

# The Impact of Individualization of China on the Married Women's Family Status

## A study Based on the Comparison Between the Urban and Rural Areas in China

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### ABSTRACT

This article investigates the question of how the individualization process promotes the married women's family status in both urban and rural areas of China. Based on the individualization theories and framework identified by Beck and Yan Yunxiang, conducting quantitative research method and the factors determinant of individualization, this paper contributes to the findings that the individualization process has not only varying and dynamic effects on urban and rural married women's family status, but also the effect is distinct in China's context from that of the western world while sharing many similarities. On one hand, due to the dualistic structure system of urban and rural areas in China, significantly varying effects on family status were seen between rural and urban married women: 1) possessing above bachelor degree of education, not being a housewife, and not compromising on family-related works have significantly increased rural married women's family status; 2) having frequent social connections and being an employee or manager in the company have significantly contributed to the various aspects of increasing married women's family status in the rural case; 3) frequently working overtime led to increasing family status on both rural and urban women. On the other hand, the research reveals the distinct individualization between western countries and China in terms of married women's family status versus their income level and the attitudes towards other family members' forceful requirements.

**Keywords:** *Individualization, married women, family status, urban and rural areas in China*

### 1. BACKGROUND

It has long been a tradition in China that females possessed extremely low status either in society or in the family. Not only overall educational level was lower than that of men, but also the active social network was not allowed for women. In extreme examples, a woman's name was even not allowed to be recorded in a family genealogy only because of being a female. In general women had no chance to be educated but to live as fertility tools, helping the husbands and teaching the children (Xiang fu jiao zi). It was not until with the process of modernization and globalization has the women's overall status been upgraded to a dramatic extent. The females acquired equal education opportunities compared to that of males in which the proportion of female graduates from universities has remaining to exceed that of the male by the year 2013 <sup>[1]</sup>. Besides, a dramatic proportion of females has entered into the labor market, which boosted women's economic

independence, further ending women's power of speech among the family members <sup>[2]</sup>.

There has been a lot of discussions among the scholars, introducing the concept of "individualization" in the western world to implicate the progress of increasing women's status in China <sup>[4]</sup>. Indeed, since the economic reform and opening up, women's increasing independence on economic income and the advanced education level attributed to the reform of state-owned enterprises and restoration of "Gaokao" (The national Higher Education Entrance Examination). This contributed to women's decreasing dependence on their families and husbands, which in turn advanced women's overall status in general. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that China's individualization process differs from that of the western world to a great extent. Despite the progress over the past decades in China, there is widely-existing gender inequality in the context of women's social and family status. Unlike the western culture where

individual freedom and independence have long been admired widely, Chinese tradition has followed the Confucian culture which used to emphasize the importance of a family and community, and therefore the individuals were to contribute to the larger organization, such as family, community, and society. Significantly, the impact of such traditional culture varies between rural and urban areas in China. Urban cities have realized a rapid promotion on women's overall status with the process of modernization, while it was not necessarily the case for the most rural areas. Women in rural areas are still suffering from most of the housework, and either economic income or education level has not correspondingly improved with the modernization compared to that of city women.

Therefore, despite the efforts made by Chinese scholars to attribute the individualization theory to Chinese women, the theory of the western world is not capable to fully explain China's context particularly in terms of the varying women's status between the urban and rural areas. What is more, most recent studies regarding Chinese women's status were conducted with qualitative research methods, analyzing particular subjects which lack universal implication. Based on the quantitative research towards the factors of individualization and family status, one of the most critical motivations of this study is to analyze the status of married women in urban and rural areas in China utilizing the individualization theory, and to localize the western concept of individualization based on China's context.

## **2. PREVIOUS STUDIES AND HYPOTHESES**

### **2.1. Relative theories**

In the western world, individualization is one of the key concepts of second modernity that was defined by Beck, which is also referred to as "reflexive modernity", in which modernization is highly correlated to self-confrontation. This is an enforced modernization that corresponding to global risks, individualization, as well as cosmopolitanization [3]. As a result, individuals are forced to be unleased from previous society and interactional relationships, and are forced to be responsible for their survival [5]. Similarly, Giddens referred individualization to as an institution that can be altered flexibly, emphasizing emancipatory politics and life politics that individualization is closely correlated with. In Giddens's concept of individualization, "detraditionalization" is a significant part in which not only the west but also the other regions remaining their traditions are gradually apart from the traditions [6].

