

**FROM KINSHIP TO CONSUMPTION:  
CAPITALISM AND THE RESTRUCTURING OF FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS IN  
MODERN SOCIETY**

*by*

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**ABSTRACT**

This research examines how family dynamics have changed with the conjunction of consumerism and individualism and how capitalism has contributed to those changes. The methodology for this research is located at the junction of family and consumption sociology. The research does not consider the expression "from kinship to consumption" as a figure of speech. It argues that market logic makes the organization of close relationships of a different nature. In this study, the quantitative descriptive method was used. Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire created on the Google Forms platform. The questionnaire invited ten participants to respond to statements to measure their attitudes on the family and work tensions, the tension between material and emotional family values, the values of family and the emotional and material values family relationships, the erosion of traditional family values, and the encroachment of work and financial responsibilities on family time. Responses were allocated descriptive statistics—specifically, frequency and percentage—and then compared to respond to the gaps in recent peer-reviewed literature and older, foundational social theory. For the sample, the study found that most participants indicated that the family and social capitalism was seen to be changing. Financial pressure was noted as the most cited change.

The study suggests that rather than perceiving the capitalist restructuring of the family as a pervasion of materialism, the restructuring is experienced as the intensification of economic pressures and the contraction of time. The study provides recommendations for policy and family practice and outlines future research.

**Keywords:** *capitalism; consumerism; family relationships; individualism; kinship; work–life balance; social change*

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

### 1.1 Background of the Study

The family unit has historically provided the foundation for the social and emotional care of the individual and for the establishment of connections with the wider network of relatives. Kinship has historically provided the framework for the organization of emotional ties, the distribution of goods and services, and the establishment of social and moral order. The family has been seen in the classical social framework as separated from the market, the family as a world marked not by calculation and exchange, but by love and obligation. This separation from the market has always been relative, and under conditions of developed capitalism, the separation has been even more difficult to maintain. The main argument of the current study is that, to a large extent, the family is organized around consumption as much as it is around kinship.

“From kinship to consumption” describes an important transformation of family life. Traditionally, kinship provided a framework for family life. Now, lifestyle, personal choices, and the purchase of goods and services provide the framework for family life. Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2002) analyze this transformation and describe it as individualization. In this process, the individual’s biography is removed from the former certainties of class, community, and family. Instead, individualization situates the individual in a highly differentiated market where freedom is offered at the expense of a lack of security. Bauman (2000, 2003) describes a similar situation in his discussion of liquid modernity. In this case, the provisional and revocable nature of personal relationships is described as being akin to the nature of consumer goods. This situation is sharply visible in societies that are in the early stages of modernization. In India, for example, the newly emerging consumer economy exists side by side with the transformation of family structures from extended joint families to nuclear families (Schneider & Kreyenfeld, 2021). This same movement from a kinship-based to a more individuated and market-compatible model of family organisation is traceable within Indian family law itself. Under the classical Mitakshara coparcenary that historically governed the Hindu joint family, a son's interest in ancestral property arose automatically at birth and passed to the surviving male members by survivorship, a mode of devolution premised on kinship status rather than any individually asserted entitlement. The Hindu Succession (Amendment) Act 2005 restructured this arrangement by making daughters coparceners in their own right, replacing survivorship with testamentary and intestate succession and allowing each coparcener to will away an individually ascertained share. In *Vineeta Sharma v Rakesh Sharma*, the Supreme Court confirmed that this change applies to living daughters of living coparceners regardless of when the daughter was born, and legal commentary on the reform notes that, alongside its gender-equality rationale, it had the incidental effect of converting an undivided, kin-based holding into a set of individually quantifiable and transferable entitlements. [Footnote: ‘Daughters’ Property Rights under Hindu Law: Before and After the 2005 Amendment’ (*SCC Online Blog*, 5 February 2026); ‘Coparcenary Right of a Daughter in Father’s HUF: Final Twist in the Tale?’ (2023) *BCAS Journal*.] The legal architecture of the Hindu joint family has therefore

itself shifted some distance along the trajectory this study traces, from an arrangement organised around inherited kinship status toward one organised around individually held and monetisable shares.

Additionally, it oversimplifies the case to regard capitalism as a solely destructive force. Capitalism has economically liberated families and women in particular from familial patriarchy and bond-related constraints and given them greater independence, thereby increasing their material comfort, liberation, and mobility. The issue is a gradual transformation (and not a decline) of the distribution of time, feeling, and value within the household, conditioned by the demands of time spent in gainful employment, family consumption, and individualistic striving and competition. The goal of this study is to see how the transformation of distribution is perceived and experienced by the masses.

### **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

While it is clear that capitalism has the power to alter family structures, there is a striking lack of qualitative research that looks at how people understand these changes to their family structures in their day to day lives. Sociological work in the area of family structures and the family unit has a high level of abstraction. This includes large sociological theories of rationality, and liberalization, and the commodification of family structures, yet there is a lack of representation of the voices of the family members themselves. There is a major lacuna in the sociological theories that discuss the marketization of close relationships, and the perspectives of the individuals within these close relationships. In order to begin to fill this lacuna, this research attempts to understand the family relationships of survey respondents, and the role they believe capitalism and consumerism play in structuring these relationships. This research attempts to understand two things. First, do people believe that family structures have been influenced by capitalism? If the answer is yes, then what do people believe are the major influences of capitalism? Is it the consumer culture, the liberalization of society, the technological changes, or the changes to family values?

### **1.3 Research Objectives**

The study is guided by the following objectives:

1. To determine if participants feel due to the presence of capitalism, there have been changes to conventional familial relations.
2. To determine how much work and financial obligations are thought to negatively impact time with family.
3. To assess what participants feel most influences current familial relations.
4. To determine how perceived material values and emotional connections of family members are in conflict.

5. To understand participants' answers using older and more modern sociological theory.

#### **1.4 Research Questions**

1. Has the perception of capitalism altered traditional family relationships?
2. How often do family financial obligations affect the time spent with each family member?
3. What does the public think is the greatest family relationship concern today?
4. Does the public think Consumerism is affecting the family relationship in that it has created a desire for material goods over emotional family contact?
5. Does the public think Capitalism has negatively impacted the traditional family values of the family?

#### **1.5 Scope of the Study**

The purpose of this study is exploratory and limited. Primary data was collected based on an anonymous online survey with ten participants and was analyzed based on five of the ten relationships of the family-network and capitalism. This study does not strive for a statistically representative outcome. This study, however, situates its small, primary data collection within a large, informal theoretical collection to provide an interpretive outcome. This study is temporally focused on the present. The theoretical placements are global, but the empirical data are most appropriately explanatory of the perceptions in a contemporary, consumer-based society. With this in mind, the data are to be viewed as suggestive and representative, not definitive or broadly representative.

#### **1.6 Significance of the Study**

The present study extends the sociology of the family and the sociology of consumption in three specific ways. First, this study places the commodification and individualism theories in the context of their actual perceptions by disparate survey participants, thus, providing a subjective basis for structural theories. Second, the study addresses the less prevalent assumption that an economic threat to the family and a shortage of family time dominate, although the erosion of family time is significant. Finally, the study is practical and advances family well-being. In this rapidly, economically unstable society, the study limits family marketing and provides a rationale for long, consumer-based work. The study is of social importance to the family.

#### **1.7 Research Hypothesis**

The study is organised around the following hypotheses:

**H1 (Alternative Hypothesis):** Capitalism significantly restructures family relationships through increasing consumerism and individualism.

**H0 (Null Hypothesis):** Capitalism has no significant influence on family relationships.

Due to the design's small sample size and lack of detail, the hypotheses described below are evaluated interpretively, as opposed to employing an inferential statistical framework. Predominant directions and patterns observed across frequencies are noted, and the specific hypothesis is determined most clearly based on these.



