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Eureka Journal of Humanities and Social Research (EJHSR)

ISSN 2760-4934 (Online) Volume 2, Issue 11, November 2026



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THE IMPACT OF THE NUCLEAR FAMILY MODEL ON THE TRANSFORMATION OF INTERGENERATIONAL TIES, SOCIAL SOLIDARITY, AND COLLECTIVIST VALUES

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Abstract

This article presents a comprehensive socio-philosophical and empirical investigation into how the structural transition from extended multigenerational households to the nuclear family model reshapes intergenerational ties, social solidarity, and collectivist value orientations in contemporary society, with particular analytical focus on Uzbekistan. Drawing upon classical sociological theories of mechanical and organic solidarity, structural functionalism, postmodern theories of liquid modernity, and Uzbek family philosophy, the study examines the dialectical tension between nuclear household autonomy and traditional communal reciprocity. Through a mixed-method socio-philosophical methodology combining systemic, axiological, comparative-historical, and empirical trend analysis (2005–2026), the research demonstrates that nuclearization does not inevitably produce moral atomization or the total erosion of kinship loyalty. Instead, it generates a complex reconfiguration from co-residential hierarchical subordination toward "intimacy at a distance", mediated by digital communication networks and institutional support structures such as the mahalla. As a primary theoretical contribution, the study formulates a three-dimensional socio-philosophical model of nuclear family transformation and proposes a four-stage "Solidarity-Preserving Nuclearization" mechanism aimed

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at harmonizing individual conjugal autonomy with enduring intergenerational responsibility and civic cohesion.

Keywords: Nuclear family, extended family, intergenerational ties, social solidarity, collectivist values, axiological transformation, mahalla, kinship reciprocity, modernization, social cohesion.

INTRODUCTION

The family represents the foundational micro-social institution through which ontological security, moral consciousness, cultural memory, and primary socialization are transmitted across historical epochs. In the twenty-first century, rapid urbanization, post-industrial labor market restructuring, spatial mobility, and digital mediatization have accelerated the global diffusion of the nuclear family – a conjugal household unit composed primarily of parents and their dependent children–at the expense of the classical extended, patriarchal, and multigenerational family structure. As William J.Goode famously observed in his seminal comparative analysis of global family patterns, industrialization and urbanization systematically exert structural pressure toward the conjugal nuclear model by weakening unilineal descent networks and privileging geographic and social mobility [1]. However, while demographic and economic dimensions of family nuclearization have been extensively documented, its deeper socio-philosophical consequences for intergenerational reciprocity, organic social solidarity, and collectivist value systems remain a subject of intense scholarly debate.

From a socio-philosophical perspective, the transition from an extended household to a small nuclear unit is far more than a mere alteration in residential architecture or demographic household size; it constitutes a profound axiological shift in how human beings conceptualize duty, autonomy, authority, and belonging. In traditional agrarian and communal societies, the extended family

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functioned simultaneously as an economic production cooperative, a multi-generational welfare safety net, and a moral micro-cosmos governed by seniority, filial piety, and collective consensus. Within such an institutional matrix, individual aspirations were organically subordinated to the continuity and honor of the kinship lineage. Conversely, the modern nuclear family elevates emotional intimacy, spousal companionship, horizontal decision-making, and individual self-realization as its primary legitimizing principles [2]. Consequently, the structural boundary separating the conjugal core from the wider kinship network becomes sharper, redefining the frequency, intensity, and normative expectations of intergenerational interaction.

This transformation acquires heightened theoretical and practical significance in societies undergoing accelerated modernization while preserving deep-rooted collectivist traditions, such as contemporary Uzbekistan. Historically, Uzbek social philosophy has been anchored in the synthesis of the extended family (katta oila) and the neighborhood self-governance community (mahalla), where mutual aid (hashar), elder reverence, and collective moral accountability sustained high levels of social cohesion. Over the past two decades, however, demographic expansion, urban housing development, women's increasing participation in higher education and professional careers, and labor migration have steadily increased the prevalence of neolocal nuclear households among young couples. Understanding whether this structural evolution erodes collectivist ethics into atomized individualism or generates a new, adaptive synthesis of solidarity is therefore an urgent scientific task for contemporary social philosophy and family policy.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Classical and contemporary sociological and philosophical literature offers competing theoretical paradigms regarding the impact of family nuclearization on social solidarity and value systems. In nineteenth-and early twentieth-century

