FAMILY-RELATED PARTIALITY:
COMMUNITARIANISM, CARE ETHICS, AND EARLY
CONFUCIANISM

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Abstract

This thesis attempts to investigate the issue of family-related partiality within the frameworks of three theories, communitarianism, care ethics, and early Confucianism. The issue of impartiality and partiality has been extensively debated in moral and political thinking. On the one hand, impartiality is generally recognized as crucial for moral and political theories. On the other hand, partial treatment for some people is also widely deemed acceptable, if not sometimes morally required. Such views are especially persuasive regarding people who are connected with us in special ways, our fellow countrymen, our neighbors, our friends, our family members. Among the subjects of partial treatment, family members are undoubtedly recognized as the main focus of partiality and the most compelling cases in support of partiality usually involve family members. This thesis will investigate how communitarianism, care ethic, and early Confucianism can address the issue of family-related partiality as well as the similarities and differences among different approaches, which may also help us better understand these three theories.

The discussion of communitarianism in this thesis is limited to the so-called “modern-day communitarianism” mainly started by Charles Taylor, Michael Walzer, Michael Sandel, and Alasdair MacIntyre. Care ethics refers to the moral and political theorizing widely recognized as starting with Carol Gilligan and Nel Noddings. Early Confucianism refers to three major texts, The Analects of
Confucius, Mengzi, and Xunzi.

The examination of family-related partiality in each theory will be further distinguished into two kinds, the general version and the particular version of family-related partiality. While the general versions may reveal the similarities among these three theories in general, especially in relation to the issue of partiality, the particular versions appeal to particular characteristics for each theory.

For the general version of family-related partiality, it is related to the conception of self in each theory, the examination of which will not only show the similarities regarding the conception of self in each theory but also indicate the differences in terms of the extent of partiality toward family members.

Unlike the similar construction of general version of family-related partiality for all three theories, the particular version of family-related partiality varies from one to another, which may better represent the unique characteristics for each theory. For communitarianism, the particular version appeals to the concept of community for communitarianism. For care ethics, the particular version of family-related partiality is related to the idea of caring. For early Confucianism, the particular version of family-related partiality is connected with the idea of filial piety.

In the end, when we consider together the general and the particular version of family-related partiality, we may conclude that communitarianism provides relatively weaker support for partial concerns for family members while care
ethics and early Confucianism both provide stronger support, despite different interpretations of caring and the consideration of other essential ideas in early Confucianism. This is obviously only a preliminary result for an endeavor that can be developed in both directions. It can be further developed into a thorough investigation of partiality and impartiality or comprehensive comparative studies of communitarianism, care ethics, and early Confucianism. This thesis, however, ends here as it aims to further our understanding of communitarianism, care ethics, and early Confucianism in relation to the issue of family-related partiality and partiality in general, which will prepare us to move on to either direction as it is mentioned above.
Chapter One

Introduction

The Nature of the Enquiry

This thesis attempts to investigate the issue of family-related partiality within the frameworks of three theories, communitarianism, care ethics, and early Confucianism. The issue of impartiality and partiality in general has been extensively debated in moral and political thinking.¹ This may not be surprising or by itself endow the issue with extraordinary status, since almost everything in moral and political theory has been widely discussed, but it does suggest that the investigation of this issue is of some significance. There are arguments supporting both impartiality and partiality. On the one hand, impartiality is generally recognized as crucial for moral and political theories. Impartiality is sometimes

assumed to be the defining character to differentiate moral discourse from non-moral ones, or at least a necessary part of moral requirement. Public policies are generally expected to manifest an impartial attitude toward everybody, or at least citizens within the national border. The enforcement of law is closely connected with impartiality to the extent that legal justice is viewed as impartial and judges are required to be impartial to both sides. On the other hand, partial treatment for some people is also widely deemed acceptable, if not sometimes morally required. Such views are especially persuasive regarding people who are connected with us in special ways, our fellow countrymen, our neighbors, our friends, our family members. Among the subjects of partial treatment, family members are undoubtedly recognized as the main focus of partiality and the most compelling cases in support of partiality usually involve family members. One way of examining the issue of partiality in general and family-related partiality in


4 See, for example, Robert E. Goodin, Utilitarianism as a Public Philosophy, pp. 267-268.
particular would be to address the issue in the framework of one particular theory. For example, as the dominant moral and political theory today, liberalism is committed to the ideal of impartiality. For liberalism, the pursuit of impartiality is connected with the recognition of the rights of others and the neutrality of the state with equal autonomous individuals who pursue different plans. The issue of impartiality and partiality in relation to family is addressed by drawing a dichotomy of the public and the private after advocating impartiality, and then, trying to accommodate certain tendencies toward partiality. Although this strategy may prove to be convenient, it faces strong critiques in relation to this (alleged) dichotomy of the public and the private. For example, the dichotomy of the public and the private is argued to be connected with and reinforce the inequalities between men and women in the society. Instead of engaging in

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6 Even so, there is still the tension between impartiality within the national border and that beyond it, which is represented in the debates of liberal nationalism and liberal cosmopolitanism. See, for example, Kok-Chor Tan, *Justice without Borders: Cosmopolitanism, Nationalism, and Patriotism*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

debates on how liberalism can address the issue of partiality, we may also find it inspiring to investigate how such issue can be handled by other theories. For example, among the opponents of liberalism, communitarianism, care ethics, and early Confucianism can provide different strategies to address the issue of partiality in relation to the family. It is the aim of this thesis to investigate how communitarianism, care ethic, and early Confucianism can address the issue of family-related partiality as well as the similarities and differences among different approaches, which may also help us better understand these three theories.

In order to clarify the focus of this thesis and avoid confusion, two points must be made clear at the beginning of this thesis. First, it is not the assumption of this thesis that these three theories can better handle the issue of family-related partiality than other theories, or vice versa. Attempts will not be made to compare these three theories with other moral and political theories, which is necessary to either support or refute either of the above view. Such comparative studies, with communitarianism, care ethics, and early Confucianism on one side, and liberalism, utilitarianism, for example, on the other, are beyond the scope of this thesis. The thesis will limit itself to examining these three theories.

Communitarianism, care ethics, and early Confucianism all provide answers to the issue of family-related partiality within the framework of each theory and they are put together here as it will be demonstrated that they all hold seemingly positive views toward family-related partiality. It does not follow that they all render unconditional support for family-related partiality as each of them imposes
restrictions on the scope of family-related partiality in its own way. The one
difference between them and other moral and political theories, liberalism and
utilitarianism for example, is that they begin with the inclination toward partiality
in general and family-related partiality in particular and move on to accommodate
wider moral concerns while other theories may start with the inclination toward
impartiality in general and move on to accommodate our partial concerns.

Second, the comprehensive comparative studies of these three theories are
also beyond the scope of this thesis. Even for a limited comparative investigation
of these three theories, there are many other perspectives from which we can
conduct such comparative studies and the adoption of family-related partiality as
the focus here does not imply that this topic is necessarily better than other topics
for achieving more in-depth understanding of these three theories. This thesis
merely claims that the issue of family-related partiality would provide a unique
and interesting angle from which these three theories can be studied.

Although both communitarianism and care ethics are modern products from
the west while early Confucianism originated more than two thousand years ago
in China, it will be established in the end that the distance between the modern
and the ancient, between the west and China, is not beyond mutual comprehension,
and mutual appreciation and accommodation is a real possibility. In the
following sections of this chapter, the concept of family-related partiality will be

8 Obviously, it is not the assumption of this thesis that modern western moral and
political theories are only represented by communitarianism and care ethics, or
ancient Chinese thoughts are represented only by early Confucianism.
introduced and reasons will be presented why this term is chosen. Since in fact two--general and particular--versions of family-related partiality will be examined in communitarianism, care ethics, and early Confucianism, clarification is needed to explain the differences between the general version and the particular version of family-related partiality. For the exploration of family-related partiality in three theories, it will be divided into two parts in each theory, with the former focusing on the general version of family-related partiality and the latter, the particular version of family-related partiality. The general version of family-related partiality in each theory is based on the conception of self which would provide the possibility for comparative studies concerning the similarities and differences of the conceptions of self in three theories. It is called the general version because the conception of self in relation to this kind of family-related partiality can be identified not only in all three theories, but also in other theories, and it provides a general starting point for justifying partiality. In contrast, the particular version of family-related partiality is based on an ideal both essential and unique in each theory, that is, the concept of community in communitarianism, the concept of caring in care ethics, and the concept of filial piety in early Confucianism; not all moral or political theories have ideals which support family-related partiality in such particular ways.

Second, the three theoretical frameworks will be briefly presented in which the issue of family-related partiality will be addressed, that is, communitarianism, care ethics, and early Confucianism.
Third, attempts will be made to introduce a common structure for examining how these three theories deal with the issue of family-related partiality through the conceptions of self and its relation to the general version of family-related partiality. Unlike the particular version of family-related partiality in each theory which concentrates on different ideals, the general versions of family-related partiality in all three theories bear close resemblance as they are based on the conceptions of self that are similar in all three theories.

Family-related Partiality

Generally speaking, impartiality is understood as referring to the equal treatment of everybody, which closely connected with the idea that everybody should be given equal moral weight. This is obviously not the only definition of impartiality. According to Marilyn Friedman, impartiality can be defined as referring to “an absence of bias or prejudice.” ⁹ Although equal treatment of everybody may actually suggest the “absence of bias or prejudice,” the worry here is that the definition of impartiality as “an absence of bias or prejudice” may suggest, either implicitly or explicitly, the embedment of positive moral evaluation in this concept, which may hinder the investigation of family-related partiality. It should also be pointed out that the above definition of impartiality at the beginning which incorporates both equal treatment and equal moral weight may

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not be accurate since equal moral weight for everybody does not always go together with equal treatment of everybody as other things are almost never equal.\textsuperscript{10}

In contrast, partiality refers to the departure from impartiality, during which some people are awarded special treatment for reasons often thought to be morally unjustifiable or even reprehensible.\textsuperscript{11}

However, not all departures from impartiality can be called partiality. Sometimes people may put the well-being of others above their own and it is clearly not what we usually include in the category of partiality, at least not the kind of partiality which will be discussed in this thesis, although it departs from impartiality. For example, during the Second World War, some people put the well-being of others above themselves by risking their lives to save Jews under Nazi’s rule.\textsuperscript{12}

\textsuperscript{10} For the purpose here, however, we can simply put aside the possible gap between these two understandings of impartiality without damaging the attempt to appreciate the differences between impartiality and partiality.

\textsuperscript{11} It is only for the purpose of clarification here that I present such dichotomy between impartiality and partiality. It will become clear in the following chapters that such dichotomy is an overstatement, if not wholly misconceived.

\textsuperscript{12} See Kristen R. Monroe and Michael C. Barton, Ute Klingemann, "Altruism and the Theory of Rational Action: Rescuers of Jews in Nazi Europe," \textit{Ethics}, Vol. 101, No. 1, 1990, pp. 103-122. Objection may be raised that for such cases, people did not really put the well-being of others above themselves since they were risking, not sacrificing, their lives for the lives of others’. It should be pointed out that such description of departure from impartiality is for the purpose of theoretical clarification and whether such cases do exist may not prove to be crucial. However, I would like to provide some other relevant and more vivid cases, which may more readily accommodate my description of such departure from impartiality. See Kristen Renwick Monroe, \textit{The Heart of Altruism: Perceptions of a Common Humanity}, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996, pp. ix-x.
In contrast with impartiality, which indicates that everybody should be treated equally, partiality suggests that from the agent’s point of view, other things being equal, she should be given more moral weight or some people, because they are special to her in some way, should be given more weight compared with others. The former kind of partiality is usually called egoism. It is the latter kind of partiality which will be investigated in this thesis.13

It also should be pointed out that departures from impartiality can go both ways. The departure in the other direction, that is, from the agent’s point of view, other things being equal, other people should be given more moral weight compared with the agent herself, such as the case of rescuing Jews during Nazi’s rule, is what is usually meant by altruism. The theme of this thesis, that is, family-related partiality, should be characterized as a specific departure from impartiality, which gives more weight to some people because they are one’s family members compared with the way one treats others who are not thus related to oneself.

It is widely observed that people give special treatment to their family members, their friends, people from the same town, their compatriots, people who speak the same language, people who believe in the same God, and fellow human beings (as compared with animals). But there is a big difference between the reality and the normative. The existence of partial practice does not automatically

suggest its universal acceptance or justification, but it does require explanation, if not justification, of this phenomenon.

Since impartiality is generally cherished in Western liberal moral and political theories, partiality is sometimes given a bad name. For example, A. W. Musschenga claims that “[u]ndoubtedly, impartiality has always been looked upon as one of the defining characteristics of right actions and morally good persons... Becoming a moral person implied: learning to resist and control one’s always present self-regarding tendencies.”¹⁴ Idil Boran also asserts that “[i]t is commonly held that morality requires an agent to be always impartial in assessing the morally right course of action in a given situation.”¹⁵ But questions are raised by our everyday experience that may contradict the above high praise for impartiality and the rejection of partiality. This may explain why theoretical adjustment has been made to accommodate our everyday experience of partial practice. Moral and political theorists have accepted the unavoidability of partial practice for some time. As Friedman admits, “[h]ardly any moral philosopher, these days, would deny that we are each entitled to favor our loved ones. Some would say, even more strongly, that we ought to favor them, that it is not simply a moral option. This notion of partiality toward loved ones is lately gaining wide philosophical acclaim.”¹⁶

As pointed out above, there are many kinds of partial practice according to different recipients of partial treatment. In this thesis, efforts will be made to investigate the partial treatment toward family members, that is, the partiality of children to their parents, and of parents to their children, the partiality between spouses, and those between siblings. Obviously, the relationships between parents and children, between spouses, and between siblings, are not an exhaustive list of all possible family relationships. In different cultures and during different periods, family may have different scopes and include different relationships besides the most basic ones which may be commonly observed. Family members may include grandparents, grandchildren, uncles, aunts, cousins, etc. and for each concrete case, a family may include other kinds of relationships or lack certain of the above-mentioned relationships.

What is family? Various definitions of family have been constructed in an attempt to accommodate various kinds of social institutions that we may refer to as families. The problem has become more complicated since families have changed dramatically ever since industrialization, and even more so in the past several decades. We have seen more and more single-parent families, blended families with at least one spouse who already has a child or more from a previous relationship, homosexual families, families with absent parents and grandparents.

raising the grandchildren, etc. It takes another thesis, perhaps several, to articulate a concept which can accommodate all the changing social realities. What matters here, however, is that a simple definition of family which consists of a couple and children would suffice for the purpose of the discussion of family-related partiality in this thesis. Obviously, there are variations of family which may not fall in the mainstream of this concept, such as adopted family, homosexual family, etc. Whether the final conclusions in this thesis can apply for all kinds of families, or social groups which we usually refer to as families, have important moral and political implications, but it is also beyond the scope of this thesis and will be left for further investigations.

The immediate question in response to the focus on family-related partiality would be: what are the differences between family members and other people whom we also usually give partial treatment, such as people from the same town and compatriots?¹¹⁸

One obvious answer would be blood ties. A big problem with this answer in relation to family is that it would exclude spouses, and adopted family members, all of whom are not considered marginal in thinking about family. However, it is indeed argued that it is the blood ties that unite people together in the family for

¹¹⁸ And people of the same race perhaps. Although I do not want to make some “politically incorrect” remarks, I still would like to point out that, from the agent’s position, what is really troubling about racism is not the different treatment of people, but the assumption of the inferiority of and hatred toward certain people. See, for example, Lawrence Blum, “Racism: What It Is and What It Isn’t”, in Education, Democracy, and the Moral Life, edited by Michael S. Katz, Susan Verducci, and Gert Biesta, Dordrecht: Springer, 2009, p. 77.
Confucianism, which even leads to the resistance to, if not rejection of, the practice of adoption.\textsuperscript{19}

By blood ties, if we refer to the importance of the continuity of certain qualities-carrying genes in relation to their physical manifestation, we as children may be compelled to exclude family members such as parents while contemplating on blood ties. Parents did contribute but would not continue to contribute to the project. In contrast, it follows that we should pay more attention to our children, our siblings (and ourselves) who will contribute to the continuation of these genetic qualities.\textsuperscript{20} Moreover, if what matter are those genes in relation to certain genetic qualities, it may not be a wild guess that genes which carry similar, if not same, qualities can be identified in someone else who is not a family member. If we refer to certain combinations of genes as well as the similarities among them, we can include parents but how exactly can we argue for the similarities between combinations of genes? One possible answer might be that for parent and child, the child can be considered as part “of a continuous biological process” which “began as an episode in the biological life of the


The argument is, however, different from those that concentrate on the fact that genetic parents brought into this world their children who in turn are entitled with some special claims. It rests on the discontinuity of self in different times and draws on the stance that one has reason to be partial to oneself in different times and that genetic similarities between a self in different times (hence multiple selves) and those between one and one’s genetic child are similar. It therefore follows that one has “reason to respond to [one’s] relationship to [one’s] genetic child in a way that is similar to the way in which [one has] reason to respond to [one’s] relationship to [oneself] at other times.” For this thesis, however, it would suffice to claim that we only consider the circumstances where blood ties coincide with closeness, either in the past or in the present, for family members.

Another possible answer toward why family members are different might be that we are more closely related to our family members both physically and emotionally. But what about our close friends as well as our colleagues? We may spend more time with people with whom we study and work, and establish more intimate relationships with our close friends than with some of our family members. In modern industrialized societies, many people go to various places to

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search for employment opportunities and make a living away from their family, which locates people physically farther away from their family members, such as parents, siblings. Besides, even the most optimistic observers cannot deny the existence of dysfunctional families, where family members are abused either mentally or physically or both. The assumption of closer physical and emotional relatedness does not hold for such dysfunctional families.

But the fact that we call these families dysfunctional suggests that we usually have a general ideal of a family implying physical and emotional closeness. This ideal may not be realized in each and every family we encounter. But let us briefly consider other categories of people whom we give special treatment, people who speak the same language, those who believe in the same God, and those who are our compatriots. We would not be surprised to find people in these categories whom we do not like or even resent. Just as these examples would not render the whole investigation on the partiality toward compatriots unnecessary, the special cases of dysfunctional family or other families where members are not partial to one another would not make the issue of family-related partiality misconceived. Perhaps the previous answer for the difference between family members and other groups of people we give special treatment needs a minor revision to avoid possible attacks from empirical evidence: we are simply generally more closely related to our family members both physically and emotionally.

What is more important for this thesis concerning the term “family” is why the term “family-related partiality” is adopted. For example, why not use the term
“family-based partiality” in this thesis? There are three reasons why the term “family-related partiality”, rather than family-based partiality for example, is chosen in this thesis. The term “family-related partiality” emphasizes family relations and refers to the partial treatment toward family members, that is, the partiality of children to their parents, and of parents to their children, the partiality between spouses, and between siblings, in which partiality arises because of the particular family relationships. In contrast, “family-based partiality” may give the misleading impression that the family as an institution serves as the basis of partiality.

The first reason is related to translation in connection with early Confucianism. Unlike the term “family-related partiality”, “family-based partiality” and its possible overemphasis on family as an institution will highlight the difficulties of locating the exact translation of the term “family” in early Confucianism. In modern mandarin, “jia 家” translates “family”. The formation of Chinese character jia 家 is composed of two parts, one referring to the Chinese character for “pig” and the other the character for “house.” It is clear that jia originally refers to the place where pigs are kept and subsequently where one lives. If early Confucian texts are examined, convincing evidence can be found that during the time of these early Confucian texts, jia sometimes refers to the social group including parents, children, husband and wife. In some cases, jia

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also includes the larger social group of relatives and even those not related by
blood or marriage, and it may not be easy to separate these two kinds of meanings
of *jia* at the time. The term *jia* also has other meanings in the texts of early
Confucianism.

The potential problem in connection with the equation of family with *jia* is
that, despite occasions when *jia* in early Confucianism is usually translated as
family, the English term “family” suggests an entity distinctively separated from
other entities, especially the state. In early Confucianism, however, such
separation of family and state cannot be accepted without scrutiny. For the three
main early Confucian texts, *The Analects of Confucius*, *Mengzi*, and *Xunzi*, the
exact character *jia* appears 11 times in *Analects*, among which 4 times it refers to
the nobles (*da fu*) and/or their feudal estate and 7 times it refers to the family in
general, or household. In *Mengzi, jia* appears 31 times, among which 17 times it
refers to the nobles (*da fu*) and/or their feudal estate and 14 times it refers to the
family in general, or household. In *Xunzi, jia* appears around 55 times, among
which 23 times it refers to the nobles (*da fu*) and/or their feudal estate, 10 times

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26 For the former, see *Analects*, 3.2, 5.8, 16.1, and for the latter, see *Analects*, 12.2,
Analects of Confucius: a Philosophical Translation*, New York: Ballantine Books,
1998.

27 For the former, see *Mengzi*, 1A.1, 1B.9, 2A.1, 2A.4, 3A.4, 3B.3, 3B.10, 5B.3,
6B.15, 7A.11, and for the latter, see *Mengzi*, 1A.3, 1A.7, 3A.3, 3B.2, 3B.3, 3B.7,
Press, 1895.

28 See, *Xunzi*, 2.2, 4.7, 6.4, 8.8, 9.2, 9.17, 9.19, 10.11, 11.1a, 13.2, 14.2, 15.5, 17.9,
25.18, 27.17, 27.27, 27.41, 27.61, 29.3. John Knoblock, *Xunzi: A Translation and
it refers to the theories of certain schools of thought,\textsuperscript{29} 1 time it refers to a person’s name,\textsuperscript{30} and 21 times it refers to the family in general or household.\textsuperscript{31} It is difficult to determine in many cases whether \textit{jia} refers to the nobles (\textit{da fu}) and/or their feudal estate or the family in general especially when \textit{jia} is accompanied with \textit{guo} (state) as in \textit{guo jia}. In \textit{Xunzi}, \textit{guo jia} has been consistently translated as nation or state. For example,

\begin{quote}

故人無禮則不生, 事無禮則不成, 國(\textit{guo})家(\textit{jia})無禮則不寧。\textit{(Xunzi, 2.2)}

Thus, a man without ritual will not live; an undertaking lacking ritual will not be completed; and a nation without ritual will not be tranquil. \textit{(Xunzi, 2.2)}\textsuperscript{32}

Hence, [i]n lives without ritual people cannot survive; In affairs without ritual success does not thrive; To states without ritual peace does not arrive. \textit{(Xunzi, 2.2)}\textsuperscript{33}

In \textit{Mengzi}, \textit{guo jia} is usually translated as state and occasionally as state and family. For example,

\begin{quote}

從許子之道,相率而為偽者也, 惡能治國(\textit{guo})家(\textit{jia})？\textit{(Mengzi, 3A.4)}

For people to follow the doctrines of Hsü, would be for them to lead one another on to practise deceit. How can they avail for the government of a State? \textit{(Mengzi, 3A.4)}\textsuperscript{34}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{29} See, \textit{Xunzi}, 8.13, 21.1, 21.4, 22.3f, 22.6a, 25.14, 27.105.

\textsuperscript{30} See, \textit{Xunzi}, 27.58.

\textsuperscript{31} See, \textit{Xunzi}, 4.3, 5.2, 8.2, 9.12, 9.13, 9.17, 12.6, 14.7, 15.1d, 15.1f, 16.6, 19.4c, 21.8, 26.4, 27.35, 27.52, 27.57, 27.91, 27.97, 27.100, 28.3.

\textsuperscript{32} All translation of \textit{Xunzi}, unless otherwise specified, is from John Knoblock, \textit{Xunzi: A Translation and Study of the Complete Works}.


\textsuperscript{34} All translation of \textit{Mengzi} is from James Legge, \textit{The Works of Mencius}. 

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孟子曰：‘人有恆言，皆曰‘天下國 (guo) 家 (jia)’。’ (Mengzi, 4A.5)

Mencius said, 'People have this common saying, “The kingdom, the State, the family.” (Mengzi, 4A.5)

In *Analects*, *guo* and *jia* are occasionally accompanied by each other where *jia* is translated as family, or clan, or household, or noble family. For example,

丘也聞有國 (guo) 有家 (jia) 者，不患寡而患不均，不患貧而患不安。 (*Analects*, 16.1)

I have heard that a nation or a family does not worry that it has little but that little is unevenly apportioned, does not worry that it is poor but that it is unstable. (*Analects*, 16.1)\(^{35}\)

I have heard that those who administer a state or a family do not worry about there being too few people, but worry about unequal distribution of wealth. They do not worry about poverty, but worry about the lack of security and peace on the part of the people. (*Analects*, 16.1)\(^{36}\)

I have always heard that what worries the head of a state or the chief of a clan is not poverty but inequality, not the lack of population, but the lack of peace. (*Analects*, 16.1)\(^{37}\)

As for me, I have heard that the ruler of a state or the head of a household: does not worry that his people are poor, but that wealth is inequitably distributed; does not worry that his people are too few in number, but that they are disharmonious; does not worry that his people are unstable, but that they are insecure. (*Analects*, 16.1)\(^{38}\)

What I have heard is that the head of a state or a noble family worries not about underpopulation but about uneven distribution, not about poverty but about instability. (*Analects*, 16.1)\(^{39}\)

I have heard that the possessors of states or noble families do not


\(^{38}\) Roger T. Ames and Henry Rosemont, Jr., *The Analects of Confucius: a Philosophical Translation*.

worry about underpopulation, but worry about the people being unevenly distributed; do not worry about poverty, but worry about discontent. (*Analects*, 16.1)\(^{40}\)

In the above examples, there are reasons to translate *guo jia* as the combination of two political institutions, where the meaning of *jia* goes beyond what we would usually assign to family. It is not argued here that the above translations are wrong or that they are inadequate to convey the thoughts suggested in these texts, but that they do indicate the difficulties of equating *jia* in early Confucianism with family in English language. It is not suggested here that the exact counterpart of the term “family” cannot be located in early Confucianism, or that such attempts are unnecessary for the studies of early Confucianism. The simple aim here is to avoid the claim that *jia* at the time of early Confucianism is the exact counterpart of family as a modern institution understood in Western social theory in general or in both communitarianism and care ethics in particular. Such claim may endanger the whole thesis by defending, or more precisely lacking the defense of, one unnecessary position, since the concept of family-related partiality in this thesis focuses on the family relationships that can be identified across different cultures, instead of family as a social institution.

Although all three early Confucian texts do not give a specific definition of *jia*, discussion can be found regarding the relationships between parents and children, between husband and wife, between brothers—all of which can be

classified within the relationships concerning the issue of family-related partiality in this thesis.

The second reason is related to the discussion of partiality in communitarianism. Unlike early Confucianism, the discussion of family-related partiality in communitarianism would not face problems of translation. But as it will be shown in the second chapter, the distinction between family as an institution and its members or that between community and its members makes a difference for the discussion of partiality in communitarianism. Accordingly, the adoption of family-related partiality is not simply an arbitrary choice of terms but affects substantial views when dealing with the issue of partiality in communitarianism.

The third reason is connected with care ethics. Like communitarianism, care ethics does not need to worry about translation. But as it will be shown in the third chapter, the dependent relationships in general and the mother-child relationship in particular are at the center of care ethics, both of which do not emphasize the importance of family as an institution.