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## Chapter 2: Literature Review

The literature on capitalism and the family traverses the sociology of family and consumption, political economy, and the sociology of emotion and care. The aim of this review is to articulate critical trends and emerging themes in literature published between 2021 and 2026 and to situate that literature in the context of canonical texts that remain relevant. The pieces discussed in this review are ordered according to the following themes: capitalism and consumerism; the sociology of family and kinship; individualism; work–life balance; digital capitalism; emotional labor; and social transformation.

### 2.1 Capitalism and Consumerism

Generations of social theorists have suggested that capitalism is more than just an economic system of production and trade of goods. They propose that it is an encompassing life system that alters values and social relationships. Like capitalism, consumerism is a culture that expresses this system. Unlike capitalism, consumerism is a more socially-accepted form of identity. It is the culture for which the possession of goods becomes the central factor in an individual's social status and identity. Consumption is suspected of playing a damaging role in sustaining family bonds. Consistent with previous literature, Kastarinen, Närvänen, and Valtonen (2023) show that families are “done” through consumption. Their research suggests that the bonds between generations that transacted and sustained care through consumption are a result of consumption practices done over time and are not a result of the consumption done in a ritualistic manner or through the same physical space. Thus, consumption practices and family bonds are illustrated through their study and the relationship between consumption and family is redefined as consumption practices sustain family bonds.

At the same time, a vital strand of research considers the problems consumerism creates within families. Brick et al. (2023) demonstrated consumption, in this case, consumerism, creates secrecy and guilt in relationships, where partners conceal small purchases and guilt is felt by the partner. Research demonstrates the infiltration of consumerism culture into the private sphere, and personal relationships and intimacy are not seamless, and is not benign as it introduces concealment, guilt, comparison, and emotional flexibility. In emerging markets, the speed of the process amplifies the risk situations. Kapoor, Rose, Jindal and Sivadas (2024) examined consumer socialization and the Indian family, reporting a move in Indian parenting from an authoritarian style to a more authoritative style and an increase in mothers exerting control and flexibility in their children's media consumption. Together, they show the infiltration of consumerism permeates family intimacy and relationships.

India's consumer protection law has begun to respond directly to the marketisation of childhood that this literature documents. The Consumer Protection Act 2019 empowers the Central Consumer Protection Authority to regulate misleading advertising, and the Guidelines for Prevention of Misleading Advertisements and Endorsements 2022, issued under that Act, single out advertisements directed at children for specific restriction. The Guidelines prohibit advertisements

that exaggerate a product's features so as to create unrealistic expectations in a child audience and require any health or nutritional claim made to children to be scientifically substantiated, on the express ground that children are more vulnerable to the influence of advertising than adult consumers; contravention can attract a penalty of up to ten lakh rupees for a first offence and up to fifty lakh rupees for repeat offences, together with a bar on the endorser making further endorsements. [Footnote: Central Consumer Protection Authority, Guidelines for Prevention of Misleading Advertisements and Endorsements for Misleading Advertisements 2022, discussed in 'Guidelines on Misleading Advertisements in India' (*ELP Law*, 8 February 2024).] The existence of a dedicated regulatory carve-out for advertising aimed at children is itself an acknowledgement, at the level of positive law, that the commercial socialisation of children within the family, of the kind Kapoor and others (2024) describe among Indian parents, is a phenomenon serious enough to warrant statutory intervention rather than being left to market self-regulation alone.

## 2.2 Family Sociology and Kinship Systems

The sociology of the family examines whether forms of industrial and post-industrial capitalism establish specific family structures. As an example of this sociological approach, Parsons and Bales (1955) suggested that the isolated nuclear family has flexibility to fulfill what an industrial society expects of mobility and is void of the extended family obligations that would impede mobility and flexibility in both geography and profession. However, this idea has been challenged. Schneider and Kreyenfeld (2021) propagate the argument that the pluralisation and diversification of family structures in modern societies has been rapid, and, therefore, great care should be taken against outlining simplistic stories of the nuclear family either becoming dominant or being in decline. In India, the effects of urban migration, economic independence, and changing aspirations are said to account for the shift from joint to nuclear family households, but scholars see expanding kinship maintaining its modified and dispersed forms, rather than disappearing altogether.

The same demographic shift that this literature associates with modified and dispersed kinship, rather than its outright disappearance, has produced a direct legal response in India. The Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act 2007 was enacted because the joint family arrangements that had informally guaranteed the support of the elderly could no longer be assumed once children began establishing independent, nuclear households; commentators specifically identify the shift from joint to nuclear living arrangements as the Act's proximate cause. The Act converts what had previously been an unstated, kinship-based expectation into an enforceable and quantified legal claim: children and other relatives who stand to inherit a senior citizen's property come under a statutory duty to maintain them, and a Maintenance Tribunal may fix a specific monthly amount, currently capped at ten thousand rupees, that a child must pay. A senior citizen who transfers property to a child on the understanding that basic care will be provided may also apply to have that transfer set aside if the child later fails to provide it. [Footnote: TG Issac and others, 'Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act 2007: A Critical Appraisal' (2021) 43(5 Suppl) *Indian Journal of Psychological Medicine* S107; PRS Legislative Research, 'The Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens

(Amendment) Bill, 2019’ (*PRS India*, 2019).] A statutory ceiling of this kind, precisely because it fixes a rupee figure on what kinship obligation once discharged without calculation, illustrates in concrete legal terms how the practice of Indian kinship is being reorganised rather than abandoned, converting a filial duty into an adjudicable and priced entitlement.

Most literature of this sort focus on kinship as a practice rather than a static structure, and changes to the practice of kinship rather than its disappearance, for example, capitalism brings changes to kinship of a varying nature, such as the practice of kinship becoming a less obligation based practice. The question this study aims to answer is whether respondents view capitalism as having transformed family relationships, which is an example of this practice rather than a more obligation based practice.

### **2.3 Individualism and Late Modernity**

Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (1995, 2002), Giddens (1992), and others have developed a formulation of individualization wherein relationships in the late modern era have less to do with social obligations and are instead shaped by individual preferences. Compared to long-lasting, socially sanctioned relationships of the past, Giddens (1992) refers to the “pure relationship” to describe a modern relationship that is sustained only as long as it is mutually satisfying. Bauman (2000, 2003) builds on Giddens’s formulation by claiming that in “liquid modernity,” relationships of love and intimacy become provisional and are structured by the consumer preferences of novelty and disposability. While Giddens and Bauman differ in their evaluations of the changes brought about by advances in individualism (with Giddens seeing improvements and Bauman viewing a decline), they both agree that the consumer society has undermined the formerly strong social ties of the family.

### **2.4 Work–Life Balance and Economic Pressure**

Many recent studies have examined the intrusion of paid work into family time. Flexible work, driven by the market, was supposed to solve the work-family problem. However, this promise has been consistently broken with the evidence. James (2024) examines how ‘flexibility’ when discussing gig economy platform work, actually refers to a more precarious work-life balance with constant scheduling and work that is almost always available. This is especially problematic for those with caregiving responsibilities. Therefore, time and economic pressure should not be viewed as external contradictions of capitalism, but structural components of it. This body of work is relevant to the current study, which looks at how work and financial pressures most often interfere with family time.

India’s own labour law framework illustrates precisely this structural, rather than incidental, relationship between paid work and family time. In November 2025 the central government brought into force four consolidated labour codes, including the Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code 2020, whose notified rules permit a daily working ‘spread-over’ of up to twelve hours even though the underlying working day nominally remains fixed at eight hours.