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social theory, Emile Durkheim established the foundational conceptual distinction between mechanical solidarity–rooted in collective conscience, homogeneity, and tight kinship-communal integration–and organic solidarity, which emerges from functional differentiation and contractual interdependence in modern industrial societies [3]. Durkheim warned that rapid structural differentiation without adequate moral regulation could induce a state of anomie, weakening traditional familial and communal bonds. Building upon this macro-sociological foundation, Talcott Parsons formulated the structural-functionalist thesis of the "isolated nuclear family", arguing that the small conjugal unit represents the optimal evolutionary adaptation to modern occupational mobility because its structural isolation from extended kin prevents nepotism and facilitates meritocratic allocation [4].

However, subsequent empirical and philosophical scholarship challenged the deterministic assumption that nuclear residence equates to complete relational isolation. Eugene Litwak introduced the influential concept of the "modified extended family", demonstrating that nuclear households maintain robust emotional, financial, and normative exchanges with kin across geographic distances through modern communication and transportation networks [5]. Similarly, Vern L.Bengtson developed the multi-dimensional "intergenerational solidarity paradigm", identifying six distinct axes of kinship cohesion–affectual, associational, consensual, functional, normative, and structural–and proving that declines in structural co-residence are frequently compensated by heightened affectual and functional solidarity [6]. In European social philosophy, Leopold Rosenmayr and Eva Köckeis conceptualized this equilibrium as "intimacy at a distance", whereby older and younger generations prefer residential autonomy while preserving close emotional attachment and reciprocal support [7].

In contrast to optimistic functionalist interpretations, late-modern critical theorists have highlighted the destabilizing risks of hyper-individualization within the nuclear family. Anthony Giddens analyzed the emergence of the "pure

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relationship" and "plastic sexuality", noting that modern intimate partnerships are increasingly contingent upon mutual emotional satisfaction rather than external kinship or institutional duty [8]. Zygmunt Bauman extended this critique in his philosophy of "liquid modernity", arguing that consumer capitalism and reflexive individualism render familial and communal commitments fragile, episodic, and reversible, thereby eroding long-term collectivist solidarity [9]. Ulrich Beck and Elisabeth Beck-Gernsheim further emphasized that institutional individualization compels family members to construct "do-it-yourself biographies", shifting moral responsibility from collective traditions onto isolated individuals [10].

Within post-Soviet and Central Asian socio-philosophical discourse, researchers have examined how family transformation interacts with indigenous collectivist traditions. A.G. Kharchev and M.S.Matskovsky established the methodological foundations for analyzing the dialectic between the social functions of the family and socialist post-socialist modernization [11]. S.I.Golod traced the historical evolution of family models from patriarchal to child-centric and conjugal types, emphasizing the pluralization of normative models in modern urban settings [12]. In Uzbekistan, philosophers and sociologists including O. Musurmonova, M. Bekmurodov, V.Karimova, and G.Tulenova have extensively explored the spiritual-moral foundations of the Uzbek family, the pedagogical role of elders, and the institutional synergy between family upbringing and the mahalla community [13, 14]. Furthermore, scholars such as N. Shermuhamedova and A. Kholbekov have analyzed how globalization and digital transformation reshape youth value orientations and social cohesion in Central Asia [15, 16]. Despite these substantial contributions, existing literature rarely integrates three-dimensional topological modeling with empirical longitudinal indicators to explain how nuclearization simultaneously transforms intergenerational ties, solidarity mechanisms, and collectivist values within a unified socio-philosophical framework–a gap this study directly addresses.

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RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodological architecture of this investigation rests upon an interdisciplinary socio-philosophical synthesis that integrates systemic-structural analysis, dialectical methodology, axiological evaluation, comparative-historical inquiry, and quantitative-topological modeling. First, the systemic approach treats the family not as an isolated demographic aggregate, but as an open, self-organizing socio-cultural subsystem embedded within broader economic, legal, communicative, and institutional environments. By mapping the feedback loops linking macro-level modernization drivers (urbanization, market relations, digitalization) with micro-level household restructuring, the systemic method clarifies how changes in residential structure reverberate across societal value hierarchies [17].

