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**Master's Thesis**

**Compressed Modernity in East Asia:  
A Comparative Study on Women's Attitude Towards  
Divorce**

**August 2015**

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**International Area Studies**

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## **Abstract**

# **Compressed Modernity in East Asia: A Comparative Study on Women's Attitude Towards Divorce**

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East Asia is characterized by its spectacular economic growth. The 'Asian miracle' is a term widely known that describes this very spurt of economic development in the last 30 years. The economies of this continent developed faster than any other region in the world. Within this region, China, Japan and South Korea witnessed, as did the world, a most expeditious transformation from an agrarian society to a modern industrial one.

This highly condensed form of modernization, entailing not only economic, but also social and political transitions over a very compressed period of time as well as space has led to a social phenomenon called compressed modernity.

Unfortunately, such a rapid entry process of modernization has led to an asymmetrical pace of development where traditional and modern social values, beliefs and institutional structures coexist. The repercussions of this phenomenon can be seen in its changing family patterns that have been detrimental to the traditionally family-oriented values of East Asia.

East Asia has been showing a spike in its divorce rates, infertility rates, non-marriages, etc. It is through these trends that individualization is evident. However, despite these changes, East Asians still remain family-centered. What then can explain this rise in changing family patterns? Are these patterns in changing family structures occurring simply due to individualization? Or has compressed modernity in East Asia led to a different form of individualization? This research examines how this phenomenon of compressed (first and second) modernity has affected women's attitude towards divorce in East Asia, thereby subsequently examining their loyalty towards family.

**Keywords:** Compressed Modernity, Second Modernity, Individualization, Familialism, Individualization without Individualism, East Asia

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# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

East Asia<sup>1</sup>, a region once synonymous with the terms ‘family-centeredness’<sup>2</sup> and ‘near-universal marriage’, has been undergoing an evident change in its family patterns and structures due to which the traditional family model is becoming increasingly difficult to sustain (Chin 2012). A surge in marriage deferrals, increase in non-marriages, divorce rates, age of first marriage, drastic decline in fertility rates etc. now characterize East Asian societies. Such trends, which were also once observed in the West, have been associated with the occurrence of individualization, an attribute of late or second modernity (Beck and Grand 2010). However, even though the demographic transitions taking place in East Asia may bear resemblance to those of the West, it differs substantially in essence (Ochiai 2011) due to the distinctive path of modernization that East Asia has taken called ‘compressed modernity’<sup>3</sup>. It has given rise to the phenomenon of ‘individualization without individualism’, denoting a continued “allegiance of East Asians to family values and relations”” (Chang 2014: 37) amidst escalating symptoms of individualization.

The primary aim of this research primarily is to statistically examine this phenomenon of ‘individualization without individualism’ among East Asian

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<sup>1</sup> East Asia traditionally refers to China, Japan, Korea, and Taiwan, and more broadly it includes countries of Southeast Asia (Ochiai 2011). However, this research will predominantly deal with the countries of China, Japan and South Korea.

<sup>2</sup> Traditional East Asian societies are family-centered in different ways (Chang 2014).

<sup>3</sup> Compressed modernity was first introduced and applied to the South Korean context by Chang Kyung-Sup (1999) to describe the economic, political, social and/or cultural changes that occurred in an extremely condensed manner in respect to both time and space.

women<sup>4</sup> facing ‘familialist compressed modernity’<sup>5</sup>. In addition, it attempts to look into the influence that varying socio-cultural contexts of each society has on family-centeredness.

## 1.1 Background

East Asia describes the eastern sub-region of Asia. The major countries of East Asia, which are China, Japan, and South Korea consist of a population of approximately 1.5 billion people and is one of the most populated regions in the world. Its total GDP is about 16.37 trillion US dollars (as of the year 2014). With the exception of Japan post 1992, these countries achieved a rapid stable growth percentage, especially after the 1980s, of 6 to 8 percent.<sup>6</sup> The East Asian development has not been short of anything miraculous.

This rapid economic growth also led East Asia to undergo a highly condensed form of modernization<sup>7</sup>, experiencing a social phenomenon labeled compressed modernity (Chang 1999), “with the exception of Japan which experienced semi-

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<sup>4</sup> I take the case of women specifically since they show a greater tendency towards the phenomenon, especially across East Asia (Chang and Song 2010).

<sup>5</sup> According to Chang (2014), ‘familialist compressed modernity’ refers to the institutional decline or weakening of families, as a result of the exorbitant burdens and challenges imposed on them by compressed (first and second) modernity.

<sup>6</sup>The World Bank, World Development Indicators.2014. Retrieved from <http://data.worldbank.org/country>

<sup>7</sup> Modernization, in the context of this research, is integrally connected to Westernization. Westernization as it is both the direction for historical change as well as a contemporaneous source of inter-civilizational remaking in East Asia (Chang 2010b).

compressed modernity”<sup>8</sup>. Compressed modernity has been defined as “a civilization condition in which economic, political, social, and/or cultural changes occur in an extremely condensed manner in respect to both time and space, and in which the dynamic coexistence of mutually disparate historical and social elements leads to the construction and reconstruction of a highly complex and fluid social system” (Chang 2010b: 6). The entry of the East Asian countries into early and second modernity in such a tremendously condensed manner has created a situation where “traditions have not yet disappeared and modernity has not completely arrived” (Canlini 1995: 1) resulting in “complex and contradictory relationships between competing traditional and modern influences” (Jackson et al. 2011).

Compressed modernity is manifested in several different societal levels or units like nation, secondary organization, family, personhood, etc. (Chang 2010b). However, this research primarily focuses on the manifestation of compressed modernity at the family level in East Asia, where family has long been considered as one of the most important social institutions in East Asia. Hence, it has been intrinsically part of the modernization process witnessed by the fact that “family relations and functions have turned out to be both essential components and consequences of compressed modernity” (Chang and Song 2010: 544). East Asian families have essentially “functioned as a highly effective receptacle of compressed modernity (*apchukjeok geundaeseong* 압축적근대성壓縮的近代性) and late

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<sup>8</sup> Japan experienced a prolonged period of prosperity in the 1980s, unlike other Asian countries due to their highly compressed modernity (Ochiai 2010). Therefore, Japan experienced a less compressed version of modernity or semi-compressed modernity (Ochiai 2014)

modernity. It is as much due to the success of East Asian families as an engine of compressed modernity and late modernity as due to their failure that they have become functionally overloaded and socially risk-ridden” (Chang 2014: 37). Therefore, due to the mounting burdens imposed upon families as a result of adverse forces of second modernity on top of the burdens of compressed modernity, family relations are increasingly becoming viewed as a source of individual risk (Chang & Song 2010). This has forced inherently familialist East Asians to redefine their idea of family structure and relations, as well as individual life choices, opting for a more individualized way of life in order to avoid familial burdens or family-associated risks. Thus, the process of individualization has taken place despite the fact that individualism has not been its spiritual and cultural basis (Chang 2014). It stems out of practicality rather than an ideational change (Chang & Song 2010), suggesting that East Asians are still very much family-oriented (Chang 2014). This paradoxical phenomenon entailing ‘risk-averse individualization’<sup>9</sup> and ‘defamiliation’<sup>10</sup> is described as ‘individualization without individualism’ (Chang and Song 2010; Chang 2014), which is far more visibly apparent in the case of East Asian women.

Familial burdens are especially arduous for women due to the male-dominated family structure and relations of these societies. Consequentially, women have

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<sup>9</sup> Risk-averse individualization is the social tendency of individuals trying to minimize the family-associated risks of modern life by extending or returning to individualized stages of life (Chang 2010a: 35).