Communitarianism, Care Ethics, and Early Confucianism

After briefly introducing the concept of family-related partiality, it is necessary to lay down the theoretical scope in this thesis. This part will specify the kind of communitarianism, care ethics, and early Confucianism that this thesis
will examine in addressing the issue of family-related partiality. The discussion of communitarianism in this thesis is limited to the so-called “modern-day communitarianism” mainly started by Charles Taylor, Michael Walzer, Michael Sandel, and Alasdair MacIntyre, all of whom are in one way or another responding to liberal emphasis on individualism in general and John Rawls’ *A Theory of Justice* in particular. Although some argue that communitarian ideas can be traced all the way back to Aristotle, it is generally agreed that communitarianism only established itself in academic discussion in the 1980s.41

If we consider the issue of partiality in general and family-related partiality in particular, it is obvious that among the common threads for communitarians, the issue of partiality is not taken to be one of them. For example, Allen E. Buchanan claims that the common positions for communitarians include the emphasis on the “fundamental and irreplaceable” status of community in the pursuit of the good life, the importance of “full participation in the political community,” and involuntary responsibilities and commitments, the adherence to the social nature of self, and community as among the highest virtues.42 Stephen Mulhall and


Adam Swift make an assertion concerning the common ground of communitarians, based solely on the works of Sandel, MacIntyre, Taylor and Walzer, that they “are united around a conception of human beings as integrally related to the communities of culture and language that they create, maintain and inhabit.”

Daniel A. Bell claims that what unite communitarians, MacIntyre, Sandel, Taylor and Walzer in his analysis, is the view that “the importance of community for personal identity, moral and political thinking, and judgements about our well-being in the contemporary world” should be taken more seriously.

Of course, this fact simply suggests the focus of contemporary communitarianism, which would not prevent us from articulating communitarian attitudes toward partiality in general and family-related partiality in particular. Moreover, attempts should be made to propose the relations between communitarianism and the idea of partiality as it could provide a unique perspective to understand the special features of communitarianism and its similarities with other moral and political theories, which will further the effort to adequately address the issue of partiality. In this thesis, two elements in communitarianism will be investigated in relation to partiality in general and family-related partiality in particular, that is, the communitarian self and the concept of community. The communitarian self will be investigated in relation to the general version of family-related partiality and the concept of community in

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relation to the particular version of family-related partiality. The investigation of
the conception of self in relation to the general version of family-related partiality
will be conducted in care ethics and early Confucianism as well, which will reveal
the similarities and the differences between conceptions of self in these three
theories, especially their relevance to the general version of family-related
partiality. For the particular version of family-related partiality in
communitarianism, the focus will be placed on the concept of community and its
relevance to family. Although family is seldom treated as a kind of community in
communitarianism, it will be argued that such interpretation of community will
not only link communitarianism with family-related partiality closely but also
provide restrictions for how far such partiality can go in communitarianism.

Care ethics has attracted much academic attention since Carol Gilligan’s *In A
Different Voice* and Nel Noddings’ *Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics and
Moral Education*, which are also commonly considered as the founding works on
care ethics.\(^45\) Attempts have also been made to expand care ethics to larger
domains, from personal to political affairs. Since 1980s, it has developed into a
moral and political theory which presents proposals to address problems in
different areas.

One may wonder what characteristics care ethics has that serve to
differentiate it from other western theories. One of the answers claims that there

\(^{45}\) Carol Gilligan, *In A Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's
Development*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982; Nel Noddings, *Caring:
A Feminine Approach to Ethics and Moral Education*, second edition, Berkeley:
are “four major features…partiality, which construes ethics as differentiating between individuals, rather than addressing a standard subject; anti-principlism, which construes ethics as reasoning from particulars, rather than from universalizable principles; emotionalism, which construes ethics as advocating compassionate emotions, rather than rule-guided conduct; and relationism, which construes ethics as referring to relations between individuals as its basic unit of analysis, rather than to each individual strictly.”⁴⁶ Regarding partiality, Noddings’ own elaboration on, and especially limitation of, the scope of caring clearly indicate that she uphold partiality in care ethics, especially partiality toward those near and dear.⁴⁷ Therefore we can conclude that the problem of partiality in general and perhaps family-related partiality in particular must be more prominent in care ethics, compared with communitarianism.

Unlike communitarianism, care ethics does differentiate different relationships within family-related partiality. The relationship between parents and children, or more specifically that between mother and child, is the prototype for care ethics as it represents the absolute vulnerability in the relationship between the cared-for and the one-caring. Such emphasis on this specific relationship will lead to different strategies toward family-related partiality despite care ethics’ similarities with communitarianism. For the discussion of family-related partiality in care ethics, two elements, that is, the concept of relational self and the idea of

⁴⁷ Nel Noddings, *Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics and Moral Education*, p. 112.
caring, will be investigated. For the general version of family-related partiality, the conception of relational self in care ethics will be examined, during which comparison between communitarian self and relational self in care ethics will provide evidence to assess the (different) strength of the general version of family-related partiality in communitarianism and in care ethics respectively. Just as in communitarianism, the investigation of family-related partiality in care ethics cannot be limited to the general version of family-related partiality as well as the concept of self. In order to better understand the attitudes toward family-related partiality in care ethics, it is necessary to carry forward the investigation of the particular version of family-related partiality which focuses on the concept of caring.

Early Confucianism in this thesis refers to the works of Confucius, Mencius and Xunzi, or rather three major texts, *The Analects of Confucius*, *Mengzi*, and *Xunzi*. Reconstruction is always needed in an attempt to investigate early Confucianism partly because of the nature of these works. Throughout these works, the various relationships within family-those between parents and children, between brothers and sisters-are widely discussed in the texts.

Early Confucianism in particular and Confucianism in general are (in)famous for the emphasis on family in moral and political thinking. It is not adequate at this stage to claim that early Confucianism will definitely produce positive effects for contemporary world but such possibility should be left open. Attempts will be made in this thesis to investigate early Confucianism’s implications for
family-related partiality. Two concepts in early Confucianism, that is, a
reconstructed Confucian concept of self and the concept of filial piety (xiao) will
be addressed in relation to the general version and the particular version of
family-related partiality respectively. Unlike both communitarianism and care
ethics, early Confucian interpretation of self is not explicitly discussed in the texts.
Reconstruction is therefore necessary for the investigation of early Confucian self,
which also paves the way for the investigation of the similarities and differences
between Confucian conception of self, communitarian self, and relational self in
care ethics as well as their relevance for the possible different strength of the
general version of family-related partiality in three theories. Just as in both
communitarianism and care ethics, the attempt to investigate family-related
partiality in early Confucianism should not be limited to the examination of
Confucian conception of self. The particular version of family-related partiality in
eyear Confucianism will be examined in relation to one crucial concept, filial
piety.

Self, Identity-Holding, and General Version of Family-related Partiality

The examination of the conception of self will provide a common ground for
all three theories for the discussion of family-related partiality in its general
version. In order to construct a general version of family-related partiality based
on the concept of self in communitarianism, care ethics, and early Confucianism,
attempts will be made to examine the conception of self in each theory as well as their similarities and differences and their relevance to family-related partiality through the idea of identity-holding. This concept which deals with the relation and interaction between self and other with regard to the formation of identity provides a way of justifying family-related partiality.

In her “Holding One Another (Well, Wrongly, Clumsily) In a Time of Dementia,” Lindemann introduces the idea of identity-holding while arguing for identity as an interpersonal achievement. Here the assumption is that one’s identity is defined as the representation of self, which suggests that the kind of identity relevant here is what one usually calls personal identity. According to Lindemann, the notion of identity-holding is mostly narrative, which suggests that it is the stories provided by both the agent and others that constitute one’s identity. Moreover, it is not only moral agents who can contribute to the identity-holding. Objects, things, etc. “can and do help us to maintain our sense of self.”

Clearly, Lindemann rejects the idea that one’s identity depends only on those internal aspects of her existence and has nothing to do with others. She also claims

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49 Hilde Lindemann, “Holding One Another (Well, Wrongly, Clumsily) In a Time of Dementia,” p. 419.
that identity-holding has both a backward-looking and a forward-looking perspective. Such claims indicate that the idea of identity-holding is based on certain theoretical stances, one of which is usually called extrinsic relational views in contrast with the intrinsic relational views, the former of which suggests that what matter for one’s identity are not just her own physical or/and psychological elements, but also how she is related to other people. 50 Another one assumes a four-dimensional view of identity, which adds the dimension of time to the traditional three dimensions (length, width, and depth) of identity, which does not consider the element of time and hence the (dis)continuation of self and identity. Accordingly, identity should be viewed as the whole of identity in each stage throughout the lifetime. 51 Moreover, the idea of identity-holding rests on the assumption and appreciation of the continuity as well as the unity of self as it has both a backward-looking and a forward-looking perspective.

Kukla further differentiates between two kinds of identity-holding, holding somebody as a person, and holding somebody in her particular identity. 52 Kukla suggests that although the distinctions should be made for conceptual clarity, we would not encounter any practical difficulties or cause real harm if we fail to do so, because in real cases these two kinds of identity-holding are inseparable. One cannot be this person without being a person and one cannot be a person without

being this person. But as it will be shown in the following section, this distinction between two kinds of identity-holding actually matters, when it appeals to the distinction between two conceptions of self both of which can accommodate the idea of identity-holding.

Lindemann believes that compared with others, family members are in a unique or advantageous position to contribute to the formation of one’s identity and that family members have special responsibilities to one another’s identity-holding. Although Lindemann does not pay much attention to the distinction between identity-holding as persons and identity-holding as a particular person, it is safe to conclude that family members more significantly contribute to the formation of identity as a particular person. Of course, it does not suggest that family members’ contribution is excluded from the formation of identity as human beings generally since, as it is emphasized above, it is practically impossible to hold somebody in her particular identity without necessarily also holding her as a human being. Although these two kinds of holding, holding somebody as a person, and holding somebody in her particular identity, are closely connected, the distinction would prove to be of significance to assess the different kinds of conceptions of self, in this thesis, the conceptions of self in communitarianism, care ethics, and early Confucianism, in relation to partiality in general and that toward family members in particular through the idea of identity-holding.
Since Lindemann’s essay focuses on the situation of people who suffer from dementia, it does not consider the question the other way around, that is, whether one has special responsibilities to those who contribute to the formation of her identity. If we admit that family members make special contributions to the construction of one’s identity and the formation of identity is morally important, as Lindemann does, it should follow that one is also obligated, or at least allowed, to pay special attention to her family members, since, first, she is in turn in a better position to form the identity of her family members, and second, compared with non-family members, she has significantly benefited from her family members or will benefit from them in the future, or both. This is what I would call the support for the general version of family-related partiality. As there are two kinds of identity-holding, identity-holding as a person and identity-holding as particular person, family members are relevant for both kinds and especially relevant for the second, while even complete strangers, or at least those who are not so close to us, can contribute to our identity-holding in the first kind. It follows that such general version of family-related partiality would not lead to the exclusive concerns for family members since other people also make their contribution to our identity-holding. How far the general version of family-related partiality in each theory, communitarianism, or care ethics, or early Confucianism, would go depends on the similarities and differences of the conception of self in each theory and how they would accommodate the idea of identity-holding, especially its different kinds.
It can be argued that such partiality in relation to identity-holding is a kind of reciprocity since we are making a return for the good we received. It should be noted that others’ contribution to our identity-holding may not be completed and that we are actually returning some favor we have not received yet. By introducing the concept of reciprocity, however, it has become clear that one characteristic of establishing the connection between the conception of self and partiality through identity-holding is to signify the contribution of others to oneself and therefore to render it closer to the idea of reciprocity.

It should be emphasized that for the idea of identity-holding here as well as the investigation of self in this thesis, the focus on self and identity is primarily placed on the metaphysical dimension, the constitution of the self for example, instead of the ethical dimension, such as what moral character one possesses. Here the metaphysical dimension of self and identity excludes the discussion of the moral assessment of self, such as whether certain views should be praised or blamed, whether certain morally evaluative characters should be supported or rejected. It does not assume any standard concerning the continuity of identity, whether physical, psychological, or certain combination of them. It is the ethical dimension of self and identity that may provide stronger support for partiality, although the emphasis on the ethical dimension may encounter serious difficulties, especially for both communitarianism and care ethics. Two arguments can be proposed to connect the ethical dimension of self and identity with the issue of

partiality. The first one is to argue that being partial to certain people is a character trait that should be valued, which belongs to the more general discussion of partiality that will not be investigated here. The second one would be more relevant for the idea of identity-holding, which argues for the value of certain morally evaluative characters of self and hence the importance of others’ contribution to our identity. From this perspective, we should appreciate other people’s contribution to the identity-holding because these people help to develop and/or maintain certain desirable morally evaluative characters. The problem with this kind of argument is that we cannot expect only valuable morally evaluative characters to be formed and held, no matter what standards are given. It would indeed be more persuasive to connect the importance of identity-holding with the value of certain morally evaluative characters and aspects of self, but those characters and aspects of self could function negatively and therefore damage the effort to value the idea of identity-holding.  

It should be emphasized that, even from the perspective of metaphysical dimension, the connection between self, identity and partiality can be investigated from various perspectives other than the idea of identity-holding. For example, different positions concerning the separation of selves may offer different implications for the issue of partiality in general. If we question the distinction between different selves and between the same self in different space and time as

well as the ordinary conviction that there are important differences between these
two kinds of distinctions, we may cast doubt on the plausibility that we would treat different persons differently.\textsuperscript{55} Except for the issue of partiality, certain stance on the separateness of selves may also have implications for substantial moral and political views.\textsuperscript{56}

Two objections, however, can be raised against linking identity-holding with partiality for family members. First, since there are good and bad identity-holding, it seems that it is possible that the more family members contribute to the identity-holding process, the greater harm they will do to that agent. Second, since one’s self and identity will change over time, why should we value those who contribute to my identity-holding as it is?

For the first objection, we should first of all clarify what morally good and bad holding means for identity-holding here. Lindemann introduces the distinction between morally good and bad holding in terms of three criteria.\textsuperscript{57} First, whether those identity-generating stories, either provided by others or the agent herself, correspond to true events that happened; second, whether the identity is constituted appropriately by those stories; and third, whether those stories would prevent one’s identity from continuously moving forward. However, Lindemann


\textsuperscript{57} Hilde Lindemann, “Holding One Another (Well, Wrongly, Clumsily) In a Time of Dementia,” pp. 419-420.
offers no example where the identity itself is morally undesirable and therefore the evaluation of holding this kind of identity is problematic in such circumstances.

Her distinction between morally good and bad holding focuses on the aspect of holding, not identity. Since family members are always better equipped to help form one’s identity, Lindemann’s distinction of and emphasis on morally good and bad holding will only further increase the importance of family members and hence the appreciation of family-related partiality. Although Lindemann’s distinction between morally good and bad holding can be readily accommodated by family-related partiality, there is another kind of distinction between morally good and bad identity-holding that would challenge the status of family members, that is, the distinction which focuses on the part of identity, not holding. This question concerning morally evaluative characters, however, falls in the ethical dimension of the identity, which goes beyond the investigation of partiality here.

It must be recognized that the ethical dimension of others’ contribution to our identity is very relevant to the issue of partiality. If we ignore this side, we may reach the conclusion that even if some people contribute to the negative side of one’s identity, for example, turning her into a thief because it is a “family business,” or abusing her so that she is psychologically damaged, such partiality should still be granted. Although this is a hard problem we have to face in arguing for the general version of family-related partiality through the idea of identity-holding, we may consider the alternative. If we turn to the ethical dimension of others’ contribution to identity-holding, we would be confronted
with the challenge that what really matter are those ethical ideals which may be generally desirable or not.

For the second objection, that is, since one’s identity and self will change over time, perhaps we should not overemphasize the importance of family members’ contribution to identity-holding. If we consider the backward-looking and the forward-looking aspect of identity-holding, from the forward-looking perspective, family members present more significance to the identity-holding because of their usual physical and emotional closeness. And from the backward-looking perspective, if we deem it problematic to emphasize the importance of family members’ contribution to identity-holding, we have to depreciate the importance of everyone else’s contribution to the formation of one’s identity from the backward-looking perspective. To accomplish this goal, we need to emphasize the accidental nature of the identity-holding from the backward-looking perspective, which would prove to be applicable to all partiality theses, not just to the thesis of family-related partiality in connection with identity-holding, since all partiality theses have to pay special attention to some aspects of the moral agent which are accidental or depend on luck.58 For example, our situation in the real world, our relationships with other people, directly or indirectly, are to some extent accidental no matter how much we emphasize the contribution of our voluntary actions. Moreover, if we consider two kinds of holding separately, it becomes

clear that one’s identity as a particular person may indeed change over time but that one’s identity as a human being may not. For example, if we consider our general identity as “an animal that needs to live in a community,”59 or “as a being with desires, interests, and inclinations,”60 it is hardly possible that it will change very soon. The concern for the changing nature of identity may prove to be more relevant for identity-holding as a particular person although such changes should not be overemphasized for identity-holding. Such worries is founded on the stance of taking self as multiple episodes in different times without affirming the continuity and unity of these episodes as belonging to one self.

It must be noted that we cannot establish the connection between conception of self and partiality simply because a general theory, communitarianism for example, fulfills the following two criteria. First, the conception of self is an essential part of this theory. Second, this theory supports or at least lean toward partiality. Regarding communitarianism for example, there are other factors, other than conception of self, which we should examine concerning the issue of partiality. Some of these factors may play more important roles in dealing with partiality, for example, the idea of community for communitarianism, which will be investigated as providing support for a particular version of family-related partiality in communitarianism.

It should also be noted that many versions of self, not just the conception of self in communitarianism, care ethics, and early Confucianism, can accommodate the identity-holding and hence provide basis for the kind of general version of partiality proposed in this thesis, for example, the social self suggested in American Pragmatism and the cultural historical school in Russia in early 20th century. One may even argue that J.S. Mill’s conception of self can accommodate the identity-holding and hence the general version of partiality, if we agree with Andrew Gustafson that Mill’s “view of self is social” and “radically affected by their social surroundings.”

It is the plan of this thesis to show clearly that these three theories, though not the dominant ones in contemporary English-speaking world, can each provide valuable insights on the issue of partiality in general and family-related partiality in particular. Moreover, although these three theories come from different backgrounds, they can be connected through one unique perspective, that is, their implications for family-related partiality, especially the general version of family-related partiality which is connected with the conception of self.

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Chapter Two
Communitarianism and Family-related Partiality

In this chapter, I will investigate two versions of family-related partiality for communitarianism in sequence, the general version based on the concept of communitarian self and the particular version based on the concept of community. The adoption of this structure is meant to accommodate the analysis of family-related partiality for communitarianism on the one hand, and the (possible) comparative studies between communitarianism, care ethics, and early Confucianism concerning the issue of family-related partiality on the other. For both care ethics and early Confucianism, two versions of family-related partiality, that is, the general one and the particular one, will also be constructed to accommodate comparative studies, focusing especially on the similarities and differences regarding the general version in each theory. For the investigation of family-related partiality for communitarianism in this chapter, it will be argued that communitarian support for family-related partiality is both indirect and weaker, compared with both care ethics and early Confucianism. It is weaker in the sense that for the general version of family-related partiality, the communitarian conception of self does not provide sufficient support through identity-holding, especially identity-holding as a particular person. It is indirect in the sense that for the particular version of family-related partiality, communitarian support depends on the analysis of the conception of community, in which the support for family-related partiality is derived from family being a kind of community. One
important note needs to be made at the beginning. The aim of this chapter is to investigate the issue of family-related partiality in communitarianism, not to argue for the absolute priority of partiality toward family members. The investigation of family-related partiality in communitarianism does not by itself suggest the distinctive or excessive partiality toward family members.

In the first part of this chapter, I will engage in the discussion of the conception of self in communitarianism in an attempt to argue for the general version of family-related partiality. The investigation of communitarian self will be limited in this chapter to the works of Michael Sandel, Alasdair MacIntyre, Charles Taylor, especially Sandel’s *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice*, MacIntyre’s *After Virtue: A Study of Moral Theory*, Taylor’s *Sources of the Self*, as well as Daniel A. Bell’s *Communitarianism and Its Critics*, which is constructed largely on Sandel’s, Taylor’s and MacIntyre’s works and openly advocates communitarianism. The interest in the conception of self can partly explain this choice since all these scholars either pay special attention to or can be understood as elaborating on the concept of self while engaging in the debates concerning communitarianism. It will be argued that according to the concept of identity-holding as well as the differentiation of two kinds of identity-holding, as a person and as a particular person, the communitarian conception of self does support the general version of family-related partiality,

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especially by appealing to identity-holding as a person. However, communitarian self
does not adequately accommodate identity-holding as a particular person. Moreover,
even for the identity-holding as a person, communitarian self does not emphasize the
status of family or family members, both of which limit the strength of the general
version of family-related partiality for communitarianism.

In the second part of this chapter, attempts will then be made to articulate the
particular version of family-related partiality based on the conception of community
for communitarianism. This particular version of family-related partiality would
suggest that family members should be given special concerns based on the concept
of community, that is, because they are our fellow members in the same community.
The following issues therefore need to be addressed. First, the investigation of
partiality based on the concept of community. Second, whether family is a kind of
community for communitarianism. It will become clear that these two issues depend
on the analysis of the conception of community as well as the scope of community for
communitarianism. It will be argued that communitarianism can accommodate the
particular version of family-related partiality by treating family as a kind of
community. In the meantime, it will be shown that although the attempt to investigate
the scope of community is intended to serve the particular version of family-related
partiality, it also reveals the limits of partiality toward family members as there are
many communities for communitarianism in terms of their scope, for example,
national community, global community, and the particular version of family-related
partiality must therefore recognize the partial considerations for these kinds of
community as well.

Unlike the lack of discussion of the relations between partiality and the conception of self, the correlation between partiality and community has been discussed in communitarianism. Michael Walzer’s Doctrine of Supreme Emergency (DSE) will be examined as an argument for communitarian partiality based on community. Walzer’s communitarian partiality reveals some theoretical ambiguities in communitarianism in general, in this case, the lack of specification of the concept of political community. The argument for or against DSE per se or as a version of communitarian partiality necessitates the elaboration on the concept of political community which is not explicitly put forward or argued for in DES.

Along with the examination of the concept of community, steps will also be taken to discuss the scope of community in order to accommodate family-related partiality in light of Walzer’s construction of communitarian partiality based on the concept of community. Following the method of DSE, if we want to argue for family-related partiality, we need to provide an argument that family can be treated as a kind of community as political community is treated in communitarianism. In the course of the examination of the scope of community, the issue whether there is a global community will be raised and how it will be addressed will also affect the strength of the particular version of family-related partiality for communitarianism.

Communitarian Self and the General Version of Family-related Partiality
In order to argue for the general version of family-related partiality for communitarianism based on the idea of communitarian self, we need to accomplish it in two steps. First, we need to investigate communitarian construction of self and attempt to reach a conclusion which may be acceptable for communitarianism in general. Despite their different opinions of communitarian discourse, Sandel, Taylor, MacIntyre as well as Bell’s views on self will be examined in relation to communitarian self, which will lead to the conclusion that communitarian self is generally considered to be socially constituted.

Second, we need to identify the connections between family-related partiality and communitarian conception of self in light of the idea of identity-holding, and moreover, how far the communitarian self can adequately accommodate two kinds of identity-holding, that is, holding somebody as a person and holding somebody as a particular person. It will become clear that in accordance with the status of family or family members for the communitarian self, the strength of the general version of family-related partiality for communitarianism is rather weak, especially compared with that in care ethics and early Confucianism which will be discussed in the following chapters.

Before presenting his own idea of self, Michael Sandel describes the target of his criticism, which is labeled as the "unencumbered self" or "deontological self." The unencumbered self is supposed to be “prior to and independent of purposes and ends”.  

65 Michael Sandel, "The Procedural Republic and the Unencumbered Self", in Communitarianism and Individualism, edited by Shlomo Avineri and Avner De-Shalit,
given independently of the things I have, independently, that is, of my interests and ends and my relations with others.”\textsuperscript{66} This kind of self suggests that "the subject, however heavily conditioned by his surroundings, is always, irreducibly, prior to his values and ends, and never fully constituted by them.”\textsuperscript{67} For this kind of self, the relationship with others and the membership within a certain community do not make much significant difference to its identity. All these belong to the category of individual choice, things that would not influence our fundamental understandings of the moral subject, as "we are distinct individuals first, and then (circumstances permitting) we form relationships and engage in co-operative arrangements with others.”\textsuperscript{68}

In response to this kind of self, Sandel proposes two conceptions of self, the intrasubjective conception of self and the intersubjective conception of self.\textsuperscript{69} The intrasubjective conceptions of self suggest that the moral subject will change all the time in response to surroundings that exercise significant power on it. The self is not something that is formed and will stay that way. As its commitment, membership, loyalty, dependency, or other elements change, it will also experience constant changes. Here Sandel does not explain the criterion for determining whether a self after significant changes can be still treated as the same one. But it seems that he employs the simple criterion of physical continuity. Significant psychological changes,

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\textsuperscript{66} Michael Sandel, \textit{Liberalism and the Limits of Justice}, p. 55.
\textsuperscript{67} Michael Sandel, \textit{Liberalism and the Limits of Justice}, p. 22.
\textsuperscript{68} Michael Sandel, \textit{Liberalism and the Limits of Justice}, p. 53.
\textsuperscript{69} Michael Sandel, \textit{Liberalism and the Limits of Justice}, p. 63.
such as “religious conversion”, would not hurt the individuality of a certain self but the question whether psychological continuity matters to identity is still left unexplored.

While intrasubjective conceptions of self can be understood to be in favor of the continuity of the moral subject, intersubjective conceptions of self refer to the attachments of self to others:

To imagine a person incapable of constitutive attachments such as these is not to conceive an ideally free and rational agent, but to imagine a person wholly without character, without moral depth.70

In discussing intersubjective conception of self, Sandel explicitly talks about the relationships between the moral subject and other social groups, such as family, community, or nation and emphasizes the importance of such memberships for the constitution of self.71

In his description of the desirable conception of self, MacIntyre turns to the ancient Greek understanding of the moral subject or rather his interpretation of the moral subject in ancient Greece, where “it is through his or her membership in a variety of social groups that the individual identifies himself or herself and is identified by others.”72 The adequate conception of self must be connected with its

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72 Alasdair MacIntyre, After Virtue, p.33. Although MacIntyre presents his conception of self based on his critique of some modern self which is contrasted with his description of self in the ancient time, it should be emphasized that his conception of self does not depend on whether his description of lives in ancient time is adequate or not in anthropological term. Whether one agrees with the veracity of his description of the ancient self should not be linked with her attitudes toward MacIntyre’s proposal of the self. For the investigation concerning the veracity of MacIntyre’s presentation of traditional self, see David Burchell, "Civic Personae: MacIntyre, Cicero and Moral Personality," History of Political Thought, Vol. 19, No. 1, 1998, pp. 101-118.
social roles and memberships but it does not follow that it is just the sum of these roles for "the self, as distinct from its roles, has a history and a social history." To emphasize the inseparable connection between the morally evaluative characters and aspects of self with the social groups that it is a member of, MacIntyre introduces the concept of setting. A setting refers to,

[A]n institution, it may be what I have called a practice, or it may be a milieu of some other human kind. But it is central to the notion of a setting as I am going to understand it that a setting has a history, a history within which the histories of individual agents not only are, but have to be, situated, just because without the setting and its changes through time the history of the individual agent and his changes through time will be unintelligible.