The notification followed a prolonged and highly public debate in which senior Indian business leaders, including the chairman of a major engineering conglomerate and the co-founder of a leading information-technology company, publicly argued for work weeks of seventy to ninety hours, provoking sustained criticism from labour unions and commentators who pointed to the absence of any statutory protection for personal and family time from such demands. [Footnote: Prasanna Mohanty, 'Centre Pushes for 12-Hour Work as Tycoons Call for 70-90 Hour Workweeks' *The Federal* (Chennai, 22 November 2025); 'We Won't Die for Your Profits: Karnataka IT Union Slams L&T Chief's 90-Hour Workweek Proposal' *Business Today* (13 January 2025).] Partly in response to this controversy, MP Supriya Sule reintroduced the Right to Disconnect Bill 2025 in the Lok Sabha, a private member's bill that would entitle employees to ignore work-related calls and messages outside their agreed hours without facing disciplinary consequences and would require larger employers to negotiate a charter governing after-hours communication with an Employees' Welfare Committee. [Footnote: 'Employees' Mental Health and Right to Disconnect in India' (*LiveLaw*, 19 December 2025).] That the new labour codes regulate pay, safety and working hours in detail yet remain silent on the digital intrusion of work into family time indicates that Indian labour law has, to date, addressed the financial dimension of the pressures respondents describe in this study more thoroughly than it has addressed their temporal dimension.

## 2.5 Digital Capitalism and the Platformisation of Family Life

The newest area of scholarship is the integration of family into digital and platform capitalism. According to Srnicek (2017), platforms are the predominant business model of contemporary capitalism to derive value from social interactions. Alternatively, Zuboff (2019) argues that surveillance capitalism turns intimate social activities into a resource for prediction and profit. Wang (2024) analyzes the remnants of Marxism and autonomism related to how the logic of control through the use of social media and surveillance and 'casual' work integrates into family life and blurs the lines between work and leisure. The integration of market rationality into family life, through the use of social media and technology, is not a neutral act. This body of work shows how the marketplace rationality integrates into the family via technology and social media by controlling and facilitating communication, shopping, and caregiving.

Indian law has begun, tentatively, to regulate this platformisation of family life from two directions. First, labour law now formally recognises the category of worker most exposed to algorithmic control of family time: the Code on Social Security 2020 defines a 'gig worker' as a person who performs work outside a traditional employer-employee relationship and a 'platform worker' as one whose work is mediated through an online application, and requires aggregators such as ride-hailing and delivery platforms to contribute toward a social security fund for such workers. Because implementation of the central Code has been slow, individual states have legislated directly: Rajasthan's Platform Based Gig Workers (Registration and Welfare) Act 2023 and Karnataka's Platform Based Gig Workers (Social Security and Welfare) Act 2025 each establish a welfare board, a registration and unique-ID system, and a welfare cess levied on

aggregators, with Karnataka's Act additionally requiring a measure of transparency in the automated systems that allocate and monitor gig work. [Footnote: 'Gig and Platform Workers: Social Security Coverage for the New-Age Workforce' (Bhatt & Joshi Associates, 30 November 2025); 'Karnataka Gig Workers Act: What the Law Says and Why It's Contested' *Business Standard* (8 July 2026).] Second, data protection law has begun to regulate the platform mediation of family authority itself. The Digital Personal Data Protection Act 2023 defines anyone under eighteen as a child and requires platforms to obtain verifiable parental consent before processing a child's personal data, while prohibiting behavioural tracking and targeted advertising directed at children altogether. [Footnote: 'Parental Consent: DPDP Law on Children's Data' (Consent.in, 9 February 2026).] Taken together, these two regulatory strands confirm that the integration of platform capitalism into family life documented by Srnicek (2017), Zuboff (2019) and Wang (2024) is no longer solely a matter of sociological observation in the Indian context: it is now, however imperfectly, an object of statutory regulation in its own right.

## 2.6 Emotional Labour and the Commodification of Care

Hochschild's (1983) notion of emotional labour—the paid management of feelings—has substantial standing in this field. In her later work (Hochschild, 2012), she extends her theorization to the family literature, claiming that as families hire out caring tasks, market logics come to dominate the most private and intimate spheres of life. Stulikova and Dawson (2023) show how emotional labour discursively travels from the workplace to the home in everyday discourse and return to Hochschild's assertion that family values are increasingly being reframed by market values. In a similar spirit, Illouz (2007) identifies "emotional capitalism" where the economic and emotional orders of the world intertwine, and Fraser (2016) refers to a structural "crisis of care" where capitalism combines a reliance on the unpaid social reproductive work it has depleted. From all these accounts, a common understanding emerges that the interplay of capitalism and emotionality ripples through all relationships and, beyond that, alters the very nature of intimacy.

## 2.7 Summary of Previous Studies

Collectively, these accounts can be understood in relation to three broad themes. First, there is considerable consensus that the effects of capitalism, and particularly consumer capitalism, on family relationships are more complex than destruction and probably involve extensive reorganization. Second, there is considerable agreement that economic and temporal factors are the most salient mechanisms of this reorganization, especially when compared with the more abstract manifestation of consumerism. Finally, there is far-reaching convergence that the digital and emotional aspects, especially the ways in which communication and care have become integrated with particular platform and market logics, are of considerable importance. The studies featured in the following table help to substantiate this review.

### Table

*Summary of Key Literature Reviewed*

1

Author(s) & Year	Focus / Theme	Key Contribution
Kastarinen, Närvänen & Valtonen (2023)	Consumption & intergenerational care	Families are enacted over time through consumption practices; consumption is a medium of kinship, not only its solvent.
Brick et al. (2023)	Consumption in close relationships	Secret consumer behaviour generates guilt and shapes relational investment, revealing tensions consumerism brings into intimacy.
Kapoor, Rose, Jindal & Sivadas (2024)	Consumer socialisation (India)	Documents shifting parenting styles and maternal mediation of children's media, showing marketisation of childhood.
Schneider & Kreyenfeld (2021)	Sociology of the family	Surveys the pluralisation of family forms, cautioning against simple narratives of decline or nuclearisation.
James (2024)	Gig work & work-family	Shows how platform "flexibility" produces constant availability and work-life hardship, especially for carers.
Wang (2024)	Digital / platform capitalism	Applies the "social factory" thesis to algorithmic control, blurring the boundary between work and home.
Stulikova & Dawson (2023)	Emotional labour & family	Traces how market language and emotional-labour discourse reshape understandings of care within the family.
Illouz (2007); Fraser (2016)	Emotional capitalism / care crisis	Theorise the entanglement of economic and emotional rationalities and capitalism's structural depletion of care.

### **Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework**

Four traditions of theory involved in this study encapsulate unique aspects of how capitalism reorganises family relations. Each of these theories contributes to this study in important ways; following Marx makes possible the analysis of alienation and commodification, Weber provides the idea of rationalization, Bourdieu accounts for the reproduction of social distinction through consumption, and Bauman analyses the instability of relationships in his concept of liquid modernity. Together, these theories enable the ‘transition from kinship to consumption’ to be understood as a multi-faceted process rather than a crude singular mechanism.

#### **3.1 Karl Marx: Capitalism, Commodification, and Alienation**

For Marx (1867/1990), capitalism is defined by the ubiquity of the commodity form. In a capitalist society, relationships once defined by use and reciprocity become subordinated by exchange value. Marx wrote comparatively little about the family. However, his collaborator, Engels, argued that the family form is historically bound by the particular mode of production and particular property relations (Engels 1884/2010). The Marxian perspective provides a framework through which the demands of capital and the dictates of wage labor shape the time, energy, and emotional resources required for family life. In a situation where the demands of paid work invade the family, and where affection and esteem are increasingly manifested through the purchase of commodities, the family becomes a space where the relations of capital are reproduced. This situation requires an understanding through the concept of alienation. In the same way that workers are alienated from the products of work, family members become alienated from one another when their relationships become a reflection of consumption and are bound by economic constraints. The prominence of financial pressures revealed among the respondents provides an empirical basis for this Marxian concern regarding the material conditions of the modern relational family.