Second, the dialectical method is employed to uncover the internal contradictions driving contemporary family evolution–specifically the dialectical polarities of "collectivism versus individualism", "filial obligation versus personal autonomy", "traditional ritualism versus rational pragmatism" and "structural separation versus emotional connectedness". Rather than viewing these poles as mutually exclusive binary oppositions, dialectical analysis reveals how their interaction generates higher-order institutional syntheses. Third, the axiological approach evaluates transformations in family structure through the prism of fundamental human and societal values, examining how core ethical categories such as hurmat (respect for elders), oqibat (enduring moral-kinship reciprocity), shukronalik (gratitude), and civic solidarity are reinterpreted across generational cohorts.

Fourth, to substantiate theoretical propositions with empirical rigor, the study incorporates longitudinal sociological trend analysis covering four five-year observation periods between 2005 and 2026 (2005–2010, 2011–2015, 2016–2020, and 2021–2026), drawing upon national demographic statistics, sociological survey datasets from the Scientific Research Institute of Family and

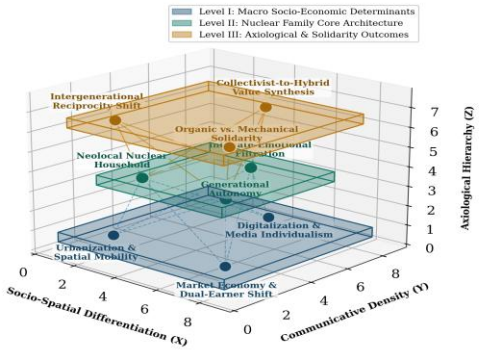
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Gender, and comparative Central Asian family studies [18, 19]. Using multidimensional mathematical-topological modeling, these empirical variables are synthesized into three-dimensional structural and surface equilibrium models to identify critical thresholds at which nuclear autonomy either reinforces adaptive social cohesion or precipitates solidarity deficits.

DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

1. Three-Dimensional Structural Architecture of Nuclear Family Transformation. Socio-philosophical analysis reveals that the transition toward the small nuclear family operates simultaneously across three hierarchically interconnected ontological planes: (1) macro-structural socio-economic determinants, (2) internal family architectural reconfiguration, and (3) macro-social axiological and solidarity outcomes. As illustrated in Figure 1, urbanization and spatial labor mobility physically separate young married couples from ancestral parental homesteads, while dual-earner market participation redistributes intra-household economic authority. Concurrently, digital media ecosystems introduce globalized narratives of self-expression and conjugal privacy into everyday domestic consciousness.

Figure 1. Three-Dimensional Socio-Philosophical Model of Nuclear Family Transformation and Axiological Reconfiguration



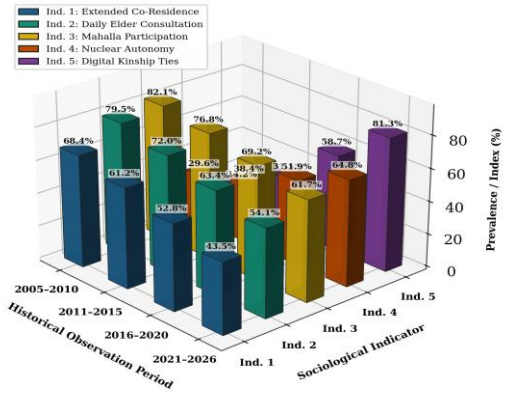
At Level II of the conceptual model (Figure 1), these macro-drivers crystallize into three defining features of the nuclear household: neolocal residence, generational decision-making autonomy, and intimate-emotional filtration. In a

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traditional three-generation household, parental authority mediated nearly every sphere of young adults' lives–from financial budgeting and child-rearing strategies to social visitation and conflict resolution. In contrast, the neolocal nuclear family establishes an autonomous communicative boundary wherein spouses negotiate domestic roles horizontally and filter external kinship interventions through the lens of conjugal privacy. At Level III, this architectural shift produces three systemic outcomes: the transformation of daily co-residential interdependence into episodic, selective intergenerational reciprocity; a structural movement from Durkheimian mechanical solidarity toward mediated organic solidarity; and a hybrid axiological synthesis blending traditional collectivist duties with modern individualistic aspirations.