<sup>10</sup> Defamiliation is a social tendency characterized by the intentional control of the effective scope and duration of family life to reduce the familial burden of social reproduction. It does not denote a complete abandonment of family life (Chang and Song 2010)

displayed a higher propensity towards defamiliation, and have thus propelled trends such as divorce and childlessness much more critically than men. However, as there is no clear evidence that shows moral and emotional detachment of women from family (Chang & Song 2010), this growing trend does not “suggest a fundamental transition to an individualist society but rather manifest the continuing primacy of institutionalized familism and women’s attitudinal attachment to it”. Ultimately, “[South Korean] women try to reduce, postpone or remold the *effective scope of family life* because they intend to cling to it rather than desert it” (Chang and Song 2010: 546).

As aforementioned, “Individualization without individualism, particularly among women, is a broader East Asian phenomenon” (Chang and Song 2010: 541). It points to a similar pattern of demographic transitions taking place in East Asia. However, it is important to note that many scholars and researchers have argued that East Asia should not be treated as a single cultural and social entity. East Asia, unlike Europe, has never been culturally or politically unified. It is marked by cultural, historical, political, and economic diversity, one that encompasses language, religion, and family structure, to name a few (Ochiai 2011). Therefore, although East Asia has undergone a similar process of modernization, it brings to question if compressed modernity, which tends to involve ‘individualization without individualism’, is truly a phenomenon beyond the South Korean context<sup>11</sup>. And even under the supposition that ‘compressed modernity’ is indeed applicable

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<sup>11</sup> South Koreans are the most strongly family-centered (Chang and Song 2010)

to all of East Asia, it is safe to assume that phenomenon like ‘individualization without individualism’ would vary in its versions of manifestation across the different countries of East Asia (Chang 1999; Ochiai 2010). Hence, taking the case of women who display stronger symptoms of ‘individualization without individualism’, we can tentatively speculate that East Asian women may overall place the needs or welfare of the family over their own; however, the socio-cultural differences of each country will be reflected in the attitudes of women towards divorce<sup>12</sup>.

## **1.2 Aim and Methods**

Using regression analysis, the aims of this research are twofold:

1. Primarily, this research aims to statistically verify the viewpoint of ‘compressed modernity’ regarding familialism among women, a key premise of ‘individualization without individualism’ in China, Japan, and South Korea.
2. Secondly, it tries to examine the attitudes of women towards divorce to find characteristic traits that explain this phenomenon in East Asia as a whole, while simultaneously looking into those that are country-specific and distinguish one from the other.

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<sup>12</sup> I specifically take divorce, where you see more cases of women filing for divorce than men, to examine and ascertain whether East Asian women truly place family over individual since divorce is not only a personal act between two adults, but also a social and legal act, whose repercussions may extend well beyond the spouses, not only to their children, but also to the extended family and community as a whole (Cohen and Savaya 2003). Therefore, divorce is an “understandable outcome if individual contentment becomes the touchstone of what a good marriage is” (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002).

Although ‘individualization without individualism’ is critical in depicting East Asian compressed modernity, it is yet to be statistically verified. Thus, by employing a cross-national dataset to consistently compare the results of these East Asian nations, this research attempts at filling the gap between theory and statistics.

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Modernity

What is modernity? The definition of modernity has long kept sociologists preoccupied. Classical sociologists like Marx, Durkheim and Weber have been tremendously influential in laying the groundwork for modern social theories. They introduced the concepts 'traditional' and 'modern' societies (Durkheim 1984) and studied the industrial revolution in Europe demarcating the traditional society from the modern (Weber 1971). Thus, modernity is largely associated as being in opposition to tradition and signifying a break from tradition (Lyon 1994:19–21; Touraine 1995), as a "post-traditional order" (Giddens 1991: 4). "Progress, advance, development, emancipation, liberation, growth, accumulation, enlightenment, embitterment, avant-garde"(Therborn 1995: 4) are words often used to describe modern culture. Giddens (1991:1) describes modernity as, "modes of social life or organization which emerged in Europe from about the seventeenth century onwards and which subsequently became more or less worldwide in their influence". However, with the worldwide social changes that started to take place in the 1970s, new concepts of modernity started to appear, the most predominant one being 'postmodernism'.

Postmodernists believed that the social changes taking place signaled the end of modernity and entry into a new 'postmodern' world (Lyotard 1979; Harvey 1989; Jameson 1991). However, there were discrepancies in how postmodernists themselves defined the term postmodernity. In light of mounting criticism by

critics such as Rosenau<sup>13</sup>, new concepts were developed to describe these social changes. Scholars such as Bauman, Giddens and Beck redefined it ‘liquid modernity’, ‘high or late modernity’ and ‘second modernity’, respectively. These scholars, unlike Lyotard and Baudrillard who believed that modernity concluded in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, extended modernity to encompass the developments denoted by postmodernity.

## **2.2 Second Modernity**

Beck (1992) presents ‘second modernity’ as an alternative to ‘postmodernity’<sup>14</sup>, stating categorically that modernity has not vanished. Second modernity can be understood as a complex process that involves distinct historical and structural change from the previous modern society, which he refers to as ‘first modernity’- characterized by industrialization and the rise of nation-states. Interestingly, Beck labels second modernity as being reflexive since, unlike first modernity where modernization took place in a relatively straightforward way, the process of modernization is being reflected back on itself; thereby causing newly created (man-made) risks to fall upon itself, an accidental result of the side-effect of first modernity. The three major driving forces of second modernity are individualization, global risks and cosmopolitization (Beck 1992; Beck and Grande 2010; Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002).

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<sup>13</sup> Criticisms based on the difficulty in defining and understanding postmodernism (See Crook 1991:150; Bernstein, 1992:199-200; Rosenau 1992:7-19; Smart 1992:169-70) such as Rosenau (1992)

<sup>14</sup> Beck (2003) distinguishes second modernity from postmodernity stating that modernity has not vanished, and that it has actually started to modernize its own foundations.

In his work *Risk Society*, Beck (1992) describes the intentional move from an industrial society in search of prosperity and wealth to a society that is riddled with risks and hazards, one that is global in nature and all pervasive. Similar views regarding ‘manufactured uncertainties’ are also found in works of Anthony Giddens and Scott Lash like *The Consequences of Modernity* (1991) and *Modernity and Identity* (1992), respectively. Subsequently, the three sociologists jointly published the highly influential work, *Reflexive Modernization* (1994), elaborating on each one’s understanding of reflexivity. They also seem to share the same concern with the increased impact of individualization. Also mentioned earlier, global risk is a major driving force of second and reflexive modernity, which pushes states to move towards second and reflexive modernization. It brings about structural pressures that support individualization, shaking up and detaching people from their already defined structure of life, one entailing collective structures of welfare.

## **2.3 Individualization**

Beck and Giddens deem individualization to be an inevitable and unavoidable outcome in the wake of new social transformations, specifically, second modernity. Individualization, according to Beck, signifies a prominent change in relations between an individual and the society. In light of the new life-threatening risks, individuals disconnect themselves from all their social affiliations established in the industrial society, for example, family, kinship, gender, etc. and become solely

responsible for their own survival. Beck describes individualization as a process that is two-fold, consisting of “disembedding” and “re-embedding”, where the first refers to a “historically prescribed social forms and commitments in the sense of traditional contexts of dominance and support” involving “the loss of traditional security with respect to practical knowledge, faith and guiding norms” leading to “re-embedding” of completely new types of social commitments. Seen by the new manner in which relationships are formed. To elucidate, personal relationships are now entered out of person choice, “which is continued only in so far as it is thought by both parties to deliver enough satisfaction for each individual to stay within it” (Giddens 1992:58).

Therefore, Beck describes individualization as both a break from traditional society as well as a loss of collective security (Beck 1992: 128) characterized by “do-it-yourself” biographies. Other works such as *The Individualized Society* by Bauman (2000), *Risk society: towards a new modernity* as well as *Individualization: Institutionalized Individualism and its Social and Political Consequences* by Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (1992; 2001), *Reflexive Modernization* (Beck, Giddens, and Lash 1994), and *Modernity and self-identity* by Anthony Giddens (1991) have all been key works in defining this social phenomenon of individualization. Hence, given the context provided above, it has been said that one of the main explanations behind the new family structures lies in modernity (Cheal, 1991; Giddens, 1992; Morgan, 1996, 1999; Stacey, 1996).

