

REFRAMING FAMILY WELL-BEING IN RAPID URBANIZATION: TOWARD A THEORY OF CULTURAL GOVERNANCE IN ASIAN MEGACITIES

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Abstract: Rapid urbanization in the Global South has fundamentally transformed family structures, intergenerational relations, and value systems. While governments increasingly introduce policy frameworks to promote family well-being, such initiatives remain predominantly technocratic, prioritizing measurable socioeconomic indicators while overlooking the cultural and ethical dimensions that sustain relational life. This article develops a theoretical framework of cultural governance of family well-being, arguing that sustainable family policy in megacities must integrate institutional design, community mediation, and familial value formation. Drawing on Aristotelian virtue ethics, interpretive cultural theory, and family resilience scholarship, the study reconceptualizes family well-being as a culturally embedded process of human flourishing rather than a purely administrative outcome. Using the context of rapidly urbanizing Asian megacities as an analytical reference point, the article identifies key urban value tensions—including economic instrumentalization, intergenerational divergence, demographic aging, and digital individualization—that challenge normative continuity. In response, it proposes a Family–Community–State triadic governance model grounded in ethical alignment and participatory legitimacy. The article contributes to urban governance and family policy scholarship by offering a culturally grounded framework applicable to developing megacities seeking socially sustainable futures.

Keywords: Cultural Governance; Family Well-Being; Urban Sustainability; Megacities in the Global South.

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Introduction

Urbanization in the Global South is not merely a demographic shift but a profound cultural transformation. Megacities such as Ho Chi Minh City, Jakarta, Bangkok, and Manila are experiencing accelerated economic growth, migration inflows, and demographic aging, accompanied by evolving family structures and pluralized value systems. In this context, governments increasingly design family well-being policies aimed at strengthening social cohesion and mitigating urban stress. Yet these policies often operationalize “family happiness” or “family well-being” through measurable indicators—income stability, educational attainment, access to healthcare—without fully addressing the cultural meanings that shape lived family experience.

This paper argues that family well-being in rapidly urbanizing cities must be understood as a culturally embedded process rather than a purely administrative objective. Effective governance requires more than regulatory frameworks; it requires what this study conceptualizes as *cultural governance*: the alignment of policy instruments with the symbolic, ethical, and relational value systems that structure family life.

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Using Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC) as an illustrative case, the paper develops a theoretical contribution applicable beyond Vietnam. It proposes a model of cultural governance that integrates philosophical ethics, interpretive cultural theory, and family resilience research to reframe urban family policy as a project of value integration and human flourishing.

Despite extensive research on urban governance and family policy, existing approaches remain predominantly technocratic, prioritizing measurable socioeconomic indicators while neglecting the cultural-ethical dimensions that sustain relational life. This theoretical gap limits our understanding of how family well-being can be governed sustainably in pluralistic megacities.

Theoretical foundations

Eudaimonia and the Ethical Foundations of Family Well-Being

Aristotle’s concept of eudaimonia—often translated as flourishing—offers a foundational lens for understanding family well-being. Unlike hedonic interpretations of happiness as pleasure or emotional satisfaction, eudaimonia refers to sustained human

flourishing achieved through virtuous practice and the cultivation of moral character. Applied to urban family policy, this perspective suggests that family well-being cannot be reduced to material sufficiency. Rather, it entails the harmonious development of relationships, virtues, and shared purposes within a social context. Policies focused exclusively on economic indicators risk producing what may be termed “instrumental happiness”—a temporary state detached from deeper ethical and relational foundations.

Family Resilience in Urban Transformation

Family resilience theory emphasizes adaptability in the face of systemic stress. Urbanization introduces multiple stressors—economic precarity, migration-induced separation, digital transformation, and aging populations. Families that maintain relational coherence and shared value systems demonstrate higher resilience. However, resilience is not solely an internal family trait; it is mediated by governance structures. Thus, urban family well-being depends on interactions between household practices and institutional support systems.

Urban Value Tensions in Rapidly Developing Megacities

Rapid urban transformation generates not only economic opportunity but also normative instability. In megacities undergoing accelerated modernization, family well-being is increasingly shaped by structural pressures that disrupt established moral frameworks. These pressures manifest as value tensions—points of friction between inherited cultural norms and emerging urban logics.