While sharing much commons with the western world, China's individualization process is different in various aspects. According to Chinese scholar Yan

Yunxiang, China's individualization is primarily triggered by "new society" which refers to social interaction among the individuals where the individuals are the representation of a certain family or a public community. Particularly, while western individualization is firmly based on cultural democracy and well-developed welfare state systems, China's individualization process is far away from enough protection and supports from the country [7]. Eventually, China's individuals had no choice but to turn back to the families and other relationships for the sake of the safety net [2]. Unlike the western world where the tradition of chasing after liberty and individualism has long been its culture, Chinese women's individualization was almost realized through promoted educational levels and political interests that were implemented by the government. While individuals in China are highly allowed to be independent and to live their own lives with the modernization process, there is an indelible impact from the family that the individuals' identities are highly affected, as a result, China's individualization is not necessarily leading to the separation of individuals [7].

### **2.2. Previous literature**

It was first in the middle of 20th century that the traditional form of family organization has been largely altered with the dramatic effort made by Chinese government. The effort was to detach the individuals' loyalty from the family organization and to put it at the national level [2]. Meanwhile, individuals have gradually "pulled out" from the traditional interaction with others. Not only the members in a community gradually recognized the importance of each other's' individual characteristics, but also the importance of individual interests has been increasingly publicized [2]. Together with the restoration of "Gaokao" that offered women equal opportunities to be educated with men, females are no more bound into the mission of being married, and the family has been altered into a selective relationship rather than an indispensable community [8]. Attributed to the increased education level, female status has raised to a great extent with the increasing recognition towards the equal ability of both gender [14]. Ministry of Education reported that, by 2015, female master's degree owners have exceeded that of males with more than 70,000 in China [9]. Unlike the women in traditional society, females in contemporary China make great efforts on career achievement and spend much time on their personal life experiences, such as traveling and social activities, which results in decreased time spent on housework of married women's, and therefore their unique family role has been transferred into dual roles facing both family and career [9].

In the urban areas, an increasing number of women have realized individualization in sense of earning money on their own instead of relying on the husbands' incomes,

and fundamentally striving for relative autonomy and liberty of "living their own life" [8]. Especially for those highly educated urban women, insisting on having their jobs to possessing enough speech power in the families is extremely crucial. Many studied women's career and education improvement towards urban women; while relatively more researches were focused on housework in the case of the rural women. In 2010, married women's average time spent on housework has dropped from 5.18 to 2.38 hours per day in rural areas compared to that of 1990's data [9]. Particularly in China's rural societies, individuals possess a stronger willingness to complete the individualization to be able to realize personal values and liberty, even though they are aware of the fact that they will be forced to face various risks of social systems [10].

Nevertheless, despite the individualization process, females as a whole are still inside the framework of traditional ideology and culture [13]. Many urban women recognized that they would partially compromise for the family and child(ren), and also accept the traditional norm of "men work in the labor market, women work inside for households (*nan zhu wai, nv zhu nei*)" [1]. Moreover, the individualization process in rural areas is much slower and harder than in urban cities. Unlike the women in urban areas, rural women possess lower education level due to "the dualistic structure system of urban and rural areas" (i.e. It is China's political system characterized by urban and rural household registration system, in which the state divides residential areas into agricultural and non-agricultural *hukou* [11]), and their time contributed to the unpaid housework exceeds compared to either that of males or urban females, and the important decisions related to the family issues are made mostly by the husbands. Even worse, the possible channels for increasing economic income provided to rural women are extremely limited [9].

Therefore, it leads to the questions that what are the specific individualization factors that led to the distinct development of family status between the urban and rural married women, and how the individualization affects Chinese married women compared to that of the western world. Conducting the factors that may attribute to the individualization (such as education level, income, and personal life experience), this study aims for exploring how and to what extent the individualization has influenced the married women's family status (such as the time spent on housework and childcare, and the power of speech among the family members), and what differences have been developed in both China's urban and rural areas [13].

### 2.3. Hypotheses

Following the research of ACWF (All-China Women's Federation) and National Bureau of Statistics, married women's family status has been studied from the

aspects of such as "time spent on housework", "decision making of personal matters", and "deciding on the important issues of the family" [9]. Additionally, both education and personal life experiment played significant roles in the process of individualization for females [1]. Therefore, in line with the aspects of individualization in the previous literature, this study particularly conducts the factors of "personal life experiment" in terms of "the time spent on personal social network", "the time spent on going to gym/yoga", and "the time spent on traveling".