#### **3.2 Max Weber: Rationalisation and Instrumental Reason**

Weber (1905/2001) identified the systematic calculation of means to ends as the hallmark of modern capitalism. He conceived of rationality and instrumental rationality as the means toward an end that modern capitalism has adopted. He cited the example of the family and argued that relationships have begun to express means toward ends and that modern time (the currency of family time) is budgeted, care is scheduled, and affection is expressed at an opportunity cost. Finally, Weber argued that modern capitalism has intruded and reorganized the family as a rational institution. This explains why respondents view modern capitalism as a rational system that imposes work and financial obligations as an intruder on family time, forcing people to organize their family lives around rational means toward the ends of modern capitalism.

### **3.3 Pierre Bourdieu: Cultural Capital and the Reproduction of Distinction**

According to Bourdieu (1984), consumption has a dual nature. It can serve a function, but is primarily a system of signs through which social distinctions can be created and maintained. These signs can indicate a certain class and carry cultural capital that is passed on from generation to generation. In the family, Bourdieu's model shows how these signs and this framework of class position and capital is employed within the family as a system of socialization and a means of exhibiting family status. In this context, the commercialization of family life can be seen as the reorganizing of family life for the purposes of social differentiation, rather than the loss of family life. The research of Kapoor et al. (2024) shows that when parents attempt to control and regulate their children's consumption, it appears that parents use this system to communicate their love and hopes for the future to their children. Bourdieu's framework shows that in consumer society, the apparent conflict between material value and emotional value is resolved. The two can be integrated in a completely satisfactory manner.

### **3.4 Zygmunt Bauman: Liquid Modernity and the Frailty of Bonds**

Bauman (2000, 2003) directly addresses the study's primary concern. He asserts that in liquid modernity social structures—including family—lose their solidity and become temporary, pliable, and able to be revoked. This flexible framework is afforded by consumer culture. Bauman argues that people adopt a consumer mentality to relationships: evaluate connections by the gratifications the relationship provides and eliminate the relationship when the gratifications fail. "Liquid love" describes the simultaneously desired and feared, and the sought yet resisted, bonds. This framework interprets the decay of traditional family values from a ruptured morality to a consequence of a society structured by choice, flexibility, and consumerism. Bauman's theory describes the dissolution of solid family bonds and aligns with the findings of the current study, which shows an alteration of family bonds by capitalism and a simultaneous ambivalence that is most clearly shown by the neutral responses.

### **3.5 Synthesis: Applying the Framework**

Marx, Weber, Bourdieu, and Bauman create a cumulative theory that describes how family bonds are systemically altered under the conditions of capitalism. Marx describes the economic aspect, Weber describes the rational component of this change, Bourdieu shows how bonds are differentiated by consumer choices, and Bauman illustrates the end result: a vulnerable bond. Each of these theorists provides a foundation to support the study's alternative hypothesis (H1), that capitalism alters family bonds through consumerism and individualism. The empirical findings presented after this section will be interpreted within this framework. This allows researchers to provide evidence of their perceptions and opinions about what they see and experience not as disconnected views, but as an expression of underlying social structures and systemic conditions.

## **Chapter 4: Research Methodology**

### **4.1 Research Design**

We used a quantitative, descriptive, cross-sectional research design. A descriptive design is meaningful in this case because the goal is to capture and analyze respondents' perceptions of the relationship between family and capitalism at one moment as opposed to creating and analyzing any relationships. It will be, to some extent, a descriptive design, but mostly, will have an interpretive design. In this cross-section, the quantitative frequencies will be interpreted in terms of sociological theory to make sense of the data.

### **4.2 Population and Sample**

The population we are describing are adults who have lived in modern, family-oriented, consumer-based societies. It is a population of ten. The sample size is small because the purpose of this research is both exploratory and illustrative. The purpose of this work is to create and capture insights and demonstrate one way of doing an analysis, and not to create a broad and statistically-supported population-based research.

### **4.3 Sampling Technique**

CONVENIENCE SAMPLING. Respondents who were contacted and willing to participate were asked to fill out a survey. Convenience sampling is not the best way to capture a population, and a variety of biases will exist, but it is considered a good way to do an exploratory research study and a study that has limited access and time. These are the sampling biases we will keep in mind as we analyze and interpret results.

### **4.4 Data Collection and Instrument**

A standardized digital questionnaire served as the primary data collection instrument for this study. Offered through Google Forms, the online instrument was advantageous for rapid data collection and participant anonymity in response. The instrument consisted of five closed-ended questions; four areas utilized five-point Likert-type agreement or frequency scales, and one area utilized a limited categorical single-choice response. The five questions in the instrument asked about the influence of capitalism on traditional family relationships, the extent of work or financial responsibilities on family time, the major work/family relationships challenge, the challenge posed by consumerism versus emotional bonds, and the challenge of traditional family values versus consumerism. The closed-ended format of the instrument aided response comparability and facilitated the analysis of response frequency.

### **4.5 Sample Size**

The achieved sample size was ( $N = 10$ ). The returned questionnaires included 0% item non-response.

#### **4.6 Ethical Considerations**

Adherence to standard social research ethics was evident in this study. Participation was voluntary and anonymous. The advance notice at the beginning of the questionnaire indicated that the responses would be used exclusively for academic purposes. The questionnaire was designed to avoid collection of personally identifiable information. Limited participants to the research by anonymized designators (R1–R10) indicated that no sensitive personal information was collected. Because participation was voluntary, the total study participant population was ( $N = 10$ ). Respondents retained the right to withdraw post-participation and predata submission at their discretion.

#### **4.7 Data analysis technique**

Descriptive statistics were conducted on the data. Specifically, data were analysed using frequency counts and percentages, which were extracted directly from the raw data. The frequency counts for each response category selected by the respondents were summed and expressed as a percentage of the total sample. These results were displayed in frequency tables and illustrated using bar charts and pie charts. These distributions were then analysed in relation to the theoretical framework and literature that were reviewed. Given the sample size and study design, no statistical tests apart from descriptive statistics were conducted. The hypotheses were evaluated on the basis of the distributions observed, and the direction and consistency of the distributions were taken into consideration.

#### ***Note on available variables***

The dataset has responses for the five substantive items along with anonymized identifiers. It does not contain variables for age, gender, occupation, or household type. Therefore, the following chapter relies only on the available data for responses, which limits sub-group analysis. The following chapter acknowledges the absence of demographic information.

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## Chapter 5: Data Analysis and Findings

This chapter analyses the ten collected responses. For each of the five survey items, frequency tables, response percentages, and distributions, along with visualizations and academic interpretations, are presented. Due to the absence of demographic data, the analysis will construct a demographic profile based on the responses, then continue with survey items one through five, and summarize with a general interpretation.

### 5.1 Respondent Profile

Where demographic data was not available, a respondent's profile was built from their qualitative evidence. Each respondent's general attitude was classified as "supportive" (predominantly agreeing that capitalism has reshaped the family), "ambivalent" (predominantly neutral), or "sceptical" (predominantly disagreeing) according to the combination of their responses to the three attitudinal items (Q1, Q4, Q5). Their answer to the categorical influence item (Q3) was also taken into account. This profile is provided as a sample description and is not intended as a demographic profile.

#### Table

2

*Respondent Profile Derived from Response Data (N = 10)*

Respondent	Overall Attitudinal Stance (Q1, Q4, Q5)	Most Influential Factor Selected (Q3)
R1	Supportive (Strongly Agree)	Financial Pressure
R2	Supportive (Agree)	Consumerism
R3	Supportive (Agree)	Technology and Social Media
R4	Ambivalent (Neutral)	Personal Values
R5	Supportive (Strongly Agree)	Financial Pressure
R6	Sceptical (Disagree)	Cultural Traditions
R7	Supportive (Agree)	Consumerism
R8	Supportive (Agree/Strongly Agree)	Financial Pressure
R9	Ambivalent (Neutral)	Technology and Social Media
R10	Mixed (Agree/Neutral)	Personal Values

The data shows that 60 percent of participants believe that capitalism has caused some restructuring of family life and has caused some changes that are positive and therefore supports this view. However, there are two who are neutral, one who is against it, and one who has a combination of differing views. Interestingly, the three individuals who noted that financial problems/stress are the most important and influential factor. They also showed the most firm,

positive agreement with all the attitudes that are measured among the individuals suggests that they perceive family changes as a direct result of economic changes.