First, economic acceleration fosters a productivity-centered ethos that reconfigures family relationships. In high-cost urban environments, extended working hours and competitive labor markets prioritize economic survival and upward mobility. While financial security is essential for stability, its dominance may instrumentalize relationships, reducing shared time and emotional presence. The moral dimension of family life—care, mutual recognition, and ethical formation—risks being subordinated to economic rationality.

Second, intergenerational cultural divergence intensifies in pluralized urban settings. Younger cohorts, shaped by global media, digital networks, and meritocratic values, increasingly emphasize autonomy and self-realization. Older generations often retain communitarian expectations rooted in filial responsibility and collective identity. Without dialogical spaces that mediate these differences, generational contrasts become sources of fragmentation rather than adaptive synthesis.

Third, demographic aging introduces a profound ethical challenge. As life expectancy rises and fertility declines, the ratio of dependents to working-age adults shifts dramatically. Traditional norms of filial piety confront structural constraints such as migration, dual-income households, and spatial mobility. The question is no longer whether care should be provided, but how care ethics can be institutionally supported in contexts where familial capacity is strained.

Finally, urban individualization and digitalization may weaken community embeddedness. Social networks become increasingly virtual, and neighborhood solidarity diminishes. Yet family resilience depends not only on internal cohesion but also on external relational ecosystems. The erosion of communal infrastructure therefore amplifies vulnerability.

Together, these tensions reveal that family well-being in megacities is not merely a private matter but a site where economic, demographic, and cultural transformations converge. Addressing these tensions requires governance strategies attentive to value integration rather than regulatory compliance alone.

Toward a Theory of Cultural Governance of Family Well-Being

The preceding analysis suggests that family well-being in rapidly urbanizing megacities cannot be adequately addressed through technocratic policy instruments alone. Rather, it requires a theoretical shift from regulatory governance to cultural governance—a framework that recognizes families as ethically and symbolically embedded institutions situated within broader systems of meaning. Cultural governance, in this sense, refers to the coordination of institutional structures, community practices, and familial value formation in ways that sustain human flourishing. At its core, cultural governance rests on three interrelated premises. First, family well-being is not reducible to material sufficiency or service provision; it is fundamentally linked to moral development and relational integrity. Drawing from virtue ethics, particularly the Aristotelian concept of eudaimonia, well-being entails the cultivation of stable dispositions—care, responsibility, reciprocity—that enable individuals and families to flourish over time. Governance, therefore, must support environments conducive to ethical formation rather than merely measure outcomes. Second, family life is embedded within interpretive cultural systems. Policies gain effectiveness when they resonate with locally grounded meanings regarding kinship, obligation, autonomy, and dignity. Cultural governance thus requires interpretive sensitivity: policymakers must understand how families narrate their own aspirations and constraints. Rather than imposing uniform standards, governance mechanisms should facilitate dialogue between institutional expectations and lived moral experience. Third, sustainable family well-being depends on multilevel interaction. This study conceptualizes such interaction through a Family–Community–State triadic model. The family domain constitutes the primary site of value transmission and emotional development. The community domain mediates between private and public spheres, reinforcing shared norms and providing social support networks. The state domain institutionalizes welfare provisions, legal protections, and cultural policy frameworks. Cultural governance emerges when these three domains operate in dynamic alignment rather than hierarchical control. Importantly, this model reframes governance as an enabling process rather than a coercive one. It emphasizes participatory mechanisms, intergenerational dialogue, and culturally adaptive policy design. By integrating ethical philosophy, interpretive cultural theory, and resilience research, the proposed framework contributes to a normative theory of urban family policy grounded in human flourishing. In megacities of the Global South, where rapid transformation often outpaces normative adaptation, cultural governance offers a pathway toward policy legitimacy and social cohesion. Family well-being, under this perspective, becomes not only a social objective but a central pillar of culturally sustainable urban development.

Case Study: Cultural Governance Challenges in Ho Chi Minh City

Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC) represents one of Southeast Asia’s most dynamic urban transformation contexts, where rapid economic expansion, demographic mobility, and digital

modernization converge within a historically rooted cultural framework. As Vietnam's largest metropolitan center and primary economic hub, HCMC embodies the structural conditions identified throughout this study: accelerated urbanization, pluralized value systems, demographic transition, and intensified labor-market pressures. These conditions render the city an illustrative site for examining the practical challenges of cultural governance in the domain of family well-being.

