Dear Edward, Sham, and Jing Jie,

Thank you very much for your comprehensive and informative presentation last Monday. The discussion was structured well with a good introduction covering some of the key concepts from the textbook and the supplementary articles. The discussion on the family (Edward), religion (Sham), and the nation-state (Jing Jie) allowed the team to cover key issues in each of the topics under the Institutions theme. For me, the best of the presentation is at the end when you addressed the tutorial discussion questions and responded to the questions from the audience. Overall, it was an interesting presentation which invited a good discussion and further enriched our knowledge about the family, religion, and the nation-state.

Moving on, the presenters should have taken some effort to expand from the course materials. In most parts, the scripts merely repeat those already covered in the lectures. The presentation slides are also too wordy with no photos, videos, or illustrations to provide a variety of ways in presenting your ideas. Adding a class activity will also attract more interest and invite more participation from the audience. Lastly, not reading too much from your notes (for most presenters) will help make your presentation more engaging. I understand that this can be challenging. However, the more effort that you take to speak directly and engage your audience will help in making your presentation more impactful.

Please refrain from sharing this feedback with your classmates so as not to influence their presentation. Keeping this information to yourself will also not put you in a disadvantaged position since you did not receive this kind of input before your presentation. On top of this, I will provide a summative feedback to everyone at the end of the semester after all the groups are done with their reports. Please let me know if you have any questions about this preliminary feedback.

Cheers!

Institutions

https://tinyurl.com/TD2Institution

What is a social institution

- Stable pattern of social interaction to establish social order and preserve basic social values

- Operates autonomously

- Self-perpetuating

- Great influence

Family

- Household
    - Physical and socio-economic units of individuals who live together
    - Nuclear family, extended family, collective household
- Kinship
    - Pattern of relationships that connects an individual to others through consanguinity and affinity
    - Primary, Secondary, Tertiary, Fictive kins, Marriage
- Function
    - Regulates sexual activity
    - Reproduction
    - Economic cooperation
    - Primary Socialisation
    - Care and emotional Support
    - Confer Status, maintaining and fostering social divisions
- Gender Inequality
    - Oppression through domestic labour
    - Oppression through sexuality/reproduction

End of the Family

- Individualism

    - Love marriage

    - Single child families

- Decline of parental authority

- Other institutions

Joy of Cooking? (Bowen, et. al. 2014)

- Current solution to obesity is for the family to eat healthy home cooked food

- Notion pushed by food celebrities that home cooked food should be healthy, easy to prepare and joyous to prepare

- Some parents also long for the nostalgia of growing and eating their own food together

BUT "emerging standard is a tasty illusion, one that is moralistic, and rather elitist, instead of a realistic vision of cooking today." p25

Obstacle 1: Gendered Labour

- Traditional Division of Labour
    - Good mother = "intense devotion to children" + "home-cooked meals have become a hallmark of good mothering" + "expected to produce elaborate meals cooked from scratch"
    - Additional burden for mothers who have to work, child rearing is their "second shift"
        - Low income -> unpredictable shift work schedule (Wanda & Leanne)
            - "Cooking and eating where often catch-as-catch-can"
        - Middle income -> regular work (Greely)
            - Still feel they lack time to cook the way they are expected (from scratch)
            - Prefer to spend time interacting with family instead
            - Frustrating
- Mothers also try to cook around the family's preference instead of their own
    - Gender and age affects the food being prepared at home (Sandy)

Obstacle 2: Costs

- Lacking proper kitchen equipment (Flora, Claudia)

    - Home cooking has an expectation that kitchens and dining spaces are equipped and safe

- Healthy home cooked food popularised by media (fresh and organic) are more expensive and have a shorter shelf life

    - Unaffordable for even the middle class

    - Preserved food last much longer -> important for many without reliable transportation

Religion

- A social institution that binds people together through a system of beliefs and practices that are based on some sacred or supernatural realm

Essential characteristics of Religion:

- G - Group (community of worshippers)

- O - Observances (rituals and celebrations)

- D - Divine (belief in a sacred power)

End of Religion

The Rise of Fundamentalism

- Fundamentalism is a social movement that advocates for strict adherence to the core of teachings and early traditions of a religious belief