MacIntyre’s views of self can also be understood as supporting the continuity of personal identity through his discussion of the unity of human life. The unity of a human life refers to, on the one hand, the connection between the moral subject and its roles, and on the other hand, the connection between selves in different periods. The continuity of self cannot be understood without social groups, such as neighborhood, nation, etc., which form its setting. MacIntyre indeed emphasizes that it is simply a fact that “the self has to find its moral identity in and through its membership in communities such as those of the family, the neighborhood, the city and the tribe.”

While MacIntyre proposes the concept of setting to stress the connection between the morally evaluative characters of self and social groups it belongs to, Charles

73 Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, p. 31.
74 Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, p. 221.
77 Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, p. 221.
Taylor introduces the concept of framework before articulating his concept of self. Frameworks are inevitable for everybody as they “provide the background, explicit or implicit, for our moral judgments, intuitions, or reactions in any of the three dimensions” and therefore it is impossible “to conceive a person or even a culture which might so understand this predicament as to do altogether without frameworks, that is, without these qualitative discriminations of the incomparably higher.”

Even if it is established that no one can escape the frameworks, it does not mean that the interpretation of these frameworks is unitary. More importantly, the same framework for different agents does not suggest the same attitudes toward it, for example, acceptance or denial of it to some extent. It is possible for people to step outside the frameworks which they are born into, but it does not follow that they could just get rid of all frameworks.

Taylor places enormous emphasis on the importance of language for the moral subject. For him, “to study persons is to study beings who only exist in, or are partly constituted by, a certain language.” It is through the shared language that the moral subject can connect with others. A language obviously cannot be maintained by a single self, which also indicates the status of self as one among others.

Besides Sandel, MacIntyre, Taylor, who either explicitly reject the label of communitarian or do not explicitly identify himself with it, we may consider Daniel Bell, who clearly identifies himself as a communitarian and pays attention to the

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80 Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, p. 35.
problem of self.\textsuperscript{81} For Bell, human beings are "first and mostly, social beings, embodied agents."\textsuperscript{82} This social, embodied self presents its characters -- not necessarily morally evaluative characters -- more clearly in the unreflective activities which constitute most parts of the everyday life.\textsuperscript{83} The overwhelming presence of this kind of unreflective activities stand in sharp opposition to the idea that we are agents who voluntarily decide what to do and how to act.\textsuperscript{84}

Sometimes the “ordinary way of coping with things” would prove “to be insufficient”, that is when the reflective way of thinking comes in.\textsuperscript{85} We have to make decisions, sometimes very important ones, in a reflective way. But just like unreflective activities, which are controlled by the social world where we reside, reflective decision-making cannot ignore the social world either:

\begin{quote}
[O]ne's social world...also sets the authoritative moral horizons within which we determine, as you said, 'what's worth doing, achieving, or being'. We cannot make sense of our moral experience unless we situate ourselves within this 'given' moral space.\textsuperscript{86}
\end{quote}

In sum, it seems that we can conclude from the above presentation of communitarian discussions of self that communitarians assert that self is enormously influenced, or even limited, by the social groups to which it belongs. In a more communitarian way, we may say that self is socially constituted.

\textsuperscript{81} Bell points out that MacIntyre rejects the label of communitarian, while Taylor and Sandel lean toward communitarianism without explicitly including themselves in it. Daniel A. Bell, \textit{Communitariansim and Its Critics}, p. 17n.14. See also Stephen Mulhall and Adam Swift, \textit{Liberals and Communitarians}, p. xv.
\textsuperscript{82} Daniel A. Bell, \textit{Communitariansim and Its Critics}, p. 31.
\textsuperscript{83} Daniel A. Bell, \textit{Communitariansim and Its Critics}, pp. 32-33.
\textsuperscript{84} Daniel A. Bell, \textit{Communitariansim and Its Critics}, p. 39.
\textsuperscript{85} Daniel A. Bell, \textit{Communitariansim and Its Critics}, p. 39.
\textsuperscript{86} Daniel A. Bell, \textit{Communitariansim and Its Critics}, p. 37.
Such a conclusion regarding the social constitution of communitarian self can be further differentiated as two related claims. One claim is that communitarian self emphasizes that morally evaluative characters and aspects of self are socially constituted and the other is that self is socially constituted with no emphasis on the content of its morally evaluative characters and aspects. Although it seems that the two claims overlap, that is, the recognition of the social constitution of self being necessary for the recognition of the social constitution of the morally evaluative characters and aspects of self, and the recognition of the social constitution of the morally evaluative characters and aspects of self being sufficient for the recognition of the social constitution of self, the first claim might lead to the conclusion that communitarian evaluation of self is derived from the assessment of these morally evaluative characters and aspects and hence the burden of defending these morally evaluative characters and aspects for communitarianism. Although such defense, if successful and persuasive, would be beneficial for the evaluation of self and identity and hence the support for partiality through identity-holding, it may not always succeed since there are bound to be some morally evaluative characters and aspects of some people that cannot be defended. The failure of such defense would damage the effort to argue for a general version of family-related partiality based on the concept of self. In the meantime, it suffices for communitarian self to maintain the second claim, that is, the social constitution of self without any emphasis on the morally evaluative characters and aspects, in order to accommodate the general version of family-related partiality through identity-holding.
It should be pointed out that for communitarian self, the emphasis may be seemingly on the morally evaluative characters and aspects of self which can be most straightforwardly supported by Taylor’s attempts to link identity with his idea of strong evaluation, that is, “discriminations of right or wrong, better or worse, higher or lower” in the moral domain. However, the interpretation of communitarian self without affirming relevant morally evaluative characters and aspects can be supported in communitarian discourse on self. For example, Bell explicitly talks about communitarian self without referring to its morally evaluative characters:

Take the following example-when riding a bicycle, you wouldn’t think of yourself as a self-sufficient subject who has the experience of riding a bicycle and thereby causing the bicycle-riding; you just do what’s appropriate as prescribed by the structure of the situation. The same is true, I venture, when you walk, dress, play games, and so on.

Now let us turn to the examination of the connection between communitarian self and partiality toward family members through the idea of identity-holding. The recognition of the social constitution of self is compatible with the idea of identity-holding which suggests the importance of others to one’s identity. Since communitarian self recognizes family members’ contribution to one’s identity-holding as it emphasizes the social constitution of self, we may conclude that it also suggests partiality toward family members. However, such recognition does not endow the family or family members with special status regarding the social constitution of self, since non family members could also contribute to our identity-holding. This lack of special status of family members differentiates communitarianism from care ethics

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87 Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, p. 4.
88 Daniel A. Bell, *Communitariansim and Its Critics*, p. 32.
and early Confucianism regarding the general version of family-related partiality based on the concept of self.

If we consider the status of family members in relation to communitarian self, it becomes clear that they are not emphasized compared with other contributors, especially considering the emphasis in communitarian discourse on factors such as settings, frameworks, language, etc., all of which go beyond the range of family or family members. If we further take into consideration two kinds of holding, that is, holding somebody as a person and holding somebody as a particular person, it seems that the communitarian self provides less support for holding somebody as a particular person compared with holding somebody as a person, because of its emphasis on ideas such as setting, history, framework, language, etc., from the perspective of communities. It therefore suggests that the general version of family-related partiality for communitarianism is relatively weaker, compared with conceptions of self in care ethics and early Confucianism as it will be shown in the following chapters. It should be emphasized that the above view does not entail that communitarian self cannot address holding somebody as a particular person, as objections can be raised that everyone has her particular settings, history, framework which make her unique. However, such uniqueness is still relatively limited since those factors may only identity a person to the extent as a member of a particular community (or members of communities as it will be shown that there are many kinds of communities) and such particularity therefore pays less attention to family.

Therefore, even if we recognize the general version of family-related partiality
for communitarianism based on the concept of self, this kind of family-related partiality is not necessarily strong enough to override other broader considerations since the basis for this general version of family-related partiality, that is, the concept of communitarian self, may suggest that partiality toward family members should be extremely limited, or at least compared with that in care ethics and early Confucianism.

Although the general version of family-related partiality for communitarianism does not extend too much concern for family members, we cannot right now form our opinions concerning family-related partiality regarding communitarianism. We need to consider the concept of community for communitarianism which will form a particular version of family-related partiality. The conclusions concerning family-related partiality for communitarianism must consider both the general version of family-related partiality and the particular version of family-related partiality.

In the following part of this chapter, efforts will be made to investigate the particular version of family-related partiality for communitarianism based on the concept of community. Unlike the lack of explicit discussion of the connection between self and partiality in communitarianism, there are proposals concerning the relation between community and partiality in communitarianism which will be examined. First, Walzer’s Doctrine of Supreme Emergency (DSE) will be examined as a proposal for partiality based on the concept of community. It will become clear that such a proposal depends on the adequate conception of political community. Second, for the particular version of family-related partiality, attempts need to be
made to investigate the scope of community as well as its relevance to family. It will be argued that the scope of community should be extended down to the family and up to the global community, which will on the one hand support partiality toward family members, and on the other, limit the extent of this kind of partiality.

Walzer’s DSE as a Version of Communitarian Partiality

Michael Walzer’s DSE can be examined as a proposal for the connection between partiality and communitarianism, or rather the concept of community. I will present Walzer’s construction of DSE in accordance with his claim that DSE is a communitarian principle. Then, efforts will be made to investigate whether Walzer’s claim can withstand scrutiny, especially his emphasis on the value of political community. Instead of focusing only on the value of political community, efforts must be made to further identify the three different entities at stake, the political community, the set of its members, and the ideals cherished in the political community. In the end, it will be pointed out that Walzer’s communitarian partiality is unsatisfactory and it cannot achieve Walzer’s goal even after revision.

DSE is used by Michael Walzer to explain British bombing of German cities in 1940 and 1941. During those months, Nazi Germany occupied vast areas from Poland to the Atlantic Ocean. After her defeat in France, the British army would face

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great difficulty in defending the island if German troops had landed. In those days, Nazi bombing was fierce and innocent civilians died almost every day. Disgusted by Nazi policies, especially her breach of the ideal of democracy, British government declared no negotiation with Nazi Germany. That is taken by Walzer as the situation called Supreme Emergency which exists “when deepest values and collective survival are in imminent danger.” British government made the decision to bomb German cities without the aim to destroy any specific military targets. The aim was to impair the Germans’ will to continue the war by killing innocent German civilians. DSE is constructed to explain and defend British government’s decision.

DSE is easily taken as “an argument from consequences: if we do not engage in terror-bombing, the consequences will be, as Walzer put it above, ‘immeasurably awful’... the end, so it might be said, of Western civilization.” But if we are to understand DSE as a communitarian principle as well as an extreme case of communitarian partiality, the essence of DSE, on the surface, is to assign special value to political community, which propels us to override some basic moral principles while maintaining that these moral principles should still be honored in normal circumstances. If we want to question the tenability of DSE, we need to examine these two parts of DSE, that is, the special value of political community in its particularity and the endorsement of these moral principles.

Even if we agree with Walzer’s views on political community, it does not mean

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that his DSE can be justified solely on this ground. For the sake of argument, I will only present what we usually call non-combatant immunity as one of the moral principles which should be both honored and overridden in DSE. While Walzer claims that soldiers are justified targets to kill during the war, he believes that non-combatants cannot be taken as deliberate targets.\textsuperscript{93} Non-combatant immunity is important to DSE because there is no need for DSE if non-combatant immunity is thrown away. The omission of the discussion of non-combatant immunity also explains why another way to defend British bombing is not discussed here, that is, by appealing to self-defense. Arguments can be made that the British were acting on self-defense since those German civilians made their contribution to Nazi invasion. However, this kind of self-defense argument is founded on the rejection of non-combatant immunity, or rather the distinction between soldiers and civilians, which as stated above will not be investigated here.

Although Walzer is simply talking about political community in DES, we need to recognize the differences between the political community, the set of its members, and the ideals cherished in the political community in order to understand the foundation of his version of communitarian partiality. First, I will try to differentiate political community from the set of its members. Then I will try to ascertain the distinction between the ideals cherished in the political community and the other two elements. It will become clear that how to address the relationship between political community and its ideals is connected with the definition of political community in particular and

\footnote{\textsuperscript{93} Michael Walzer, \textit{Just and Unjust Wars}, pp. 138-142.}
If we separate political community from its members, we need to ask the question: what is the relation between a political community and its members? It must be emphasized that this question is different from the one about the relationships between the self and the communities it belongs to in communitarian discourse, which usually assumes the existence of this self as a member of certain communities. But for DSE, it is a real possibility that some members of the political community, even the agent herself, may cease to exist, for example, to be killed during the war. It sounds bizarre, but for the purpose of examining Walzer’s version of communitarian partiality, we need to consider the possibility that the self may cease to exist in order to clarify what is actually at stake in DSE.

94 This kind of relationships between the self and the communities it belongs to, with the usual assumption of the existence of the self, will be discussed later in this chapter. One of the proposals for this question is offered by Amitai Etzioni, which is clearly very different from the following discussion of the relation between political community and its members here. It states that the relationship between the self and the communities it belongs to refers to “a deep-seated, unexpungeable, often productive tension,” which “is the result of the tendencies of at least some individuals to seek to expand their realm of unprescribed behavior and to change the community to reflect more fully their values and interests while the community attempts to extend its social/moral prescriptions and to reformulate the individual members in line with its values and genuine or perceived needs.” Amitai Etzioni, “A Moderate Communitarian Proposal,” *Political Theory*, Vol. 24, No. 2, 1996, p. 157. This distinction between different kinds of questions concerning the relations between the community and its members does not attract much attention in communitarian articulation. For example, Henry Tam claims that “[p]hilosophical discussions of the relationships between individuals and communities have not been of much help in clarifying this matter as they have remained at generally an abstract level.” Henry Tam, *Communitarianism: A New Agenda for Politics and Citizenship*, New York: New York University Press, 1998, p.219. Obviously, such statement does not consider the situation like Walzer’s DSE which renders an abstract discussion necessary as it will be presented here.
If we consider separately a political community and its members, clearly those members of British political community during the Second World War are not the same people who are the members of British political community now and we can rightly claim that the British political community then is not the same as the British political community now. But does it follow that Nazi Germany actually succeeded or that the political community at the center of the example in Walzer’s communitarian partiality was destroyed? Obviously, no one would accept such seemingly absurd conclusions. The relation between the British political community and its members can be said to be similar to the relation between a group and its members where the group is “constituted by members, but… allow[s] for fluctuation in members.”

Daniel Stateman, in his discussion of supreme emergency, poses similar ideas, where he uses the term “collective” instead of “group”:

[\text{T}]hough collectives are made up of individuals, they are not identical to any list of the individuals that constitute them.

The British political community can accordingly survive the change of its members and it is not identical to the set of its members. What identify the British political community and differentiate it from other political communities include other elements besides its members, such as the social and economic structures, political institutions, literature and art, etc., which would propel us to turn to the distinction between political community and the ideals cherished in it. Although I would not make an exhaustive list of elements that represent the value of political


community, I will in this section choose some elements pertaining to the analysis of this communitarian version of partiality, that is, the ideals cherished in the political community. In Walzer’s application of the DSE, there are two relevant ideals, that is, democracy and waging a war with just cause. We will also find out later in the discussion of the concept of community that the distinction between the political community and the ideals upheld in this community, or the lack of these ideals, is closely related to the definition of political community in particular and community in general.

For the case used by Walzer to put forward his version of communitarian partiality, if we consider from the side of the Germans instead of the British, we may arrive at a conclusion that would be rejected by Walzer. During the last year of the Second World War, Nazi Germany was on the edge of collapse. We may argue that this political community was endangered. Their way of life was threatened. Can Nazi Germany exercise Walzer’s communitarian partiality in general and its extreme application as DSE? Can Germans show their partiality for their political community as the British do to their political community as endorsed by Walzer?

I seriously doubt that Walzer would agree that Germans can use DSE or show their partiality to their political community to defend their actions if they want to deliberately kill innocent people, for example, to launch mass terrorist attacks in the US and Britain or to sink merchant ships even though they know that there are only civilian passengers on board, in order to defend their political community.

In order to better understand what Walzer really values in his communitarian
partiality, we need to consider the case of terrorism and his critique of it. It seems that terrorism, during some historical periods and in some places, did have popular support. Can they appeal to the values of their political community? Can these terrorists claim that ideals upheld in their political community, are in immediate danger? What if “the terrorist group is part of a given collective and is conceived by the members of that collective as acting for the sake of their collective goals?”

Walzer’s attitude toward terrorism, however, is very different from his position represented in DSE. Walzer objects to any attempts to find excuses for terrorism and he claims that terrorism is never “a politics dependent on mass support,” but only “a politics of an elite.” So what allows Walzer to support communitarian partiality in general and DSE in particular on the one hand, and to reject terrorism on the other?

Perhaps there are mainly two reasons for Walzer to defend British bombing German cities during 1940 and 1941, that is, Britain is a political community that can be called a democracy and Britain has a just cause for the war. Such answers would support the previous claim that Walzer’s communitarian partiality fails to identify the distinction between the ideals cherished in a political community and both

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98 Michael Walzer, Arguing about War, p. 61.
100 John Rawls believes that war is impossible between liberal democratic societies. But this kind of conclusion is not followed by the declaration that liberal democratic countries always have the just causes when engaged with non-liberal countries. Besides, Walzer believes that ‘no single form of government seems particularly prone to aggression’. So here I will address liberal democracy and just causes respectively. See John Rawls, The Law of Peoples, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999, p.8; Walzer, Just and Unjust Wars, p. 114.
this political community and its members. It is not just the survival of any political community or its members which justifies the DSE; the ideals of democracy and just cause for war, which distinguish the British political community from Nazi German political community, allow the former but not the latter to invoke the DSE.

Walzer’s appreciation of democracy can explain his seemingly contradictory views on terrorism. As it is pointed out above, sometimes it seems clear that terrorists can claim that they are fighting to defend their political community. But according to Walzer, “other strategies are available if you are opposing liberal and democratic states and that terrorism never works against totalitarian states.” 101 So if the enemies do embrace the ideal of democracy, there is no need for terrorism. If the enemies do not, there are still not enough reasons to turn to terrorism as it would not work. One would wonder, in the British bombing case, how killing German citizens could accomplish any goals since Nazi Germany is a totalitarian state immune to popular pressure.

If both the case of bombing German cities in Second World War and the case of terrorism support the claim that Walzer’s communitarian partiality is justified only for democratic communities, the case of bombing German cities alone would support the claim that the ideal of waging a war with a just cause is also at the center of Walzer’s communitarian partiality. Perhaps there is another reason for Walzer to defend Britain while criticizing Nazi Germany for the similar actions, that is, Britain had a just cause for the war. But it seems that Walzer would not want to admit it, for he believes that

the *Jus ad Bellum* should be separated from *Jus in Bello*.

If we fail to differentiate the ideals cherished in a political community from this political community, we may reach the conclusion that the destruction of a political community means the destruction of those ideals, as Per Sandin does:

> [O]ur deepest values are always at risk when our collective survival, understood as the survival of our community, is at stake. This goes with Walzer’s explicit communitarianism.

Sandin is wrong to claim that the destruction of a political community means the destruction of the ideals cherished in this political community unless he believes that these ideals only exist in this political community. A political community can be annihilated while the ideals cherished in this political community need not be. Other communities may also cherish the same ideals.

But what if not just one political community is at stake? What if an ideal will perish as all political communities which uphold it are in danger? In the case of British bombing in the Second World War, perhaps we can argue that Nazi Germany posed the threat to the whole world, not just the British political community, which would lead to the destruction of all political communities which embrace these ideals:

> [W]ith a stretch of the imagination, Churchill’s actions could be presented as aimed at the protection of the entire world from the Nazis, not just at the defense of Britain.

As the importance of emphasizing the distinction between the ideals cherished in a political community and this political community is appreciated in the above discussion, to further understand Walzer’s communitarian partiality in general and

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DSE in particular, we need to differentiate between the destruction of the ideals cherished in a political community and the establishment of some abhorrent ideals. In the British bombing case, what concerns Walzer is not just the preservation of the ideal of democracy, but the establishment of an “evil” ideal that “at once stuns, cripples, horrifies, and completely overwhelms the imagination.”  \(^{105}\)

Another question concerning the British bombing case is whether the Nazi’s conquest means the failure of democracy forever. Perhaps some idle speculation is required in order to assess the question whether the destruction of all political communities which uphold an ideal means the irreversible extinction of that ideal. These two issues, the distinction between the destruction of a desirable ideal and the establishment of an abhorrent ideal and whether the defeat of all political communities which uphold an ideal equals the irreversible extinction of that ideal, need further discussion to better understand and assess DSE. What matters, however, for DSE in relation to partiality and communitarianism, is whether communitarian concept of community should incorporate specific ideals in it.

In review, DSE fails to distinguish three relevant elements: the political community, the set of its members, and the ideals cherished in the political community. It would also pose the question whether DSE can be interpreted as a kind of communitarian partiality as Walzer claims since it seems that the ultimate elements that matter are some ideals a political community happens to hold. For Walzer, perhaps one way of avoiding such critique is to adopt an evaluative, normative

conception of political community, instead of a nonevaluative, descriptive conception of it, for example, building democracy into the concept of political community. However, as it will be presented later in the discussion of community, Walzer himself simply offers a descriptive, nonevaluative conception of community, or an evaluative, normative conception of community that is agent-neutrally good at best. It will also become clear in the later discussion of concept of community that building democracy into the concept of political community, or more generally, defining community with certain moral or political ideals, may not work well for communitarianism.

It must be emphasized here that another very important reason why Walzer’s communitarian partiality is difficult to defend is perhaps that it simply goes too far and sets too high a goal, which is to override some crucial moral principles, in this case, not deliberately killing civilians. Moreover, the defense of this principle may very well receive some support from the particular version of family-related partiality itself if we can better interpret the scope of community. For example, if the concept of community can be extended into global community which includes all human beings, the particular version of family-related partiality must recognize the moral demand of this community as well and it suggests that we cannot defend killing an innocent person just to save our family member since that person would be a fellow member of the global community.

The above investigation of partiality in relation to community leads to examination of the concept of community for communitarianism. Moreover, if we want to argue for family-related partiality based on community, we need to argue that
family can be treated as a type of community for communitarianism, which also requires the examination of the concept as well as the scope of community. In the following part, attempts will be made to investigate the distinction between nonevaluative, descriptive and evaluative, normative conceptions of community as well as different types of communities, especially focusing on the scope of community. These questions are not only important to understand Walzer’s communitarian partiality, as what has been demonstrated above, but also crucial to any attempt to articulate the particular version of family-related partiality based on the concept of community in communitarianism.

Three issues will be addressed in the following discussion of community for communitarianism. First, the distinction between nonevaluative, descriptive and evaluative, normative conceptions of community. After the brief presentation of different proposed answers to this issue, it will be argued that it is better to adopt a kind of evaluative, normative conception of community. Second, whether family can be treated as a kind of community regarding the scope of community. The attempt to construct a particular version of family-related partiality based on the concept of community for communitarianism depends on viewing family as a type of community, which would also suggest that such a particular version of family-related partiality would be indirect. Third, as we examine the scope of community, we need to consider another issue. If the scope of community can be extended to family, can it be extended in the other direction, that is, can we take the whole world as a type of community? The answer to this question will affect the strength of the particular version of
family-related partiality for communitarianism. However, it may not be bad news. The recognition of global community could not further significantly limit the strength of partiality toward family members, or harm the particular version of family-related partiality if we admit that other kinds of community, national community for example, are recognized in communitarianism, which already limit the partiality toward one kind of community. However, if one intends to provide a relatively more defensible proposal of family-related partiality for communitarianism, the recognition of global community would further ease certain anxieties in this regard, for example, the accommodation of wider concerns within communitarianism itself and hence be a small price to pay. No matter how minor an influence it may exercise, the recognition of global community would indeed further reduce the importance of family. If so, the particular version of family-related partiality may face the challenge that such partiality may become as limited as those that are proposed in other theories, liberalism for example. However, even if the proposals are similar, the process leading to such proposal in communitarianism is different from others.

If the particular version of family-related partiality recognizes that both family and the whole world should be taken as a type of community, it seems that this kind of family-related partiality only supports limited partial concerns for family members as it must recognize concerns for members in other communities, the national community and the global community for example.

The Concept of Community
What is community? Which kind of social groups can qualify as communities? Robert Booth Fowler suggests that “the concept of community invariably invokes the notion of commonality, of sharing in common, being and experiencing together. This is the root concept implied in most uses of the word.”

A. P. Cohen claims that the term “community” should be interpreted from its ordinary usage. The term “community” seems to imply two related suggestions: that the members of a group of people (a) have something in common with each other, which (b) distinguishes them in a significant way from the members of other putative groups. ‘Community’ thus seems to imply simultaneously both similarity and difference. The word thus expresses a relational idea: the opposition of one community to others or to other social entities. Indeed, it will be argued that the use of the word is only occasioned by the desire or need to express such a distinction.

Although it seems that we can find something in common for different conceptions of community, such as commonality, for the question about what community is, we may simply have some unsatisfying answers, such as the one found by Colin Bell and Howard Newby: “[I]t will be seen that over ninety definitions of community have been analyzed and that the one common element in them all was man!” But the fact that we may have numerous definitions of community would not render it incomprehensible. Like many other “essentially contested concepts”,

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such as justice, equality, the importance of community would not be endangered by the fact that it is difficult for us to reach an agreement on its definition. In fact, the right question for this thesis may not be “what is community”, but “what is community in relation to communitarianism” although communitarianism seldom engages in the systematic discussion of it. In review of the previous presentation of communitarian self, community for communitarianism can be simply defined as any kind of social group in which members have something in common and which contributes to its members’ identity. This broad and vague definition leaves room for various kinds of conceptions of community and perhaps provides no practical guidance to judge whether a group is a community or not. However, it is not the purpose of this chapter to achieve such a goal. In accordance with this broad understanding of community, more specific conceptions of community can be divided into two general kinds, the descriptive, nonevaluative and the normative, evaluative. The descriptive, nonevaluative conception of community does not presuppose that it is desirable or not, good or bad. The normative, evaluative conception of community presupposes that (genuine) community is both good and desirable.

For the second kind of conception, that is, the evaluative, normative conception of community, it can be further divided into two kinds, being agent-neutrally good, desirable and being agent-relatively good, desirable. A particular community being

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agent-neutrally good and desirable is closely connected with the ideals cherished in this community. When the judgment is made that a particular community is agent-neutrally good and desirable, certain good, desirable ideals can usually be located. For example, when we claim that children benefit from growing up in this neighborhood community which is both good and desirable, we usually say that it is because children can learn how to care for others, to treat others equally, to help those in need, to share their possessions with others, etc. Perhaps what are really good and desirable are the ideal of altruism, generosity, caring, equality, etc. This particular community being good and desirable is because this community embraces these ideals. The problem for upholding such an agent-neutrally good and desirable conception of community is that the evaluation of community for communitarianism would depend on the assessment of these ideals. It is detrimental to the particular version of family-related partiality since such partiality would depend on whether families can support some ideals.