First, economic instrumentalization poses a foundational governance dilemma. HCMC's integration into global production networks has generated rising living costs, competitive employment environments, and extended working hours. Dual-income households have become increasingly common, particularly among middle-class urban families. While material living standards have improved for many, time scarcity has emerged as a structural constraint on relational life. Family interaction is often compressed into limited temporal windows, and caregiving responsibilities are frequently outsourced to grandparents or market-based services. This dynamic reflects a broader tension between economic rationality and relational flourishing. From a cultural governance perspective, the challenge lies not merely in providing welfare support, but in designing urban labor and social policies that acknowledge the ethical dimension of time-use balance and intergenerational presence.

Second, intergenerational divergence in HCMC illustrates the normative fragmentation characteristic of rapidly modernizing megacities. Younger cohorts, shaped by global media, digital connectivity, and transnational educational aspirations, increasingly emphasize autonomy, career mobility, and individual self-realization. Older generations, socialized within more collectivist and family-centered moral frameworks, often prioritize filial responsibility and multigenerational cohesion. While such divergence is not inherently destabilizing, the absence of institutionalized dialogical spaces can transform difference into conflict. Cultural governance in this context requires mechanisms that facilitate intergenerational mediation—community forums, school-based family education programs, and culturally adaptive communication campaigns—rather than prescriptive moral enforcement.

Third, demographic aging introduces structural strain on traditional care norms. Although Vietnam remains younger than many East Asian societies, HCMC is experiencing a steady increase in elderly populations, particularly as rural-to-urban migration reshapes household composition. Migrant workers frequently leave aging parents in peripheral districts or home provinces, generating spatially fragmented care networks. The ethical principle of filial piety persists symbolically, yet practical caregiving capacity is constrained by geographic mobility and economic precarity. This gap between normative expectation and structural feasibility constitutes a core cultural governance challenge: how to institutionalize distributed care systems that preserve moral commitment while acknowledging socioeconomic realities. Integrating community-based eldercare services with family-oriented support policies becomes essential to maintaining relational dignity.

Fourth, digitalization reshapes both family interaction and community embeddedness. HCMC's high rates of smartphone penetration and social media engagement have expanded communicative networks but simultaneously altered patterns of co-presence. Digital environments enable translocal family contact yet

may reduce embodied neighborhood solidarity. As public spaces become increasingly commercialized and privatized, opportunities for spontaneous intergenerational interaction diminish. Urban planning decisions—ranging from housing density to the availability of communal cultural centers—therefore acquire ethical significance. Cultural governance must extend beyond social policy into spatial design, recognizing that built environments mediate relational life.

Finally, policy implementation in HCMC reveals the limits of technocratic governance models. Family well-being initiatives often rely on quantitative indicators—poverty reduction, educational enrollment, health insurance coverage—while cultural dimensions remain implicit rather than operationalized. Although these indicators are indispensable, their dominance can obscure lived value tensions. Cultural governance does not replace socioeconomic metrics; rather, it complements them with interpretive sensitivity and participatory legitimacy. In HCMC, this implies expanding consultative processes at ward and district levels, incorporating civil society actors into family policy dialogue, and fostering culturally resonant narratives that align institutional objectives with everyday moral experience.

In sum, Ho Chi Minh City exemplifies the complex interplay between modernization and normative continuity in the Global South. The city's governance challenge is not solely administrative capacity but ethical alignment. Economic dynamism, demographic transition, and digital transformation must be integrated within a coherent cultural framework that sustains family flourishing. As such, HCMC illustrates both the urgency and feasibility of a cultural governance approach: one that situates family well-being at the intersection of institutional design, community mediation, and relational ethics.

Policy Implications for Megacities in the Global South

If family well-being is understood as a culturally embedded process rather than a merely socioeconomic outcome, policy design in rapidly urbanizing megacities must undergo a conceptual recalibration. The theory of cultural governance developed in this study suggests several strategic implications applicable across the Global South, where demographic shifts, economic volatility, and pluralized value systems intersect. **First**, policymakers should move beyond indicator-driven models that equate family well-being with material sufficiency alone. While economic stability, education, and healthcare remain essential, sustainable family flourishing requires integrating relational and ethical dimensions into policy frameworks. This implies incorporating measures that promote intergenerational communication, shared caregiving practices, and time-use balance, thereby recognizing the moral ecology of family life. Governance mechanisms must be sensitive not only to income disparities but also to value tensions emerging from modernization. **Second**, cultural legitimacy should become a central criterion of policy effectiveness. In megacities characterized by cultural hybridity and migration, standardized policy templates often fail to resonate with diverse family configurations. Participatory consultation, community-based dialogue forums, and culturally adaptive implementation strategies can enhance alignment between institutional objectives and lived experience. Rather than imposing uniform normative expectations, governments should facilitate value negotiation processes that acknowledge generational and socio-economic diversity. **Third**, demographic aging and shifting household structures require integrated care strategies grounded in shared responsibility. Instead