### **2.3.1 Changing Structures and Notion of Family**

Traditionally, pre-modern family structures were seen to be bigger in size than the modern nuclear families (Young, 1975). However, some scholars have disputed the existence of this large extended family in every pre-modern society (Laslett, 1972, 1977).

This extended type of family structure changed with modernization, leading to the formation of smaller family structures called nuclear families found characteristically in modern industrial society (Parsons 1965). This stated, however, the conception of nuclear families and its relation to modernization as its by-product has been a debated topic. Some scholars claim that it has long existed before the process of modernization (Laslett 1972, 1977; Anderson, 1971) while others say that industrialization actually led to the extension rather than decrease in family size (Roberts, 1984; Anderson, 1971). However, with second modernity, these nuclear families have further disintegrated. Individualization theorists have said that family, once considered as a “community of need”, like with other personal relationships, is becoming a self-chosen, self-elected option (Beck-Gernsheim 1999).

Giddens (1992) suggests that the notion and nature of family has fundamentally changed in the recent phase of modernity. Love has become a central trend in defining pursuit of relationships, thereby generating more gender egalitarian relationships. Institutional reflexivity, which creates self-identity, has led to an increase in the life choices and patterns. Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (1995) agree

with Giddens and say that people have become less bound by familial obligations and hence have sought more “satisfying” relationships. Such trends have led to not only changes in family arrangements but also its perceived notion. Hence, the recent decades have shown a rapid rise in divorce rates, among many other consequences, seen as detrimental to family.

### **2.3.2 Impact of Modernity on Gender and Divorce**

Modernity has also impacted gender in various ways. The industrial world was seen as responsible in placing identities on individuals, particularly by creating gender based roles. Theories such as Parsons’s gender role theory defined gender identities, which were tied to division of labor in the modern nuclear family. Men were regarded as the breadwinner, while the women as the homemakers. However, with the shift to second modernity, Beck claims that such traditional values came to be replaced with the gradual process of individualization. Individualization is viewed as a determinant to the rise of the egalitarian gender ideology. This is evident through increased women’s participation in the labor market, increased level of education of women, so on and so forth. This shift in ideology is clear through Hochschild’s *The Second Shift: Working Parents and the Revolution at Home*, where women’s ideology preference was that of an ‘egalitarian woman’, who, “wants to identify with the same spheres her husband does, and to have an equal amount of power in the marriage”.

This egalitarian gender ideology, brought about by individualization rooted in modernity, is seen to have in turn propelled a decline in marital stability, causing a rise in divorce (Preston and McDonald 1979; Goldscheider and Waite 1991). Probing further into this correlation, there are various aspects of egalitarian gender ideology that may cause divorce. As mentioned above, increased women's participation in the labor market and increased level of education of women are examples of the rise in egalitarian gender ideology. In terms of women's increased participation in the labor market, while it is still a debated topic as to whether there is a clear negative correlation between the wife's employment in general and marriage stability, it is widely agreed that the wife's employment subsequently causes a restructuring of the division of household labor (Davis and Greenstein 2004), which may bring about marriage instability. Emery (2013) states that the traditional idea of men being breadwinners and women being stay-at-home mothers has changed. Not having a script outside the traditional marital setting has caused conflict between spouses. Unable to balance unconventional roles, spouses tend to choose divorce. Furthermore, Frisco and Williams (2003) claim that marriage instability is also related to the wife's views of an unequal division of household labor.

Another aspect of egalitarian gender ideology is increased level of education of women. Increase level of education of women is related to divorce, where Goode (1993) states that, in cases where legal, social, and economic costs of divorce are high, higher level of education of the woman would increase the likelihood of divorce.

## 2.4 East Asian Modernization

### 2.4.1 Modernity and East Asia

The debate on whether second modernity, or more broadly Western modernity, can be applied to non-Western societies has been widely debated among scholars. It is mainly centered on whether modern societies display the homogeneity or distinctness due to modernization. In *The Consequences of Modernity*, Giddens (1990) writes that modernity took place in the West because of two factors, which are, the modern nation-state and capitalist industrialism. Modernity became a global phenomenon, in its relatively brief history permeating non-Western cultures worldwide

During the 1960s, when the West underwent its remarkable economic growth, scholars were particularly more prone to the belief that the most advanced states would be *the* exemplary models that developing nations would follow. Scholars such as Lerner (1968: 286) defined modernization as, “ the process of social change whereby less developed societies acquire characteristics common to more developed societies”. However, scholars such as Frank (1967) and Wallerstein (1976) rejected the concept of modernization and disputed claims put forth by scholars like Lerner. They stated that these assumptions were ethno-centric and had neo-colonialist assumptions. Other critics like Eisenstadt (2000a), who had introduced the concept of ‘multiple modernities’<sup>15</sup>, also disagreed with the

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<sup>15</sup> Eisenstadt (2000a) introduced the concept of ‘multiple modernities’ to pluralize the concept of modernity to emphasize on the differences that existed in modern societies.

modernization theory stating that, in reality, there existed a lack of homogeneity in modern societies. He writes that Western modernity led to multiple patterns of organizations in society that are can be seen as modern, but differ from the Western form of modernity; a clear reference model for developing non-Western societies. Works like *Political Order in Changing Societies* and *Clash of Civilizations* by Huntington (1968; 1996) demonstrate a demand for a more flexible understanding of modernity. He argues that there needs to be at the very least a political modernity that is less rigid, and that the political differences are not between democracies and authoritarian regimes but rather governments. Similarly, in *Clash of Civilizations*, Huntington (1996) states that future clashes and conflicts would be based on religion and culture that have persisted. Beck argues that Western modernization has to be “rediscovered and understood as a specific mixture of tradition, first modernity, second modernity, and after-modernity” (Beck and Grande 2009:15). Thus, emphasizing the differences in the paths to modernization of different societies. A cosmopolitan sociology is essential in explaining modernization in non-Western societies (Beck and Grande 2010). It is seen that the East Asian case has also been prominent in debates related to multiple modernities or global modernity/modernities (Eisenstadt 2000a; Therborn 2000; Dirlik 2003, 2006).

Applying this debate more specifically to the East Asian context, Dirlik believes that global modernity is actually resulting in bringing back tradition. While Zhao (1997) believes that, in some cases, global capitalism are leading to more than just the revival of traditions but also their reinvention.

Eisenstadt takes the case of Japan<sup>16</sup> to state that Japan and the West converge in their pursuit for modernization; however, the outcomes have been distinctly different. The distinction in Japanese modernization patterns suggests that these peculiarities seen in Japan are based on something beyond even traditional cultural factors. He believes that these two models, the West and that of Japan, are essentially two separate ones (Eisenstadt 2000b). However, scholars Han and Shim (2010) believe that Beck's second modernity theory applies to the case of East Asia but displays different patterns. Furthermore, global risks, a side effect of second modernity, are even more evident in East Asia. They also observe and state that the road to second modernity within East Asia varies for each country. Such an outcome, distinguishing it from the West, is due to the compressed form of modernization in East Asia.

#### **2.4.2 Compressed Modernity**

The concept of 'compressed modernity' was first coined by Chang Kyung-Sup (1999) to describe the radical transitions taking place in contemporary South Korea characterizing the coexistence of modern and traditional elements. It is heavily based on the works of Beck (1992) dealing with second modernity and individualization. However, over the years, compressed modernity has broadly been used to explain the similar demographic changes taking place in East Asia. Scholars like Akio Tanabe and Yumiko Tokita-Tanabe (2003) show concurrent

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<sup>16</sup> The first Asian nation to undergo modernization

views to Chang, arguing that Asian societies cannot be seen as being post-traditional due to the fact that modernization co-exists with the simultaneous desire to retain traditional identities. Similarly, Chan and Lee (1995: 84) understand Hong Kong as “a novel and idiosyncratic reconfiguration of traditional and modernistic value”. According to Jackson et al. (2011), such cases show or prove the distinctiveness of overall Asian modernity. Emiko Ochiai also states that first modernity and second modernity in Asia often occur together, thereby creating complex and fluid social systems (Ochiai 2013). She clearly believes compressed modernity to be an Asian phenomenon, however, she also considers the case of Japan to be slightly different. Ochiai describes compressed modernity in Japan as ‘semi-compressed’ due to a less compressed version of modernization than its East Asian counterparts. In Beck’s words, East Asia is marked by “an active, compressed modernization driven by a developmental state (Beck and Grande 2010: 412).