The hypotheses are as follows:

- *H1. The higher education levels a married woman possesses, the higher family status is she likely to possess (where the higher family status refers to 1) less time does she spend on housework, 2) more power of speech and 3) more decision-making does she have than those with relatively lower education level, below the same).*
- *H2. The more time a married woman spends on her personal life experience, the higher family status does she likely to possess*
- *H3. The more a married woman is career-oriented, the higher family status does she likely to possess.*
- *H4. The less a married woman is family-oriented, the higher family status does she likely to possess.*

## 3. DATA AND RESEARCH METHOD

### 3.1. Data resources

The primary data for this study were collected through 451 married women in urban and rural areas of China. Participants were conducted through an online questionnaire and were randomly and unconsciously participated in the research. The conducted were questions delving into the backgrounds of the participants, the nature of their careers, as well as personal wills and possible obstacles towards the career development and the family environment.

### 3.2. Main variables and implications

Three dimensions are conducted to evaluate the family status, which includes married women's autonomous position, decision-making position, and time-use status [12]. The questions asked respectively are as follows: 1) "Who's decision is most important when deciding on whether or not having a second child?" (autonomous position); 2) "Who's speech is most powerful in your family?" (decision-making position), and 3) "Who is most responsible for housework?" (time-use status). The answers are provided in four aspects: "me"; "my husband"; "both me and my husband" and "our parents".

In terms of the individualization process, this paper includes factors including educational level, career status, wage, time spent on enjoying personal life (eg. "how often do you go for meeting friends?", "how often do you go to gym/yoga?", and "how often do you go for traveling?") which shows in Table 1, as well as the time spent on childcare and attitudes towards forced requirements from family members. In terms of the evaluation of enjoying personal life, the answers were given in five frequencies including "never", "rarely", "sometimes", "often", and "always".

As the primary interest is the factors evaluating the women's family status, binary logistic regression is implied with the values "0" and "1". In the family status evaluation, those who answer "me" for the power of speech and decision-making power are marked as "1" (i.e.

"my speech is more powerful" and "my decision on having a second child is more important"), and that of the answers for housework status is "0" (i.e. "I am responsible for most of the housework"); otherwise vice versa.

Table 1 shows the details of the women's time spent on their own life experiences. The results show that it is a common trend in which, with the increase of the frequencies, the urban married women possess higher proportions in both "social" and "traveling" life experience dimensions compared to that of rural married women. For instance, almost 30% and 25% of urban married women respectively often meet their friends and go for traveling, while merely around 17% and 5% of rural married women respectively do so.

**Table 1:** three dimensions of evaluating married women's personal life experience

Main variables	total observations		urban area		rural area	
	observation	%	observation	%	observation	%
<b>social frequency</b>						
never	21	4.66	9	4.09	12	5.19
rarely	110	24.39	27	12.27	83	35.93
sometimes	184	40.00	94	42.73	90	38.96
often	105	23.28	65	29.55	40	17.32
very often	31	6.87	25	11.36	6	2.60
<b>travel frequency</b>						
never	9	2.00	5	2.27	4	1.73
rarely	132	29.27	38	17.27	94	40.69
sometimes	213	47.23	97	44.09	116	50.22
often	66	14.63	54	24.55	12	5.19
very often	31	6.87	26	11.82	5	2.16
<b>gym/yoga frequency</b>						
never	79	17.52	49	22.27	30	12.99
rarely	130	28.82	56	28.82	74	32.03
sometimes	165	36.59	80	36.59	85	36.80
often	67	14.86	28	12.73	39	16.88
very often	10	2.22	7	3.18	3	1.30

#### 4. RESULTS

Table 2, table 3, and table 4 show the individualization factors that significantly affect either urban or rural married women's family status. For the sake of convenience, the variables insignificant for both urban and rural areas after the regression are not presented in

the table. Meanwhile, an interaction variable "work overtime\*travel" is included which indicates the interaction of "whether or not often work overtime" and "traveling frequency". This is because there is a concern of having the mutual influence of both factors since it is very possible that the person who often works overtime would have limited time available for travel.