of placing the burden solely on families or state institutions, policy frameworks should encourage distributed caregiving systems that involve civil society organizations, local communities, and public welfare infrastructures. Such multi-actor arrangements strengthen resilience while preserving ethical commitments to care. **Fourth**, urban planning must incorporate social cohesion as a core developmental objective. Public spaces, cultural centers, and community infrastructures are not peripheral amenities but foundational components of relational well-being. Investments in neighborhood networks and intergenerational programs can mitigate isolation and reinforce communal bonds that sustain family resilience. Finally, governance approaches should adopt a long-term normative orientation. Short-term administrative compliance cannot substitute for sustained cultural transformation. Policies that cultivate ethical reflection, social trust, and community solidarity contribute to what may be termed culturally sustainable urban development.

In sum, megacities in the Global South face the dual challenge of economic modernization and normative continuity. By embedding family well-being policy within a framework of cultural governance, urban administrations can enhance policy legitimacy, social cohesion, and intergenerational stability. Family well-being thus becomes not only a social welfare concern but a strategic axis of sustainable urban futures.

Discussion

The theoretical framework proposed in this study positions family well-being as a central axis of cultural governance in rapidly urbanizing megacities. Rather than conceptualizing family policy as a technocratic intervention focused on measurable outputs, this approach reframes it as a normative and interpretive project embedded within broader socio-cultural transformations. The discussion below elaborates the theoretical implications, clarifies the conceptual contributions, addresses potential critiques, and situates the argument within global academic debates on urban governance and social policy.

Reframing Family Policy Beyond Technocracy

A central contribution of this study lies in challenging the dominant managerial paradigm that governs family policy in many developing urban contexts. Contemporary governance models often prioritize performance indicators, administrative compliance, and standardized evaluation frameworks. While such approaches enhance efficiency and comparability, they risk oversimplifying the complex moral and relational dimensions of family life. By introducing the concept of cultural governance, this study advances a normative shift: family well-being is not merely a policy outcome but a process of value integration. This perspective resonates with broader critiques of technocratic governance in urban studies, which argue that excessive reliance on quantifiable metrics can marginalize lived experience and symbolic meaning. In this sense, cultural governance complements institutional analysis by restoring the interpretive dimension of policy effectiveness. The argument does not reject measurement or socioeconomic support; rather, it asserts that these must be situated within a moral ecology that acknowledges relational dignity, ethical development, and intergenerational continuity. Without such integration, policy risks producing surface-level compliance without deep cultural resonance.

Bridging Virtue Ethics and Urban Governance

A second theoretical contribution concerns the integration of Aristotelian virtue ethics into contemporary urban policy discourse. While virtue ethics has traditionally been situated within moral philosophy, its application to governance theory remains underdeveloped. By foregrounding *eudaimonia* as a conceptual anchor, this study reframes family well-being as flourishing achieved through sustained ethical practice rather than episodic satisfaction. This ethical framing expands the analytical vocabulary available to policymakers and scholars. It shifts attention from hedonic metrics—such as life satisfaction surveys—toward structural conditions that enable the cultivation of care, reciprocity, and responsibility. In megacities experiencing rapid modernization, such virtues become critical mediating mechanisms between economic dynamism and social cohesion. However, this integration also raises questions. Critics may argue that virtue-based frameworks risk moral universalism or cultural essentialism. The present model mitigates this concern by combining virtue ethics with interpretive cultural theory. Rather than prescribing fixed moral standards, it emphasizes dialogical adaptation and context-sensitive interpretation.