### **2.4.3 Individualization in East Asia**

Modernity in East Asia evidently seems to have digressed from what was witnessed in the West, which was characterized with the process of individualization, as both a break from traditional society as well as a loss of collective security (Beck 1992: 128). Thus the ‘compressed modernity’ in East Asia has given rise to a very distinctive East Asian ‘individualization without individualism’.

In the West, individualization is viewed as a determinant to the rise of the egalitarian gender ideology, which in turn ushered in changing structures of families and women's attitude towards divorce. Whether it be the change in a restructuring of the division of household labor (Davis and Greenstein 2004) subsequently straining the marriage, or Goode's (1993) observation of a positive correlation of women's education level and divorce there is widespread agreement amongst scholars of the negative relationship shared between egalitarian gender ideology and marital stability.

Applying this to East Asia, there are similarities in the starting and end points of modernity to the West, where both societies see a rise in egalitarian gender ideology through individualization. And both undergo/are undergoing increasing levels of divorce. However they differ vastly in every other component. A study by KIHASA (2006), brought to light the unequal division of household labor that was still prevalent, regardless of whether or not the wife was working. Furthermore, Lee & Hirata (2001) found that more than half of the South Korean women give up their jobs after getting married. Brinton (2001) and Sandefur & Park (2007), correspondingly relate this to the prevalence of the traditional notion of man as the breadwinner and woman as the homemaker.

Taking a look at China, we find that China too, is suffering from increasing divorce rates. In 2006, Beijing alone had almost 50 percent divorce rate. Palmer (2007) suggests that this trend may be rooted in the simplification of the process of divorce that was introduced to China in 2003. Prior to which the process of getting

a divorce involved the couple getting first, an approval from their employers. One of the findings of Shim, Kim and Kim (2014), on comparing the three cities of Beijing, Seoul and Tokyo in relations to family risk perception, was that all three cities were undergoing both 'first' and 'second modern type' family risk perception. They go on to state that "East Asian cities share not only a high risk perception of 'the second modern' type, but also of 'the first modern' type of family risk, and that this is something which characterizes East Asian cities." (Shim, Kim and Kim 2014:265)

On the other hand, however while Ochiai (2014) agrees with Chang's theory of 'individualization without individualism' in Asia, she does emphasize the need to perceive Japan's familialism different from the rest of Asia as well. She explains that in 1979, a new welfare policy that the Japanese government undertook was rooted in familialism ('Japanese-type of welfare society'). This model of familialism, although passed off as 'traditional' by politicians at the time, was a new concept for Japan. Thus Ochiai defines it as 'traditionalization of modernity' (Ochiai 2013, Ochiai 2014). Consequently, claiming that Japan is currently undergoing 'semi-compressed modernity'.

It is quite evident that there is overwhelming information proving 'individualization without individualism. However, one of the biggest limitations to the theory of compressed modernity and its repercussion of 'individualization without individualism' in East Asia is that it is solely a theoretical model. It is yet to be statistically, quantitatively and empirically proved.

## CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Data

This research has used data from the East Asia Social Survey (EASS), which was conducted in 2006. The EASS is a biannual survey project comprising of the Chinese General Social Survey (CGSS), the Japanese General Social Survey, the Korean General Social Survey (KGSS), and the Taiwan Social Change Survey (TSCS). The 2006 module was designed “Families in East Asia” and was conducted from June to December 2006. Collection of data is done by incorporating a group of common questions into existing repeated national surveys in the four countries. All questions are given by structured interviews, although some of the data from Japan were collected by a self-administered questionnaire. Hence, the questionnaires have the same fundamental content and format. The numbers of valid responses are 3,208 in China, 2,130 in Japan, 1,605 in South Korea, and 2,102 in Taiwan. The response rates are 38.5%, 59.8%, 65.7%, and 42.0%, respectively. The datasets of Chinese, Japanese, and Korean General Social Surveys (CGSS, JGSS, and KGSS respectively), which were designed and conducted to be compatible with one another, allow for a cross-country analysis. For this research, the sample is limited to women from the specific three specific countries: China, Japan, and South Korea.

## 3.2 Dependent Variable

For this study, the ‘attitude towards divorce’ is the dependent variable. The married female respondents were asked how much they agreed or disagreed with the statements:

1. Divorce is the best solution when the marriage cannot be worked out.
2. Divorce should be avoided until children grow up.

The responses were rated on a seven-point likert-type scale ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”. For the purpose of consistency, I have reversed the scale for item 2 so that the direction of the scale moves from conservative towards progressive, as in the case of item 1. It, therefore, ranges from ‘strongly agree’ to ‘strongly disagree’. The values for Item 1 can be seen as the acceptability of divorce as an option in a factual and rational sense, and thereby a more progressive stance on divorce; whereas, item 2 focuses on the presence of young children and thereby poses questions based on family moral and ethics. It shows a more conservative stance towards divorce. Therefore, since these two items deal with different aspects of divorce, it is likely that they will interact differently with the independent variables (Kapinus and Flowers 2008). Hence, the two items are treated separately when conducting regression analysis as well as when presenting results and interpretations.

### 3.3 Independent Variable

The determinants of attitudes towards divorce consist of attitude towards gender role in family, attitude towards household division of labor, presence of young children, and marital status. The first independent variable is the ‘attitude towards gender role in family’, which is based on two items:

1. It is more important for a wife to help her husband’s career than to pursue her own career
2. A husband’s job is to earn money, a wife’s job is to look after the home and the family

The scale used is a composite score of the two items with Cronbach’s alpha of 0.75, showing good reliability. Second, ‘attitude towards division of household labor’, it is based on the statement: ‘Men ought to do more housework than they do now’. Their responses were scored on a seven-point scale ranging from ‘strongly agree’ to ‘strongly disagree’. The ‘presence of young children’<sup>17</sup> is a dummy variable is created where 1 (Yes=1) signifies that the respondent has children aged from 0 to 18<sup>18</sup>. Once children have graduated high school, they are considered as adults.

Another variable that has been included is ‘marital status’. It is made up ‘Married’,

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<sup>17</sup> Presence of young children is seen as an important variable in examining the adherence towards family as it reduces the incentive to divorce, especially among women (Chang and Song 2010).

<sup>18</sup> All three countries of China, Japan and South Korea follow a similar educational system. Children generally graduate from high school at the age of 18.

‘Widowed’, ‘Divorced’, ‘Separated, but married’, ‘Single, never married’ and ‘Cohabiting’. For ‘marital status’ the reference group is ‘divorced’. This study has treated women who are ‘cohabiting’ as ‘married’ and ‘separated, but married’ as ‘divorced’.

### **3.4 Control Variable**

The control variables are age, degree of education attainment, and employment status. The first control variable, age groups, has been divided into five groups (1=10-19, 2=20-29, 3=30-39, 4=40-49, 5=50-59, 6=60+) since sample consists of data limited to women aged from 20 to 69. This is because JGSS lacks data on those aged 19 and below while CGSS lacks data from respondents who are aged 70 and above. The reference group is 20-29.