**Table 2: the individualization factors affect married women's housework**

Housework	Urban Areas		Rural Areas	
	variables	model 1	variables	model 1
Education (below bachelor degree=0)	1.523	1.922	-1.748**	-1.862**
Housewife or working (housewife=0)	2.208	1.423	-7.758***	-7.808*
Occupation (freelance=0)				
Normal employee	-4.514**	-2.117	1.753	2.087
Manager	-4.708*	-3.191	0.510	0.165
Work overtime or not	0.548	-14.934*	4.264***	-3.164
Social frequency (never =0)	-2.993***	-3.781**	0.280	0.432
Travel frequency (never =0)	-0.246	-3.618*	-0.109	-2.530*
Agree on having more than 2 children (agree=0)	2.816*	3.879*	-1.306*	-1.080
Gym/Yoga (never=0)	-1.170**	-0.981*	-0.331	-0.195
Whether would be forced to leave job (yes=0)	-1.326	-1.871	-4.253***	-4.978***
Time spent on childcare (never=0)	-0.069	-0.006	0.706	0.903*
Work overtime*travel		5.552*		2.946*
Constant	13.979*	23.232*	4.688	9.154*
N	184	184	231	231
R <sup>2</sup>				

\* p < 0.05, \*\* p < 0.01, \*\*\* p < 0.001

**Table 3: the individualization factors affect married women's power of speech**

Power of speech	Urban Areas		Rural Areas	
	variables	model 1	variables	model 1
Education (below bachelor degree=0)	-0.109	0.394	0.681	1.281*
Work overtime or not	0.431	8.978***	3.145***	14.358***
Yearly wage (less than 50000=0)				
50000 - 120000 (yuan)	-0.382	-1.003	-0.150	0.690
Over 120000 (yuan)	-1.261	-1.928*	-3.942***	-4.342***
Social frequency (never =0)	1.019***	2.679***	1.097**	3.754***
Travel frequency (never =0)	-0.326	-0.436	-0.654	-0.958*
Agree on having more than 2 children (agree=0)	-0.154	-0.136	-0.979	-1.539*
Number of wanted child(ren)	-2.456***	-3.021***	-1.468**	-1.902**
Gym/Yoga (never=0)	-0.325	-0.373	-0.437	-0.564*
Time spent on childcare (never=0)	-0.677**	-0.694*	-0.734*	-0.826*
Abide by tradition (yes=0)	1.410	1.495	1.738**	2.303**
Work overtime*social		-2.549***		-3.584***
Constant	5.682	2.958	2.599	-4.924
N	220	220	216	216
R <sup>2</sup>				

\* p < 0.05, \*\* p < 0.01, \*\*\* p < 0.001

**Table 4: the individualization factors affect married women's decision-making power on second-child issues**

Decision making on the 2 <sup>nd</sup> child	Urban Areas		Rural Areas	
	variables		variables	model 1
Education (below bachelor degree=0)	1.133		0.843	1.007*
Work overtime or not	-0.292		1.022	9.352***
Yearly wage (less than 50000=0)				
Over 120000 (yuan)	-0.356		-1.302	-2.179*
Social frequency (never =0)	0.635*		0.328	0.244
Travel frequency (never =0)	-0.092		-0.675*	1.258
Agree on having more than 2 children (agree=0)	1.321*		-0.617	-0.738
Gym/Yoga (never=0)	-0.468*		-0.093	0.031
Time spent on childcare (never=0)	0.138		-1.094**	-1.161**
Balance between job & family (family=0)	0.288		1.597**	2.226***
Work overtime*travel				-2.888**
Constant	-3.115		3.672	0.449
N	220		218	218
R <sup>2</sup>				

\* p < 0.05, \*\* p < 0.01, \*\*\* p < 0.001

#### **4.1. The impact of individualization on women's housework**

From Table 2 can be seen that the higher "education" status (at least bachelor's degree) is significantly negatively correlated with the rural married women's housework; while the effect is not significant in the urban case. Similar negative trends also can be found in terms of "housewife or working" and "whether would be forced to leave the job", in which those who work are more likely to do less housework compared to those housewives, and those who insist to work even if being forced to quit the jobs are responsible for less housework compared to those who compromise. On the contrary, either factor shows a significant effect on rural married women.

In terms of personal-life experience, both "social frequency" and "gym/yoga frequency" presents significant effects on urban married women. The more frequently an urban female enjoys social life and personal health training, the less housework burden she has; while the situation is not significant for rural married women. In the case of the effect of the traveling frequency, both urban and rural women had a significantly negative effect on doing much housework compared to those who never travel when the interaction term (work overtime\*travel) was controlled.