Cultural Pluralism and Governance Legitimacy

Megacities in the Global South are characterized by migration, hybridity, and value pluralism. In such environments, governance legitimacy depends not only on institutional authority but on cultural recognition. The theory of cultural governance posits that family policy must function as a mediating arena where competing value systems can be negotiated rather than suppressed. This approach aligns with deliberative governance theories that emphasize participatory dialogue and normative inclusion. Yet it extends these theories by foregrounding the family as a primary site of value reproduction. Urban governance literature often focuses on public institutions and economic infrastructure; this study suggests that families constitute a parallel infrastructure of moral formation that shapes long-term social stability. Importantly, cultural governance does not imply relativism. Instead, it acknowledges that policy effectiveness depends on sustained interaction between shared ethical commitments and evolving social realities. The Family–Community–State model thus represents a relational rather than hierarchical configuration, where legitimacy emerges from alignment rather than enforcement.

Structural Constraints and Normative Agency

One potential critique of culturally grounded frameworks is that they may overemphasize moral agency while underestimating structural inequalities. Urban families in the Global South face systemic constraints—housing shortages, precarious labor markets, gendered employment patterns—that cannot be resolved through value dialogue alone. This study recognizes that cultural governance must operate alongside redistributive and welfare-oriented policies. Ethical flourishing requires material preconditions; *eudaimonia* presupposes basic security. Therefore, cultural governance should not be interpreted as a substitute for socioeconomic intervention but as its normative complement. The triadic model underscores this interplay: the state domain provides structural support, the community domain reinforces solidarity, and the family domain cultivates ethical capacities. By situating cultural governance within multilevel interaction, the framework avoids reducing family well-being to either moral voluntarism or structural determinism. Instead, it conceptualizes flourishing as

emerging from the dynamic interplay between institutional design and relational practice.

Comparative and Global Relevance

Although illustrated through the context of an Asian megacity, the theoretical propositions advanced here hold broader relevance. Rapid urbanization across Africa, Latin America, and South Asia exhibits similar patterns of demographic aging, migration, digitalization, and normative transition. In such settings, family well-being becomes a strategic concern not only for social stability but for long-term urban sustainability. The concept of cultural governance offers a transferable analytical lens. It enables comparative inquiry into how different cities institutionalize care ethics, negotiate generational change, and integrate family support into urban planning. Future cross-national research could examine how varying welfare regimes shape the alignment between family, community, and state domains.

Limitations and Future Directions

The present study is primarily theoretical, drawing on illustrative empirical references rather than original large-scale data. While this approach enables conceptual synthesis, it limits direct causal claims. Future research should operationalize cultural governance indicators and test their relationship with measurable well-being outcomes across diverse urban contexts. Additionally, further interdisciplinary dialogue between philosophy, sociology, and public policy could refine the normative foundations of urban family governance. Questions regarding digital mediation, gender transformation, and post-traditional family forms warrant deeper empirical and theoretical exploration. In conclusion, the discussion underscores that family well-being in megacities is neither a purely private matter nor a narrow administrative objective. It is a site where economic modernization, demographic transition, and cultural meaning intersect. By proposing a theory of cultural governance grounded in ethical flourishing and interpretive legitimacy, this study expands the conceptual toolkit available to scholars and policymakers seeking sustainable urban futures.

Conclusion

This article has proposed a theoretical reframing of family well-being in rapidly urbanizing megacities through the lens of cultural governance. Moving beyond technocratic and indicator-driven approaches to family policy, it has argued that sustainable family flourishing must be understood as a culturally embedded and ethically grounded process shaped by dynamic interaction among families, communities, and state institutions. In contexts characterized by demographic transition, economic acceleration, and normative pluralization, family well-being emerges not as a peripheral welfare concern but as a foundational dimension of urban sustainability.

Theoretical Implications

The study advances three principal theoretical contributions.

First, it reconceptualizes family well-being as a domain of governance embedded within moral and symbolic systems rather than merely a private social outcome or administrative target. By positioning families as normative infrastructures that reproduce ethical dispositions, relational stability, and intergenerational continuity, the analysis expands urban governance theory beyond material development and institutional management. In doing so, it highlights the family as a central site of cultural reproduction

essential to long-term social cohesion in megacities. *Second*, the integration of Aristotelian virtue ethics into urban governance discourse offers a normative deepening of policy analysis. The concept of eudaimonia shifts the evaluative focus from hedonic satisfaction or short-term welfare gains to sustained human flourishing grounded in virtuous relational practices. This ethical perspective does not impose rigid moral prescriptions; rather, it underscores the structural conditions necessary for the cultivation of care, reciprocity, and responsibility. By embedding virtue ethics within interpretive cultural theory, the framework avoids moral universalism and instead emphasizes dialogical adaptation within pluralistic urban contexts. *Third*, the proposed Family–Community–State triadic model contributes to multilevel governance scholarship by foregrounding relational alignment as the source of legitimacy. Governance effectiveness is conceptualized not as hierarchical enforcement but as structured congruence between institutional frameworks and lived value systems. This relational configuration enriches collaborative and deliberative governance theories by introducing a culturally interpretive dimension that accounts for meaning-making processes within family life. Collectively, these theoretical contributions position cultural governance as an integrative framework linking ethics, cultural sociology, and urban policy.