Second, the ‘degree of educational attainment’ in this dataset was originally been divided into six categories: ‘No formal qualification’, ‘Lowest formal qualification’, ‘Above lowest qualification’, ‘Higher secondary completed’, ‘Above higher secondary level’, and ‘University degree completed’. However, the first three categories ‘No formal qualification’, ‘Lowest formal qualification’, and ‘Above lowest qualification’ have been omitted in this study since data from Japan is missing for these categories. The reference group is ‘No formal qualification’.

Lastly, ‘Employment status’ comprises of: ‘Employed-full time’, ‘Employed-part time’, ‘Self-employed’, ‘Helping family member’, ‘Unemployed’, ‘Student, school,

vocation training', 'Retired', 'Housewife,-man, home duties', 'Permanently disabled', and 'Other, not in labor force' .But for this research, employment status is constructed as a dummy variable placing the first four categories ('Employed-full time', 'Employed-part time', 'Self-employed', and 'Helping family member') under Employed-full time (Yes=1).

### **3.5 Hypothesis**

Theory of 'individualization without individualism' is built on two core assumptions: First is that this is more commonly exhibited among women; and second, that it is an East Asian phenomenon. In order to verify the first assumption, we come up with the following hypothesis:

**Hypothesis 1:** Women will be more liberal to the idea of divorce than men.

Now to examine the validity of the second assumption, we first divide the phenomenon of 'individualization without individualism' into two parts, which are family-centered attitudes and individualistic attitudes. According to Chang and Song (2010), family-orientedness among East Asian women can be seen from the fact that they place the welfare of their family over their own. Therefore, to assess this aspect of family-centeredness, we hypothesize that:

**Hypothesis 2:** Women will be display an overall conservative attitude towards divorce.

**Hypothesis 3:** Women with young children are more likely to be conservative towards the notion of divorce.

Furthermore, when comparing China, Japan, and South Korea, since each country defines family-centered in different ways (Chang 2014), it can be hypothesized that:

**Hypothesis 4:** The degree of progressiveness or conservativeness towards divorce will be different among the three countries in comparison.

As for the individualistic aspect, as previously mentioned in Chapter 2, a more egalitarian perspective on gender roles in family has led to increased conflicts between spouses and subsequently divorces (Emery 2013). Furthermore, women's perception of unequal division of household labor causes instability in a marriage (Frisco and Williams 2003). Hence, we formulate the following hypotheses:

**Hypothesis 5:** More egalitarian gender ideology regarding gender role in family, the more likely women are to be progressive in their attitude towards divorce.

**Hypothesis 6:** The women who believe that men should do more household work are more likely to be open to the idea of divorce

### **3.6 Analytical Strategy**

A quantitative research approach using ordinary least square (OLS) regression coefficient model was employed in order to verify the statistical significance between the dependent and independent variables. Regression analysis is a proficient tool to assess and infer the causal relationship between the given variables.

This study conducts the OLS regressions in two parts. The first part deals with pooled data while the second; split data (by country). The regression analysis of pooled data is done in order to verify hypothesis 1 to hypothesis 4. In the first regression, independent variables 'sex' and 'country' are added. 'Sex' is a dummy variable with two categories, 'male' and 'female' (female=1). 'Country', which is also a dummy variable, uses 'China' as the reference group, and hence China is omitted from the model. It is then followed by regression of pooled data based on attitudes of women. Also, to look more intricately into intraregional specificities, we adopt a split dataset to first focus on the attitudes towards divorce by country. Regression analysis is carried out furthermore to examine the attitudes of women in each country.

## **CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH FINDINGS**

This chapter presents the results of my analysis. It first provides descriptive statistics of the key variables used in this analysis.. The findings based on regression are divided into two first parts. The first part deals with regressions utilizing pooled dataset, while the second focuses on the split dataset divided by country.

### **4.1 Basic Information**

<Table 1>describes the basic information of the key variables used in the regression. The descriptive statistics proves that the institution of marriage is still very much thriving in East Asia. Among the Chinese, a whopping 83% is married, while Japan is 73.29% and 69.44% in Korea. Those who are divorced only account for 1.9% in China, 3.58% in Japan, and 4.27% in Korea. Also, the highest level of education seems to be the higher secondary level for all three nations. This table also reveals that a majority of the respondents actually do not have children, with 58% saying no in China, 71.41% in Japan, and 53.92% in Korea. Clearly, the detrimental trends of low fertility rate can be seen through the descriptive statistics provided below.

<Table 1>Descriptive Statistics of All Key Variables

<b>VARIABLES</b>	<b>CHINA</b>	<b>JAPAN</b>	<b>KOREA</b>
<i>N/%</i>	3,110	1,756	1,430
Male	1,401 (45.05)	786 (44.76)	642 (44.9)
Female	1,709 (54.95)	970 (55.24)	788 (55.1)
Married	2,595 (83.44)	1,287 (73.29)	993 (69.44)
Widowed	126 (4.05)	63 (3.59)	61 (4.27)
Divorced	59 (1.9)	87 (4.95)	46 (3.22)
Single	330 (10.61)	319 (18.17)	330 (23.08)
20-29	575 (18.49)	226 (12.87)	281 (19.65)
30-39	759 (24.41)	329 (18.74)	389 (27.2)
40-49	734 (23.6)	327 (18.62)	419 (29.3)
50-59	649 (20.87)	433 (24.66)	196 (13.71)
60-69	393 (12.64)	441 (25.11)	145 (10.14)
Higher Secondary	2,666 (85.72)	1,127 (64.58)	715 (50.03)
Above Higher Secondary	297 (9.55)	244 (13.98)	298 (20.85)
University	147 (4.73)	374 (21.43)	416 (29.11)
No	1,817	1,254	771

	(58.42)	(71.41)	(53.92)
Yes	1,293	502	659
	(41.58)	(28.59)	(46.08)
Not Employed	310	514	522
	(9.97)	(29.29)	(36.76)
Employed	2,799	1,241	898
	(90.03)	(70.71)	(63.24)

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## 4.2 Pooled Dataset

As mentioned previously, since the dependent variable consists of two items that are not compatible, the analysis is conducted separately in all the regressions. <Table 2> shows the results of the regression coefficients of attitude towards divorce related to all the variables in the pooled data. China is the omitted category for country, while male is omitted in sex. For age groups, the reference group is 20-29. Education level takes 'no formal education' as its reference group; 'divorced' is for marital status. A positive coefficient signifies that the given variable shows a more liberal stance towards divorce; while a negative coefficient is seen as being conservative.

The results for 'country' in this regression model, for both items of divorce, point to the fact that China is the most liberal towards divorce out of the three countries, while Korea is the most conservative. This can be inferred from the fact that Korea has a higher negative coefficient than Japan in both items.

Interestingly, no statistical significance for sex or gender is found. Age groups also show no statistical significance for the case of the item 1. However, in item 2, we see that there is significance in the age groups 40-49, 50-59, and 60-69. The negative coefficient for all three age groups shows us that, overall older generations have a more conservative attitude towards divorce than those in their 20s.