Interestingly, disagreeing on the family members' requirement of having more than 2 children (i.e. "agree on having more than 2 children") gives a significantly heavier housework burden for urban married women; while that of rural women are likely to get rid of most of the housework. Also, it is worth noting that the occupation status is only significant for urban married women, in which either being a normal employee or manager in the company leads to less housework compared to those who work free instead of having a stable occupation. This implies that the married women's stable job status critically reduces their housework burden. For the rural married women, often working overtime strongly causes their heavier housework. Moreover, the housework burden increases for rural married women with the raising time they contribute to childcare.

#### **4.2. The impact of individualization on women's power of speech**

Table 3 shows that the "social frequency" has a significantly positive effect on both urban and rural married women's power of speech among the family members, in which the more a female put great attention on her social network, the more power does her speech has among her family members. Yet, "travel frequency" and "gym/yoga frequency" show few impacts on women's power of speech. Again, for the rural married

women only, 1) the positive effect of education level and 2) negative effect of disagreeing on the families' requirement of having more than 2 children, and 3) the positive effect of "abide by tradition" (i.e. women's attitudes towards the traditional views on the gender division of labor) can be seen from their speech power, which indicates 1) above bachelor degree owners possess more speech power among family members, 2) disagreeing on the families' requirement of having more than 2 children is likely to weaken their speech power, and 3) reveals that the more a rural female endorses the traditional rules, the more power of speech she possesses in her family. Meanwhile, both increasing "number of wanted child(ren)" and "time spent on childcare" describe significantly negative effects on both urban and rural married women's power of speech among family members compared to those who want no child and never spends time on childcare respectively. Surprisingly, for those yearly salary exceeds 120 thousand Yuan as a whole instead possess lower power of speech compared to the ones who earn less than 50 thousand.

#### **4.3. The impact of individualization on women's decision making on giving birth to a second child**

The most distinctive factor in this category is the effect of the "balance between job and family" (i.e. how would one balance between the career and family). For the rural married women, choosing a career instead of the family is crucial for possessing decision-making power on second child matters, although the effect is not significant for the urban married female.

Similar to the previous categories, the education level is significantly important for the rural married women to make their own decision on matters related to the second child. Similarly, often working overtime significantly embeds more decision-making power for married women as a whole. Again, the more time a rural female spends on childcare, the less power does she have on second child-related decisions, while the effect is not significant in urban case.

In terms of personal life experience, for urban married women, both "social frequency" and "gym/yoga frequency" powered women's decision on the matter of when and whether to have the second child. Even though the effect of either factor is not significant for rural women, traveling frequency significantly reduced the possibilities of rural married females' decision-making compared to those who never go for traveling.

As surprising as that of power of speech, earning more than 120 thousand Yuan each year negatively influences rural married women's possibility of holding most of the decision power on the second child issues despite the insignificant effect on the urban females. What is more, in the urban areas, those who do not agree

family's requirement of having more than 2 children possess a positively significant effect on decision-making power while this is not significant for rural areas.

#### **4.4. Overall summaries**

First of all, the rural married women's family status is significantly more affected by education level than that of urban married women. Rural married women as a whole significantly benefit from having above bachelor degree in all three aspects of family status evaluation, in which compared to those whose education status is below bachelor degree, they are not only bound to less housework but also endowed relatively more powerful speech among the family members and can have more power on second child decision-makings. Therefore, the first hypothesis (H1) of this paper is to a certain extent supported by rural married women's case.

What is more, in terms of personal life experiences, the most significant outcome was the effect of social frequency on urban married women. In all three aspects, urban married women showed critical improvement in family status with the increasing efforts made for social lives. While the effect of going for gym/yoga had unequal effects, increasing traveling frequencies have significantly weakened rural married women's both speech power and second-child related decision-making powers. In a word, the outcome reveals that the life experience factor plays a varying role for urban and rural married women, in which the urban females have experienced relatively more improvement on family status; while the effect was more controversial for rural women. Therefore, the second hypothesis (H2) is supported to a certain extent.

Besides, the career-oriented outcomes are as follows:

1) Working overtime dramatically strengthens both urban and rural married women's power of speech and rural women's decision-making power on 2nd child than those who never work overtime. Nevertheless, there is a controversial effect on the housework burden for urban and rural married women, in which often working overtime eases urban women's housework burden, while it on the other hand exacerbates rural women's. One of the possible explanations is that housework has been a part of "job" for rural married women.