What does being agent-relatively good and desirable mean? The answers to this question differentiate communitarians from others who also use the concept of community in their moral and political discourse. According to Haig Khatchadourian, contemporary communitarians “tend to employ the term [community] as an honorific term; as shorthand for ‘good or desirable (perhaps also, moral) community.’”111 I agree with him that contemporary communitarians reject “purely descriptive, nonevaluative” conception of community which does “not include the idea of

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goodness or desirability,” but I will suggest that communitarianism should only adopt the normative, evaluative conception of community which is agent-relatively good and desirable. That communities are agent-relatively good and desirable means that they provide the circumstances where people become human, learn all the social rules and conventions, interact with each other, etc., or rather in a more communitarian way, that they are constitutive for its members’ identity.

For the purpose of investigating family-related partiality, we also need to examine the scope of community, specifically whether family can be treated as a kind of community. Clearly, there are many kinds of communities available for discussion for contemporary communitarianism in relation to their scope. In this thesis, four types of communities will be selected according to their scope, that is, family, neighborhood community, national community and global community. It does not follow that there are only these kinds of communities for communitarianism. However, the examination of these four types of communities is critical to investigate the issue of family-related partiality.

A neighborhood community may qualify as a political community in ancient times, for example, the Greek polis where there are less than a few thousand citizens. National community is usually considered closest to political community in contemporary world. For neighborhood community, since it is usually uncontroversially accepted as a kind of community in relation to its scope for either communitarianism or moral and political theory in general, it will not be paid much attention in the following discussion. For national community, it is assumed that one
significant character of contemporary communitarianism is the recognition of national community in relation to the scope of community.\(^{112}\) The idea of national community will also serve in many cases as the premise of arguing for global community as they both face the difficulties of accommodating the lack of close interactions among members and the accusation of over expansion of community. The idea of global community is important to the discussion of family-related partiality in communitarianism as it may help us to more adequately respond to following critique of partiality in general:

At best, some partialists do acknowledge some moral responsibilities to distant others and strangers, sometimes linking these responsibilities to the duties which define certain positions of public office. At worst, partialists simply neglect to mention any such responsibilities, concentrating their attention entirely on what should or can be done for those who are close.\(^{113}\)

It is my intention to argue that communitarianism can accommodate this kind of critique by suggesting that it can and should consider wider moral concerns which go beyond what we usually consider the scope of community. There are many communities, including family and global community among others, which suggests that a particular version of family-related partiality based on the concept of community for communitarianism can address multiple moral concerns by itself. It follows that there will be conflicts among concerns generated by different

\(^{112}\) This may explain why MacIntyre differentiates himself from communitarians as it will become clear later that he rejects the idea of national community in relation to its scope. See also Andrew Mason, *Community, Solidarity and Belonging: Levels of Community and Their Normative Significance*, p. 3n.4.

communities to which one belongs. Instead of proposing practical solutions to such conflicts, the modest objective of this chapter simply attempts to more adequately present such conflicts in light of family-related partiality. Anyway, before we can propose any solution to address or simply more clearly illustrate such conflicts, we must first of all seek clarification on the conception of community in communitarian discourse.

As it is suggested in the discussion of DSE, in response to the distinction between political community and the ideals cherished in it, Walzer can introduce a conception of political community which is embedded with the ideal of democracy. This kind of political community would be both agent-neutrally good and agent-relatively good. But does Walzer offer such a definition of political community in particular or community in general? Although Walzer does not provide a relevant definition of political community in discussing DSE, he does elsewhere offer a definition, according to which, a political community is,

[A] bounded world within which distributions takes place: a group of people committed to dividing, exchanging, and sharing social goods, first of all among themselves…[its] members distribute power to one another and avoid, if they possibly can, sharing it with anyone else.114

It seems, however, that such definition of political community does not provide grounds to label political community being agent-neutrally good and desirable unless more specific elaboration is given regarding how such distributions are structured. Doubts can be even raised that such a definition as it is presented is just a descriptive, nonevaluative conception without any explicit reference to the constitution of

community members’ identity, although one can still argue that providing such an environment for distributions, given its enormous influence on community members’ life, is bound to contribute to the constitution of identity.

As for the scope of community, although Walzer’s political community goes beyond local or face-to-face community, he rejects the idea of global community. A global community that includes “all men and women everywhere” does not exist. One of the reasons is that a global community does not have boundaries and hence no outsiders. The other one is that there is no such thing like common meanings for a global community. According to Walzer,

[T]he political community is probably the closest we can come to a world of common meanings. Language, history, and culture come together (come more closely together here than anywhere else) to produce a collective consciousness. National character, conceived as a fixed and permanent mental set, is obviously a myth; but the sharing of sensibilities and intuitions among the members of a historical community is a fact of life. It should be pointed out that the “sharing of sensibilities and intuitions” may not always refer to positive attitudes or emotions, all of which are unavoidable results of the long-term common political structures of any political community. As we will see later, unlike MacIntyre who believes that modern political society cannot be a community as it cannot express the common values, Walzer is more optimistic

115 Michael Walzer, *Spheres of Justice*, p. 29.
116 Walzer raises more reasons, such as the lack of a global government, as he is concerned with the distribution of goods as well as its enforcement. Michael Walzer, *Spheres of Justice*, p. 30.
although he also admits that there are enormous conflicts within any political community.\textsuperscript{119}

Let us consider the two possible reasons why Walzer rejects the idea of a global community. For the first reason, there are boundaries for a global community and outsiders do exist. Animals and plants are not counted as members of a global community. If it is against the background of outsiders that a community can establish itself, a global community would not have difficulties in doing so. For the second reason, even if there are no such things like common meanings for a global community right now, it does not follow that there will not be common meanings one day in the future, especially if we consider what the rapid development of communication technologies could offer, the interaction on the Internet, for example. Walzer admits that “few of us have any direct experience of what a country is or of what it means to be a member…we have only dim perception of it…it is…invisible; we actually see only its symbols, offices, and representatives.”\textsuperscript{120} If the gap between the contacts with the concrete symbols of a national community and the conclusion that there are common meanings in this community can be bridged, we should not be too pessimistic about the prospect of the common meanings in a global community.

If we apply the above two criteria, that is, the recognition of outsiders and the existence of common meanings, to family, it seems that family has no problem to qualify as community in Walzer’s sense. For the first one, obviously there are many who are outsiders for family. For the second one, it is true that family lacks the

\textsuperscript{119} Michael Walzer, \textit{Spheres of Justice}, p. 29.
\textsuperscript{120} Michael Walzer, \textit{Spheres of Justice}, p. 35.
context to generate common meanings if they are limited to language and culture, both of which are social products that go way beyond the scope of a single family. But this refers to the origins of these common meanings, not whether they exist in the family or not. Besides, Walzer also admits one common feature for both national community and family, that is, “states are like families rather than clubs, for it is a feature of families that their members are morally connected to people they have not chosen, who live outside the household.”

Although this involuntary feature of both political community and family is not adopted as a defining character of community, it does suggest one important resemblance between political community and family and therefore reinforce the above conclusion.

Among the three conceptions of community offered by Sandel, which are instrumental, sentimental, and constitutive conception, the appropriate conception of community, according to Sandel, is the constitutive conception, which refers to "a community describing the subject and not just the objects of shared aspirations." Unlike both instrumental and sentimental conceptions of community which assume a highly independent, autonomous, individualistic self, this constitutive conception of community reject such characterization of self and "could penetrate the self more profoundly" compared with the former two conceptions. But how can we

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121 Michael Walzer, *Spheres of Justice*, p. 41.
122 This involuntary feature of community also indicates an important difference between communitarianism and other theories, liberalism for example, which assumes the voluntary choices regarding memberships in any community. For example, see Andrew Jason Cohen, “A Defense of ‘Strong Voluntarism’,,” *American Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. 35, No. 3, 1998, pp. 251-265.
determine whether a certain social group is a community in this sense or not? For example, for Sandel, is family a constitutive community?

Based on Sandel’s explanation of constitutive conception, the following criteria are proposed here to judge whether a social group, or rather a society, is a constitutive community. First, it must be represented in its members’ identity. Second, there exist certain sentiments, such as “fraternal sentiments and fellow-feeling.” Third, its institutional arrangements must be organized for the distribution of resources in certain ways to reflect the above two characters for a social group or a society to be qualified as a constitutive community.

Family, or at least what we usually call families, can pass the first two criteria with flying colors. If a person’s identity can be penetrated to such an extent by a particular society where she lives, obviously we cannot deny the possibility that her identity can be penetrated to more or less the same extent by her family in which she grows up. For example, a Chinese who grew up in modern China cannot define herself disregarding the historical background and the popular discourse in China, whether she accepts or rejects them. A young American who claims to make her own choice and take her own stance may still fall in the traditional discourse of leaving home as a mark of adult independence, as Taylor suggests:

Each young person may take up a stance which is authentically his or her own; but the very possibility of this is enframed in a social understanding of great temporal depth.  

Although we cannot determine that the contribution of the family to one’s identity,

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in light of the above examples, is more significant, there is no doubt that such contribution of the family exist to significant extent. For the second criterion, there is probably intuitional consensus that such sentiments can be more readily found in the family, which is recognized by Sandel.127

The third criterion seems to be circular as well as unclear, but Sandel believes that it should not prevent us from locating one crucial character of a particular society which qualifies it as a community, that is, the requirement for the organizational arrangement of that society.128 Although Sandel does not explain explicitly the meanings of “institutional arrangements” or “basic structure”, he clearly implies that he borrows these terms from Rawls, who adopts them to refer to the fundamental ways how political, economic powers and resources are allocated.129 Such institutional arrangements are clearly beyond the domain of family as what we would usually understand, but the failure to pass this criterion only reaffirms that Sandel’s conception of community is limited to larger social groups. In review, family can (even better) accommodate the two criteria of constitutive community and as long as we do not predetermine the scope of constitutive community, we must recognize such correlation between family and Sandel’s constitutive community.

Now let us turn to the idea of global community. How about the possibility of global community as a kind of constitutive community? Although Sandel does not set any standards about the scope of constitutive community, we may argue that he

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probably would agree that at present whether there is such a global community as a constitutive community, pretty much depend on whether it satisfies the third criterion.

For the first criterion, it may be arguably acceptable to claim that global community should also be considered an essential part of one’s identity, although perhaps not every member would realize it. Perhaps there are difficulties in accepting that there can be, not just should be, a global community which contributes to its members’ identity. Indeed, it would be difficult to accept the scope of community all the way from the default scope of community, that is, the neighborhood community, to global community. Such an endeavor may not seem to be unacceptably overreaching if we start with the assumption of national community, which is not unacceptable for communitarianism. Perhaps objections would be raised that when we are asked the question “who are you,” we would likely answer “I am Singaporean,” “I am Chinese,” not “I am a human being.” But this may be attributed to who we assume asks the question. If you are asked the same question by your dog or an extraterrestrial life, “I am a human being” seems to be an adequate answer which signifies an essential part of your identity. As for the second criterion regarding sentiments, it would be understandable that one would include family while excluding a global community since the differences between these two kinds of groups, such as the intimate interactions among family members and the lack thereof in global community, would be obvious. However, if one assumes that political community could satisfy this criterion, it would be difficult to deny global community the benefit of the doubt.
It seems, however, that from the perspective of the third criterion, the global community lacks such basic structure and institutional arrangements. There is perhaps consensus that there are no such institutional arrangements in the whole world, comparable with those in a particular society, but there is no reason why a global community should have the same institutional arrangements as those in a state, especially since not all states have the same kind of institutional arrangements regarding the allocation of resources. The point is that there is no objection for the development of such institutional arrangements for the global community. A constitutive global community may not exist right now, but it could in the future. When such arrangements (or the lack thereof) do not reflect the first two criteria, perhaps instead of denying the possibility of fulfilling these two criteria as well as global community, we should push for such institutional arrangements.

For MacIntyre, it may not be surprising that his appreciation of self in the ancient periods would lead to his rejection of modern states as (genuine) communities although he talks about a whole kingdom as a community in the ancient time. His characterization of modern states may offer some possible criteria according to which a certain group can be labeled as community. Compared with states in the past, modern states are characterized with, first, greater “heterogeneous technological and social resources and powers,” second, “competing economic and social interests,” and, third, complex “administrative rules and regulations” which ordinary members lack the expertise to fully comprehend, all of which “make it impossible for states to give

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expression to genuinely communal values, except in their official rhetoric.”

It seems that according to MacIntyre, a community or a genuine community must have very few conflicts of interests, or even homogeneous interests, which is accompanied by genuine common values.

If there is no such thing as a national community in contemporary world, it is reasonable to argue that he would also claim that there is no such thing as a global community since all the characteristics of a modern state which hinder its prospect as a genuine community would be more prominent when we are talking about the whole world.

For the first characteristic of a modern state, there is no such thing like a global government who can allocate and redistribute the resources in the whole world although the resources in the whole world are obviously more than those in any modern state. Any real or supposed attempt to allocate these resources globally would require no less, if not more, diverse technologies.

For the second characteristic, the conflicts of interests in the whole world are of course staggering compared with those within a modern state. Although compromises must be made to handle these conflicts of interests, the dissatisfaction and resentment during and after these processes are presumably much greater than those in a single state.

For the third, as there is no such thing like a global government, there are no

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agencies acting on its behalf but the complexity of global rules and regulations, even if we only consider those usually being respected and enforced, is clearly beyond that in traditional communities, whether it is more or less than that in a modern state. Just consider the enormous conflicts of interests and how they are and how they can be addressed, there will not be such thing like values for the global society and it therefore cannot be a community.

But how about modern family? Can we conclude that there are homogeneous interests and genuine common values in modern family? It is more likely for a family (compared with a national state or perhaps a neighborhood community) to reach agreement regarding common values, especially if it avoids the above-mentioned structural obstacles produced in the modern societies, or heterogeneous interests. But it is also plausible for a family to have as little common values as a modern state. We will not be surprised to find many families in which members may have different, even contradicting, views concerning important issues while they can easily find people with similar views outside the family. However, we may give family a better chance if we consider how common values are generated.

According to MacIntyre, for members of a community, common values can be arrived “by shared enquiry into the nature of their common good, enquiry in which each member of the community is accountable to each of the others both for the quality of her or his argument and for the discharge of her or his responsibilities in effecting that good.”132 This obviously is a very high standard and, however, a

standard easier to meet in smaller communities where members have greater opportunities to interact with each other, such as families.

Clearly, MacIntyre’s conception of community is agent-relatively good and desirable. But is it agent-neutrally good and desirable? It seems that the method to construct common values may suggest the importance of accountability and voluntary actions. If we accept such judgment, we may conclude that MacIntyre’s conception of community is both agent-relatively and agent-neutrally good and desirable, which is furthered confirmed by his critique of oppressive social groups.133

Different from above-mentioned scholars who do not directly deal with the problem of the different types of community, Bell puts forward his conception of community explicitly, which can be divided into three kinds, communities of place, communities of memory, and psychological communities, which should be of close relevance to the discussion of different kinds of communities here. Communities of place refer to “‘my neighbourhood’, the place where I live, have friends, go shopping, join clubs, and so on. Community of place, then, refers to the place we call home, the place where we’re born and bred and often the place where we’d like to end our days even if home is left for some time as an adult.”134 Communities of memory is characteristic of “a shared history going back several generations” and “a moral tradition that helps to provide the narrative unity of...[the members’] lives, which entails an obligation to sustain and promote the ideals and aspirations embedded in

134 Daniel A. Bell, *Communitarianism and Its Critics*, pp. 103-104.
their history through memory and hope." 135 Psychological community is characterized by “face to face interaction” and hence “a psychological sense of ‘togetherness’."136

Bell’s conception of community is comparatively more favorable for family-related partiality for two reasons. First, it explicitly characterizes family as community. Although family is considered as a kind of psychological community, it is not differentiated from other communities such as church groups, work units, which may lead to the conclusion that family-related partiality based on the idea of community would not give special weight to family or family members compared with other kinds of communities or their members to which the agent belongs. Second, it also explicitly enlarges the domain of community to the scale of a country, which further limits the extent to which the agent can practice family-related partiality. However, Bell’s communities stop before the idea of a global community without any reason being offered. What could possibly be Bell’s reasons?

[My view is that the only real test of commitment to a community is the willingness to sacrifice one's interests on its behalf. This may require sacrificing one's life (in war), but more typically it requires such things as paying taxes, doing voluntary work, helping to care for children and elderly people, etc.137

It seems that this is a very high standard to judge the possibility of communities to which we belong. Besides, it would be counterfactual that we refuse to make any sacrifice for the global world or for foreigners.

According to Bell, the three types of communities are all constitutive

135 Daniel A. Bell, *Communitarianism and Its Critics*, pp. 125-126.
136 Daniel A. Bell, *Communitarianism and Its Critics*, p. 170.
137 Email communication from Daniel A. Bell, 18 October 2005.
communities. Like Sandel, Bell also emphasizes the importance of self-identification in the conception of constitutive communities, but he further clarifies that “constitutive communities provide a large background way of meaningful thinking, acting, and judging, a way of being in the world which is much deeper and more many-sided than any possible articulation of it.” Bell’s communities, or rather constitutive communities, are agent-relatively good and desirable, but obviously not agent-neutrally good and desirable as he emphasizes that “valuing a community doesn’t mean that you have a special obligation to endorse every strong belief or deed of that community.” This implies that a community is not defined by or valued for its ideals.

In sum, there are different conceptions of community regarding whether community is both agent-neutrally and agent-relatively good and desirable, or simply agent-relatively good and desirable as well as whether community can be extended to family and the whole world in terms of its scope. For the first issue, conceptions of community which are only agent-relatively good and desirable would better accommodate the particular version of family-related partiality based on the concept of community. On the contrary, conceptions of community which are agent-neutrally good and desirable may lead to the suggestion that the particular version of family-related partiality relies on not only the value of community, but also the value of certain ideals. It would require separate justification of these specific ideals, which

138 Daniel A. Bell, *Communitarianism and Its Critics*, p. 103.
139 Daniel A. Bell, *Communitarianism and Its Critics*, p. 95.
140 Daniel A. Bell, *Communitarianism and Its Critics*, p. 99.
may be difficult to accomplish depending on what these ideals are.

For the second issue regarding the scope of community, the particular version of family-related partiality is not only indirect as it relies on the concept of community and family being a kind of community, but also limited regarding how far such partiality would go. The attempt to investigate whether family can be considered as a kind of community also reveals another possibility of the scope of community, that is, the global community. The fact that there are many communities including family, national community, global community makes the particular version of family-related partiality admit partial concerns for other people in the same community beyond family, for example, our fellow countrymen or our fellow human beings. However, this may not be a bad thing for the particular version of family-related partiality as it can also accommodate wider concerns.

Both the particular version and general version of partiality for communitarianism support family-related partiality, but they are both limited. For the particular version of family-related partiality, it is indirect as it is derives its strength from the concept of community and family being one among other kinds of communities. Despite the vague nature of the concept of community for communitarianism, we can still reach the conclusion that the particular version of family-related partiality can be better served by conceptions of community which are only agent-relatively good and desirable. As we move on to the examination of the scope of community in order to establish whether family can be treated as a kind of
community or not, it becomes clear that the scope of community can be extended not only to family but also to the whole world. This also reveals the restriction of this particular version of family-related partiality as it must recognize concerns for members in the same community, national community, global community, for example, on similar grounds.

For the general version, communitarian self can support family-related partiality through the idea of identity-holding, but it does not entail that family members should be given priority over fellow members of other communities to which the communitarian self belongs, as this communitarian self, in light of identity-holding, need not be influenced by family members more than others, which may be different from the general version of family-related partiality for care ethics in the next chapter.
Chapter Three

Care Ethics and Family-related Partiality

In chapter two where family-related partiality has been investigated in the context of communitarianism, attempts have been made to construct a general version of family-related partiality based on the idea of communitarian self as well as a particular version based on the idea of community. Along the same line, efforts will be made in this chapter to construct two versions of family-related partiality, among which the general version is also based on the concept of self in care ethics. Like communitarianism, the investigation of family-related partiality for care ethics will not be limited to this general version based on the concept of self. In order to have a better understanding of family-related partiality for care ethics, we should also consider a particular version of family-related partiality based on the concept of caring for care ethics. Regarding the issue of partiality, however, care ethics is different from communitarianism in one aspect. Unlike the communitarian discourse, the discussion of partiality is an essential part of the care ethics discourse and care ethics is usually assumed to support partiality, which perhaps renders the investigation of family-related partiality more relevant and necessary.141

In the first section of this chapter, I will examine the concept of relational self in

care ethics as well as its bearing on the general version of family-related partiality in care ethics. As in communitarianism, there is also a consensus on the concept of self in care ethics, which can be utilized as the common foundation of a general version of family-related partiality through identity-holding. Efforts will be made to examine the similarities, but more importantly, the differences, between the interpretation of self in care ethics and in communitarianism, which would not only further support the plausibility of a general version of family-related partiality in care ethics but also reveal the possible differences concerning the general version of family-related partiality based on the concept of self through the idea of identity-holding in communitarianism and care ethics. This will be taken further in the next chapter, where the connection between the concept of self and partiality in light of identity-holding will be tested in early Confucianism where, similar to what is done for both communitarianism and care ethics, a concept of Confucian self can be constructed and examined. After presenting the concept of relational self in care ethics, it will be shown that as far as family-related partiality is concerned, the main difference between communitarianism and care ethics concerning the concept of self is the latter’s emphasis on particularity and dependency, both of which support relatively stronger partial concerns for family members. Moreover, it will become clear that although both particularity and dependency pertain to the issue of family-related partiality, particularity for relational self is more relevant through the idea of identity-holding.

In the second section, the particular version of partiality based on the idea of
caring will be examined. As the term “care ethics” suggests, the concept of care or caring is perhaps the most central one for it.\textsuperscript{142} Attempts will be made to investigate the link between caring and family-related partiality. If differences between the concept of self may lead to different conclusions concerning family-related partiality in communitarianism and care ethics, the emphasis on caring on the side of care ethics would further enlarge these differences in terms of the extent partiality toward family members would go. Despite its numerous definitions, conceptions of caring will be divided into two kinds in terms of its ranges of application, that is, whether caring should be limited only to close encounters or not. Different interpretations of caring in terms of its range will lead to different partial concerns of the particular version of family-related partiality for family members since the opportunities for close encounters with family members are usually significantly higher than those with other people. However, even if caring should not be limited only in close encounters, it may not follow that the particular version of family-related partiality would be weaker regarding its partial concerns for family members, because the emotional or psychological element which is crucial for caring, whether it goes beyond close encounters or not, would still be better accommodated by the circumstance of family members.

Relational Self and the General Version of Family-related Partiality

\textsuperscript{142} In this thesis, I will use caring and care for care ethics interchangeably.
In order to establish the connection between the concept of self in care ethics and family-related partiality, just as a similar attempt has been made in communitarianism, we need to examine the concept of self in care ethics as well as the similarities and differences between the two concepts of self in relation to partiality toward family members.

First, the idea of relational self will be examined in care ethics. It will become clear that the discourse of self in care ethics may vary among three different positions, the conception of a relational self, self being a relation, and rejection of the term “self” in favor of a focus on relationship, all of which can be considered arguing for the importance of relationships for the concept of self and hence the idea of relational self.

Second, it will be pointed out that one important difference between communitarianism and care ethics refers to the idea of particularity. Communitarian self also emphasizes the importance of the relationships between the moral subject and others in terms of the appreciation of memberships in different communities, but communitarian self does not pay attention to the same kind of particularity as it is done in relational self. This emphasis on particularity can be better addressed by relationships among family members, which suggests that the general version of family-related partiality for care ethics would support stronger concerns for family members compared with that for communitarianism.

Third, another crucial element of the concept of self in care ethics, that is, the idea of dependency, will be examined. The kind of dependency emphasized here can
be called human dependency as against the mere material dependency which refers to the situation that one’s biological body’s functioning is dependent on something that may or may not involve human beings. It will become clear that this difference between care ethics and communitarianism regarding the concept of self, that is, the idea of dependency, would provide stronger support in care ethics for partiality toward family-members, though perhaps not in terms of the general version of family-related partiality through identity-holding.

Let us first turn to the discourse on self in care ethics. Generally speaking, the idea of relational self is widely accepted by the advocates of care ethics. In her elaboration of two distinct kinds of moral views, Gilligan describes one of them as centering on relationships. This alternative moral orientation sees “a world comprised of relationships rather than of people standing alone.”

The connection between self and relationships, or rather a relational definition of self, according to this kind of moral views, is most explicitly represented in the way one would describe herself:

In response to the request to describe themselves, all of the women describe a relationship, depicting their identity in the connection of future mother, present wife, adopted child, or past lover.

If Gilligan simply describes relational self as contributing to an adequate understanding of self along with other kinds of interpretations of self, others who show such interests in relational self may go further to declare it an appropriate and

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self-sufficient understanding of the moral agent. Although it is generally recognized that Gilligan first introduces the contemporary background for the discussion of care ethics through her psychological studies, Noddings expands it further to the field of philosophical investigation. In her view, care ethics is “built on a relational ontology.” This relational self suggests that “our selves are constructed through encounters with other bodies, objects, selves, conditions, ideas, and reflective moments with our own previous selves.”

As the investigations of care ethics move forward, the idea of relational self is simply taken for granted. In review of the characteristics of care ethics, Virginia Held claims that,

It is characteristic of the ethics of care to view persons as relational…The ethics of care…conceptualizes persons as deeply affected by, and involved in, relations with others; to many care theorists persons are at least partly constituted by their social ties.

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149 Virginia Held, *The Ethics of Care: Personal, Political, and Global*, p. 46.
Despite the central place of relational self in care ethics, care ethics discourse itself may cast doubt on the very idea of self. Regarding the idea of relatedness, the mounting emphasis on relationships concerning the concept of self in care ethics leads to the claim that it is not appropriate to use the term “self” in care ethics. Perhaps instead, we should simply talk about relationships. If self is just a relation, as Noddings suggests, it may sound rather extreme as it may form an obstacle to locate the subject of actions and the boundary between people.\textsuperscript{150} However, this is not the end of the story. One step further ahead, we will arrive at the position where the issue of self seemingly disappears. It becomes not necessary or appropriate to examine the concept of self in care ethics, since our fundamental concern should be placed on the relationships, which leads to the conclusion that care ethics “construes ethics as referring to relations between individuals as its basic unit of analysis, rather than to each individual strictly.”\textsuperscript{151} Therefore, it would not be surprising that care ethicists may claim that the term “relational self” is misleading as care ethics should focus on relationships and the term “relational self” may carry with it the sense of individualistic self which is perhaps unavoidably embedded in the concept of self.

The same problem is observed elsewhere outside care ethics discourse. For example, Kenneth J. Gergen claims that,

\begin{quote}
[T]he term “self” carries with it strong traces of the individualist tradition. It suggests again a bounded unit, one that interacts with other distinct units.\textsuperscript{152}
\end{quote}


\textsuperscript{151} Abraham Rudnick, "A Meta-Ethical Critique of Care Ethics," p. 506.

\textsuperscript{152} Kenneth J. Gergen, \textit{Relational Being: Beyond Self and Community}, p. xxvi.
As we will see in the next chapter, the concept of Confucian self also encounters similar objection that the very term “Confucian self” is misleading. We should of course always observe the nuanced position with regard to the concept of self in all three theories, communitarianism, care ethics, and early Confucianism, but it should not prevent us from adopting the term “self” in investigating these three theories, since the (minimal) moral agent would not be totally denied in any of them if it refers to, as Diana Tietjens Meyers defines, “an individual who is capable of choosing and acting in accordance with judgments about what is right, wrong, good, bad, worthy, or unworthy.” For example, despite her doubt about self in care ethics, Noddings admits that one cannot totally ignore her own existence distinguished from others:

[I]t is…harder to extricate individual selves from the relations in which they are formed. But we do have individual bodies that move about, grow old, suffer pain, are recognized by others, and become associated with particular occupations and recreations.

