urge their children to marry and start families promptly. Elders often view their children's family formation as completing their own tasks and fulfilling their parental responsibilities, without genuinely respecting the true wishes of their children as self-organizers of their families. This leads to numerous conflicts and frustrations that could otherwise be avoided.

In summary, promoting the idea of self-organizing family construction requires multidimensional transformation across society, tradition, culture, education, and other domains.

2.4. Reflecting on Okin's Theory of Family Justice through the Lens of Self-Organizing Family Models

While critiquing traditional conceptions of the family, Okin developed a new theory of family justice. Upon careful reflection, however, several significant issues emerge.

2.4.1. The Limits of Introducing Social Justice Principles into the Family

Okin emphasizes the need to dismantle the public-private dichotomy and introduce politics into the family, arguing that the family itself is imbued with political hierarchy. In patriarchal societies, enforced hierarchical gender relations rigidify internal family hierarchies, turning the family into a site of class oppression. Yet we cannot simply transplant social and political rules directly into the family.

Applying social and political rules to the family is dangerous. Lenin, for instance, advocated expanding the public sphere, arguing that everything in the economic realm should belong to the public sphere, leaving no room for private law. He called for expanding state intervention in private-law relations and enlarging the state's power to annul private contracts. This thinking was adopted in post-1949 China, leading to a complete negation of the public-private distinction and bringing family life under comprehensive state control. At that time, citizens' sovereignty over family life was disregarded, and excessive public power intervention in private life caused immense suffering. This situation was soon corrected with the onset of reform and opening-up [13].

Okin also states that her critique of the public-private distinction does not imply a denial of social privacy or a rejection of the reasonable differentiation between public and domestic spheres. Yet the degree of public power intervention is exceedingly difficult to calibrate; it is not merely a matter of caution but involves complex factors. To this day, debates over the boundaries between public and private power have never truly ceased.

2.4.2. Distinctions between Family and Social Construction

Relations among family members differ fundamentally from those among members of society. Within society, individuals, while abiding by the law, often engage in competitive relationships, and such competition is encouraged. This benign, fair competition can promote social self-organization, evolution, and progress; a just society should oppose monopolies. Examples include limited positions in companies, limited demand for products within the same industry, and the exclusivity of marriage choices. Such competitive environments foster positive social development, spiritual vitality, and technological innovation. Yet they also have a darker side: the low standard of living and uncertain future faced by those who fail in competition. Thus, justice in the public sphere lies in ensuring that, while maintaining benign competition, those who lose in various social competitions receive certain protections, reducing social conflict and fostering a harmonious environment.

The family, by contrast, is entirely different. There is no competition among family members. On the basis of gender equality, family affairs can be divided into multiple domains: housework, income generation, consumption, social relations outside the family, care for children, the elderly, and the sick, handling various internal and external family matters, and balancing interpersonal relationships, among others. If one person can handle a particular task, the other need not duplicate it; instead, they can devote energy to other areas. Each task requires specific elements such as expertise, interest, proficiency,

and focus; only thus can tasks be performed optimally. Duplication of effort often leads to waste and conflict.

Okin argues that men and women should share childcare, eldercare, and housework equally, dividing family responsibilities equally [3]. (p. 147) However, gender equality in the family should reside in equality of gender-based division of labor-that is, not presupposing a gendered division of labor through hetero-organization-rather than an equal division of every family responsibility. Family responsibilities are shared, but this does not mean all responsibilities should be equally divided.

2.4.3. Information Interaction and Division of Labor in Self-Organizing Families

"The subsystem in self-organization is a kind of governance that is regular, parametric, intangible, and influential."¹⁴ The construction of a self-organizing family should center on a division of labor among family members characterized by long-range information coherence, analogous to the high degree of differentiation and specialization among cells and tissues in multicellular life systems. Each cell type possesses strong functionality and specialization: skin cells protect the body, intestinal cells manage digestion and absorption, and red blood cells deliver nutrients to all cells. They cannot perform the functions of other cell types, yet when the body encounters problems, they maintain swift information exchange; they constitute, in effect, a vast information network. For example, when the body is injured, all cells respond to the emergency: skin cells tighten the wound and accelerate proliferation, red blood cells gather around the wound to deliver nutrients and aid recovery, and intestinal cells reduce absorption rates to cooperate with the urgent repair process. These bodily emergency responses often involve regulation by multiple hormones or pheromones. All cells are connected in real time through information; everything is shared among all cells, collectively experiencing joys, sorrows, and the world and life. This explains why depression caused by emotional distress can ultimately lead to somatic symptoms: the self-organizing mind and body are one.

In a self-organizing family, agile and transparent information transmission and communication among members are essential. Each person, through information exchange, finds their place within the family, plays their role, fulfills their tasks and responsibilities, and remains prepared to shoulder various familial responsibilities in times of unexpected events. Each element in a self-organizing system should possess a degree of altruism and cooperativeness-that is, not only completing part of one's own work but also contributing to others' tasks, while willingly delegating part of one's work to family members. Only through such close interconnection can a family's self-organizing wholeness emerge. "All for one and one for all," sharing honor and disgrace, weathering difficulties together-these are fundamental characteristics of a self-organizing family.

2.4.4. Limitations of Self-Organizing Families

Self-organizing families also have drawbacks, closely related to their very nature.

First, constructing such a family requires members to possess the qualities and capabilities for self-organization-the capabilities discussed in the previous section. Cultivating such individuals demands substantial social resources for education and upbringing, as well as a society capable of educating and nurturing talents with corresponding self-organizing abilities. In reality, many people lack self-organizing capacity and are easily constrained and guided by hetero-organized models. Moreover, society still falls short in many respects regarding educational accessibility, and a considerable number of educators themselves lack open self-organizing capabilities. This renders self-organization in many families incomplete.

Second, people are constantly changing. These changes embody the freedom, randomness, and uncertainty essential to elements in a self-organizing system. On one hand, such changes enable self-organizing systems to evolve, adapt to environmental shifts, and generate complex diversity. On the other hand, deleterious mutations in self-organizing systems more readily lead to system collapse. For instance, we cannot ensure that all family members will remain altruistic indefinitely; once altruism diminishes or

disappears, this manifests at the family level as dissolution-rising divorce rates, estrangement, family breakdown, and related issues. Clearly, hetero-organized families exhibit greater stability than predominantly self-organizing ones.

Finally, all self-organizing families inevitably incorporate and maintain hetero-organized models-religion, culture, morality, customs, and even concepts and construction patterns of family and marriage, as well as interaction models. These are all hetero-organized: pre-existing social information models used to organize individuals. Thus, self-organizing family models are necessarily built upon certain hetero-organized foundations; the two cannot be completely separated. Familial harmony and happiness do not lie in-nor can they be achieved by-severing these two modes of construction. Hetero-organized moral information models, religious doctrines, or traditional individual responsibility may, in fact, be key factors maintaining family stability. Ultimately, harmony and happiness depend on mutual communication and information construction among family members, leading to reconciliation, cooperation, tolerance, and fulfillment.

If we approach the family from the perspective of ordered dynamic systems and information communication networks, reflecting on Okin, Rawls, and traditional theories of family justice, we find that the families envisioned in these theories are neither absolutely right nor wrong, neither good nor bad; rather, each possesses its own limitations.

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