<Table2>OLS Regression Model of Pooled Data

<b>VARIABLES</b>	<b>Divorce Item 1</b>	<b>Divorce Item 2</b>
<b>COUNTRY</b>		
Japan	-0.297*** (0.0458)	-0.230*** (0.0474)
South Korea	-0.560*** (0.0499)	-0.491*** (0.0517)
<b>SEX</b>		
Female	0.0210 (0.0369)	0.0569 (0.0382)
<b>AGE GROUPS</b>		
30-39	0.0475 (0.0648)	0.0417 (0.0671)
40-49	-0.00402 (0.0672)	-0.175** (0.0695)
50-59	0.0553 (0.0755)	-0.167** (0.0781)
60-69	0.0437 (0.0839)	-0.346*** (0.0869)
<b>EDUCATION LEVEL</b>		
Above Higher Secondary	0.0836 (0.0558)	0.0527 (0.0577)
University Degree	0.0177 (0.0550)	-0.0567 (0.0570)
<b>MARITAL STATUS</b>		
Married	-0.523*** (0.102)	-0.171 (0.106)
Widowed	-0.642*** (0.136)	-0.225 (0.140)
Single	-0.465*** (0.120)	-0.160 (0.124)
<b>EMPLOYMENT</b>	0.0240 (0.0467)	-0.0138 (0.0484)
<b>YOUNG CHILD</b>	-0.0112 (0.0526)	-0.130** (0.0544)
<b>GENDER IDEOLOGY</b>	-0.0104 (0.0143)	0.230*** (0.0148)
<b>HOUSEWORK</b>	0.108*** (0.0158)	0.0721*** (0.0163)
Constant	4.285*** (0.155)	3.232*** (0.155)
Observations	6,256	6,251
R-squared	0.033	0.069

Standard errors in parentheses

\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

The table also points to statistical significance in marital status for the case of item 1, which focuses on divorce as an option for an unworkable marriage. Married, widowed, and single individuals are more conservative than those who are divorced in their attitude towards divorce. However, for the second item based on avoidance of divorce until young children grow up, there proved to be no statistical significance. Another interesting observation is that, for the variable ‘presence of young children’, there is no statistical significance in the first item. However, in the case of the second item, those who have children show statistical significance. It is exhibited by a negative coefficient, thus indicating a conservative attitude towards divorce. Furthermore, we see that the more egalitarian East Asian are, the more liberal they will be towards divorce, but this applies only in the second case (item 2). The same outcome is shown for the variable, attitude towards division of household labor.

<Table 3> depicts the regression results of women’s attitude towards divorce using the pooled dataset. <Table 3> seems to present an overall similarity to <Table 2>. However, we do see some interesting differences. Similar to the coefficients of <Table 2>, Japan and Korea seem to be more conservative than China regarding divorce. However, in item 2 of <Table 3>, we see that there is no statistical significance in the case of Japan.

<Table 3> OLS Regression Model of Pooled Data Of Women

<b>VARIABLES</b>	<b>(Item 1)</b> <b>Not Workable Marriage</b>	<b>(Item 2)</b> <b>Presence of Young Child</b>
<b>COUNTRY</b>		
Japan	-0.253*** (0.0628)	-0.0943 (0.0639)
Korea	-0.522*** (0.0684)	-0.382*** (0.0696)
<b>AGE GROUPS</b>		
30-39	0.0292 (0.0877)	-0.111 (0.0892)
40-49	-0.00211 (0.0902)	-0.441*** (0.0917)
50-59	-0.0737 (0.103)	-0.379*** (0.104)
60-69	-0.193* (0.114)	-0.668*** (0.116)
<b>EDUCATION LEVEL</b>		
Above Higher Secondary	0.00184 (0.0744)	-0.00777 (0.0758)
University Degree	-0.00580 (0.0843)	-0.0884 (0.0857)
<b>MARITAL STATUS</b>		
Married	-0.533*** (0.135)	-0.183 (0.137)
Widowed	-0.577*** (0.169)	-0.191 (0.172)
Single	-0.565*** (0.165)	-0.287* (0.168)
<b>EMPLOYMENT</b>		
	0.0163 (0.0564)	-0.0477 (0.0574)
<b>YOUNG CHILD</b>		
	-0.0132 (0.0711)	-0.146** (0.0723)
<b>GENDER IDEOLOGY</b>		
	0.000917 (0.0191)	0.282*** (0.0195)
<b>HOUSEWORK</b>		
	0.130*** (0.0218)	0.0876*** (0.0222)
Constant	4.242*** (0.206)	3.951*** (0.209)
Observations	3,445	3,443
R-squared	0.034	0.100

Standard errors in parentheses

\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

### 4.3 Split Dataset

In this section, we use split data by country to look the similarities and differences in attitudes between China, Japan, and Korea. The results of the regression are presented in four tables, two showing the overall attitudes towards divorces based on the two different items, and the remaining two showing the attitude of women specifically.

<Table 4>, which is the OLS model depicting overall attitudes in China, Japan, and Korea show that there is no significance in sex or gender in their attitudes towards divorce. However, in the variable age groups, we see very intriguing results. Japan shows a statistical significance, that too in every age group. Interestingly, unlike what Chang argues regarding compressed modernity(2010a), which states that older generations are more likely to be more conservative than younger generations towards modern values; we see, in this case, that the older the Japanese are, the more liberal they will be to towards the notion of divorce. Korea also shows an interesting outcome where only the 50s age group shows statistical significance, depicting a more liberal attitude towards divorce than those in their 20s. Marital status does not seem to be an important factor influencing divorce for the Chinese, while they do influence attitudes towards divorce in Japan and Korea. Both countries show that all the other categories are more conservative in their attitudes than those who are divorced. Employment and education seem to only be significant in the case of China. Another peculiar result spotted is that for gender ideology. It can be seen that while Japan shows that a more egalitarian ideology in regards to gender roles equates to more liberal attitudes towards divorce, as is argued by most scholars, China shows the opposite response. The more egalitarian one is signifies that they are in fact more conservative towards divorce. Also, unexpectedly, the presence of young children does not have any statistical significance. Finally, division of household labor is significant only in the cases of China and Japan.

<Table 4>OLS Model of Item 1 (by country)

<b>VARIABLES</b>	<b>Divorce is the Best Solution for Unworkable Marriage</b>		
	<b>CHINA</b>	<b>JAPAN</b>	<b>KOREA</b>
<b>SEX</b>			
Female	-0.00893 (0.0480)	0.0415 (0.0603)	0.0911 (0.104)
<b>AGE GROUPS</b>			
30-39	-0.124 (0.0843)	0.302*** (0.108)	0.231 (0.183)
40-49	-0.0943 (0.0841)	0.250** (0.115)	0.188 (0.202)
50-59	-0.117 (0.0944)	0.351*** (0.122)	0.429* (0.240)
60-69	-0.0954 (0.106)	0.538*** (0.133)	-0.240 (0.274)
<b>EDUCATION LEVEL</b>			
Above Higher Secondary	0.193** (0.0819)	0.0517 (0.0823)	-0.0611 (0.147)
University Degree	0.203* (0.115)	-0.0471 (0.0710)	0.0334 (0.120)
<b>MARITAL STATUS</b>			
Married	-0.0893 (0.170)	-0.392*** (0.126)	-1.262*** (0.270)
Widowed	-0.148 (0.206)	-0.421** (0.189)	-1.470*** (0.362)
Single	-0.123 (0.197)	-0.320** (0.152)	-0.980*** (0.316)
<b>EMPLOYMENT STATUS</b>			
	0.162** (0.0786)	0.105 (0.0674)	-0.150 (0.105)
<b>YOUNG CHILD</b>			
	0.0987 (0.0670)	-0.00865 (0.0894)	-0.228 (0.153)
<b>GENDER IDEOLOGY</b>			
	-0.0742*** (0.0212)	0.0889*** (0.0249)	0.0287 (0.0336)
<b>HOUSEWORK</b>			
	0.137*** (0.0221)	0.0540* (0.0277)	0.0438 (0.0389)
Constant	3.883*** (0.247)	3.399*** (0.229)	4.644*** (0.410)
Observations	3,109	1,733	1,414
R-squared	0.028	0.031	0.038

Standard errors in parentheses

\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

Now looking into specifically how women view divorce in the three countries, <Table 5> provides us with the regression coefficients for this. In the case of China, women in their 50s and 60s show a more conservative attitude than those in their 20s, while it is the 60s age group in Korea that shows the same attitude. Japan, again like the previous regression results, shows that, although only the 60s age group is statistically significant; it is more liberal than the 20s in their attitude towards divorce. Furthermore, Korean women overall show a more conservative attitude towards divorce judging from the negative coefficient in all categories of marital status and Korea continuing to show no statistical significance in gender ideology. Lastly, attitude towards division of household labor is seen as significant only in the case of Chinese women.