## 5.2 Question 1: Has Capitalism Changed Traditional Family Relationships?

### Table

3

*Perceived Change in Traditional Family Relationships Due to Capitalism*

Response Category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	3	30
Agree	4	40
Neutral	2	20
Disagree	1	10
Strongly Disagree	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100</b>

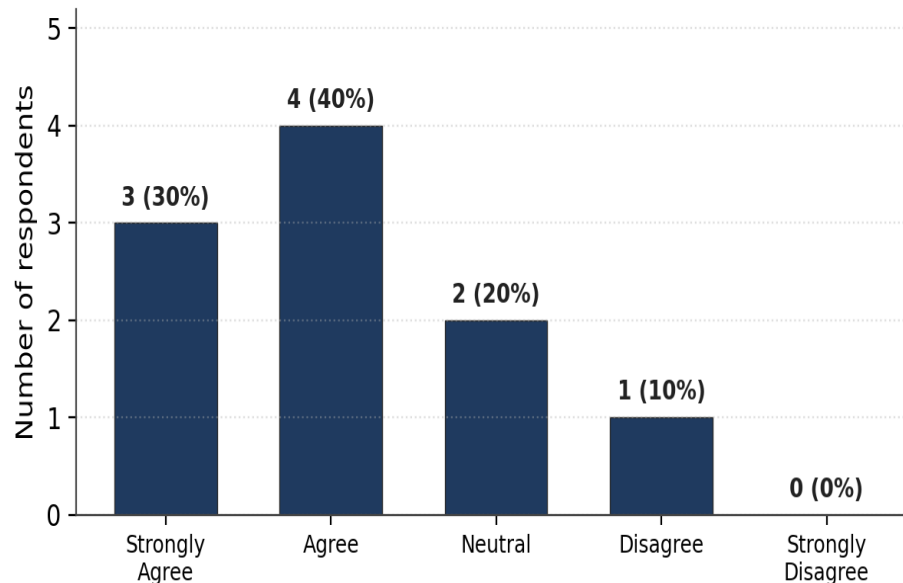
**Figure 1. Perceived change in traditional family relationships due to capitalism**

Figure 1. Perceived change in traditional family relationships due to capitalism (N = 10).

Did respondents think capitalism has transformed relationships in traditional families? Most of the responses, about 70%, agreed or strongly agreed. Of those, 4 agreed and 3 strongly agreed. 20% of respondents chose a neutral position, while 10% disagreed (no one strongly disagreed). The modal response was “Agree,” and the absence of strong disagreement is notable.

Most of the responses (70%) said capitalism has changed family relationships, which partially supports hypothesis (H1). This majority view supports the theories of Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2002) and Bauman (2000). According to these authors, the intrusion of the market into the personal sphere is a crucial element of late modernity. This view also supports the findings of Kastarinen et al. (2023) where families are reached through market-mediated practices.

Responses that were neutral or dissenting indicate the change in family relationships was not obvious and is subject to varying interpretations, which supports Schneider and Kreyenfeld (2021). This response also predicts the recurring uncertainty that is found throughout the remaining data responses.

### 5.3 Question 2: How Often Do Work or Financial Responsibilities Reduce Family Time?

**Table**

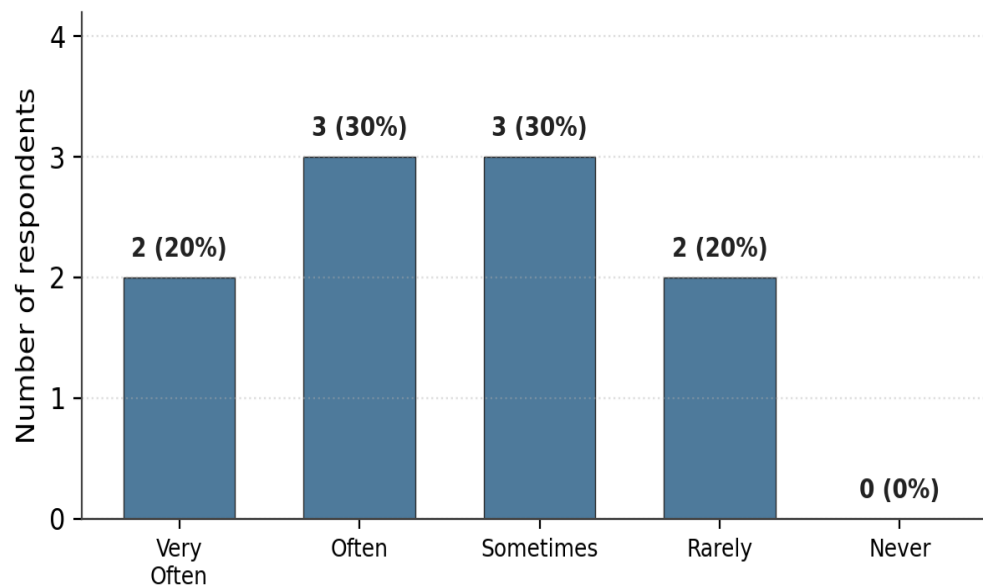
4

*Frequency with Which Work or Financial Responsibilities Reduce Family Time*

Response Category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Very Often	2	20
Often	3	30

Response Category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Sometimes	3	30
Rarely	2	20
Never	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100</b>

**Figure 2. Frequency with which work/financial duties reduce family time**



*Figure 2. Frequency with which work or financial responsibilities reduce family time (N = 10).*

The second item examined how time scarcity is felt or experienced. Responses were more evenly distributed and spread across the time scarcity scale. However, responses still skewed towards the frequent end of the time scarcity scale. Of the total, 50% of the respondents said that work or financial obligations reduced time available for the family very often (20%) or often (30%). The remaining three (30%) said it happened sometimes. Only two respondents (20%) said it happened rarely. Significantly, there were no respondents who said this intrusion of work or financial obligations on family time had ever happened (answered “Never”).

The survey findings strongly and clearly suggest that the diminishing family time is experienced by everyone to almost the same degree. According to this survey, the diminishing family time is experienced almost universally, with everyone regarding it as a rational and calculative intrusion. This finding also, to some degree, corresponds to Weber’s rationalization theory (Weber, 1905/2001), and to Dr. James’ (2024) research and theory, regarding the organizational structure of work. The diminishing family time and work obligations intrude upon family time and work, and to some extent.

The pressure that was surveyed also likely varies by a number of factors, for example occupation and income, and is reflected in the placement on the survey scale. The pressure members of society are experiencing at this time is pressure that work related time obligations are scarce. This enhances the argument that work related economic pressure, not materialism, is the primary or most important pressure that influences the structure of the family.

#### 5.4 Question 3: Which Factor Has the Greatest Influence on Family Relationships Today?

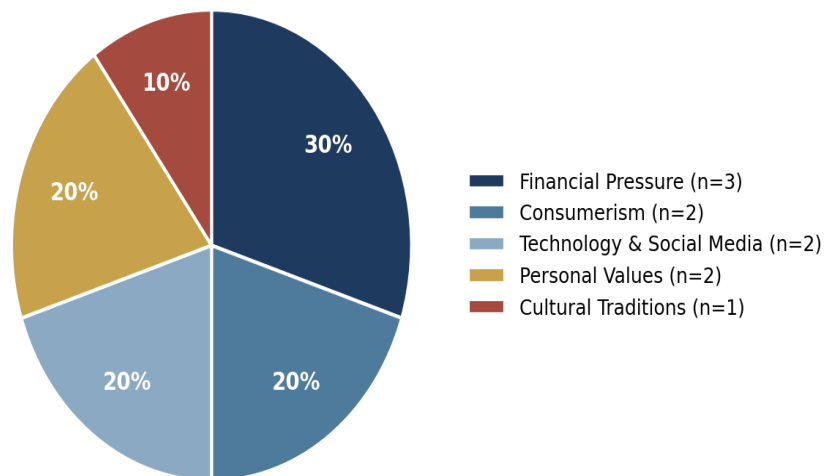
**Table**

**5**

*Factor Perceived as Most Influential on Family Relationships*

Response Category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Financial Pressure	3	30
Consumerism	2	20
Technology and Social Media	2	20
Personal Values	2	20
Cultural Traditions	1	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100</b>

**Figure 3. Greatest perceived influence on family relationships today**



*Figure 3. Factor perceived as most influential on family relationships today (N = 10).*

In the third question, five choices were supplied to respondents to identify the most important factor affecting family relationships at the present. The results show that respondents were dispersed with regard to what they identified, and no factor achieved an overall majority. The most

common choice was financial pressure, having been selected by three respondents (30%). The next most common were consumerism, technology and social media and personal values, each selected by two respondents (20%), and the remaining choice, cultural traditions, was selected by one respondent (10%).