From the perspective of moral agency, the legitimacy of relational self discourse can be further supported by the insistence of (perhaps another kind of) autonomy, more or less, of the moral agent in care ethics. If self referring to individual, autonomous self is not taken for granted and self can broadly refer to the moral subject, the total denial of discourse on self would require the absolute denial of moral agency, which is not supported in care ethics. On the contrary, partly because of the emphasis on relationships in care ethics, efforts have been made to emphasize the existence of moral agency. For example, Held claims that there is a consensus

regarding the relational self, which insists that it “must still allow the person enmeshed in relationships to change her situation: to break free of patriarchal communities and to alter oppressive social ties.”\textsuperscript{155} This is not to deny that care ethics is under attack from the perspective of autonomy. In fact, “a central contemporary criticism of care ethics is exactly that it may do wrong to subjects by paternalistically emphasizing caring at the expense of other important issues such as autonomy.”\textsuperscript{156} However, from the perspective of relational self, no matter what relationships she find herself in, voluntary or otherwise, she always has capacities to manage her own action to certain degree.\textsuperscript{157} The main point here is that care ethics does not deny autonomy altogether. Instead, it simply has its own interpretation of autonomy, which can still ground the basis for the discussion of moral agent and self.

This concept of relational self can also serve as a distinctive character that differentiates care ethics from other moral and political theories which may have similar views on other matters, such as similar discussion of caring that should not be considered as care ethics discourse. For example, Maureen Sander-Staudt suggests that despite some similarities with virtue ethics in emphasizing “the goodness of care as a motive and end, and the importance of relationships to a virtuous and flourishing life,” one important difference refers to care ethics’ “relational ontology” which constructs “the entire self as constituted, known, and maintained through

\textsuperscript{156} Abraham Rudnick, "A Meta-Ethical Critique of Care Ethics," p. 512.
relationship.”158 For the same reason, although Jeffrey Blustein devotes large parts of his *Care and Commitment: Taking the Personal Point of View* to the discussion of caring, its nature, its scope, its object, its motivational factors, etc., we may still exclude such studies as part of care ethics discourse since he implicitly suggest a conception of self in contrast with relational self.159

On the other hand, the idea of relational self is not unique to care ethics. For example, T. L. Zutlevics summarizes relational self mainly based on Gilligan’s view, suggesting that “personal relationships are crucial for the construction of self identity or, more strongly, are constitutive of the self.”160 According to this kind of explanation, relational self seems to be very similar to the communitarian self discussed in chapter two which also emphasizes the social constitution of communitarian self.

More relevant to the discussion in the next chapter, Chinese philosophy in general and Confucianism in particular are also believed to uphold the idea of relational self.161 It is claimed that the idea of relational self is at the core of Confucianism.162 For example, David L. Hall and Roger T. Ames’ explication of Confucius’s

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philosophy devotes substantial length to the idea of relational self.\textsuperscript{163} In arguing for the importance of the Confucian conception of self for education, Xinyan Jiang also uses the term “relational self”, according to whom relational self suggests that “a person is mainly identified by his or her social roles and relationships to others, that is, to regard one’s social roles and relationships as a major constitutive part of one’s personal identity.”\textsuperscript{164}

It should be pointed out that all these discussions of relational self elsewhere emphasize the idea of relatedness, not characteristics such as particularity or dependency, which are treated as essential elements of the relational self in care ethics. However, it also needs to be pointed out that the emphasis on what we may call relatedness is not always accompanied with other characters of relational self, such as dependency and particularity, in care ethics discourse. For example, Margaret A. McLaren suggests that the “relational self in care ethics provides an account of the self that emphasizes the importance of social roles and relationships.”\textsuperscript{165} Although it seems that it does not emphasize either particularity or dependency, it does not follow that it would deny those characteristics of relational self in care ethics which will be discussed later. It may simply be the case that, in elaborating on the idea of relational self in care ethics, some scholars are perhaps doing the task of investigating the concept of self against the background that does not make such specification

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necessary. For example, Samantha Brennan suggests that the lack of examination of differences between relational self and other kinds of self, communitarian self for example, which may produce the significance of these characteristics, is due to “a tendency to run these two accounts together, to focus on their similarities, since both are opposed to the mainstream tradition.”¹⁶⁶ For the examination of relational self in comparison with communitarian self and Confucian self, however, such elaboration and emphasis are necessary.

It is widely recognized in care ethics that the relationships concerning self are described as being concrete, particular. The alternative moral orientation described by Gilligan emphasizes particular relationships.¹⁶⁷ Noddings also emphasizes the importance of particularity of self which is expressed more vividly in the encounters with others:

A self cannot be captured in terms of its time, culture, profession, or roles. If we are interested in the development of caring persons, we need to know about the particular encounters that support or undermine caring, the kinds of encounters that induce people to harm others, and the patterns that mark sensitivity and insensitivity.¹⁶⁸

This is where Noddings attempts to differentiate her understanding of self from communitarian self. Contemporary communitarians also emphasize the importance of relations for moral subjects, which is are captured in the memberships in various communities they belong to, but the communitarian self, according to Noddings, still misses the particularity of the moral subject which is crucial for care ethics:

The descriptions offered by MacIntyre and Taylor are as yet too abstract...we are still dealing with idea-like selves...When MacIntyre says that these characteristics do not “belong to human beings accidentally,” we have to agree at a high level of abstraction: all people, real selves, are selves in virtue of their relationships...A self cannot be described in terms of mere rationality or choice, but neither can it be wholly described in terms of its time and culture. I am not just a modern or postmodern self, one of a set, all of whom are shaped in general by relationships. I have been shaped by particular relationships.\footnote{Nel Noddings, \textit{Starting at Home: Caring and Social Policy}, p. 95.}

Although Communitarian self also emphasizes the particularities of the historical, social, cultural circumstances, it does not go so far to attend to the particular relationships between self and particular others, or fail to treat them seriously especially considering the emphasis on community which by definition can only accommodate such particularities to a less extent. As Held claims, however, relational self in care ethics is not concerned with relationships in general, but relations between the subject and “particular others.”\footnote{Virginia Held, \textit{The Ethics of Care: Personal, Political, and Global}, p. 12.}

Another feature of relational self in relation to family-related partiality is its emphasis on dependency. It is the simple fact that we human beings enter the world in the state of absolute dependency. We need others’ direct help to meet our basic physical needs, not to mention psychological ones in the early stage of our life. Sometimes in the last period of our life, we may once again find ourselves in the state of dependency. During our adult life between the early stage and the last period of our life, we may occasionally lean upon others due to disease, injury, etc.

It is not difficult to find out that we are talking about dependency on humans, not any kind of dependency.\footnote{Logi Gunnarsson, "The Great Apes and the Severely Disabled: Moral Status and...} The mere “dependency on something to remain
biologically alive” cannot differentiate human beings from nonhuman animals.\textsuperscript{172} For the purpose of differentiating relational self in care ethics from other interpretations of self, it is necessary to differentiate dependency from interdependency or mutual dependency, which may not be as easily ascertained as the separation of one or both of them from independence since dependency and interdependency are usually grouped together against independence. However, independence also provides the opportunity to test the differences between dependence and interdependence.

The idea of independent self is not meant to deny those facts regarding our dependency, but to be admired as a goal to achieve. In fact, the idea of independence is compatible with the idea of interdependence. Any theory that admits the unavoidable social cooperation would recognize the fact and the importance of human interdependency. For example, liberalism would not deny that each of us as individuals still needs others’ cooperation and thus recognize the unavoidable situation of mutual dependency or interdependency.\textsuperscript{173} But the emphasis is placed on the necessity to carry out one’s own plans, in which individuals would be confident that such interdependency will eventually contribute to the realization of these plans.\textsuperscript{174}

Noddings seems to contribute to the mixture of dependency and interdependency

\textsuperscript{174} Charles W. Anderson, \textit{A Deeper Freedom: Liberal Democracy as an Everyday Morality}, p. 141.
in elaborating on her interpretation of care ethics. On the one hand, she recognizes the unavoidable dependency of human beings:

   The original condition of every human being is utter dependency…real babies are totally at the mercy of human caregivers.175

   On the other hand, she talks a lot about interdependency, instead of dependency, in discussing caring relationships, as she emphasizes that “every society is marked by the interdependence of its citizens” and that “interdependence is part of the original condition.”176 Her idea of interdependence is, however, different from what we usually understand as it applies to all the caring relationships, including the relationship between parents and children, or even infants. According to Noddings, such interdependency must be recognized in those relationships:

   An appreciation of interdependence is central in learning to care, and a first step in acquiring this appreciation is to have one’s own contributions acknowledged. To say to a child, “It’s so much fun doing this with you,” or to a class, “You folks make the effort worthwhile,” is an explicit acknowledgement of interdependence.177

   Noddings’ interdependence is therefore connected with her own interpretation of response and contribution in the caring relationships in general and parents-children relationship in particular. Assuming B as the dependent party and A as the one being depended upon, Noddings claims that in such relationships where one party cannot reciprocate in the traditional sense, where mutuality does not exist, this dependent party still makes its own essential contribution:

   Besides being the site of initial “vibrations,” the cared-for responds in a way that shows that A’s efforts at caring have been received. B’s consciousness is characterized by the recognition or realization of care, and “I am cared for” would be the appropriate verbalization of B’s state of

175 Nel Noddings, Starting at Home: Caring and Social Policy, p. 121.
176 Nel Noddings, Starting at Home: Caring and Social Policy, p. 234.
177 Nel Noddings, Starting at Home: Caring and Social Policy, p. 208.
consciousness. Again, B’s state of consciousness doesn’t tell us exactly what B will do or should do. It merely suggests some form of response that will be detectable by A. Reception of A’s caring by B completes the relation.\textsuperscript{178}

According to Noddings, this kind of contribution by the dependent party is sufficient to render such relationships interdependent, although it clearly does not conform to what we usually understand by interdependency which necessarily refers to mutuality or reciprocity. Noddings’ adoption of interdependency therefore does not contradict the essential status of dependency in care ethics.

Held also seems to fail to emphasize the importance of dependency. The same as many care ethicists, she recognizes the inevitable dependency for human beings:

The ethics of care recognizes that human beings are dependent for many years of their lives... Many persons will become ill and dependent for some periods of their later lives, including in frail old age, and some who are permanently disabled will need care the whole of their lives.\textsuperscript{179}

She then moves from being dependent as children to being interdependent as members of societies, without further emphasizing dependency as the starting point for interdependency.\textsuperscript{180} At best, such continuity from dependency to interdependency is simply taken as an empirical fact.\textsuperscript{181} This may explain her claim that interdependency “is one of the central aspects of an ethics of care.”\textsuperscript{182} In her conception of person, interdependence, instead of dependence, is singled out in connection with the character of relatedness.\textsuperscript{183}

In his attempt to expand the domain of care ethics, Daniel Engster also mixes

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\textsuperscript{178} Nel Noddings, \textit{Starting at Home: Caring and Social Policy}, pp. 18-19.
\textsuperscript{179} Virginia Held, \textit{The Ethics of Care: Personal, Political, and Global}, p. 10.
\textsuperscript{180} Virginia Held, \textit{The Ethics of Care: Personal, Political, and Global}, p. 55.
\textsuperscript{181} Virginia Held, \textit{The Ethics of Care: Personal, Political, and Global}, pp. 13-14.
\textsuperscript{182} Virginia Held, \textit{The Ethics of Care: Personal, Political, and Global}, p. 53.
\textsuperscript{183} Virginia Held, \textit{The Ethics of Care: Personal, Political, and Global}, p. 13.
\end{flushright}
dependency with interdependency. On the one hand, he claims that care ethics takes dependency to be empirical truth, suggesting that “all human beings require care during childhood to survive and develop their capabilities.”

On the other hand, Engster does not emphasize dependency while moving back and forth between dependency and interdependency:

Care theory…begins with individuals already existing in society and dependent upon one another for their survival, development, and social functioning, and highlights the unchosen obligations we all have toward others by virtue of our interdependency.

The tendency to mix up dependency and interdependency may also explain why it seems necessary to further define dependency as asymmetrical dependency, which emphasizes the nature of unilateral, instead of mutual, reliance on others. For example, Alisa L. Carse uses the term “asymmetrical dependency relationships”, which refers to “asymmetries of vulnerability, need, knowledge or power, in which one party is especially dependent on the other for care.”

The difference between dependency and interdependency can be more obvious if we examine Sigal Ben-Porath’s proposal concerning the application of care ethics in international postwar arena. Arguing against the position that international support should aim at encouraging the victims of human or natural disasters to gain independence, Ben-Porath claims that,

[D]ependence, as distinct from helplessness, should be structured as an acceptable part of international relations, that it is a given aspect of state relations that should not only be accepted by realists but also by

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Clearly, the above conclusion is derived from the mixture of dependency and interdependency, especially since Ben-Porath already points out that interdependence should be accepted as “a starting point for international relations,” while insisting that the investigation of *jus post bellum* should not be separated from the expansion of care ethics to appreciate the importance of dependency.\(^{188}\)

Just as interdependency is recognized as an empirical fact by (some) supporters of independence, it is also accepted by supporters of dependence, which suggests that the difference does not lie in the prospect that interdependence will be achieved most of the time.\(^{189}\) The special feature in care ethics regarding dependency is not only that the empirical fact of dependency is observed but also that it is considered the essential and starting point of care ethics despite the fact that the interdependency of human beings in the world is widely recognized as the empirical truth as well as the most likely outcome.\(^{190}\) The importance of dependency is also revealed through the

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paradigm of mother-child relationship in care ethics.\textsuperscript{191} Although such relationship between mother and child in care ethics may trigger criticism, such as that concerning the gendered nature of care ethics, it exemplifies the essential status of the idea of dependency in the concept of self in care ethics.

In sum, the emphasis on particularity and dependency is what mainly differentiates the concept of self in care ethics from that in communitarianism, but it does not follow that this is the only difference between care ethics and communitarianism.\textsuperscript{192} The possible difference concerning gender equality may be also taken as one main difference between conceptions of self in care ethics and that in communitarianism. According to Susan J. Hekman, communitarianism and care ethics reach the agreement that it is desirable to have “a concept of the subject as connected, rather than unencumbered, and as constituted by the necessary relationships that bind us as human beings to those around us.”\textsuperscript{193} Her criticism of communitarianism focuses on the idea of gender inequality, which makes communitarianism undesirable,

The community as it has been conceived in Western thought is hierarchical and ascriptive. This community ascribes its members, and the status it has traditionally ascribed to women is clearly an inferior one.\textsuperscript{194}

Hekman admits that redefinition of community to avoid sexist influence may help

\textsuperscript{191} Here mother refers to the party being dependent upon, not necessarily the biological features.
\textsuperscript{192} See also, Daryl Koehn, \textit{Rethinking Feminist Ethics: Care, Trust and Empathy}, pp. 5-6.
communitarianism to dodge such criticism. If we can shield, or attempt to shield, care ethics from undesirable influence of certain existing caring practices, it seems optimistic to expect that we can do the same thing for communitarianism on the issue of gender inequality. Moreover, the issue seems to play no significant part in our assessment of the general version of partiality in relation to both communitarianism and care ethics, which would primarily focus on the issue of particularity and dependency.

As the discussion of the general version of family-related partiality based on the concept of self through the idea of identity-holding in communitarianism shows, in order to accommodate the idea of identity-holding, it only requires that relational self recognizes the contribution of family members to the constitution as well as the holding of its identity, which can be easily met by the concept of relational self. As it has been discussed earlier that communitarian self does not highlight to the same extent the importance of family members for identity-holding and therefore the general version of family-related partiality does not provide strong support for partial concerns for family members, the relational self seems to be different if we focus on its emphasis on particularity and dependency, both of which would provide stronger support for partial concerns for family members.

Regarding the differences in particularity in the concept of self, it seems that compared with communitarian self which does not emphasize the special status of family or family members in identity-holding, the relational self in care ethics would suggest that family members contribute more to one’s identity-holding, since such
particularity in relational self can be more readily identified in close interpersonal contacts such as those among family members. Moreover, if we consider two kinds of identity-holding, that is, holding somebody as a person and holding somebody as a particular person, compared with communitarian self, the relational self can better accommodate holding somebody as a particular person because of its relatively stronger kind of particularity, which further makes relational self relatively better accommodate holding somebody as a person since holding somebody as a particular person is sufficient for holding somebody as a person.

As for the issue of dependency, it does make a difference between care ethics and communitarianism concerning family-related partiality. The paradigm of dependency in care ethics refers to the mother-child or parent-child relationship, which falls within the domain of family. The recognition of and emphasis on dependency exemplify the importance of family members as such dependency, in terms of mother-child relationship being the paradigm in care ethics, can be most readily observed in family context. Moreover, under most circumstances, family members are also among the best candidates to accommodate such dependency because of the long-term contact among family members. If relational self in care ethics gives dependency relatively greater emphasis, it seems that it would also support relatively more concerns for family members and thus stronger support for family-related partiality. However, such stronger support is not related to the idea of identity-holding as the idea of identity-holding plays no part in the above argument.

Now that we have examined the general version of family-related partiality in
care ethics based on the concept of relational self, it has become clear that care ethics is differentiated from communitarianism in this area since the emphasis on particularity and dependency in relational self would suggest that relatively more partial concerns could be extended to family members compared with those outside the family. But this is not the end of the story. We need to further investigate the particular version of partiality for care ethics before we can reach any conclusion concerning partial treatment toward family members. In the following section, attempts will be made to examine the particular version of partiality in care ethics based on the idea of caring as well as the emotional or psychological element pertaining to it.

Caring and The Particular Version of Family-related Partiality

In this section, after the introduction of different kinds of conceptions of caring, it will become clear that although the controversies over the definition of caring is of great importance for care ethics in general, a precise definition is not necessary (or perhaps impossible to achieve) for investigating family-related partiality, or at least we can proceed safely to the issue of partiality in care ethics even without a consensus on the definition of caring.

What matters for family-related partiality is the contestable range of caring. From the perspective of range, there are two possible views in care ethics regarding caring, that is, whether caring or perhaps genuine caring can be extended beyond close
encounters or not. Different views concerning this issue will lead to different answers toward the strength of the particular version of family-related partiality which suggests that family members should be given more concerns in care ethics because caring can be more easily provided among family members. If caring must be limited to close human encounters, the particular version of family-related partiality would provide stronger support for partial concerns toward family members and if caring can be extended beyond close encounters, such extension would by itself limit the extent of family-related partiality based on caring.

It is obvious that care ethics focuses on the concept of caring. So what is caring? In our everyday language, we usually speak of “I don’t care”, “I care”, “why do you care”, but the general understanding of these expressions does not fulfill the requirement of care ethics which intends to provide a complementary, if not alternative, method to deal with moral and political issues. One way of dealing with the concept of caring is to dismiss the necessity of such endeavors to reach any specific definition, since either it is not practical or it is not desirable in relation to care ethics. For example, after affirming the ethical importance of caring, Peta Bowden quickly devotes her attention to the practices where caring is more or less manifested so as not to lose the insight into the particularities of human situations. Care ethics is indeed also known for its doubt of principles as well as the commitment to and application of principles, but care ethics discourse cannot be conducted without concepts. Attention, however, should always be paid to the limitations of concepts,

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which is observed in the following discussion of caring, where the investigation will focus on caring as a relation pertaining to the purpose of discussing the range of caring. This of course does not imply that it is inappropriate to talk about caring as a disposition or virtue, or a practice, or a relation, or all of the above. In fact, Held insists that caring should be able to refer to “work, motive, value, and perhaps more than these.”

Even if caring is limited to a practice or a relation, it will not be possible to examine all kinds of such caring that we may encounter. First, for example, non-moral caring is put aside since we concentrate on moral caring in this investigation, although in everyday language, we often use such expressions such as “care about the weather,” “care about whether the room is clean,” etc., all of which do not concern morality. Second, the relevant moral objects of caring under examination here refer to human beings, which exclude things such as ideas. Because of the similarities between non-human animals and human beings, especially certain human beings in certain situations, and the main concern of this investigation, that is, the issue of family-related partiality, whether non-human animals can be or even should be considered as the parties in caring will be examined in relation to partiality.

Regarding the range of caring, Noddings can be seen to advocate caring or genuine caring being limited to close encounters. Noddings claims that genuine caring can only be established in caring-for, “the face-to-face occasions in which one person,

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197 It is also for the same reason that I adopt the term “caring” instead of “care”, since care may refer to some other meanings, such as “some form of state institution.” Peter Allmark, “Can there be an ethics of care?” p. 21.
198 Virginia Held, The Ethics of Care: Personal, Political, and Global, p. 35.
as carer, cares directly for another, the cared-for,” not in caring-about, which goes beyond face-to-face encounters.\textsuperscript{199} According to Noddings, it is possible that we can literally care about anyone in the world, even thousands of miles away from us:

I can “care about” the starving children of Cambodia, send five dollars to hunger relief, and feel somewhat satisfied. I do not even know if my money went for food, or guns, or a new Cadillac for some politician. This is a poor second cousin to caring. “Caring about” always involves a certain benign neglect. One is attentive just so far. One assents with just so much enthusiasm. One acknowledges. One affirms. One contributes five dollars and goes on to other things.\textsuperscript{200}

Why is such caring-about excluded from (genuine) caring? One reason may lie in Noddings’ emphasis on both parties in caring. For Noddings, caring must include at least two parties, the care-giver who provides caring, in her term, the “one-caring”, and the care-recipient who receives it, in her term, the “cared-for”. Caring would not be fully established without either party, which needs to fulfill certain requirements to accomplish its role. For the care-giver, her internal state should manifest attention and motivational displacement, which lead to certain actions and for the care-recipient, she must receive and recognize being cared for in response.\textsuperscript{201} Attention suggests that the care-giver would perceive the particular situation of the care-recipient, her specific needs, etc., through the perspectives of both the care-giver and the care-recipient.\textsuperscript{202} Motivational displacement suggests that the care-giver’s “motive energy begins to

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  \item \textsuperscript{199} Nel Noddings, \textit{Starting at Home: Caring and Social Policy}, pp. 21-22. The distance between people in caring-about refers not only to physical distance, but also “social status, culture, physical distance, or time.” Nel Noddings, \textit{Starting at Home: Caring and Social Policy}, p. 3.
  \item \textsuperscript{200} Nel Noddings, \textit{Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics and Moral Education}, p. 112.
  \item \textsuperscript{201} Nel Noddings, \textit{Starting at Home: Caring and Social Policy}, p. 19.
  \item \textsuperscript{202} Nel Noddings, \textit{Starting at Home: Caring and Social Policy}, pp. 13-15.
\end{itemize}
flow toward” the cared-for and her projects at the expense of the care-giver’s own projects. Moreover, the care-giver is supposed to act in certain ways to accomplish her role in caring. All these requirements for the care-giver may lead to the establishment of limits of caring in terms of its range, which will be further supported by the stated requirements for the care-recipient. For the care-recipient, although in many cases such as the paradigm of mother-child relationship, reciprocity from the care-recipient is not obvious in the traditional sense, the care-recipient is still required to respond to the care-giver in order to accomplish caring. Such response from the care-recipient, in terms of “the recognition or realization of care,” may be presented in different forms, such as a simple “I am cared for.” One thing in common, however, for such response, is that it must be manifested in such a way so as to be able to be detected by the care-giver. In review, if Noddings’ requirements for the care-giver, such as attention and motivational displacement, are suspected of rendering caring limited, her requirements concerning the care-recipient, that is, the response from the care-recipient being able to be detected by the care-giver, clearly explain her interpretation of caring-for as occurring only within close encounters.

If we consider Noddings’ construction of caring-for in terms of her requirements for both the care-giver and the care-recipient, we may find a big gap between caring-for and caring-about, especially considering the necessary closeness for attention and motivational displacement which may significantly limit the range of

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204 Nel Noddings, *Starting at Home: Caring and Social Policy*, pp. 18, 19.
caring-for. This may explain Noddings’ further distinction between two kinds of caring-for, that is, natural caring and ethical caring, which may help to expand the range of necessary emotional or psychological state, that is, attention and motivational displacement on the part of the care-giver, especially through the construction of ethical caring. For natural caring, it refers to relations “in which we respond as one-caring out of love or natural inclination.” What is significant about natural caring is that it refers to the unreflective response of the care-giver, without “mediating ethical-logical deliberation.” In contrast to natural caring, ethical caring involves reflection and deliberation. It is driven by our desire in pursuit of the ethical ideal manifested more vividly in natural caring. Unlike natural caring where emotional or psychological state can be relatively more readily satisfied, more efforts are needed for ethical caring where spontaneous response from the care-giver is not expected and may even be difficult:

On such occasions we respond as carers because we want to uphold our ideal of ourselves as carers. We overcome our own resistance by asking ourselves, “How would I respond if I really cared? If I were at my best as a carer, what would I do?”

Although ethical caring goes through a more complicated process compared with natural caring, it is still rather limited in terms of the possible range. Faced with the limits of caring-for, either natural caring or ethical caring, Noddings adopts the term “caring-about” to refer to circumstances resembling caring in wider areas, for example, in circumstances some people are truly concerned about the well-being of

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some other people.\textsuperscript{209}

For caring-about beyond close encounters, it is clear that it cannot satisfy Noddings’ requirements for the care-recipient who responds to the care-giver in ways for the care-giver to recognize the receipt and acceptance of the caring-for. But it is more complicated regarding the requirements for the care-giver in caring-about, that is, certain emotional or psychological state and actions followed by it. It is understandable that the care-giver may not do anything direct for the care-recipient in caring-about, but we may hesitate to reach the conclusion that her emotional or psychological state cannot be achieved as it is in caring-for, since the construction of ethical caring already admits the possibility that the attainment of such emotional or psychological state can be cultivated, at least to some extent. Such possibility may lead to the attempt to cultivate such emotional or psychological state in wider areas, which may explain the views that caring should be considered as going beyond close encounters.

Noddings’ elaboration and emphasis on the care-giver and the care-recipient signifies the unique understanding of caring for care ethics, which is also recognized in care ethics discourse as what can be used to differentiate caring in care ethics from everyday usage of caring. For example, Amy Mullin maintains that caring “requires both parties to be aware of each other as a particular (not interchangeable) person, to be aware of being in relation, and it requires some reciprocity.”\textsuperscript{210} This requirement

\textsuperscript{209} Nel Noddings, \textit{Starting at Home: Caring and Social Policy}, p. 3.

for the awareness of the particularities of each party would also limit the distance between the care-giver and the care-recipient.

However, the emphasis on both the care-giver and the care-recipient may not necessarily lead to defining caring within close encounters. For example, although Joan Tronto defines caring as “an ongoing process,” with “caring about,” “taking care of,” and “care-giving” referring to the side of the care-giver and “care-receiving” to the side of the care-recipient, her interpretation of caring is not limited to close encounters.211 In fact, Tronto’s interpretation of caring goes beyond the range of close encounters to the extent that it “consumes much of human activities.”212 In order to understand Tronto’s view concerning the range of caring, we need to examine her interpretations of both parties in caring.