2. Transformation of Intergenerational Ties: From Hierarchical Co-Residence to “Intimacy at a Distance”. A central finding of this research is that the numerical decline of multigenerational co-residence does not automatically signify the disintegration of intergenerational attachment; rather, it alters the structural modality and normative basis of kinship ties. In classical extended households, intergenerational solidarity was structurally mandated by shared property, pooled income, and continuous physical proximity. Under the nuclear family model, intergenerational relationships transition from obligatory structural dependence to voluntary affectual and symbolic reciprocity.

Figure 2. 3D Longitudinal Dynamics of Intergenerational Ties, Solidarity, and Nuclear Autonomy in Uzbekistan (2005–2026)



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Empirical longitudinal data presented in Figure 2 demonstrate this structural realignment in Uzbekistan over the 2005–2026 period. Between 2005–2010 and 2021–2026, the prevalence of extended three-generation co-residence among urban and semi-urban families declined steadily from 68.4% to 43.5%, while daily face-to-face elder consultation in household decision-making decreased from 79.5% to 54.1%. Simultaneously, explicit preference for neolocal nuclear autonomy among young couples aged 20–34 rose more than twofold, from 29.6% to 64.8%. Crucially, however, this spatial separation has been accompanied by an exponential surge in digital kinship mediation–such as daily video calls, family messaging groups, and mobile financial remittances–which expanded from 14.2% in 2005–2010 to 81.3% in 2021–2026.

Nevertheless, socio-philosophical scrutiny uncovers subtle qualitative vulnerabilities beneath these quantitative adaptations. First, when physical distance separates grandparents from grandchildren, the transmission of tacit cultural knowledge, oral historical memory, vernacular moral parables, and traditional etiquette (odob-axloq) becomes episodic rather than immersive. Digital communication excels at maintaining emotional reassurance and logistical coordination, yet it cannot fully replicate the embodied moral socialization that occurs through shared daily rituals, collective labor, and immediate behavioral modeling within an extended household. Second, unilateral elder care obligations face structural strain: as nuclear families prioritize investments in their own children's education and urban housing, elderly parents living separately risk experiencing “emotional loneliness amidst digital connectivity” unless supported by robust community and state gerontological care frameworks.

3. Reconfiguration of Social Solidarity: Mechanical Cohesion, Organic Interdependence, and the Mahalla Institution. Beyond intra-familial dynamics, the proliferation of the nuclear family profoundly reshapes macro-level social solidarity. In traditional Uzbek society, extended families functioned as dense

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nodal clusters linking private domestic life directly to the broader mahalla community. Collective participation in life-cycle ceremonies (to‘y-maraka), neighborhood mutual aid (hashar), and informal conflict mediation relied upon extended kinship networks capable of mobilizing substantial human and material resources.

Table 1. Comparative Socio-Philosophical Matrix of Extended vs. Nuclear Family Models Across Key Solidarity and Axiological Dimensions

Analytical Dimension	Traditional Extended Family Model	Modern Nuclear Family Model	Emergent Hybrid Synthesis
Ontological Basis of Solidarity	Mechanical solidarity rooted in lineage continuity, shared residence, and collective conscience	Organic solidarity rooted in conjugal choice, emotional intimacy, and contractual reciprocity	Modified extended solidarity balancing household autonomy with voluntary kinship duties
Intergenerational Authority	Vertical patriarchal-seniority hierarchy; collective parental veto over life choices	Horizontal spousal partnership; consultative rather than binding elder guidance	Dialogical respect (hurmat) preserving moral deference alongside personal agency
Socialization & Moral Transmission	Multi-agent immersive socialization via grandparents, aunts, uncles, and elders	Bi-parental concentrated socialization supplemented by formal schools and digital media	Co-governed socialization integrating parental autonomy with structured elder mentorship
Economic & Welfare Mechanism	Pooled household budget; intra-familial risk pooling and co-residential elder care	Segmented nuclear budget; reliance on market wages, state pensions, and remittances	Networked financial reciprocity combining nuclear asset accumulation with targeted kinship aid
Community & Mahalla Integration	Direct, obligatory participation in collective rituals, hashar, and neighborhood governance	Selective, time-constrained civic engagement mediated by urban professional schedules	Institutionalized civic partnership linking nuclear households to modernized mahalla councils
Dominant Axiological Orientation	Collectivist duty, self-sacrifice for kin honor, conformity, and ritual continuity	Individual self-actualization, emotional fulfillment, privacy, and pragmatic efficiency	Relational individualism harmonizing personal dignity with enduring oqibat (moral loyalty)