Financial pressure was the most commonly selected choice, showing that most respondents agreed on that factor. When given the opportunity to identify the most important factor affecting family relationships, the majority of respondents identified financial constraints, as opposed to consumer demand, and as opposed to digital distractions. Therefore, it is reasonable to challenge the consumerism thesis in the context of family relationships, as well as the consumerism focus in research itself, to argue for the dominance of materialism in family relationships. This research also supports the view of the family as an institution that has less to do with the compulsions of the marketplace and more to do with the necessities that arise from earning within that marketplace.

Responses were dispersed across five categories. While less than 30% of respondents cite personal (20%) and cultural (10%) values as focal points, and while 70% of respondents cite market-related forces, the degree of market-related forces as compared to personal and cultural values exhibits the respondents' understanding of modernity, and capitalism. This analysis points to the respondents' understanding of separable pieces of capitalism. The role of technology and social media further validates growing research on digital capitalism as the frontier of market influence and mediated interactions.

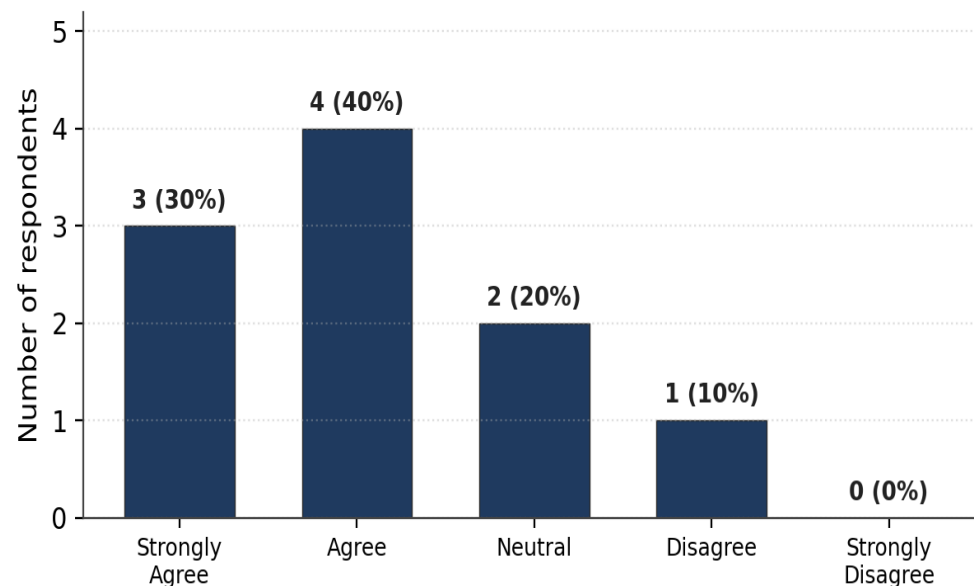
#### 5.5 Question 4: Does Consumerism Encourage Material Values Over Emotional Bonds?

##### Table

6

*Perception That Consumerism Encourages Material Values Over Emotional Bonds*

Response Category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	3	30
Agree	4	40
Neutral	2	20
Disagree	1	10
Strongly Disagree	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100</b>

**Figure 4. Consumerism encourages material values over emotional bonds**

*Figure 4. Perception that consumerism encourages material values over emotional family bonds (N = 10).*

The fourth item asked respondents to return to the attitudinal scale to determine whether respondents feel that consumerism places material values over emotional family ties. The distribution exactly matches the first item: seven (70%) respondents were in agreement or close to agreement—four (4) in agreement (3) in strong agreement—two (2) were neutral, one (1) was in disagreement (no one) was in strong disagreement. The symmetry with Question 1 tends to show that respondents think that consumerism weakens emotional family ties and agree that capitalism weakens family structures.

The respondents' high agreement with this proposition has a theoretical basis that extends further. Bauman (2003) and Hochschild (2012), and especially Illouz (2007), emphasize that in the current age, the values of the marketplace increasingly invade the most intimate areas of emotional life and fundamentally reshape emotional attachments. Respondents feel, as researchers have argued, that consumer culture and emotional life are in conflict.

According to Bourdieu there is no conflict because emotional care can be expressed through consumption, and families can care through the provision of material goods. 30% of respondents abstained on this item, getting a clear sense of this. Kastarinen et al. (2023) argue that consumption can also represent intergenerational care. The data show us that the dominant view respondents have of consumerism is that it is in conflict with emotional life. However, the minority of respondents show that they recognize the interdependence.

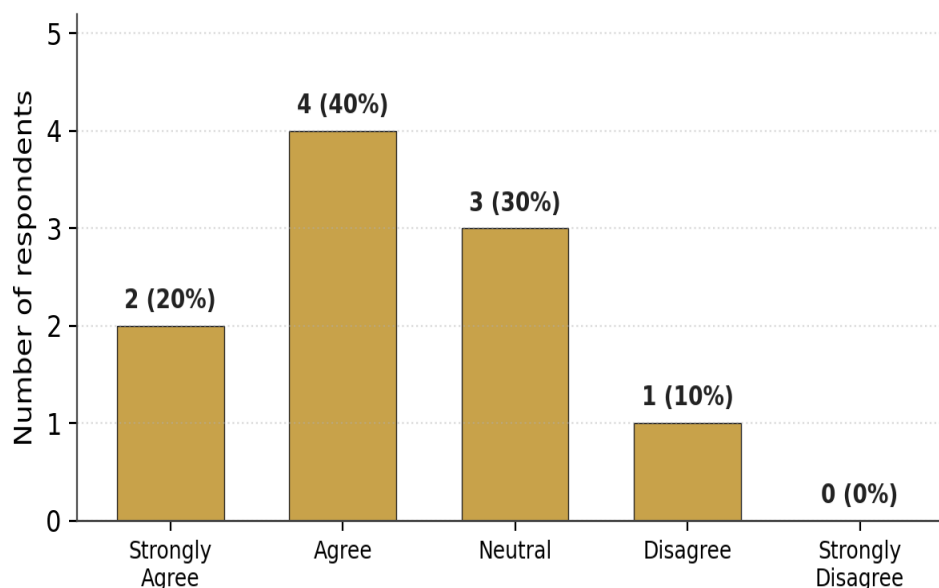
### **5.6 Question 5: Has Capitalism Weakened Traditional Family Values?**

**Table**

7

*Perception That Capitalism Has Weakened Traditional Family Values*

Response Category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	2	20
Agree	4	40
Neutral	3	30
Disagree	1	10
Strongly Disagree	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100</b>

**Figure 5. Perception that capitalism has weakened traditional family values***Figure 5. Perception that capitalism has weakened traditional family values (N = 10).*

In summary, the last item sought to establish whether respondents felt capitalism has undermined traditional family values. Six respondents, 60 percent, agreed or strongly agreed (four respondents agreed, and two respondents strongly agreed). Three respondents (30 percent) were neutral, while one respondent (10 percent) disagreed. Compared to Questions 1 and 4, there was a greater proportion of neutral respondents, and the level of affirmative endorsement was lower. However, the tendency in this case is toward agreement.