2) Another unexpected outcome is that the yearly wage over 120 thousand (Yuan) leads to the significant weakening of a) the power of speech for both urban and rural married women and b) power of second child's decision-making for the rural women. In the text of the female group over 120 thousand (Yuan) of the yearly wage, the weakness of barely possessing any power in the families is significantly presented in the data analysis, while the effect is not shown for the normal/low-income population. Indeed, the fact reveals that the income level is not equally correlated to the married women's status.

Importantly, this is a contradicting fact compared to the western scenarios where the higher individualization is positively correlated to higher income and rising powers. In a word, in China's specialized individualization, higher income does not necessarily lead to improvement of power and decision-making speech.

3) For the urban married women, having stable jobs, either being normal employees or managers, significantly released their housework burden; while for the rural married women, females working instead of being full-time housewives eased their housework. In a word, stably working, in general, had increased certain aspects of family status for married women as a whole.

Overall, despite the controversial effect of income level, the positive effects of working overtime and having stable jobs on married women's family status mutually supported the third hypothesis (H3).

Last but not least, the family-oriented outcomes are as follows:

1) The increasing time spent on childcare significantly decreases a rural married female's family status in all three aspects (while only decreases urban women's power of speech). Besides, married women as a whole, the more children they want, the less speech power they have in the family.

2) Those rural married women who resist leaving the jobs even under the pressure from the families are extremely less bordered by the housework burden.

3) Disagreeing with the family's requirement on having more than 2 children significantly led to complexing and controversial outcomes in urban and rural contexts, a) releasing rural married women's housework while burdening urban women's, b) decreasing rural women's power of speech, and c) strengthens urban women's power of decision-making on second child-related issues. Reasonably, on one hand, unlike those rural women whose older children are normally responsible for certain parts of the housework, having more children for urban females necessarily leads to more housework since the urban children are more likely to be concentrated on the studies rather than the housework. On the other hand, it is in line with the individualization theory that less individualized women (those who are more likely to agree on the family requirement) possess less power of speech.

4) For the rural married women only, not compromising to the family and tradition is specifically increases their family status, which includes choosing jobs instead of the family when have to balance them both, as well as not taking traditional customs for granted (i.e. traditional thoughts of men work outside and women take care of the family). In this way, rural women are capable to have powerful speech and second child decision-making.

In summary, although disagreeing with the family's more-than-2-children requirement showed China's specific controversial individualization effect, less family-oriented women as a whole had an increasing family status which further supports the fourth hypothesis (H4).

## 5. CONCLUSION

The paper critically exposes the crucial evidence of the different effects of the individualization process between the western world and China. Yet, one of the major drawbacks of this research is that the amount of the sampling is limited to a certain extent which may lead to uneven distribution, and this is the part that could be improved in future research.

The study reveals the fact that, on one hand, the impact of individualization for married women varies in urban and rural areas of China due to "the dualistic structure system of urban and rural areas" applied by the Chinese government. The policy caused diverse education and city development resource distribution between rural and urban areas which necessarily led to unequal education and economic developments. First of all, higher education level had a significantly positive effect on increasing rural married women's family status in all aspects. Secondly, possessing a job rather than being a housewife and being a normal employee or manager eased rural and urban married female's housework burden respectively. Thirdly, working overtime increased both urban and rural married women's power of speech. Moreover, in terms of personal life experience, frequently having social contacts critically improved urban married women's family status in all aspects. Additionally, being less family-oriented (i.e. a) not spending much time on childcare, b) insisting on the workplace when forced by the family to leave the job, and c) choosing the career instead of the family when balancing the both) significantly increase rural married women's family status.

On the other hand, the individualization process differs between the western world and China. Significantly, the research introduces the fact that Chinese married women as a whole are lack speech and decision power regardless of their income level. This is China's specialized individualization that varies from that of the western world's in the sense that promoted individualization process and increasing income level do not direct to women's advanced family status. Besides, a highly individualized female who disagrees with other's opinions on having more than 2 children led to distinct family status between urban and rural areas – less housework and more decision-making power in the urban case, while more housework and less power of speech in rural case.

Despite the cause of China's dualistic structure system, the traditional culture (especially confusion culture) that has dominated thousands of years is continuously influential on Chinese as a whole. Accordingly, differing results have been seen between not only urban and rural areas but also China's and western worlds' individualization process. Hence, such factors are critically worth noting when analyzing the individualization in China's case. This is not about which individualization is in a higher priority, but is about various individualization processes that fit the diverse cultural and social background. Overall, this study enlightens the importance of possessing a critical view on the individualization process for future researches.

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