Also, gender ideology depicts the unusual patterns of China again that show a conservative attitude with rise of egalitarian views. It is hard to say why exactly this is occurring in the case of China. Hence, further research into China's individualization focusing particularly on attitude towards divorce is much needed.

<Table 5> OLS Model of Women's Attitude: Item 1 (by Country)

VARIABLES	Divorce is the best solution for unworkable marriage		
	CHINA	JAPAN	KOREA
<b>AGEGROUPS</b>			
30-39	-0.0386 (0.113)	0.127 (0.147)	0.0217 (0.252)
40-49	0.00115 (0.114)	0.145 (0.154)	-0.0783 (0.270)
50-59	-0.231* (0.129)	0.226 (0.164)	0.234 (0.327)
60-69	-0.284* (0.147)	0.372** (0.176)	-0.793** (0.361)
<b>EDUCATION LEVEL</b>			
Above Higher Secondary	0.205* (0.124)	0.000649 (0.0904)	-0.290 (0.200)
University Degree	0.225 (0.179)	-0.0806 (0.116)	-0.0528 (0.165)
<b>MARITAL STATUS</b>			
Married	0.0716 (0.247)	-0.309** (0.155)	-1.487*** (0.337)
Widowed	0.0490 (0.284)	-0.287 (0.219)	-1.414*** (0.424)
Single	-0.128 (0.291)	-0.155 (0.203)	-1.292*** (0.419)
<b>EMPLOYMENT STATUS</b>			
	0.140 (0.0926)	0.0759 (0.0809)	-0.191 (0.127)
<b>YOUNG CHILD</b>			
	0.0220 (0.0914)	0.171 (0.121)	-0.117 (0.205)
<b>GENDER IDEOLOGY</b>			
	-0.0763*** (0.0286)	0.129*** (0.0325)	0.0631 (0.0460)
<b>HOUSEWORK</b>			
	0.169*** (0.0306)	0.0302 (0.0385)	0.0306 (0.0541)
Constant	3.639*** (0.348)	3.415*** (0.296)	5.141*** (0.528)
Observations	1,709	959	777
R-squared	0.042	0.032	0.059

Standard errors in parentheses  
 \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

In the next table <see Table 6>, it shows the attitudes towards divorce based on item 2 of the dependent variable (“Divorce Should be Avoided until Children Grow up”). In this model, unlike the previous ones, we see that there is a statistical significance in gender. Women in Japan and Korea are more progressive than their male counterparts when it comes to divorce, but Chinese women are more conservative. As for age groups in China, with increase in age groups we see that people are more conservative in their attitudes towards divorce. Japan shows that only the 30s and 50s are statistically significant. They also have positive coefficients indicating that these groups are more liberal than the 20s. The presence of young children seems to only be a factor affecting attitudes towards divorce in the case of Korea again. Gender ideology shows that the more egalitarian one’s viewpoint is, the more progressive they are towards divorce. This applies to all three countries in this model, unlike the previous regression where China showed the opposite outcome. Also, Korea demonstrates statistical significance in its attitude towards household division of labor along with China.

<Table 7> focuses on women’s attitude towards divorce based on the statement: ‘Divorce should be avoided until children grow up’. We see that in this model, age groups are not only statistically significant in the case of China but also in Korea. Women in their 40s, 50s, and 60s are more conservative, with the 60s being the most conservative; this is also true for China. Furthermore, marital status shows significance among Japanese women, where married and single women are more conservative than divorced women.

<Table 6>OLS Model of Item 2 (by Country)

<b>VARIABLES</b>	<b>Divorce should be avoided until children grow up</b>		
	<b>CHINA</b>	<b>JAPAN</b>	<b>KOREA</b>
<b>SEX</b>			
Female	-0.0812* (0.0486)	0.219*** (0.0678)	0.218** (0.106)
<b>AGEGROUPS</b>			
30-39	-0.135 (0.0854)	0.294** (0.121)	0.301 (0.188)
40-49	-0.266*** (0.0852)	0.184 (0.129)	-0.0826 (0.207)
50-59	-0.371*** (0.0956)	0.351** (0.137)	-0.0822 (0.246)
60-69	-0.512*** (0.107)	0.151 (0.150)	-0.346 (0.281)
<b>EDUCATION LEVEL</b>			
Above Higher Secondary	0.129 (0.0829)	-0.0835 (0.0927)	-0.0367 (0.151)
University Degree	0.0885 (0.116)	-0.0811 (0.0799)	-0.0474 (0.123)
<b>MARITAL STATUS</b>			
Married	-0.0195 (0.172)	-0.217 (0.141)	-0.225 (0.277)
Widowed	-0.114 (0.209)	-0.144 (0.213)	-0.269 (0.371)
Single	-0.115 (0.200)	-0.208 (0.171)	0.0974 (0.324)
<b>EMPLOYMENT STATUS</b>			
	-0.0746 (0.0796)	0.105 (0.0759)	0.0445 (0.108)
<b>YOUNG CHILD</b>			
	-0.0919 (0.0678)	-0.00224 (0.101)	-0.262* (0.157)
<b>GENDER IDEOLOGY</b>			
	0.207*** (0.0215)	0.206*** (0.0281)	0.240*** (0.0345)
<b>HOUSEWORK</b>			
	0.0944*** (0.0224)	0.0326 (0.0312)	0.0668* (0.0399)
Constant	3.320*** (0.227)	2.702*** (0.258)	2.542*** (0.408)
Observations	3,109	1,730	1,412
R-squared	0.067	0.052	0.081

Standard errors in parentheses  
 \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

<Table 7> OLS Model of Women's Attitude: Item 2 (by Country)

VARIABLES	Divorce should be avoided until children grow up		
	CHINA	JAPAN	KOREA
<b>AGEGROUPS</b>			
30-39	-0.252** (0.112)	0.259 (0.169)	-0.0707 (0.251)
40-49	-0.430*** (0.114)	-0.00153 (0.177)	-0.691** (0.268)
50-59	-0.484*** (0.128)	0.194 (0.189)	-0.598* (0.326)
60-69	-0.632*** (0.146)	-0.168 (0.203)	-1.195*** (0.360)
<b>EDUCATION LEVEL</b>			
Above Higher Secondary	-0.0352 (0.123)	-0.0300 (0.104)	-0.109 (0.199)
University Degree	0.115 (0.177)	-0.124 (0.134)	-0.155 (0.165)
<b>MARITAL STATUS</b>			
Married	0.163 (0.245)	-0.322* (0.178)	-0.259 (0.336)
Widowed	0.00264 (0.282)	-0.0845 (0.253)	-0.118 (0.422)
Single	0.0743 (0.289)	-0.436* (0.234)	-0.246 (0.417)
<b>EMPLOYMENT STATUS</b>			
	-0.118 (0.0920)	-0.0150 (0.0935)	0.0169 (0.127)
<b>YOUNG CHILD</b>			
	-0.0652 (0.0908)	-0.0343 (0.139)	-0.321 (0.204)
<b>GENDER IDEOLOGY</b>			
	0.235*** (0.0284)	0.247*** (0.0375)	0.308*** (0.0459)
<b>HOUSEWORK</b>			
	0.125*** (0.0304)	-0.0147 (0.0443)	0.128** (0.0539)
Constant	3.011*** (0.305)	3.251*** (0.329)	2.934*** (0.494)
Observations	1,709	957	777
R-squared	0.096	0.075	0.139

Standard errors in parentheses  
 \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

## CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

The regression analysis conducted leads to several interesting and intriguing findings. Through the results we were able to that there exist distinct differences between the three East Asian societies in their attitudes towards divorce. There also exists a division in perceptions within a society when divided on the basis on gender. However, ironically, there also seems to be an overall similarity in attitudes across East Asia, thereby supporting the argument put forward by Chang Kyung-Sup (2014) regarding ‘individualization without individualism’.