As synthesized in Table 1 and quantified in Figure 2, active participation of nuclear households in traditional mahalla collective events declined from 82.1% in 2005–2010 to 61.7% in 2021–2026. This decline reflects structural time

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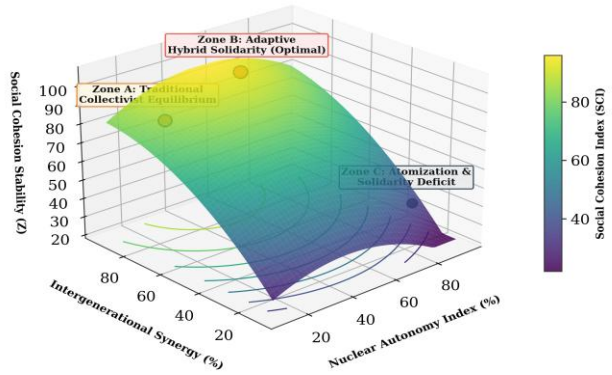
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compression: in dual-earner nuclear families lacking co-resident grandparents to share domestic childcare and household management, both spouses face intense temporal constraints that limit unscheduled communal volunteering. However, rather than signifying civic apathy, empirical observation indicates a qualitative shift in solidarity forms. Younger nuclear families increasingly express social solidarity through targeted financial philanthropy, digital crowdfunding for community needs, professional volunteering, and institutionalized mahalla social support programs. Thus, social solidarity is transitioning from unmediated, face-to-face mechanical obligation to organizationally and technologically mediated organic solidarity [20].

4. Axiological Transformation of Collectivist Values and Topological Equilibrium Analysis. From an axiological standpoint, the rise of the nuclear family recalibrates the internal hierarchy of collectivist values. In traditional Uzbek moral philosophy, collectivism was anchored in four pillars: (a) subordination of individual self-interest to family-kinship reputation, (b) unconditional filial obedience, (c) egalitarian resource sharing among siblings and relatives, and (d) collective social control over personal conduct. Under the influence of nuclear family autonomy, these values undergo selective normative reinterpretation rather than wholesale abandonment.

Figure 3. 3D Topological Surface Model of Social Cohesion Equilibrium Under Nuclear Family Transformation



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To formalize the systemic relationship between nuclear household autonomy and societal value stability, Figure 3 models the Social Cohesion Index (SCI) as a nonlinear three-dimensional topological surface governed by two independent axes: the Nuclear Autonomy Index (X) and Intergenerational & Institutional Synergy (Y). The topological surface reveals three distinct socio-philosophical regimes. Zone A ("Traditional Collectivist Equilibrium", X ≈ 22%, Y ≈ 78%, SCI ≈ 82.1) characterizes classical extended households where low conjugal autonomy is compensated by dense kinship solidarity. Zone C ("Atomization & Solidarity Deficit", X ≈ 88%, Y ≈ 25%, SCI ≈ 31.4) represents the pathological extreme of hyper-individualized Western-style atomization, where maximal nuclear autonomy combined with weak intergenerational and community synergy triggers a steep collapse in social cohesion, elevated divorce rates, youth alienation, and elder neglect.

Most significantly, the topological surface identifies a global optimum in Zone B ("Adaptive Hybrid Solidarity", X ≈ 62%, Y ≈ 85%, SCI ≈ 93.8). At this equilibrium point, moderate-to-high nuclear household autonomy–which fosters spousal equality, psychological maturity, and economic initiative–is counterbalanced by strong intergenerational emotional synergy, digital kinship networks, and institutional mahalla support. Within Zone B, collectivist values are not extinguished; instead, they evolve from coercive external conformity into internalized ethical commitments. Specifically, traditional obedience transforms into reflexive respect (hurmat), mandatory ritualism evolves into authentic moral empathy (oqibat), and passive dependence gives way to reciprocal agency.