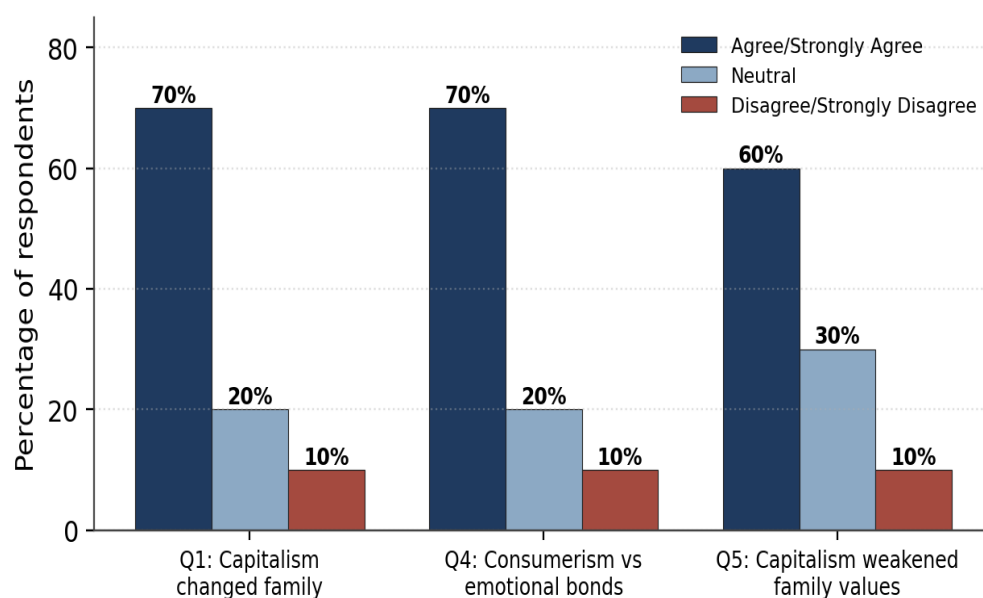
This trend represents a significant change. Respondents may prefer not to provide a clear answer to a question about a term, in this case “traditional family values,” that is value-laden and semantically vague. There may also be resistance to the idea that positive and negative evaluations of the transformation of family values, which include greater equality, more personal choice, and

more focus on personal fulfillment, are necessarily implicative of an overall negative change. Giddens (1992), for example, views the evolution of family values as positive and the deepening of democracy in family relations as positive.

The increasing neutrality of respondents in this case may be viewed as positive. This social phenomenon represents the idea that respondents have largely seen capitalism as redefining family values, and that respondents have preferred to reserve evaluation of that change in family values. This idea is consistent with Bauman (2000), the changing of family values in capitalism has simultaneously been liberating and represented loss.

### 5.7 Overall Interpretation of the Survey

**Figure 6. Comparison of attitudinal agreement across capitalism-family items**



*Figure 6. Comparison of attitudinal agreement across the three capitalism-family items (Q1, Q4, Q5).*

Analyzing the survey as a whole creates a clear, internal image. Respondents have the same opinion on three survey questions. The majority of respondents see capitalism and consumerism as having an impact on family relationships. In relation to survey question 1, 70% of respondents said capitalism impacts family relationships. In response to survey question 4, 70% of respondents said consumerism creates an overemphasis on material over emotional family relationships, and, in response to survey question 5, 60% of respondents said capitalism undermines traditional family values. Survey question 2, which asked about an intrusion of work time and financial responsibilities into family time, supports the survey respondents' linked thinking on the intrusion of work and financial responsibilities. Survey questions 3 indicates financial constraints, but

survey respondents identified a lack of family time as a consequence of market factors as the greater concern.

Respondents of the survey have a linked perception of the effects of capitalism on the family. They think time constraints, consumerism, and the changes in family values are all related. The survey respondents neutral answers, which account for 30% of the respondents to the question on family values, show that participants don't think family values have declined, which supports the alternative hypothesis (H1) and weakens the null hypothesis (H0) by showing that participants think family values have also been impacted by capitalism.



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## **Chapter 6: Discussion**

This chapter analyzes the findings in relation to the reviewed literature and the theoretical framework, considering how capitalism is understood to affect family interaction, consumer behavior, emotional relationships, traditional values, work-life balance, and financial stress. It addresses both concordance and discordance between the empirical findings and the consensus in the scholarship.

### **6.1 Capitalism and Family Interaction**

The strong resemblance of 70% of respondents believing capitalism has changed family relations and individualization theory (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002) and Bauman's (2000) liquid modernity is evidenced by Beck and Beck-Gernsheim and Bauman. Beck, Beck-Gernsheim, and Bauman revealed that the near-universal understanding that family relations have changed and thus, family relationships have less family interactions (Q2) provides a real reason to explain why family relations have changed, family relations have become individualistic: there is a lack of family time because of the family's involvement in the modern, liquid, capitalist economy. Beck's and Beck-Gernsheim's liquid modernity and capitalism revealed a lack of family time because of a lack of time to interact with family. Beck's and Beck-Gernsheim's capitalism revealed a lack of family time because of a lack of time to interact with family. Beck's and Beck-Gernsheim's liquid modernity revealed a lack of family time because of a lack of time to interact with family.

### **6.2 Capitalism and Consumer Behaviour**

The responses from the survey almost perfectly follow the critical tradition from Bauman (2003) through Hochschild (2012) to Illouz (2007). However, the survey also showed a small, resistant following. The data created a productive tension with Kastarinen et al. (2023), and in a different context, with Bourdieu (1984). These consider consumption as the medium for and the opposite of intimacy. The data show both sides of the debate, with most respondents expressing the opinion that materialism prevails over emotionalism, and there is a minority of the survey sample showing the opposite view. This suggests that the relationship between consumption and family is better theorized as ambivalent and dialectical.

### **6.3 Capitalism and Emotional Relationships**

The theme of emotional life links this survey to the scholarship on emotional labor and the commodification of care. According to Stulikova and Dawson (2023), the emotional work of the family is being framed by the growing use of market language. On the other hand, Fraser (2016) argues that capitalism lacks the care it needs to sustain itself, and structurally drains it. The respondents of this survey perceive that emotional ties give way to material values, and this is in agreement with the above authors. The results of the survey and the emotional consequences of consumption as described by Brick, and others, (2023) such as guilt, secrecy, and the need to

recalibrate relationships, show the extent to which market behavior is combined with emotionally close relationships. Despite being based on attitudes, the survey results are consistent with the empirical research.

#### **6.4 Capitalism and Traditional Values**

The softer response regarding the decline of traditional values (Q5, 60%) and the recently observed increase of neutrality requires further qualification. Most critical literature take a declensionist approach. However, the respondents' ambivalence is closer to Giddens (1992) and is constructively optimistic regarding the democratisation of intimacy, as well as Schneider and Kreyenfeld (2021), who argue for pluralism and resist the decline of family structures. Thus the data challenge the fairly straightforward argument of moral decline, and suggest respondents perceive value shifts as real and contestable. This is important to this study, and should bring some restraint when interpreting changes in family when evaluating this as an obvious loss.