For the care-giver, she is supposed to notice the needs of others, in terms of “caring about”, which can refer to the needs of distant people, such as starving children thousands of miles away.213 The care-giver is supposed to act in direct contact with the care-recipient, in terms of “care-giving”, such as “the nurse administering medication, the repair person fixing the broken thing, the mother talking with her child about the day’s events, the neighbor helping her friend to set her hair.”214 Obviously, such direct contact refers to unmediated fulfilling the needs of

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the care-recipients. In this way, giving money to the needy should not be considered as caring as it works indirectly. Although the emphasis on direct contact may be suspected of limiting caring to close encounters, such a conclusion is avoided perhaps because the care-giver can always reach out to people far away and perform direct actions toward those people. For example, volunteers not only donate money to some humanitarian missions but also come to the place and personally perform the caring activities. Moreover, regarding the care-giver, Tronto also discusses the example of giving money as Noddings does. Unlike Noddings who concentrates on the extent of attentiveness manifested in giving money which may not reach the necessary standard for caring, Tronto’s doubt about giving money in relation to caring refers to the understanding that giving money cannot be equated with fulfilling needs of the care-recipient and thus not a kind of performing caring actions.\textsuperscript{215} Although giving money may not qualify as caring, it does show the willingness to help, in terms of “caring about.”

For the care-recipient, Tronto refers to, in terms of “care-receiving,” situations such as “the patient feels better, or the starving children seem healthier after being fed.”\textsuperscript{216} The focus, however, is placed on whether needs of the care-recipient have been met, not the possible obstacles for the care-recipient to respond to the care-giver, which may lead to the conclusion that as long as the situation of the care-recipient can be observed, the necessary response from the care-recipient can be considered


\textsuperscript{216} Joan C. Tronto, \textit{Moral Boundaries: A Political Argument for an Ethic of Care}, pp. 105-107.
fulfilled.

The interpretations of caring do not always emphasize both the care-giver and the care-recipient. In many cases, only the care-giver is focused on, which obviously reduces the requirements for caring, but it does not follow that all such interpretations will lean toward caring beyond close encounters, for even if the emphasis is only placed on the side of the care-giver, whether caring is assumed to be limited to close encounters or not still depends on more detailed descriptions of the care-giver.

Held, among others, seems to emphasize only the care-giver while advocating caring beyond close encounters to include the society or even the whole world. 217 Caring between distant people is considered weaker, but not differentiated qualitatively from caring between people who are close to each other, such as family members. 218 This is related to Held’s interpretations of caring, as either a value or a practice, which is characterized with “attentiveness, responsiveness to needs, and understanding situations from the points of view of others.” 219 Although the issue of perspective may be related to the care-recipient, the above characterization of caring seems to emphasize only one party in caring, that is, the care-giver. The attitudes of the care-giver to the care-recipient, in terms of attentiveness and responsiveness, are not influenced by the distance between the care-giver and the care-recipient. Or at most such influence, in terms of distance, is a matter of degree. We can always (genuinely) care for others, despite the distance between us, only in different degree.

217 Virginia Held, The Ethics of Care: Personal, Political, and Global, p. 31.
218 Virginia Held, The Ethics of Care: Personal, Political, and Global, p. 43.
219 Virginia Held, The Ethics of Care: Personal, Political, and Global, p. 18.
Moreover, the care-giver is not defined as acting directly toward the care-recipient, which also leaves ample room for relevant activities between the care-giver and the care-recipient disregarding the possible distance.

Although the above characterization only refers to the care-giver, the care-recipient is mentioned in caring, who is supposed to respond to the care-giver. Such response is also different from reciprocity since the former may simply refer to “the look of satisfaction in the child, the smile of the patient.” However, such response is not always necessary since, according to Held, the care-giver can by herself accomplish caring when any kind of response is not possible, such as patients who are in coma and cannot respond in any way. Allowing for the absence or impossibility of the care-recipient response removes the obstacle to extending caring to the society and perhaps even the whole world.

Along with Tronto and Held, Daniel Engster also argues for caring in wider areas after providing a definition of caring which intends to encompass most, if not all, circumstances where it happens. According to such a definition, caring refers to “everything we do directly to help others to meet their vital biological needs, develop or maintain their innate capabilities, and alleviate unnecessary pain and suffering in an attentive, responsive, and respectful manner.” It can be argued that such an interpretation of caring only focuses on the care-giver, but its emphasis on attentiveness, responsiveness, and respect may also involve the care-recipient in some

220 Virginia Held, *The Ethics of Care: Personal, Political, and Global*, p. 36.
221 Virginia Held, *The Ethics of Care: Personal, Political, and Global*, pp. 36-37.
aspects, such as the necessary assessment of needs through interactions between the care-giver and the care-recipient. But according to Engster, the “emphasis on attentiveness, responsiveness, and respect nonetheless need not limit the scope of caring” and the care-giver “can still care for people across the world.”\(^{223}\)

In sum, there are different views of the range of caring, that is, whether caring is limited to close encounters or not and which one of them is adopted will determine the strength of the particular version of family-related partiality based on caring. Clearly, if we deem it proper to limit caring to close encounters, it follows that we would agree that such caring as well as the particular version of family-related partiality would require stronger partial consideration for family members as they are more likely to be party to such close encounters.

If we accept that caring can go beyond close encounters, however, it does not follow that caring as well as the particular version of family-related partiality would definitely not support partial concerns for family members, but it does suggest that family members would not be given very special place since caring is not necessarily better accommodated by family members. This stance seems to better shield the particular family-related partiality from critique that it would prevent concerns in wider areas.

However, it should be recognized that in the real world, many family members are separated in physical distance and if caring is limited to close encounters, it may follow that many family members are also excluded. On the contrary, if caring goes

\(^{223}\) Daniel Engster, *The Heart of Justice: Care Ethics and Political Theory*, p. 32.
beyond close encounters, we can feel relieved that caring can still extend to family members despite the distance between us. But in this situation, family members are not emphasized in caring and the particular version of family-related partiality in care ethics seems to fail to provide any special support for partial concerns for family members.

As it will become clear in the following section, however, the distance between these two different views concerning the range of caring as well as the particular version of family-related partiality can be reduced. On the one hand, for the adoption of caring within close encounters, it does not follow that we cannot extend our concerns for other people outside such close encounters, or beyond the domain of family since the emotional or psychological element for caring can be cultivated in wider areas. On the other hand, for the adoption of caring beyond close encounters, it does not follow that family members would not be given special consideration, since the examination of emotional or psychological element for caring would also suggest that family members could still provide better circumstance for such emotional or psychological element. I shall argue that the psychological elements in caring, whether it happens in close encounters or over longer distances, favor partiality to family members.

Caring, Empathy, and Sympathy

In review of the above two kinds of views concerning the range of caring, that is,
whether caring is limited to close encounters or not, we may conclude that the strength of the particular version of family-related partiality depends on how we define caring in relation to its range. It may not be so if we consider the emotional or psychological element in caring, which also serves in many cases as the defining standard in relation to the care-giver to determine whether caring is limited or not.

Empathy and sympathy, among others, have been the most competitive candidates for emotional involvement in caring regarding either explanation or motivation or both. The assumption is that care ethics generally upholds the importance of emotional elements regarding either justification or motivation, which translates into the arguments for or against empathy or sympathy. Despite their differences, they both lead to the same position which may support stronger partiality toward family members as those emotional or psychological elements can be relatively better located within family members, although they can be arguably extended to wider areas.

It should be pointed out that the interests in empathy and sympathy in moral and political theories go far beyond the scope of care ethics and it is not the plan here to conduct a thorough investigation of empathy or sympathy, nor a validation of empathy or sympathy from the perspective of care ethics.\textsuperscript{224} There are many different definitions of both empathy and sympathy. Empathy is said to refer to “feeling an

emotion with someone," or imagining “how others feel, what they fear or hope for, and how they understand themselves and their circumstances,” or to experience “emotions homologous to someone else’s emotions and experience them for that other person,” or “taking…other person's perspective and imagining…[her] feelings” while recognizing her “as a separate, autonomous agent.”

Sympathy is taken as referring to sharing others’ “hopes, fears, joys and sorrows” on behalf of these people, or the “immediate and unthinking response to the suffering of another,” or experiencing “concern (compassion, pity, warm-heartedness) in response to negative impacts on others’ wellbeing.”

It is important to emphasize that the elaboration on both empathy and sympathy will be analyzed in relation to care ethics and the investigation here is not intended to provide any all-purpose definition of either empathy or sympathy. In fact, empathy and sympathy are sometimes used interchangeably in moral theory. For care ethics, on the one hand, empathy and sympathy are also sometimes indiscriminately adopted

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to refer to the emotional element. On the other hand, the adoption of one of them is usually accompanied with the rejection of the other. Such controversies partly explain why I will not present any definition of either empathy or sympathy at the beginning or even at the end, since it will become clear that what matters in care ethics regarding empathy and sympathy is not the choice of terms, but the ways we approach others’ experience, feelings, perspective, etc., which may help to defend care ethics from criticism regarding care-giver and care-recipient facing the danger of being dominated or exploited, for example.

However, for the purpose of examining such emotional or psychological element in caring as well as its relevance to family members and hence the particular version of family-related partiality, we should pay more attention to the attainment of such emotional or psychological state in relation to family members, that is, whether one or both of them suggest that it can be better formed among family members.

Let us first consider the advocacy of empathy. Meyers and Michael Slote, among others, argue for the adoption of empathy in addressing the emotional or psychological element in caring. Meyers differentiates empathy from both “shrewdly sizing people up” and “sympathetic fusing with people.” If we construct a continuum, sympathy and “sizing up” lie at two ends of this continuum and empathy lies in the middle. For “sizing up”, it is directed toward people whom we may or may not feel connected, whom we may or may not bear ill will. Of course, there is nothing

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in principle that may prevent “sizing up” from being followed by good will and emotional attachment, but those are not essential elements of it. We may establish some connection, even a causal one, between “sizing up” and good will, emotional attachment toward those people, since the latter may be founded on the outcome of the former. However, ill will, resentment, or hatred may be also established on the outcome of “sizing up.” Moreover, there is a third possibility that we may not form any kind of emotions toward the objects of “sizing up.” It is not necessary that “sizing up” would be followed with any kind of feelings.235

For sympathy, according to Meyers, it indicates the direct sharing of other people’s feelings as well as their intentions, or experiencing such feelings. More importantly, it also suggests that we approve those feelings and intentions as well as the undertaken projects and we want to establish, maintain a relationship between us and those people.236 Conversely, it suggests the difficulty of sympathy for others since we may very well find many people whose projects we do not approve.

For empathy, according to Meyers, it lies between “sizing up” and sympathy regarding the distance between us and the objects of empathy. There is a tendency in empathy that it would be directed toward people whom we bear good will, which accordingly differentiates empathy from “sizing up.” Although this good will and emotional attachment usually happen, they are not essential elements of empathy, for example, there is nothing surprising that we may empathize with people “for whom

one feels no affection,” which differentiates empathy from sympathy. Unlike sympathy which indicates the sharing of and hence feeling others’ emotions, empathy refers to the construction of others’ feelings in oneself through imagination. But how does this imagination process work? Meyers suggests that we should try to reconstruct others’ experience with which those feelings are accompanied. Following warnings and suggestions are offered for such reconstruction:

To empathize well, it is often necessary…to mobilize one's powers of attentive receptivity and analytic discernment. Particularly when the other's background or circumstances are very different from one's own, empathy may require protracted observation and painstaking imaginative reconstruction of the minutiae of the other's viewpoint.

Whether such suggestions are adequate or helpful to trigger concerns for other, accurately experiencing such feelings while maintaining one’s own stance and judgment, needs examination under different circumstances, but they do imply that such efforts may be better accommodated by close contacts.

Michael Slote also takes empathy as the essential element for caring and claims that the “differences in strength or force of empathy make a difference to how much we care about the fate of others in various different situations.” Although Slote also adopts empathy as the basic and fundamental emotion for caring, his interpretation of empathy is not the same as Meyers’s interpretation. Unlike Meyers, Slote takes empathy as “having the feelings of another (involuntarily) aroused in ourselves, as when we see another person in pain.”

On the other hand, according to Slote, sympathy suggests that we “feel sorry for, bad for, the person who is in pain and positively wish them well” even if “we aren’t feeling their pain.”\textsuperscript{241} For example, one may feel “bad for someone who was being humiliated, but in no way felt humiliated oneself.”\textsuperscript{242} Here what is presented is only sympathy, not empathy. Slote gives an example as how empathy is aroused when we see that someone is drowning in a lake:

In drowning examples, someone’s danger or plight has a salience, conspicuousness, vividness, and immediacy that engages normal human empathy (and consequently arouses sympathy and caring concern) in a way that similar dangers we merely know about—dangers, we might say, that we know only by description—do not.\textsuperscript{243}

Clearly, such immediacy required for the empathy can be better fulfilled by emphasizing the particular, concrete contacts, which can be more readily observed among people with close relationships. Since Slote claims that he is against Noddings’ suggestion that caring is limited to close encounters, he is bound to suggest that empathy can be extended beyond such encounters, which leads to his proposal about a new kind of empathy that can accommodate people far away.\textsuperscript{244} This empathy for distant people is connected with the economic, technological development in the modern world which makes it possible to communicate with, exercise influence on, people who are far away.\textsuperscript{245} Other measures can be taken to help people develop such empathetic concerns for distant people.\textsuperscript{246} Still, the fact that all these measures are

\textsuperscript{241} Michael Slote, \textit{The Ethics of Care and Empathy}, p. 13.
\textsuperscript{242} Michael Slote, \textit{The Ethics of Care and Empathy}, p. 13.
\textsuperscript{243} Michael Slote, \textit{The Ethics of Care and Empathy}, p. 23.
\textsuperscript{244} Michael Slote, \textit{The Ethics of Care and Empathy}, p. 29.
\textsuperscript{245} Michael Slote, \textit{The Ethics of Care and Empathy}, p. 29.
\textsuperscript{246} Michael Slote, \textit{The Ethics of Care and Empathy}, pp. 29-30.
necessary to develop such empathetic concerns seems to suggest that empathy of all kinds, according to Slote’s own understanding, can clearly be better accommodated by family members (as well as other people near and dear) compared with people far away or we do not know.

In contrast with empathy, some care ethicists adopt sympathy to refer to the emotional or psychological element in caring. For example, although Noddings uses the term “engrossment” to refer to natural caring where “revulsion and motivational displacement” are brought about, she later adopts the term “sympathy” to address the emotional or psychological state in caring.\textsuperscript{247} According to Noddings, sympathy refers to encounters where,

\begin{quote}
I receive the other person and feel what he or she is feeling even if I am quite sure intellectually that I would not myself feel that way in the given situation.\textsuperscript{248}
\end{quote}

As it has been pointed out, Noddings defines caring within close encounters, which is related to her emphasis on the emotional or psychological state of the care-giver. Her interpretation of sympathy is therefore deemed to favor the circumstance of family. However, the adoption of sympathy is not always followed with caring being limited to close encounters. For example, although Engster supports caring beyond close encounters, he also chooses sympathy to refer to emotional or psychological element for care ethics.\textsuperscript{249} For him,

\begin{quote}
[S]ympathy...connote a ‘feeling with’ others that respects their difference and leads to good caring while empathy involves ‘putting oneself in another’s place’ in a manner that can be distorting, controlling,
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{247} Nel Noddings, \textit{Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics and Moral Education}, p. 18.
\textsuperscript{249} Daniel Engster, \textit{The Heart of Justice: Care Ethics and Political Theory}, p. 36.
presumptuous, and paternalistic.\textsuperscript{250}

According to Engster, sympathy would be relatively easily located within close encounters, such as among family members, although cultivation can help to extend it to wider areas, which is perhaps why he still support caring beyond close encounters.\textsuperscript{251}

Whether empathy or sympathy, which empathy or sympathy, can best represent the emotional or psychological element in caring is of significant importance for care ethics to establish itself as a viable theory while responding to criticism regarding the danger of domination, exploitation, dissolution of the care-giver and the care-recipient, but without reaching any conclusion about that issue, it suffices to say, in view of above different ideas about empathy and sympathy, they all privilege close contacts. However, just as it is pointed out in discussing the range of caring, in fact, we do not always spend more time and have more close contacts with our family members, except perhaps during the very early stage of our life. The emotional or psychological element in caring, in terms of either empathy or sympathy, may not always be better accommodated by family members, but in many cases, it does and it follows that the emphasis on this element in caring may also suggest that family members should be given special consideration.

In review, whether empathy or sympathy should be the appropriate model for caring is of mounting importance for care ethics, especially when care ethics is confronted with the challenge to address the relationship between the care-giver and

\textsuperscript{250} Daniel Engster, \textit{The Heart of Justice: Care Ethics and Political Theory}, p. 197n.2.  
\textsuperscript{251} Daniel Engster, \textit{The Heart of Justice: Care Ethics and Political Theory}, pp. 36, 37.
the care-recipient to avoid domination, exploitation of either side, but if the concern is partiality for family members, it is clear that both of them would favor partiality toward family members, although in some cases efforts can always be made to cultivate and extend both empathy and sympathy to people outside the family.

For care ethics, although the general version of family-related partiality is also grounded on the concept of self as it is in communitarianism, the differences between communitarian self and relational self in care ethics, especially the latter’s emphasis on a stronger particularity and on dependency, suggest that the latter’s general version of family-related partiality is more strongly partial toward family members.

As for the particular version of family-related partiality based on the concept of caring in care ethics, to which extent it supports partial treatment toward family members in relation to other wider moral concerns depends on the different conception of caring, that is, whether caring can be extended beyond close encounters. If caring is deemed to be limited within close encounters, the particular version of family-related partiality would probably support stronger partial concerns toward family members. If caring is deemed proper to be extended beyond close encounters, it may not follow that the particular version of family-related partiality would lose its relatively stronger concerns for family members, because the emotional or psychological element which is crucial for caring, be it empathy or sympathy, would always be better accommodated by the circumstance of family members. In sum, care ethics would always extend stronger partial concerns for family members compared
with communitarianism.
Chapter Four

Early Confucianism and Family-related Partiality

Similar to the strategy adopted in previous two chapters, in this chapter the investigation of family-related partiality in early Confucianism will also be divided into two parts, the general version of family-related partiality based on the concept of self in early Confucianism and the particular version of family-related partiality based on the concept of filial piety. For the general version of family-related partiality, attempts will be made to establish it on the basis of conception of self in early Confucianism as it has been done for communitarianism and care ethics. The differences between Confucian self, communitarian self, and relational self will be examined in relation to family-related partiality through identity-holding. Unlike both communitarianism and care ethics in English-speaking moral and political theories, the concept of self cannot be found in the philosophical vocabulary of early Confucianism in traditional Chinese and all discussions of a philosophical conception of Confucian self therefore require reconstruction from the original texts, in which the discourse of self, whatever form it takes, is more mixed with discourse of other issues in early Confucianism, the idea of filial piety, for example. The claim that self is not among the philosophical vocabulary of early Confucianism does not deny the fact that the individual subject is mentioned in the first person in early Confucian texts. Instead, it suggests that the self is not philosophically prominent as it is in
communitarianism and care ethics. Since such reconstruction of Confucian self cannot be clearly separated from other issues, filial piety, for example, the general version of family-related partiality is more closely connected with the particular version of family-related partiality based on the idea of filial piety in early Confucianism. For the particular version of family-related partiality based on filial piety, the investigation will be limited to filial piety itself. Moreover, filial piety here is interpreted in its narrow sense, which refers directly only to the relationship between parents and children.

In the first section of this chapter, the concept of self in relation to identity-holding will be examined in early Confucianism. Different from both communitarianism and care ethics in which the discourse of self is an inherent part of those theories, the investigation of self in early Confucianism is confronted with two related difficulties from the beginning. First, whether we can find the counterpart of Western philosophical concept of self in the texts of early Confucianism. Second, whether it is appropriate to apply the concept of self in the studies of early Confucianism.

For the discussion of self in early Confucianism, there is the problem of translation, which is related to whether it is appropriate to include self in the philosophical vocabulary of early Confucianism. Various Chinese terms are identified in early Confucian texts as the counterparts of self, which include wo, 我, shen, 身, ji, 己, zi, 自, wu, 吾, among others.252 It is important to figure out

252 See, for example, Herbert Fingarette, “The Problem of the Self in the Analects,” Philosophy East and West, Vol. 29, No. 2, 1979, p. 131; David L. Hall
which Chinese term can better accommodate the meaning of self as moral subject in English language as well as the philosophical implications of each term, since the nuanced differences among these Chinese terms may suggest different interpretations of Confucian self in terms of its contents, characteristics, and emphasis. However, the reconstruction of self in early Confucianism draws from various essential ideas that are put forward, discussed, defended, and debated in early Confucian texts and the selection of the appropriate Chinese term is therefore interwoven with these essential ideas. It is not the intention here to offer a stance and the defense thereof regarding the adequate relation between the investigation of various essential ideas pertaining to the moral subject and the appropriate Chinese term for self. The focus here is simply placed on the former.

For the second difficulty, that is, whether it is appropriate to apply the concept of self in the studies of early Confucianism, early Confucianism as well as communitarianism and care ethics would face this same problem as long as the concept of self is predetermined as a specific version, the liberal individual self for

example. However, if we abandon such conviction regarding the embedded content of self, there is no contradiction in examining other kinds of self, such as Confucian self.

After the examination of Confucian self in some of the original early Confucian texts, it will be pointed out that Confucian self can support partiality toward family members through its recognition of others’ contribution, including family members’, to ones’ identity-holding. Moreover, there are two characteristics of Confucian self which would further family members’ status in identity-holding and hence relatively stronger support for partiality toward family members. First, Confucian self directly emphasizes the special status of family members in relation to self. Second, Confucian conception of self emphasizes its particularity.

In the second section, efforts will be made to construct a particular version of family-related partiality based on the concept of filial piety in early Confucianism. It is well-known that early Confucianism in particular and Confucianism in general are (in)famous for the emphasis on family in moral and political thinking, which is closely connected with filial piety that has been long regarded as one of the most important ideas, if not the most important idea, in early Confucianism.253

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It needs to be emphasized that the investigation of filial piety as well as the particular version of family-related partiality is based on two related assumptions about filial piety. First, the concept of filial piety here applies directly only to the domain of family. Second, filial piety is treated as a fundamental idea in early Confucianism.

The first assumption refers to different interpretations of filial piety in terms of its direct application, that is, whether it applies to the domain of family or goes beyond it. The broad interpretation suggests that filial piety applies in broad areas of human affairs, even including relations between humans and nonhumans, which can be supported by evidence from Confucian texts. For example, in the *Xiaojing* [*The Classics of Filial Piety*] it states:

Master Zeng replied, “Incredible—the profundity of family reverence!” The Master continued, “Indeed, family reverence is the constancy of the heavenly cycles, the appropriate responsiveness (yi) of the earth, and the proper conduct of the people.”

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Partly based on the interpretation of Zhongyong [Centrality and Commonality], another Confucian text, Tu Wei-ming suggests that filial piety directly appeals to the whole cosmos, which may also support the broad interpretation of filial piety:

Filial piety and reverence are parallel principles in the Confucian anthropocosmic worldview...They are, in our contemporary terminology, ecological principles humanly designed but heavenly inspired for the primary purpose of bringing peace and harmony to the universe. Filial piety and reverence...attempt to establish a pattern of mutual dependence and organismic unity between Heaven and humankind.255

Jung Hwa Yol also explicitly claims that the “ethics of filial piety not only governs filial and familial relationships but also extends to human moral conduct toward nonhuman living beings and nonliving things as well.”256 However, all these arguments refer to other Confucian texts and it has been emphasized that the early Confucianism discussed here relies on Analects of Confucius, Mengzi, and Xunzi. Of course, it does not mean that early Confucianism excludes the possibility of the broad interpretation of filial piety since, among the various discussions of filial piety in early Confucianism, textual evidence can be found to support the broad interpretation of filial piety. For example, in Analects, it says:

The gentleman applies himself to the roots. ‘Once the roots are firmly established, the Way will grow.’ Might we not say that filial piety and respect for elders constitute the root of Goodness?” (Analects, 1.2, Slingerland)257

The broad interpretation of filial piety can be further distinguished into two

kinds. First, certain actions outside the bounds of family are counted directly as filial piety, which is expressed in *Xiaojing*. In this sense, the domain of filial piety includes all (human) areas. Second, certain actions outside the bounds of family are also overwhelmingly, if not solely, ordered according to filial piety, although filial piety is understood as referring firstly to matters within family, which can be relatively better accommodated by early Confucian texts. It suggests that wider actions outside the family context should be ordered as it is within family according to filial piety. Moreover, filial piety serves as the sole guidance for matters outside family. The second broad interpretation is similar to the first broad interpretation in terms of providing guidance outside the family and it is similar to the narrow interpretation in terms of referring firstly to the family domain.

However, for the narrow interpretation, although it refers only directly to the relationship between parents and children and does not address concerns in wider areas, it does not theoretically deny the possibility that how matters outside family may be ordered can learn something from how those within family. Moreover, even if matters outside the family context may be conducted similar to those within family, according to the narrow interpretation of filial piety, it does not suggest that filial piety can be treated as the only source for such guidance. Therefore, one crucial difference between the second broad interpretation and the narrow interpretation is that the latter does not insist that filial piety is the only ultimate factor to which matters outside the family appeal, although it is possible that matters outside the family may be conducted in a similar way as matters
within the family.

The second assumption refers to the fundamental status of filial piety in early Confucianism. This assumption is actually closely connected with the first one. If filial piety is viewed as a fundamental idea, we tend to extend the scope of filial piety to wider areas. Conversely, we can pretty much determine that if one holds the broad interpretation of filial piety, she obviously supports the fundamental status of filial piety in early Confucianism. However, even if we assume the narrow interpretation of filial piety which only directly applies to the domain of the family, it does not follow that filial piety is denied its fundamental status. Whether filial piety is deemed fundamental or not depends partly on the relationships between filial piety and other essential ideas in early Confucianism. For example, different views concerning the relationship between filial piety and ren [benevolence, humanity] suggest different stances regarding the fundamental status of filial piety. If filial piety is believed to be the origin of ren, it casts no doubt on the fundamental status of filial piety. If ren is believed to be the origin of filial piety, it would suggest that compared with filial piety, ren is more fundamental and filial piety is perhaps a subset or partial presentation of ren. If filial piety and ren are considered as parallel ideas, that is, neither of them derives its status from the other, exactly how they are related would be irrelevant for the fundamental status of filial piety. All these views can find evidence in early Confucian texts and it has long been debated regarding the adequacy of these views. For the purpose of investigating the particular version of family-related
partiality based on filial piety, it is assumed that filial piety is not derived from *ren* and it follows that different conclusions may be reached if such assumption is denied, which is however beyond the scope of this chapter.

Based on the early Confucian texts, a brief interpretation of what filial piety refers to will be provided, which will clearly suggest that one should be partial to family members, which is therefore considered the particular version of family-related partiality in early Confucianism. The examination of filial piety itself will show that although such particular version of family-related partiality is not overwhelming to the extent that wider concerns are totally denied, it does support relatively strong partial concerns for family members since the idea of filial piety itself cannot provide any internal constraint, like the idea of community and caring both do. Again, this is partly due to the fact that filial piety is understood narrowly and hence the lack of restraint on partiality toward family members which may be provided by other early Confucian ideas. It explains why we cannot assume the early Confucian stance for family-related partiality by simply examining the general and the particular version of family-related partiality as there are other essential ideas in early Confucianism which may pull in other directions. For example, the strength of such partial concerns may be curtailed by other early Confucian concerns, such as *ren*.