5. Strategic Socio-Philosophical Mechanism: "Solidarity-Preserving Nuclearization". To guide society toward Zone B while preventing drift toward Zone C, family policy and socio-philosophical practice must implement an integrated institutional mechanism termed "Solidarity-Preserving Nuclearization", structured across four operational stages (Table 2).

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Table 2. Operational Architecture of the 'Solidarity-Preserving Nuclearization' Socio-Philosophical Mechanism

Mechanism Stage	Core Socio-Philosophical Objective	Institutional & Community Instruments	Target Axiological & Solidarity Indicator
Stage I: Axiological Harmonization	Reconcile conjugal autonomy with filial loyalty and collectivist ethics	Pre-marital counseling centers; modernized family ethics curricula in higher education; media storytelling	Reduction in intergenerational value conflict; high relational satisfaction
Stage II: Spatial & Urban Propinquity	Enable "intimacy at a distance" through multi-generational urban planning	Preferential mortgage incentives for adjacent housing; neighborhood family hubs within mahallas	Sustained weekly face-to-face grandparent-grandchild interaction (>75%)
Stage III: Digital Kinship & Care Synergy	Bridge geographic separation and dual-earner time deficits via institutional care	Community childcare co-ops; digital literacy programs for seniors; tele-care and family archive platforms	Elimination of elder isolation; preserved oral heritage transmission
Stage IV: Civic Solidarity Re-Embedding	Integrate autonomous nuclear units into participatory community governance	Flexible project-based hashar; digital mahalla civic portals; family-friendly community spaces	Social Cohesion Index (SCI) stabilization within optimal Zone B (>90)

As detailed in Table 2, Stage I ("Axiological Harmonization") addresses normative friction between generations by institutionalizing pre-marital psychological and philosophical counseling that equips young couples and parents-in-law with constructive boundary-setting and conflict-resolution skills. Stage II ("Spatial & Urban Propinquity") translates the sociological principle of "intimacy at a distance" into urban architectural policy by encouraging adjacent or proximate housing clusters within mahallas, allowing young nuclear families independent living spaces while preserving effortless physical proximity to aging

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parents. Stage III ("Digital Kinship & Care Synergy") compensates for the loss of co-residential childcare and elder support by combining community-based early childhood facilities with senior digital literacy initiatives that empower grandparents to participate actively in family life. Finally, Stage IV ("Civic Solidarity Re-Embedding") adapts traditional mahalla participation to the temporal realities of dual-earner nuclear households through flexible, project-oriented civic initiatives.

CONCLUSION

The transition from the extended multigenerational household to the small nuclear family model constitutes one of the defining structural transformations of contemporary society, reshaping the ontological, communicative, and moral fabric of human coexistence. Socio-philosophical and empirical analysis demonstrates that nuclearization neither guarantees linear emancipatory progress nor inevitably condemns society to moral atomization and the collapse of collectivist values. Instead, as revealed by our three-dimensional conceptual and topological models, the nuclear family acts as a structural prism that refracts traditional mechanical solidarity into new, differentiated configurations of organic interdependence and "intimacy at a distance".

In the context of contemporary Uzbekistan, while extended co-residence and daily hierarchical elder consultation have measurably declined over the past two decades, intergenerational attachment has demonstrated remarkable resilience through digital kinship mediation, financial reciprocity, and enduring moral norms such as hurmat and oqibat. Nevertheless, left entirely to spontaneous market individualism, rapid nuclearization carries genuine risks of intergenerational cultural discontinuity, dual-earner time poverty, and elder isolation. Achieving the optimal equilibrium of "Adaptive Hybrid Solidarity" requires conscious institutional stewardship–harmonizing conjugal autonomy with proximate urban planning, intergenerational mentorship, and modernized

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mahalla civic engagement so that individual self-realization and collectivist social cohesion mutually reinforce one another.

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