#### **6.5 Work–Life Balance and Economic Pressure**

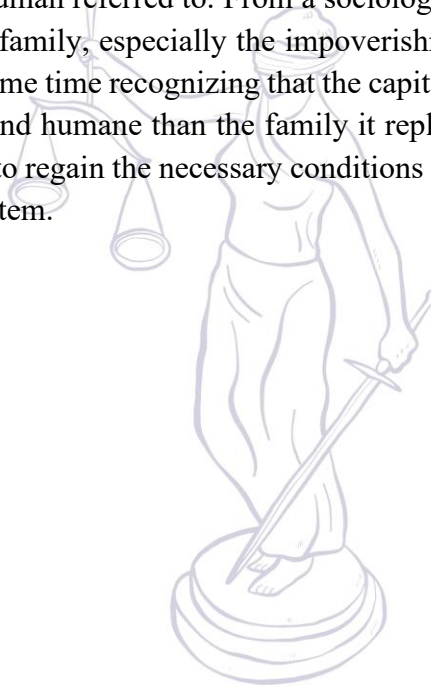
This study advances existing empirical work by featuring financial pressure and time scarcity. Regarding financial pressure, respondents selected it as the most significant individual factor (Q3). This result is complemented by the universal description of work encroaching upon family time (Q2). Taken together, these results present financial pressure as the main lived aspect of capitalist influence. We argue that these results both agree with and advance the existing work on the subject. It agrees with the Marxian and Weberian emphasis on the material and rational encroachments on the intimacies of one's life (Marx, 1867/1990; Weber, 1905/2001), and with the work–family balance research of James (2024). We argue that these results advance the work by framing the issue in respondents' terms, and that the restructuring of family life, in respondents' view, is less the result of abstract consumer wishes and more the result of the concrete dynamics of earning and controlling money under conditions of financial pressure.

#### **6.6 Points of Agreement and Contradiction**

Overall, the results support the central thesis of the literature surrounding capitalism and the restructuring of family ties. The primary contradictions relate to emphasis rather than orientation. Within some critical theories that suggest the material world triumphs, the results indicate that the influence of the economy is greater than the seduction of consumers. In the absence of decline narratives of a traditional family structure, the data present a level of ambiguity and a lack of an outright condemnation of the restructuring. Also, where intimacy is often threatened by a high level of consumerism, a large number of those surveyed, sustained by recent research, suggest that a high level of consumerism can also be a function of care. Rather than a linear restructuring of family ties and a clear affirmation of the influence of capitalism on family ties, the results support a clear affirmation of the influence of capitalism on family ties as a complex and contested restructuring.

### **Sociological Reflection**

This research demonstrates an example of the sociological principle of the market integrating itself into the organization of intimate relationships. Capitalism works by restructuring the family, rather than dissolving it. Where family ties used to connect people through a long-term commitment, modern families negotiate their relationships during the time that they have left after their work and show their concern for their relationships through consumerism. The memories of the participants of the time that they had with their families speak to the real situation: time, not money or goods, is the most scarce resource for families. The participants don't express a traditional view of nostalgia for a time of greater family bonds, because the forces that are dissolving family ties have, to a large extent, increased individual freedoms and choices. This is the liberating and losing aspect of capitalism that Bauman referred to. From a sociological perspective, we need to see the effects of capitalism on the family, especially the impoverishment of the family in terms of time and attention, while at the same time recognizing that the capitalist family is more voluntary, more negotiated, and more kind and humane than the family it replaced. The goal is not to go back to the old model of family but to regain the necessary conditions (time and security) for relationships to thrive in the capitalist system.



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## Conclusion

### Summary of Main Findings

This research aimed to analyze if and how capitalism alters family relations through its components of individualism and consumerism. This was done through a descriptive analysis of ten survey responses within the bounds of classical and contemporary sociological theory.

Through these, some major findings were discovered. There were clear responses that noted that capitalism changes traditional family relations (70%) and that consumerism prioritizes material over emotional family relations (70%). There was also a noticeable response of those that agreed with the weakening of traditional family values (60%). Every one of the respondents stated that their work and financial obligations cut time spent with their family (at least) some of the time. The most cited influence family relations was financial pressure. Overall, these results appear to support the alternative hypothesis (H1) and undermine the null hypothesis (H0) at least some of the time.

### Research Implications

The implications of these findings are multiple. Theoretically, these findings provide evidence that strengthens the individualisation and liquid-modernity theses and mitigates the most pessimistic extremes of these theses. This is particularly the case as they identify the economic and time constraints as the most concrete mechanisms of capitalist influence and the ambivalence with which ordinary people regard changes in family structures. Substantively, these findings reveal that the assumption that family disintegration equals materialism is incorrect, as it is the organisation of family life and contemporary consumer practices that are shaped by the new capitalist structures of work and advanced consumer society. This encourages the articulation and the placing of the contemporary debate on the structures of work and economic stability (or insecurity) rather than where contemporary consumer morality is located.

### Recommendations

Here, I present some suggestions. Regarding policymakers, considering the important roles of time scarcity and financial strain, we defend the need for laws that guarantee family time and reduce financial insecurity through the humane regulation of working time and provision of supports for family caregivers. This recommendation is not merely aspirational: it mirrors a live legislative debate in India. The Right to Disconnect Bill 2025, tabled in the Lok Sabha in December 2025, would give employees a legal entitlement to ignore work communications outside agreed hours, and its Statement of Objects and Reasons expressly cites the erosion of family and personal time by 'telepressure' as its justification, echoing the concerns raised by respondents in this study. [Footnote: 'What's in Supriya Sule's Right to Disconnect Bill and How Have Other Countries Tackled Work-Life Balance' *ThePrint* (7 December 2025).] That the Bill remains, as of this

writing, an unpassed private member's bill, while the four labour codes notified in November 2025 permit a twelve-hour daily work spread-over without any corresponding statutory protection for family time, suggests that Indian law has so far been more willing to regulate the material terms of work than the temporal boundary between work and family. [Footnote: Prasanna Mohanty, 'Centre Pushes for 12-Hour Work as Tycoons Call for 70-90 Hour Workweeks' *The Federal* (Chennai, 22 November 2025).] The recommendation advanced here, that policy should guarantee family time and not merely wages, therefore identifies a genuine and currently unresolved gap in Indian labour law. As for educators and family practitioners, we argue that the findings of this study will assist families in the critical development of some form of financial and media literacy that will ideally support families in the development of a reflective versus a reactive approach to consumer culture. Lastly, for families, results of the study support the development of practices that will safeguard shared, device-free family time as a precious and scarce resource. Given the exploratory nature of the study, the authors are pleased to support these various suggestions.

### **Limitations and Future Research**

The reported findings should be taken with caution. Descriptive statistics could not be computed from this study's small sample of ten participants. Convenience sampling precludes understanding of the relationship between socioeconomic status and this study's research questions. Participants' answers to the closed-ended questions used in this study reflect perceptions, not actions, and, therefore, no predictive or explanatory power can be claimed. This study should be developed further and supplemented with a more comprehensive sample and the demographic variables of interest to this study. Mixed methods with longitudinal design would be helpful to explain the variability and capture the fluidity of family structures. Cultural comparative studies with rapidly developing nations will show the interplay between structuring of capitalism and the existing kinship frameworks. Although this study is limited in scope, it is a starting point to incorporate empirical data of family structures and research the relationship and countless futures of consumption and family structures.

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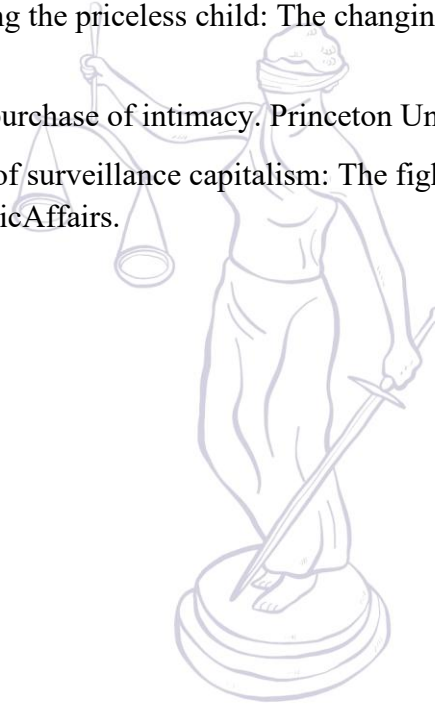
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