Confucian Self and the General Version of Family-related Partiality
It has been argued that it is not appropriate to talk about self in Confucianism in general or early Confucianism in particular, which is perhaps why the term “person”, instead of “self”, is sometimes adopted in relevant discussion. For example, Kwong-loi Shun claims that “some have observed that Confucians do not have a notion of self.”

To support this claim, Shun quotes several works, including Herbert Fingarette’s “The Problem of the Self in the Analects.” In this article, after carefully examining the possible counterparts of self in Analects, Fingarette concludes that,

We can now in this context identify with more precision the negative aspects, the respects in which Confucius teaches, as central to his Way, that we must have no self.

But he admits that the above conclusion concerning the absence of the concept of self in early Confucianism is established on the assumption of certain embedded implications in the concept of self. Putting aside this strictly limited conception of self, he recognizes that in the Analects, we can find references to the “self as a self-observing and self-regulating individual, a self sharply distinct from Others.” Therefore as long as we do not insist on any restricted definition of self, either the specific one discussed by Fingarette or the “self in the Western tradition” summarized by Hall and Ames, the replacement of self by other terms,

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such as person, does not render discourse on self unnecessary.\textsuperscript{263}

If we do not restrict the concept of self to any specific definition and treat self as one among a cluster of concepts, such as person, individual, agent, we can reach an uncontroversial consensus on Confucian self, which emphasizes its relatedness to others. For example, advocating a role-based interpretation of Confucianism, Henry Rosemont Jr. characterizes Confucian self in terms of its multiple roles:

Confucian self…is to be seen relationally: I am a son, husband, father, grandfather, teacher, student, friend, colleague, neighbor, and more. I live, rather than “play” these roles, and when all of them have been specified, and their interrelationships made manifest, then I have been fairly thoroughly individuated.\textsuperscript{264}

And,

From our beginning roles as children—and as siblings, playmates, and pupils—we mature to become parents ourselves, and become as well spouses or lovers, neighbors, subjects, colleagues, friends, and more...the manifold roles we live define us as persons. And the ways in which we live these relational roles are the means whereby we achieve dignity, satisfaction, and meaning in life.\textsuperscript{265}

Tu Wei-Ming defines Confucian self as referring to “a center of relationships, a communal quality which was never conceived of as an isolated or isolable entity.”\textsuperscript{266} Using a model of focus-field, Hall and Ames also connect Confucian self with its roles and relationships:

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{263}{David L. Hall and Roger T. Ames, \textit{Thinking from the Han: Self, Truth, and Transcendence in Chinese and Western Culture}, p. 20.}
\footnote{265}{Henry Rosemont Jr., “Two Loci of Authority: Autonomous Individuals and Related,” p. 11.}
\footnote{266}{Tu Wei-Ming, \textit{Confucian Thought: Selfhood as Creative Transformation}, New York: State University of New York Press, 1985, p. 53.}
\end{footnotes}
The locus of the self as a field of social relations constituting and constituted by the person is fundamental to our understanding of Chinese conceptions of selfhood... The focus-field model results from understanding one's relation to the world to be constituted by acts of contextualization.  

In fact, the way the *Analects* is organized is a vivid manifestation of such ideas of Confucian self. Just as the *Analects* is comprised of many vivid portraits of Confucius from different persons’ perspectives as well as the interaction between Confucius and one or more of his disciples, which all contribute to the image and model of Confucius, Confucian self is also the combination of many particular relationships with others in concrete circumstances.  

Such views of Confucian self is not limited to early Confucianism or Confucianism in general. It is also believed that other early Chinese theories uphold the similar views of self. For example, Chris Fraser puts Mohists together with Confucians on this matter,

> Like the Confucians, the Mohists see individuals as largely constituted by the... relational, social roles they occupy, such as ruler or subject, father or son, elder or younger brother, male or female, elder or youth, and member of a clan or community.

Karyn Lai goes further to claim that such views of Confucian self can adequately apply to all Chinese philosophical thoughts, in which “an individual is essentially a relationally constituted and situated self.”

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Ames pushes even harder to maintain that such assessment is not limited to traditional philosophical thoughts. Using an example of everyday sentence in English and contrasting it with its counterpart in modern Chinese language, Ames further claims that selves should be understood as “situated, relational…who grow and realize themselves as distinctive persons through a sustained commitment to their always collaborative, transactional roles within the nexus of family and community.”

Evidence is claimed to be located in early Confucian texts where such views of Confucian self can be supported. For example, Karyn Lai claims that the Confucian self can be interpreted “as a social being whose life is deeply integrated with the lives of others” and such “interactions and relationships” are fundamental to Confucian self. During such argument, she quotes, in addition to others, following passage in *Analects*:

> The Master said, ‘Zeng, my friend! My way is bound together with one continuous strand.’ Master Zeng replied, ‘Indeed.’ When the Master had left, the disciples asked, ‘What was he referring to?’ Master Zeng said, ‘The way of the Master is doing one’s utmost (zhong) and putting oneself in the other’s place (shu), nothing more.’ (*Analects*, 4.15, Ames and Rosemont)

However, based on such texts themselves, it is difficult to push for the idea of Confucian self being fundamentally defined in terms of its relationship with others.

The passage by itself simply emphasizes the importance of zhong [doing one’s

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273 Roger T. Ames and Henry Rosemont, Jr., *The Analects of Confucius: A Philosophical Translation*. 
utmost] and shu [putting oneself in the other’s place]. Since there are controversies over the adequate interpretation of zhong and it is not the intention here to engage in a detailed discussion of it, I will focus on shu in relation to Confucian self in this passage.274 Unlike zhong, shu is generally accepted as referring to a version of Golden Rule, “that my behavior or attitude affecting another person should in some sense be the kind of thing that I would find acceptable if I were the person affected.”275 However, it is very rare, if any, that Golden Rule arguments are connected with a conception of self which is defined in terms of its relationships with others. In fact, John C. Harsanyi argues that Golden Rule is closely connected with Kant’s moral theory.276 Of course, shu as the Confucian version of Golden Rule cannot be assumed to be the same as those in western moral and political theories.277 The emphasis is simply that the above quotation by itself does not establish a Confucian self that is generally accepted by

274 Zhong is translated as doing one’s utmost, loyalty, conscientiousness, and being honest with oneself in dealing with others, which obviously have very different meanings. See Paul R. Goldin, “When Zhong 忠 Does Not Mean ‘Loyalty,’” Dao, Vol. 7, 2008, pp. 168-170.
In fact, if we want to find specific and precise textual evidence to support a Confucian conception of self, it is easier to find it in other Confucian texts, such as *Zhongyong* and *Great Learning*, not *Analects*, *Mengzi*, or *Xunzi*.²⁷⁸ More generally speaking, it may not be accidental that the discussion of Confucian self is seldom directly connected with specific passages in early Confucian texts. Instead, many other crucial ideas in early Confucianism are always introduced to support the above views on Confucian self, which include the idea of self-cultivation, five basic relationships (*wu lun*), the importance of rituals (*li*), and perhaps more relevant here, the idea of filial piety. What distinguishes the Confucian self as a philosophical concept from the concept of self in communitarianism and care Ethics is its reconstruction indirectly from essential ideas in Confucianism.

The similarities between Confucian self, communitarian self and relational self in care ethics can be easily identified. All three of them define self in terms of its relationships with others. For communitarian self, it is through the memberships in different communities. For relational self in care ethics, it is through encounters with particular others. For Confucian self, it is through the interpretation of some essential ideas in early Confucianism and Confucianism in general, including the emphasis on self-cultivation, filial piety, rituals, etc.

Such similarities are more obvious when these conceptions of self are confronted with other opposing ideas. For example, regarding both Confucian self and communitarian self, Yuli Liu claims that they would stand together, opposing “the liberal self” that is devoid of “narrative history,” “character,” and “social identity.”

Regarding Confucian self and relational self in care ethics, David B. Wong and Xinyan Jiang, among others, both use the term “relational self” in discussing Confucian self. Ranjoo Seodu Herr even uses Confucian self as the background to introduce the concept of self in care ethics.

Now that it is clear that Confucian self is similar with both communitarian self and relational self in care ethics, in terms of recognizing and emphasizing the contribution of others’, including family members, to the constitution of one’s identity, it therefore can also serve as the foundation for a general version of family-related partiality in early Confucianism as communitarian self and relational self in care ethics do respectively. In this respect, Confucian self is not different from both communitarian self and relational self in care ethics in providing support for partiality toward family members through the idea of identity-holding. However, Confucian self is also different from both

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communitarian self and relational self, which propels us to further identify its own characteristics in relation to identity-holding as well as the general version of family-related partiality. We should therefore ask, just like the differences between communitarian self and relational self in care ethics pertaining to identity-holding would provide different strength for partial concerns toward family members, are there any differences between Confucian self, communitarian self, and relational self in care ethics pertaining to identity-holding and hence partiality toward family members?

Of course, it should be recognized that although the same term “relational self” is adopted in discussions of Confucian self, it does not follow that Confucian self is the same as the relational self in care ethics. As it is pointed out in chapter three, the emphasis on the concreteness and dependency is the main difference between the relational self in care ethics and communitarian self, regarding the issue of family-related partiality through the idea of identity-holding. Despite the same term “relational self”, are there any differences between Confucian self, communitarian self and relational self in care ethics pertaining to the issue of family-related partiality? The possible answer concerns the special status of family members and the idea of particularity. First, family members are specially emphasized in Confucian self. Second, particularity is stressed in Confucian self in its own way.

As Confucian self is fundamentally defined in terms of its relationships with others or roles it possesses, family members are always awarded special place
within such relationships or roles. For example, Rosemont claims that “at the heart of Confucian society is indeed the family” and one’s “first and most basic role, one that significantly defines us in part throughout our lives, is as children.”

Also interpreting Confucian self in terms of its relations to others, Li-Hsiang Lisa Rosenlee puts relationships within family, perhaps especially the relationship between parents and children, “as the core of all social relations.” Unlike the social or relational understanding of Confucian self which is mainly based on the interpretation of Confucianism as a whole, if we recognize such characters of Confucian self, the importance of family members can find direct textual support in early Confucianism. In the *Analects*, many times family members such as parents, brothers are mentioned and elaborated on. For example,

Thus, in being a filial son and good brother one is already taking part in government. (*Analects*, 2.21, Slingerland)

And,

Zilu asked, “Upon learning of something that needs to be done, should one immediately take care of it?” The Master replied, “As long as one’s father and elder brothers are still alive, how could one possibly take care of it immediately?” (*Analects*, 11.22, Slingerland)

In *Mengzi*, it says “the relations of humanity” is manifested through five basic relationships, which include that “between father and son,” “between sovereign and minister,” “between husband and wife,” “between old and young,” and “between friends.” (*Mengzi*, 3A.4) Three out of these five relationships are located within family (“old and young” usually understood to refer to seniority among


siblings.)

Just as the whole concept of Confucian self is a reconstruction based on Confucianism as a whole, the emphasis on family members in Confucian self is also derived from more basic ideas in early Confucianism, among which, filial piety is the most important. From this perspective, the Confucian self as well as the general version of family-related partiality finds one thing in common with the following particular version, for they both turn to filial piety while the difference is that the former relies on it indirectly through the idea of self and the latter directly.

As for the issue of particularity, we may consider Confucian self in comparison with both communitarian self and relational self in care ethics. If Confucian self is defined (at least) as the totality of its different roles, such as, father, son, husband, friend, etc., we may conclude that it is more particular than communitarian self which is limited by the kinds of communities available in this regard, but it seems difficult to reach any conclusion regarding the comparison between Confucian self and relational self in care ethics. To use the focus-field model, Hall and Ames suggest that Confucian self,

\[\text{[C]onstitutes and is constituted by the field in which it resides…And since the field is always entertained from a particular perspective, the self as focus shares the particularity, indeed uniqueness, of the particular perspective.}\]

However, it seems that compared with the relational self in care ethics which emphasizes the concrete, particular relationships, Confucian self is difficult to be

\[\text{284 David L. Hall and Roger T. Ames, } \textit{Thinking from the Han: Self, Truth, and Transcendence in Chinese and Western Culture, p. 43.}\]
deemed relatively more or less particular. The situation is different from the comparison between communitarian self and Confucian self, since communitarian self does not emphasize the particularity of relationship with others, or rather other members in the same community and it is therefore easy to notice the distance between it and both Confucian self and relational self in care ethics pertaining to the idea of particularity.

Regarding both the emphasis on family members and particularity, we can conclude that Confucian self appreciates the importance of family members in the constitution of one’s identity more than communitarian self. However, it is undetermined whether Confucian self is more particular compared with the relational self in care ethics, because although Confucian self directly emphasizes family members, it is difficult to determine whether it surpasses or fall behind relational self in care ethics in terms of particularity.

If we recall the comparison between the general versions of family-related partiality in communitarianism and care ethics, it is argued that the general version in care ethics is stronger than that in communitarianism since in the former, the conception of self pays more attention to the idea of particularity, which helps the project of identity-holding, especially the identity-holding as a particular person. Along the same line, we can therefore conclude at this stage that the general version of family-related partiality in early Confucianism is stronger than that in communitarianism regarding the partial concerns for family members, since the conception of self in early Confucianism also pays more attention to the idea of
particularity and moreover, it directly emphasizes the role of family members in the identity-holding.

As for early Confucianism and care ethics, although it is undetermined which general version of family-related partiality is stronger, since we cannot reach a conclusion regarding particularity in conceptions of self in both theories, if we consider both the general and the particular version of family-related partiality, we may reach the conclusion that early Confucianism suggests stronger partial concerns for family members.

Filial Piety and the Particular Family-related Partiality

In the following section, attempts will be made to examine a particular version of family-related partiality based on the idea of filial piety in early Confucianism. First, based on the narrow interpretation of filial piety which refers only to the relationship between parents and children, the content of filial piety will be provided pertaining to the partial concerns for family members. Second, it will be pointed out that although filial piety, within the domain of narrow interpretation, refers to the relationship between parents and children, it does not pose any inconsistency of concerns for other family members. Third, it will recognize the relatively stronger strength of this particular version of family-related partiality and suggest that the restriction for such partial concerns rests on other essential ideas in early Confucianism.
Although early Confucianism does not provide unambiguous definition of the concept, there are some available textual resources in early Confucianism from which we may grasp an initial understanding of filial piety. According to such textual evidence, we can make the following conclusions regarding filial piety in relation to partial concerns for family members. First, children should materially or financially support their parents, but this alone is inadequate. This requirement is so basic and uncontroversial that in early Confucianism discussion quickly moves to further elaboration on other relevant requirements, such as proper emotions and attitudes. For example, in the *Analects*, it says,

Ziyou asked about filial conduct. The Master replied:” Those today who are filial are considered so because they are able to provide for their parents. But even dogs and horses are given that much care. If you do not respect your parents, what is the difference?” (*Analects*, 2.7, Ames and Rosemont)

In *Mengzi*, it says,

The nourishment of parents when living is not sufficient to be accounted the great thing. It is only in the performing their obsequies when dead that we have what can be considered the great thing. (*Mengzi*, 4B.13)

Filial piety also further requires such provision of material goods to be conducted with proper attitudes, for example, showing respect to one’s parents as it is indicated in the above passages. (see also *Analects*, 2.8)

Second, filial piety does not entail absolute obedience to the parents’ wishes, despite criticism against Confucianism that it demands such obedience. This is important for the discussion of family-related partiality, because if filial piety requires such absolute obedience, children would be burdened with unlimited responsibilities toward parents who initiate such requests. If so, the particular
version of family-related partiality based on filial piety would require unlimited partial concerns for family members, or rather parents. Although this would be a clear and simple conclusion, it does not hold well since filial piety does not require such absolute obedience in early Confucianism.

The idea that filial piety suggests absolute obedience to parents may seem to find support in early Confucian texts.

Meng Yizi asked about filial piety. The Master replied, “Do not disobey.” (*Analects*, 2.5, Slingerland)

However, it further clarifies that the object of obedience is not parent’s commands but the rites:

The Master replied, “When your parents are alive, serve them in accordance with the rites; when they pass away, bury them in accordance with the rites and sacrifice to them in accordance with the rites.” (*Analects*, 2.5, Slingerland)

Elsewhere, it is pointed out that although children may remonstrate with parents, if such opposition is rejected, children “should be respectful and not oppose them, and follow their lead diligently without resentment.” (*Analects*, 4.18, Slingerland)

The contradictory textual evidence in *Analects* would pose less challenge to the idea that filial piety does not entail absolute obedience to the parents if we interpret *Analects* not as a systematic work in which specific issues are addressed one by one in sequence, but as work of composite nature in which each issue is addressed differently to accommodate possible different circumstances, while together they may provide a rather coherent view, which is how Karyn Lai attempts to accommodate seemingly contradictory presentation and discussion of
rituals in *Analects*. Confronted with seemingly contradictory passages regarding rituals in *Analects*, Lai interprets rituals, or rather the learning, mastering of it, in three different stages, in each of which different requirement is presented to provide a gradual path to not only understand rituals but also practice it appropriately. In this way, Lai downplays the challenge of certain rigid discourse of rituals and put it in line with other more complex and delicate discourse of rituals.

Instead of the above strategy, we can also reject the thesis of absolute obedience by looking into what is behind obedience in *Analects* as Tan suggests. According to Tan, obedience to parents and obedience in general can be distinguished into two kinds, noncoercive obedience based on knowledge and excellence as in the authoritatively, and the coercive obedience based on strength, power, and hierarchy as in the authoritarian; and the obedience in *Analects* refers to the first kind. In this way, even if we have to accept the validity of relevant claims regarding the absolute obedience to parents in early Confucian texts, we can appeal to the rationale behind them and place the emphasis on the evaluation of knowledge and excellence. Such strategy is also supported by direct evidence

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286 For the former, see for example, *Analects*, 3.17, and for the latter, see for example, *Analects*, 9.3.
in the *Analects*:

Confucius said, “Those who are born understanding it [knowledge] are the best; those who come to understand it through learning are second. Those who find it difficult to understand and yet persist in their studies come next. People who find it difficult to understand but do not even try to learn are the worst of all.” (*Analects*, 16.9, Slingerland)

How one is ranked among others appeals to the possession of knowledge, which suggests that the hierarchy as well as the obedience that follows should be ordered accordingly. Even if *Analects* requires obedience of the inferiors to the superiors, who is judged to be the inferiors or superiors depends on their merits, not their place in the social or political hierarchy. Although the above passage from Analects can be interpreted as pertaining to hierarchy and obedience in general, it can also be understood as referring to a specific kind of obedience, that is, the obedience of children to parents. In this way, the obedience of children to parents depends on the merits on each side. This is also supported by textual evidence in the *Mengzi*:

Mencius said, 'If a man himself does not walk in the right path, it will not be walked in even by his wife and children. If he orders men according to what is not the right way, he will not be able to get the obedience of even his wife and children.' (*Mengzi*, 7B.9, see also 4A.7, 6A.16)

What matters for the obedience of children to parents accordingly is not their different places in the social hierarchy, but the knowledge of the right path and the will to practice it. However, one may indeed insist that being parents by itself is enough to require obedience, if being (true) parents is considered not as a simple descriptive label, but being loaded with normative content.289

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In the *Xunzi*, it is explicitly pointed out that compared with obedience to parents, following the way and obeying superiors rank higher than being filial.

Inside the home to be filial toward one’s parents and outside the home to be properly courteous toward one’s elders constitute the minimal standard of human conduct. To be obedient to superiors and to be reliable in one’s dealing with inferiors constitute a higher standard of conduct. To follow the requirement of the Way and morality rather than those of one’s lord and father constitute the highest standard of conduct. (*Xunzi*, 29.1, revised)

If obedience is part of filial conduct towards parents, this implies that such obedience would be constrained by higher “standards of conduct,” namely obeying superiors and following the way. Furthermore, circumstances in which disobedience to parents is suggested are also specified in *Xunzi*:

Of filial sons who do not follow the course of action mandated by their fathers, there are three types. If following the mandated course would bring peril to his family whereas not following it would bring security, then the filial son who does not follow his commission still acts with true loyalty. If following his mandated course would bring disgrace on his family whereas not following it would bring honor, then in not following the mandated course he still acts morally. If following the mandated course would cause him to act like a savage whereas not following it would cultivate and improve him, then in not following it he still acts with proper reverence. (*Xunzi*, 29.2)

Therefore, the children should always first consider the consequences of obeying parents. As long as they act in accordance with the general interests of parents as well as the family, they act in accordance with filial piety even if they disobey the wishes of parents.

Third, the subject on the receiving side of filial piety is not restricted to one’s parents. It may refer to one’s ancestors or even the tradition which has been carried on by one’s ancestors. For example, Lijun Bi and Fred D'Agostino claim that filial piety “involves paying due respect, not only to one’s living parents, but
also to the deceased and to remote ancestors.” 290 A. T. Nuyen also puts forward a similar view, which actually emphasizes the importance of ancestors in fulfilling filial service:

The father has his own father and the latter his and so on. Filial piety requires the son to defer not to the father pure and simple, but to the father who defers to his, and the latter in turn is someone who defers to his, and so on. Filial piety is inter-generational. It makes no sense to speak of it as something that stops with one’s own father. Thus, the father is really a father figure representing a tradition. 291

There is the danger that if filial piety is also directed toward one’s ancestors, we may be confronted with the problem that there may be conflicts between partiality toward one’s parents and one’s ancestors, which may defeat the efforts to establish a particular version of family-related partiality based on filial piety. However, such attention to ancestors in filial piety may not be direct. Although admitting the importance of ancestors in fulfilling filial piety, Lijun Bi and Fred D'Agostino claim that “ancestor worship is merely an extension of paying tribute to one’s parents.” 292 The relations between treating one’s parents and treating one’s ancestors are further described as being nonconflicting. 293 In this way, we can also argue against the absolute obedience of children to parents, if parents’ wishes are themselves considered unfilial toward ancestors. (Mengzi, 4A.26,

There are other aspects of filial piety which have not been discussed because they are irrelevant to the issue of family-related partiality. There are controversies about filial piety, such as what is the proper psychological status or attitude for filial piety, what is the relevant intention for filial piety, what activities of the moral agent alone can be considered in favor of the assessment of filial piety, and so on. These problems are important issues to fully understand filial piety in early Confucianism, but they are not closely connected with the attempt to examine family–related partiality, especially in contrast with wider concerns.

Although there is no doubt that filial piety requires partial concerns for one’s parents, we have to consider possible conflicts within the family since, according to the narrow interpretation here, filial piety refers to the relationships between children and parents. However, if it can be demonstrated that filial piety does not directly conflict with concerns for other family members, we can proceed to declare that filial piety supports a particular version of family-related partiality. In the *Mengzi*, the relationship between spouses and that between siblings are discussed and suggestion is offered regarding the appropriate conduct in these matters:

[B]etween father and son, there should be affection…between husband and wife, attention to their separate functions; between old and young, a proper order. (*Mengzi*, 3A.4)

Whether such suggestion is desirable or not, they do not contradict the partial concerns toward one’s parent as it is suggested by filial piety. Moreover, it should also be pointed out that filial piety is usually accompanied with *di*
[fraternal responsibility, brotherly love] (Analects, 1.2), during which no internal contradiction is ever mentioned. Moreover, it can be argued that *di* is partly derived from filial piety as “brothers share a common family tie with the same father” and this kind of argument also include all siblings.294

Although filial piety refers to the relationship between parents and children, it only represents unilateral concerns of children to parents. Does early Confucianism offer any characterization of the other side of the relationship between parents and children, that is, the unilateral relationship of parents to children, which would contradict filial piety in terms of showing partiality toward family members? The answer is negative. Although early Confucianism does not elaborate on the adequate action of parents to children, it is perhaps because it is generally assumed that parents will always support their (underage) children and there is no need to emphasize it. But when parents do not fulfill such requirement, Confucians did blame such failure. For example, infanticide was practiced in early China as Anne Behnke Kinney claims: “Infant abandonment is a recurring theme in Han biographical writing, and if we believe that these accounts accurately reflect contemporary practices, the disposal of unwanted newborns must have been a common feature of Han culture.”295 Of course, the social practices cannot represent Confucian teachings. Actually, it is clearly condemned by Confucian scholars:

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The common people were in difficult straits and poor, many of them refusing to rear their children. Piao was severe in wielding his authority and punished them in the same manner as murderers. [Once], south of the city, there were bandits who were robbing and assaulting people; in the north there was a certain woman who had killed her child. When Chia set out to investigate, his officials all wanted to go south. But Piao said angrily,” That bandits should harm people is natural; but for mothers to harm their own children is to offend against Heaven and to transgress the Way.” They therefore drove their carriages north and investigated the crime there.\textsuperscript{296}

In the end, it seems that filial piety, in terms of its requirement for supporting parents, would support partial treatment toward ones’ parents as well as a particular version of family-related partiality. Unlike the particular version of family-related partiality in communitarianism and care ethics, where arguments can be made concerning the scope of community and of caring in order to curtail the extent of family-related partiality and to reserve or even facilitate our wider moral concerns, the particular version of family-related partiality based on filial piety in early Confucianism would suggest relatively stronger partial concerns for family members. The following cases in the \textit{Analects} and \textit{Mengzi} are usually discussed for this matter.

The case of She:

The Duke of She said to Confucius, “Among my people there is one we call ‘Upright Gong.’ When his father stole a sheep, he reported him to the authorities.” Confucius replied, “Among my people, those who we consider ‘upright’ are different from this: fathers cover up for their sons, and sons cover up for their fathers. ‘Uprightness’ is to be found in this.” (\textit{Analects}, 13.18, Slingerland)

The case of Shun:

T'ao Ying asked, saying, 'Shun being sovereign, and Kao-yao chief minister of justice, if Kù-sau had murdered a man, what would have

been done in the case?' Mencius said, 'Kao-yao would simply have apprehended him.' 'But would not Shun have forbidden such a thing?'
'Indeed, how could Shun have forbidden it? Kao-yao had received the law from a proper source.' 'In that case what would Shun have done?'
'Shun would have regarded abandoning the kingdom as throwing away a worn-out sandal. He would privately have taken his father on his back, and retired into concealment, living some where along the sea-coast. There he would have been all his life, cheerful and happy, forgetting the kingdom.' (Mengzi 7A.35)

Despite their differences, these two cases can both be interpreted as circumstances where filial piety conflicts with concerns in wider areas, such as public interests, in terms of enforcing the law. In both cases, it is argued that filial piety as well as the partial concerns for parents violates one’s responsibilities in wider areas. Rosemont and Ames conclude that these cases show that filial piety “is central—that is, protect family members at any cost, even when they are wrongdoers.”

Liu Qingping echoes such view by claiming that Analects and Mengzi “regard kinship love alone as supreme, insisting that it can trump anything else.”