By using the pooled dataset in the first part of regression analysis, we could see the overall attitude towards divorce in East Asia. China was overall more progressive in its attitude towards divorce in comparison to Japan and Korea. China seems to depict a more liberal outlook due to the fact that its modernity can be seen as being far more compressed than even that of South Korea<sup>19</sup> (Chang, 2010b). When looking into the sex or gender variable, we had hypothesized (see hypothesis 1) that women would be more liberal or progressive in their attitude towards divorce in comparison to men across East Asia. However, for both items, the sex variable was insignificant; thereby, refuting hypothesis 1. However, we do see significance in sex in <Table 6>, which shows us attitudes towards divorce based on item 2 by country. It interestingly shows us that women from Japan and Korea are more progressive in their attitude towards divorce based on the statement “divorce

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<sup>19</sup> Chang (2010b) asserts that China underwent a economic development process that resulted in the creation a society with socialist and capitalist elements, making it even more compressive that that of South Korea.

should be avoided until children grow up”, but women are more conservative than men in the case of China; explaining why the sex or gender variable has been found insignificant in the other tables.

The regressions using pooled dataset also provides with the information that there has been trends in individualization. It shows that women who are more egalitarian in their attitudes about gender role tend to be more liberal. Additionally, a similar response is found for women’s attitude towards household division of labor (seen in Table 3). However, we can see from <Table 3> that, with the exception of these two variables, all other variables such as marital status and age groups that are statistically significant point to the fact that women overall still tend to be conservative in their attitude towards divorce. This proves the second hypothesis, which states, “Women will display an overall conservative attitude towards divorce” as well as hypothesis 5 and 6, which states that a more egalitarian perspective of gender roles in family would cause women to be more open to the idea of divorce and women who want a fair division of household labor will be more liberal in their attitudes towards divorce, respectively. Furthermore, hypothesis 3 which states “Women with young children are more likely to be conservative towards the notion of divorce” is shown to be true or correct in item 2 <Table 2> and <Table 3> as well. The presence of young children has an impact on how individuals view divorce.

In the second part of the regression analysis, attitudes towards divorce are assessed by country. <Table 4> and <Table 6> show a very interesting phenomenon in

Japan, that is related to its age groups variable. Unlike what Chang has argued regarding age<sup>20</sup> (2010a), people in Japan seem to be showing a more liberal attitude in older age groups. This unique trait exhibited only by Japan proves the argument put forth by Ochiai (2014) who writes about Japan's similar yet distinct path to second modernity, called semi-compressed. Japan's modernization, which took place much before that of Korea or China, only started taking a different direction from the West since the 1970s. Due to "traditionalization of modernity", which took place from 1970s onwards, traditional values were emphasized upon again and promoted heavily by the government. Thus, it can be said that the older generation which experienced modernization first hand tend to be more liberal in their attitudes towards modern values, while the younger generations post-1970s have been influenced by the "traditionalization of modernity".

Therefore, we can clearly see that each country has country-specific difference in attitudes due to its particular socio-cultural and political context. This brings us to the next hypothesis. Hypothesis 4 states that there would be a difference in family-centeredness reflect through attitude towards divorce in the three countries. Besides the phenomenon just explained above, we notice that South Koreans seem to be the most family-centered; another point mentioned by Chang and Song (2010). They showed the most conservative attitude when divorce involved the presence of young children out of the three countries.

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<sup>20</sup> There is a intergenerational gap in attitudes towards modern and traditional values where older generation tend to be more conservative (Chang, 2010a)

Hence, it can be said that variations in responses to the burdens of compressed (first and second) modernity can be seen as the result of country-specific socio-economic development. However, as a whole, it is a phenomenon that competently explains the social phenomenon that East Asia is currently undergoing.

## CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

### 6.1 Summary

The theory of ‘compressed modernity’ has gained immense popularity worldwide. It has helped define the sociological phenomenon that is taking place in contemporary East Asia due to the process of modernization. There has been a lot of debate on whether the Western concept of modernization can be applied to the East Asian context. And since the concept of compressed modernity is heavily based on the theoretical framework of Beck’s second modernity, it brings to question if compressed modernity can actually be applied to countries such as China, Korea and Japan simultaneously, regardless of the fact that they all have distinct modernization paths and cultures

East Asia, of recent, has been riddled with worries of incredibly low fertility rates, rapid rise in divorce rates along with decline in marriages; a region that has been traditionally been rooted in family-centeredness. Why have the same changes in family patterns have been occurring in throughout East Asia despite their socio-cultural and economic differences? Chang (2014) states that compressed modernity is the root cause of this converging trends in East Asia.

The East Asian process of modernization is quite different from that of the West. One sees that family values have still managed to prevail amidst outcomes that can be seen as individualization, unlike what happened in Europe and North America.

‘Individualization without individualism’ is what describes this very paradoxical world which shows the coexistence of familialism and individualism. This development can be attributed to a very compressed form of modernization that took place in East Asia.

In order to verify the phenomenon statistically across the East Asian nations, I conducted a regression analysis using the EASS database from 2006. Through the statistical analysis it was possible to confirm an overriding commonality in conservative attitudes towards divorce in East Asia amid the presence of modern values such as egalitarian ideology, thereby verifying this phenomenon of individualization without individualism, and more broadly compressed modernity. Hence, “it is not individualism but familialism that is causing the current demographic and family changes in East Asia” (Ochiai 2011: 219). The reason of the pervasiveness of familialism in East Asia is not solely or predominantly cultural factors; rather, it is compressed modernity (Ochiai 2011).

## **6.2 Limitations and Implications**

This analysis is mainly based on the EASS database from 2006. Although this database allowed for a consistent comparative research, it lacks credibility on the basis of present day relevance, especially in the context of the rapidly transforming societies of East Asia. Therefore, this research the fact that this data is from nine years ago proves to be a limitation in understanding the current trends or attitudes

of East Asians as well as being able to confirm if this phenomenon of individualization without individualism has persisted in East Asia.

Furthermore, since the study focuses on solely divorce and women, although a subject that truly needs more research and study, it may be a narrower approach in understanding the broader concept of individualization without individualism. In addition, as it has been pointed out by Chang and Song(2010), the use of data from EASS is limited in providing a longitudinal study of a process like women's individualization without individualism. It has further been mentioned that there exists an inherent "limitation in probing the much more qualitative issue of people's life orientation" (Chang and Song: 549). Hence, further quantitative study in this field based on a newer dataset as well as spanning over a longer period of time is in dire need.

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초록

# 동아시아의 압축 근대성: 여성들의 이혼에 관한 태도 비교연구

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동아시아권은 전례가 없는 성장률을 자랑한다. 아시아의 기적이라는 용어가 사용될 정도로 지난 30년간 급속도로 성장했다. 아시아 지역의 경제 규모는 타 지역에 비해서 더 빠른 성장을 보였다. 중국, 일본과 한국은 아시아 지역에서 대표적으로 농촌 사회에서 산업 사회로의 빠른 전이를 경험했다.

경제뿐만 아니라 사회와 정치의 단기적 다변화와 같은 압축적인 현대화를 압축근대성이라고 일컫는다. 그러나 이런 단기간 성장은 현대와 과거 사회의 가치, 신념과 체재의 혼란을 초래했다. 더욱 구체적으로 전통 가정 구조의 변화가 과거 전통적인 가치를 파괴하는 현상을 보인다.

현재 동아시아권에서 이혼, 불임, 미혼 인구의 증가를 엿볼 수 있다. 동시에 이 지역은 아직도 가정적인 가치를 버리지 않은 채 과거와 현재가 공존하고 있다. 가정 구조의 변화를 어떻게 분석할 수 있는가? 단순히 개인주의로 인한 변화라고 볼 수 있는가? 아니면 압축적 근대성라는 현상으로 인해 동아시아권은 또 다른 형태의 개인주의를 나타내고 있는 것인가? 본 논문은 압축 성장이 이혼에 대한 여성의 인식 변화를 어떤 형태로 가져왔는지를 살펴봄으로써 여성층의 가정에 대한 충성도를 분석하고자 한다.