Policy Relevance for the Global South

The framework developed in this study carries significant implications for megacities across the Global South, where rapid modernization frequently disrupts established normative orders. Policymakers confronting demographic aging, migration flows, digital transformation, and shifting gender roles must move beyond narrowly technocratic metrics of family well-being. Cultural governance underscores that effective family policy operates simultaneously at structural and symbolic levels. Material provisions—housing security, healthcare access, childcare support, eldercare services—remain indispensable. Yet their sustainability depends on cultural legitimacy and relational coherence. Policies that ignore ethical and intergenerational dimensions risk producing formal compliance without deep social integration. Furthermore, the emphasis on participatory dialogue and community mediation provides a pathway toward governance legitimacy in culturally plural urban environments. Intergenerational programs, culturally adaptive consultation mechanisms, and community-based care networks can strengthen resilience by reinforcing shared meaning rather than imposing uniform norms. In this respect, family well-being policy becomes a strategic instrument for enhancing social trust and mitigating fragmentation in diverse megacities. Family well-being thus assumes a dual function: it is both a measure of social stability and a generator of normative continuity. Urban administrations seeking sustainable futures must cultivate not only economic competitiveness but also relational cohesion embedded in culturally resonant governance systems.

Limitations

Despite its integrative scope, this study remains subject to important limitations.

First, the analysis is primarily theoretical and illustrative. Although empirical references were incorporated to substantiate identified value tensions, the study does not present original large-scale quantitative or ethnographic data. Consequently, the framework's empirical robustness requires further validation through systematic cross-city research.

Second, while the model emphasizes cultural alignment, it may understate structural inequalities embedded within families and communities. Gender hierarchies, class disparities, and migration-related vulnerabilities can shape how cultural norms are interpreted and enacted. Future refinements of the framework should integrate feminist and critical urban perspectives to ensure that cultural governance does not inadvertently legitimize exclusionary practices.

Third, the normative orientation toward flourishing raises questions about measurement and operationalization. Translating ethical and relational dimensions into policy indicators without reducing them to superficial metrics remains a methodological challenge. Addressing this issue requires interdisciplinary collaboration between philosophers, sociologists, and policy analysts.

Future Research Agenda

Building on these limitations, several avenues for future inquiry emerge.

Empirically, comparative cross-national studies could operationalize dimensions of cultural governance—such as intergenerational dialogue density, community mediation mechanisms, and perceived value congruence—and examine their relationship to measurable well-being outcomes. Mixed-method approaches combining survey data, ethnographic observation, and policy analysis would enhance explanatory depth. Theoretically, further exploration of the intersection between digital transformation and moral socialization is warranted. Digital technologies simultaneously fragment and extend relational life; understanding their implications for family governance represents a critical frontier. Additionally, demographic aging and declining fertility in many Global South megacities necessitate expanded research into distributed care models. Integrating cultural governance with welfare regime theory may illuminate how institutional variation shapes the sustainability of intergenerational solidarity. Finally, future scholarship should investigate how cultural governance interacts with broader sustainability agendas, including environmental responsibility and labor policy. Family well-being intersects with urban planning, climate adaptation, and economic restructuring. Situating family governance within comprehensive sustainability frameworks would further strengthen its analytical relevance. In closing, this study has argued that the sustainability of megacities depends not solely on infrastructural development or economic growth, but on their capacity to cultivate culturally grounded forms of human flourishing. Family well-being represents a strategic and normative cornerstone of such sustainability. By articulating a theory of cultural governance rooted in ethical formation, interpretive legitimacy, and multilevel alignment, this article offers a conceptual foundation for reimagining urban family policy in an era of accelerating transformation. In the long term, the resilience and legitimacy of rapidly developing megacities may hinge not only on their economic dynamism, but on their ability to sustain relational cohesion and moral continuity across generations.

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