However, it is hardly the consensus today that the acts in these two cases would be definitely considered morally repugnant. In fact, they may simply address some moral difficulties which are “insurmountable in all political teachings and constitute a fundamental dilemma of human.” In the case of Shun, the offender no longer poses any threat to others as he is removed from

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society and in the case of She, the nature of the offender’s crime is clearly recognized and the adequate exercising of filial piety may require certain subsequent intervention, for example, remonstrating with parents in order to change their moral characters so that such offense will not occur again in the future and moreover, perhaps attempts to compensate the victims and restore status quo ante.\(^{300}\) Moreover, if we consider the subject of filial piety which goes beyond one’s immediate parents as to include ancestors, such intervention to prevent future offense is clearly in accordance with filial piety, which requires children to protect and defend the reputation of one’s parents and ancestors. (Mengzi, 5A.3)

Moreover, strictly speaking, the acts in these two cases do not directly help to carry out the crimes, theft, manslaughter or murder, and do not suggest that the son should do everything he can to “prevent the law from being applied to his father.”\(^{301}\) Considering especially the case of Shun, it does not suggest that one is entitled to prevent enforcing the law, or it would suggest that Shun, the king, should use his political power and status to accomplish this task, which is not supported in this case. This also explains why the case of Shun is in fact similar to a contemporary example put forward by Bryan W. Van Norden, which may show that these ancient cases are not that appalling or rarely observed in the contemporary society. According to Van Norden, suppose he finds out that his

\(^{300}\) See following argument put forward by Van Norden.

\(^{301}\) Edward Slingerland, *Confucius: Analects with Selections from Traditional Commentaries*, p. 147.
brother committed a crime, who now leads a decent life as an appreciated member of the society, from the Confucian stance, he would attempt to convey the nature of such crime to his brother and to be convinced that his brother would never pose any threat to others. If such aims are achieved, he would not report his brother to the authority.302 One important difference between this case and the case of Shun may be that in the latter, Shun’s action takes him away from the throne, which deprives the people of a sage ruler and therefore harms their interest. However, if the alternative for Shun’s action is to do nothing while his father faces the danger of being arrested and punished, Shun may also harm the interest of the people by failing to fulfill his filial obligation and setting an inadequate moral example. Moreover, Daniel A. Bell even suggests that it perhaps means that “public officials should resign from their posts if close family members have committed serious crimes (for one thing, they would lose much of their moral authority, and governing would be more difficult).”303

As it is also pointed out by Fan Ruiping, to consider these cases as advocating breaking the law would be to claim that “the law immorally requires us all to join crime reporters” while these cases only suggest that “one does not report one’s father’s crime” and they do “not ask one to aid or abet him in stealing.”304 Fan

also gives a contemporary example. If one’s parent steal a watch and it is known to the children, the filial children should try to avoid the intervention of judicial power by returning the watch to the store.  

One can even argue that these cases do not suggest that filial children should try everything simply as an ordinary member of the society to prevent the application of law to parents who commit crimes. In the case of Shun, it is clear that even if Shun does not want to abuse his political power, he can still take other more efficient measures to bring his father out of the jurisdiction, for example, using horses or a cart, if the only thing that matters to him is just to help his parent to get away with his crime.  In the case of She, if the aim is to serve the parent as he wishes, it is not enough to just conceal the crime in order to protect one’s father from being arrested. One can obviously do much more, such as manufacturing evidence to mislead the authorities. All these suggestions are not offered in these two cases.

Moreover, the claim that these cases suggest that filial piety should be considered the supreme principle in Confucianism is based on an assumption which is rejected at the beginning of this chapter, that is, the assumption that filial piety is solely fundamental in early Confucianism. As Liu claims, these two cases in *Analects* and *Mengzi* suggest that filial piety is regarded “as the ultimate

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305 Fan Ruiping, "Consanguinism, Corruption, and Humane Love: Remembering Why Confucian Morality is Not Modern Western Morality," p. 23.
foundation of all morality and the sole lifeblood of Confucianism.” Moreover, Liu’s analysis of these cases is also especially suspicious because sometimes Liu seems to be more interested in condemning some historical and contemporary practices:

Throughout history, Confucianism always exhorts the Chinese people to become the filial children of their “parent-officials”…When the commoners complain that they are harmed by these corrupt practices, those “parent-officials” will shout to them—unfortunately, often by resorting to the Confucian notion of harmony: why do you always want to maximize your own interests without considering the country’s stability and the society’s harmony, which should override anything else?

However, it is one thing to evaluate the veracity of above claims regarding the political realities in China, quite another to argue that these two cases, that is, the case of She and the case of Shun, are to blame for such claims. It is probable that in asserting the above claims, Liu is actually targeting a kind of Confucianism which is not the focus of investigation here. As Bai Tongdong suspects:

Liu’s attempt to pin the ills of modern China on Confucianism is typical of what many people of the May 4th generation and its followers like to do. Their disgust at these ills and their hope for China to be revitalized are understandable. However…the two cases…do not even come close to the blatant abuse of power, the desperate holding onto one’s interests, and the total disregard of the well-being of innocent people, which are characteristics of corruption in contemporary China and elsewhere.

For the investigation of Confucianism and especially the reflection on early Confucian texts, as Sin Yee Chan emphasizes, we should always differentiate

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philosophical Confucianism from Imperial Confucianism:

   The former refers to the system of ideas as expressed in the Confucian philosophical texts. The latter aims at promoting the authority of the ruler by emphasizing the virtue of loyalty and obedience to the ruler. Its main architect is Dong Zhongshu of the Han Dynasty.\textsuperscript{310}

Moreover, for these cases, we can also argue that together they may not represent early Confucian endeavor to establish some general rules to be followed, in this case, the principle that filial piety should always take priority. This strategy appeals to the nature of Confucianism, especially its differences with principle-based moral and political theories as well as the danger of mixing Confucianism with the latter. For example, after his investigation and comparison of Christian and Confucian ideas of particular family love and universal humane love, Sidney Callahan also reaches the conclusion that Christian theories categorically put humane love above family love while Confucianism does exactly the opposite, categorically putting moral concerns for family members above more general moral concerns. According to Callahan, such Confucian stance is clearly manifested in the case of Shun and the case of She, which leads to his criticism of Confucianism in relation to filial piety.\textsuperscript{311}

Such mixing of Confucianism with principle-based theories may also explain the assertion that these cases in early Confucian texts suggest that “if there is a conflict between the two obligations, filial piety must always take priority.”\textsuperscript{312}


However, as Ni Peimin points out, “[u]nlike the Kantian rule-oriented ethic that provides universal ethical principles, Confucianism focuses on the process of person-making.”\footnote{Ni Peimin, "Do Not Take Confucians as Kantians: Comments on Liu Qingping’s Interpretation of Confucian Teachings," \textit{Dao}, Vol. 7, 2008, p. 45.} Fan also supports a similar interpretation of Confucianism, claiming that Confucianism does not attempt to construct morality as being “constituted in terms of independent universal norms, the violation of any of which is essentially wrong.”\footnote{Fan Ruiping, "Consanguinism, Corruption, and Humane Love: Remembering Why Confucian Morality is Not Modern Western Morality," p. 22} Although emphasizing the particular nature of Confucian thinking as well as the doubt about the universal principles may help to ease the worry about the absolute priority of filial piety, this strategy may be self-defeating in attempts to argue for a particular version of family-related partiality, if such endeavor is understood to generate the same kind of principle.

In review, although these two cases in the \textit{Analects} and the \textit{Mengzi} are often quoted to argue that filial piety is overwhelming, the above discussion suggests that it does not support unlimited partiality toward family members as the examination of these two cases show. It therefore suggests that the particular version of family-related partiality based on filial piety does not extend unlimited partial concerns, in terms of denying concerns in wider areas, to family members. However, filial piety by itself as well as the particular version of family-related partiality indeed does not provide any internal restraints for partiality toward family members. It is misleading to assume that the combination of the general and the particular versions of family-related partiality alone can represent early
Confucianism’s proposal toward the issue of partiality toward family members, since other essential ideas in early Confucianism must also be considered to form more comprehensive views.

Filial Piety, Ren, and Wider Concerns

As it is pointed out, even if it is recognized that filial piety as well as the particular version of family-related partiality supports relatively stronger partial concerns for family members, it does not follow that early Confucianism would support unlimited partial concern for family members since filial piety is just one among several essential ideas in early Confucianism. The particular version of family-related partiality based on the idea of filial piety has to be reconciled with other essential ideas if the aim is to provide a more comprehensive view regarding partiality toward family members. Here the idea of ren will be examined in relation to filial piety as well as this particular version of family-related partiality.

Ren is considered a very important concept in early Confucianism and many different English terms are used to translate it, for example, benevolence, humanity, altruism, love, humanness, goodness, compassion, associated humanity, etc., or sometimes it is simply left untranslated. Similar to filial piety, ren is

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also a, perhaps more, competitive candidate to be the fundamental idea in early Confucianism. 316 In its broad interpretation, ren is considered as an all-encompassing ideal for human beings, which includes all desirable characters for Confucians and serves as the sole guidance in Confucianism. In its narrow interpretation, ren is considered as one among many desirable Confucian ideals, such as filial piety, li [rituals].317 Here the distinction between the broad and the narrow interpretation of ren is different from that for filial piety as the former refers to whether ren includes all other essential ideas (such as li) in early Confucianism and the latter, to whether it applies outside the family.

Based on the analysis of Analects, Wing-Tsit Chan provides a thorough summary of ren which concludes that,

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\text{[r]en connotes the general meaning of moral life at its best. It includes filial piety, wisdom, propriety, courage, and loyalty to government...In short, [r]en precludes all evil and underlies as well as embraces all possible virtues...In other words, a man of [r]en is a perfect man.}\]

318 According to this broad interpretation, we can probably conclude that Confucianism is simply a theory of ren. However, in its narrow interpretation, ren can be considered only as a particular desirable moral quality as expressing


316 As Wing-Tsit Chan claims, based on the frequencies that ren appears in Analects, that even filial piety does not attract so much attention compared with ren. Wing-Tsit Chan, “The Evolution of the Confucian Concept Jen,” Philosophy East and West, Vol. 4, No. 4, 1955, p. 296.

317 Shun makes the similar, if not the same, distinction between a broader and a narrower sense of ren. Kwong-loi Shun, Mencius and Early Chinese Thought, p. 23. See also, Julia Po-Wah Lai Tao, “Two Perspectives of Care: Confucian Ren and Feminist Care,” Journal of Chinese Philosophy, Vol. 27, No. 2, 2000, p. 217.

concerns for all human beings (and perhaps nonhuman beings as well), which is also stated in *Analects*:

> Fan Chi asked about *ren*. The Master replied, “Concern for others.”
> (*Analects, 12.22, Slingerland, revised*)

The person of *ren* loves others. (*Mengzi, 4B.28, revised*)

The person of *ren* embraces all in his love. (*Mengzi, 7A.46, revised*)

Clearly, whether one chooses the broad or the narrow interpretation of *ren* will make a big difference in assessing *ren*, especially when *ren* is compared with other concepts. For example, *ren* in Confucianism is selected to be compared with caring in care ethics to provide a comparative perspective from which both theories can be examined. In his comparative studies of Confucianism and care ethics, Li Chenyang suggests the ethics of *ren* for Confucianism is similar to care ethics in three aspects. First, as the essential idea in both theories, *ren* and care are similar in content. Second, both theories are not principle-based. Third, both theories advocate partiality for those near and dear. However, Li seems to adopt a broad interpretation of *ren*, which not only serves as the only fundamental idea for Confucianism, but also includes perhaps many desirable ideals in Confucianism, such as filial piety.

For example, in Li’s argument for the second point that both Confucianism and care ethics are not principle-based, *ren* is considered as providing a

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self-sufficient theory, perhaps being the same as Confucianism. In arguing for the third point that ren and caring both support partiality toward close relatives, Li claims that:

\[\text{ren} \] demands that one love one's parents first and other people second. This is the ideal moral life one should devote oneself to. If a man treats his father as he treats a stranger and vice versa, then he is neglecting the affectionate tie between him and his father and hence fails to be \text{ren}.323

It is one thing that whether one agrees with the above statement concerning early Confucianism, quite another whether such statement is solely derived from the idea of ren. There is no doubt that the above view regarding the partiality toward one’s father is manifested in the idea of filial piety and to say that ren includes such view is to say that ren is a general idea which encompasses many ideas, such as filial piety. However, as it is previously emphasized, in this thesis, filial piety is considered as a fundamental idea, which is not included in other ideas, and the relationship between filial piety and other essential ideas in early Confucianism, such as ren, is treated as a kind of relationship between parallel ideas.

In arguing for the first point that ren and caring are similar to each other, Li claims that ren, whether in its broad or narrow interpretation, suggests caring. As many English terms are used to translate ren, such as “benevolence, love, altruism, kindness, charity, compassion, human-heartedness, and humaneness,” what those

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terms have in common is caring.\textsuperscript{324} Li further explains that,

If a person does not care for others, he or she cannot be described in any of these terms. For example, benevolence is the kindly disposition to do good and promote the welfare of others. If one does not care for others, he or she cannot be benevolent.\textsuperscript{325}

And,

What we can conclude from their teachings is that, in Confucian philosophy, to be a person of Jen one must care for others. So, even if the entire concept of Jen cannot be reduced to "caring," at least we can say that "caring" occupies a central place in this concept.\textsuperscript{326}

However, as it is pointed out in chapter three, in care ethics, caring is not the same as we usually understand in ordinary language. It has its own specific characterizations of the care-giver and the care-recipient as well as its domain, which help to differentiate caring in care ethics from care or caring in ordinary language. The above interpretation of \textit{ren} as suggesting caring is adequate only if we understand caring as an ordinary term.

As it is pointed out earlier that filial piety in this thesis is interpreted in its narrow definition, which refers only directly to the relationship between parents and children, here \textit{ren} is interpreted in its narrow sense, that is, not as an all-encompassing ideal, but as just one among other desirable ideals. Although \textit{ren} has many different meanings and it may not be easy or even possible to give a proper definition, perhaps even for the narrow interpretation, for the purpose here, we just need to agree that \textit{ren} is supposed to be applicable to all human beings.

\textsuperscript{324} Li Chenyang, “The Confucian concept of Jen and the feminist ethics of care: A comparative study,” pp. 72-73.

\textsuperscript{325} Li Chenyang, “The Confucian concept of Jen and the feminist ethics of care: A comparative study,” p. 73.

Such universal character of ren, in terms of concerns for everybody, may provide basis for the explicit conclusion later that ren refers to "universal love for others." It also explains why ren is chosen (together with another Confucian idea) to argue that Confucianism can accommodate moral concerns for all human beings, or rather the idea of global justice.

Ren is also used as to undermine the distinction between different peoples, in terms of culture, tradition, or even moral evaluation, since it should not be influenced by such distinctions (Analects, 13.19), which is perhaps why it is used to defend Confucianism in addressing concerns across boundaries, for example, for both insiders and outsiders, people in the same group and strangers.

This is why, if we take into consideration the idea of ren in early Confucianism, we may hesitate even more to grant unlimited partiality toward family members or anyone who is near and dear. More specifically, if ren is considered in its broad interpretation which includes other essential ideas in early Confucianism, such as filial piety, the possible restraint on the partiality toward

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family members can be dealt with in relation to ren by itself, similar to the previous discussion regarding the scope of community and the range of caring in relation to the extent of partial concerns for family members for the particular version of family-related partiality in communitarianism and care ethics. If ren is considered in its narrow interpretation, the possible restraint that it can provide on the partiality toward family members needs to be examined in relation to the complex relationship between filial piety and ren, since these two essential ideas are both fundamental and not all-encompassing.

Despite such opinions concerning the universal property of ren, there are explicit objections regarding the nature of ren, which may question the role of ren in expanding our moral concerns. For example, Lijun Yuan claims that “the concept of [r]en for centuries served an ideology of domination and that it is quite inhospitable to the values of equal concern and respect.” Clearly, one may hesitate to quote the idea of ren in attempts to expand moral concerns, if it is deemed so harmful. However, Yuan’s conclusion is problematic for early Confucianism since, first, the textual evidence she adopts is beyond the scope of early Confucianism as it is defined in this thesis, and second, the possibility that an ancient tradition can still be interpreted for modern world is left undiscussed.

But to what extent can ren affect the particular version of family-related partiality? Although it is generally held that while filial piety refers to specific partiality?

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relationship between parents and children, ren is not limited to any specific member of the society, the introduction of ren in an attempt to restrain possible excessive partiality toward family member may backfire if we consider the discussion of how ren works in Mengzi. It will become clear that although ren favors concerns for everyone, the development of ren may actually recognize the fact that family members as well as those near and dear will, though perhaps they should not, be given special concerns. In Mengzi 2A.6, it is recognized that everyone has “a mind which cannot bear to see the sufferings of others,” which is further explained in following example,

if men suddenly see a child about to fall into a well, they will without exception experience a feeling of alarm and distress. They will feel so, not as a ground on which they may gain the favour of the child's parents, nor as a ground on which they may seek the praise of their neighbours and friends, nor from a dislike to the reputation of having been unmoved by such a thing. (Mengzi, 2A.6)

According to Mengzi, such feeling for everyone is called the feeling of commiseration, which is the beginning or sprout[duan] of ren. However, although commiseration is directed toward everyone and it should lead to ren, it is not ren. It needs to be developed so as to achieve ren when people will “love and protect all within the four seas.” (Mengzi, 2A.6) The process to move from commiseration to ren is called extension [tui], which is explained in Mengzi, 1A.7.\textsuperscript{333} Whether

such extension is plausible or not, it is clear that such commiseration can be better triggered by those close to us, a suffering ox in front of you on its way to be slaughtered, a child in front of you who falls into a well, and perhaps, your family members who on many occasions are or were close to you. Therefore, even if we recognize that ren can restrain (excessive) partiality toward family members because it calls for concerns for everyone, the fact that commiseration as well as subsequent concerns are more likely to be evoked by family members is also recognized in the idea of ren may beg the question as to how much constraint the introduction of ren can exercise on the particular version of family-related partiality.

It should be pointed out that the introduction and emphasis on the concept of ren is not the only possible way to ease our worries about the particular version of family-related partiality based on the concept of filial piety. For example, Fred Dallmayre suggests that we can attempt to accommodate our wider moral concerns about total strangers based on the idea of five relationships in Mengzi.334 Or, we can always turn to other essential ideas in early Confucianism, such as li and yi. Li is translated as rituals, rites, propriety, observance of rites, ritual propriety, etc.335 The importance of li is emphasized in early Confucian texts.336

Filial piety as well as the strength of the particular version of family-related partiality has to be curtailed by the function of *li*. *Yì* is translated as rightness, righteousness, propriety, appropriateness, etc. It is understood as suggesting that decisions have to be made in each particular case under particular circumstances, considering all relevant early Confucian ideals and applying them in an appropriate way. Accordingly, the partiality suggested by filial piety cannot be assessed generally, but only in each particular case where all relevant Confucian ideals will play their roles.

Although the general version of family-related partiality in early Confucianism is similar to that in both communitarianism and care ethics as it also appeals to the concept of self, it is different since, unlike the concept of self in the vocabularies of both communitarianism and care ethics, Confucian self is based on the reconstruction of early Confucianism as a whole, which would appeal to the idea of filial piety, as well as other important Confucian ideals. In this regard, the general and the particular version of family-related partiality in early

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1997, p. 49.

336 See, for example, *Analects*, 2.5.


Confucianism are connected differently from those in both communitarianism and care ethics, where two versions appeal to relatively different yet fundamental ideas in each theory. Since the Confucian self pays more attention to particularity than communitarian self and directly emphasizes the status of family members, the general version in early Confucianism is obviously stronger than that in communitarianism, in terms of supporting partial concerns for family members. 

The comparison between early Confucianism and care ethics is however more difficult to reach a definite answer since the concepts of self in both theories attend to the particularity. As for the particular version of family-related partiality based on filial piety, it does call for partiality toward family members without any internal restraint in itself. But two cases in early Confucianism do suggest that it does not follow that such partial concerns are unlimited, in terms of totally denying other concerns in wider areas. Moreover, there are other essential ideas in early Confucianism which would exercise their pull in different direction regarding partiality toward family members, the idea of ren, for example.
The aim of this thesis, as it is stated at the beginning of the first chapter, is to examine family-related partiality from the perspectives of communitarianism, care ethics, and early Confucianism. Two points have been therefore established. First, the endeavor here is not to provide a comprehensive discussion of partiality and impartiality. Second, the investigation is not intended to achieve overall studies of as well as comparison between communitarianism, care ethics, and early Confucianism. Why choose these three theories when dealing with family-related partiality? Why not turn to some obvious alternative, such as conducting the study from the perspective of liberalism or utilitarianism?

The answer may simply be: it is just the plan for this thesis. Or perhaps a relatively detailed answer can be offered here. Although the issue of partiality could well be investigated as it pertains to (possible) conflicts between our commitment to certain generally highly regarded ideals, such as impartiality, and our deepest appreciation of those around us as well as the (possible) dilemmas thereof, and has been examined in the area of moral and political theorizing, most of such studies are conducted within the dominant framework, liberalism for example. However, such choice represents the view that other moral and political theories may not be treated seriously in an attempt to reveal their potential to provide defensible proposals regarding the issue of
partiality and impartiality. As it has been done in the previous chapters, theories other than the dominant ones have a lot to offer. If we want to adequately assess the issue of partiality as well as raising questions regarding the status of dominant theories therein, we cannot do so without properly understanding what kinds of alternatives we may have, which is what has been achieved in this thesis.

In this thesis, instead of investigating the issue of family-related partiality within the dominant theoretical frameworks in contemporary moral and political theories, liberalism or utilitarianism for example, the issue of family-related partiality has been examined within the frameworks of communitarianism, care ethics, and early Confucianism, none of which are normally considered the mainstream in moral and political theorizing. Although these three theories are presumably friendly to the idea of family-related partiality, or rather the partial concerns toward family members, efforts have been made to further distinguish one from another in terms of the extent of such partiality. To accomplish this goal, the examination of family-related partiality in each theory has been further distinguished into two kinds, the general version and the particular version of family-related partiality. While the general versions may reveal the similarities among these three theories in general, especially in relation to the issue of partiality, the particular versions appeal to particular characteristics for each theory. However, the terms “general version” and “particular version” may be misleading, which requires some further elaboration here. The distinction between the

“general version” and the “particular version” does not imply that elements in each theory related to each of these two versions can be precisely separated from each other. The conception of communitarian self, for example, cannot be actually separated from the investigation of community. Once again, the further distinction between the general and the particular version is meant to emphasize the similarities among these three theories regarding the conception of self as well as partiality toward family members.

For the general version of family-related partiality, it is based on the conception of self in each theory, the examination of which not only shows the similarities regarding the conception of self in each theory but also indicates the differences in terms of the extent of partiality toward family members. In order to connect the conception of self with family-related partiality, the idea of identity-holding has been introduced in the first chapter, which suggests that since family members contribute (more) to one another’s identity-holding, both identity-holding as a person and identity-holding as a particular person, partial concerns should be extended toward one another. Since communitarian self, relational self in care ethics, and Confucian self can all accommodate the contribution of family members to the project of identity, the general version of family-related partiality in each theory would therefore support partial concerns for family members. Meanwhile, the differences between conceptions of self in three theories would also lead to different strength of such partiality.

For the communitarian self, it recognizes others’ contribution to one’s identity in terms of membership in different communities. As it has been argued that among all
possible types of community, family is just one of them and the membership in family
is not specially emphasized. Moreover, those ideas which are usually associated with
communitarian self, such as language, tradition, common values, etc., are obviously
beyond the domain of family and hence the lesser importance of family for
communitarian self. However, since all communities are specific for each member,
such memberships in different communities still indicates the particularity of self to
some extent and hence identity-holding as a particular person can be still be addressed
by communitarian self.

For the relational self in care ethics, since it is fundamentally connected with
relationships with concrete others, it also recognizes the contribution of others’ to
one’s identity-holding and hence the general version of family-related partiality.
Different from communitarian self regarding partiality, the relational self emphasizes
the idea of dependency and pays relatively more attention to particularity. Since
dependency in relational self is best manifested in mother-child paradigm, it can be
better accommodated within family context and hence provide stronger support for
partiality toward family members based on relational self. However, this does not
work through the idea of identity-holding as well as the general version of
family-related partiality. On the contrary, the relatively more emphasis on particularity
in relational self does suggest stronger partial concerns for family members through
identity-holding, especially through the identity-holding as a particular person.

Confucian self is different from both communitarian self and relational self in care
ethics in terms of its reconstructive nature in early Confucianism. Although various
terms in early Confucian texts can be located as referring to the individual subject in the first person, they are not philosophically significant compared to the concept of self in communitarianism and care ethics. This suggests that the examination of Confucian self as well as the general version of family-related partiality is more closely connected with essential ideas in early Confucianism, filial piety for example.

Since Confucian self, similar to both communitarian self and relational self in care ethics, recognizes the importance of others to the identity of the moral subject, it also accommodates the general version of family-related partiality and hence partial concerns for family members. Although it can be argued that Confucianism pays more attention to the idea of particularity in its conception of self compared with communitarianism, it is undetermined whether it surpasses care ethics in terms of emphasizing particularity in the conception of self. However, Confucian self is unique in its direct emphasis on the significance of family members, which may also be traced back to the idea of filial piety, which offers stronger support for partiality for family members.

Unlike the similar construction of general version of family-related partiality for all three theories, the particular version of family-related partiality varies from one to another, which may better represent the unique characteristics for each theory. For communitarianism, the particular version appeals to the concept of community for communitarianism. Although community mostly refers to small social groups, such as neighborhood community, efforts have already been made in communitarianism to argue for a whole nation being a type of community. In order to establish the
particular version of family-related partiality based on the idea of community, chapter two attempts to expand the scope of community, which may include family and the whole world. However, even if we can agree on the view of family being a type of community, the particular version would suggest partiality toward family members while indicating that such partiality must be rather limited since family is just one among many communities. The attempt to examine the scope of community also indicates that not only can community extend to the family but it can also extend to the whole world, that is, the global community. This would, on the one hand, restrain the strength of this particular version of family-related partiality, and on the other hand, render it more defensible against the critique that communitarianism cannot address wider concerns.

For care ethics, the particular version of family-related partiality appeals to the idea of caring. Whatever caring is, a desirable character, a practice, a relationship, etc., we can differentiate different interpretations of caring into two kinds, in terms of its range, that is, whether caring is limited within close encounters or beyond such encounters. Although conclusion may be drawn that if caring is limited to close encounters, it can be relatively better addressed among family members and hence stronger partial concerns for family members, we may not reject caring beyond close encounters for being less friendly to partiality toward family members if we consider the emotional or psychological element in caring. Whether such element can be best represented by sympathy or empathy, it is clear that they both appeal to close encounters and hence partiality toward family members.
For early Confucianism, the particular version of family-related partiality is based on the idea of filial piety. After differentiating two kinds of interpretations of filial piety, it is pointed out that the investigation is based on the narrow interpretation of filial piety. Although filial piety as well as the particular version supports stronger partial concerns for family members, other essential ideas, such as ren, in early Confucianism may restrain the extent of such partial concerns.

If we consider together the general and the particular version of family-related partiality, we may conclude that communitarianism provides relatively weaker support for partial concerns for family members while care ethics and early Confucianism both provide stronger support, despite different interpretations of caring and the consideration of other essential ideas in early Confucianism. This is obviously only a preliminary result for an endeavor that can be developed in both directions. It can be further developed into a thorough investigation of partiality and impartiality or comprehensive comparative studies of communitarianism, care ethics, and early Confucianism. This thesis, however, ends here as it aims to further our understanding of communitarianism, care ethics, and early Confucianism in relation to the issue of family-related partiality and partiality in general, which will prepare us to move on to either direction as it is mentioned above.
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