Religious Pluralism

- Refers to the social and political condition wherein every individual in a religiously diverse society has the freedom, safety, and rights to practice or even to practice a religion

Religious individualization

- Refers to the greater agency accorded to each person in choosing a religious group and in crafting their own religious life

Yoga and Rebirth in america:
asian religions are here to stay (Cadge and Bender 2003)

- Religious individuality

    - A greater agency accorded to each person in choosing a religious group and in crafting their own religious life

    - Shift from religiosity (organizations) to spirituality (individuals)

- Growing Popularity of Yoga and Asian Religions in America

- Influence of globalization

- Yoga as an alternative to the materialism and consumerism of mode Western culture

Implications

Practices becoming less traditional as they spread to different parts of American Society

- "The option to teach yoga and other disciplines as both fitness and as devotional practice makes Asian religions available to a more varied American audience than ever before. But it also shows how practices considered religious by teachers may not be considered so by students" p48

- "Recent controversies in the national yoga community about the "authenticity" of new forms of yoga which downplay meditation (including "hot" or Bikram yoga and "power" yoga) point to the currently unsettled meaning of these practices. T'ai-chi, qigong, and various forms of meditation with roots in Asian traditions are undergoing similar transformations from religious to secular devotions as they are introduced to the national mainstream as part of Americans' quest for health and fitness" p 48

Religions are here to stay

- **Taking on new forms and expressions**

- "The increased popularity and acceptance of alternative medicine nonetheless introduces Americans to Eastern ideas of spirituality and health, even if taught by acupuncturists and Ayurvedic healers" p 50

- E.g. TCM, Acupuncture

Nation State

Nation state: independent political entity that rules over a community of people who live within a define territory

Function:

- Country's largest employer
- Regulates businesses and peoples entry into jobs
- Make decisions on resource allocation

Theories of the Nation State

Nation and Nationalism

-   Functionalist approach on the rise of nationalism

Imagined Communities

-   Product of modernisation, where members of the community rarely know each other

Mapping the Nation

-   Demarcation of state boundaries serves as a political tool to claim to social and physical domains

End of the Nation State

Digital revolution and the End of the Nation State

- Technology as a primary driver of social change

Globalisation and the End of the Nation State

- Decline in sovereignty of Nation State

Resilience and Resurgence

- Emergence of new nation states and its central role in shaping the lives of the people

Consuming Rice, Branding The Nation (Chi 2014)

Nation Branding: Application of marketing strategies to individual countries to create and promote a distinct image and reputation to serve national goals and interests (Anholt, 2003)

- Rise of culinary tourism in Asia, Rice as a staple and identity marker for asians.
- Sociologist Priscilla Parkhurst Ferguson has described "culinary nationalism," which Michaela DeSoucey terms "gastronationalism." Food and cuisine, they argue, are tied to locality, place, and community, and become markers of national identity and nationhood. p53
- Rice is being transformed from a mundane everyday staple to a food that conveys national distinction. It is precisely this ability to represent the local while embracing the national that makes rice a quintessential element in a country's national tourist program and image. p54
- Rice is heavily featured in many different cuisines, local food cuisine helps foster national identity by "confirming dominant narratives and collective popular representations of nationhood" p55

Identity Cards? / NRIC

1. Type of identification document - being "seen"/"approved" by the state as a legal resident

2. Colour of identity card (Green - 11b, Blue - PR, Blue Green - Work Permit, Pink - Singaporean Citizen)

3. Information on the card: race, gender, address, bloodtype (removed in 2002)

4. Proof of residence/identity (authentication)

Beyond its practical purpose, what are the meanings that people have bestowed on it?

- Categorising people

    - Exclusion / inclusion based on type of identity card

    - Economic: Attracting foreign talents/workers (hire with work permit)

        https://www.pacificprime.sg/blog/guide-singapore-work-permits-s-pass-and-employment-pass/

    - Education

        - difference in grants given based on identity

    - Political: Policies catered to various groups/categories (EIP)

Does it promote "alternative and complementary techniques" (Cadge and Bender 2003) on how family, religious, economic, political and other institutional objectives can be achieved?

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3. What does the object tell us about the social or cultural influence of that particular social institution?

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Explore how it can be espousing a "moralistic or elitist vision" (Bowen, et. al. 2014) or is focusing on projecting a specific image through branding (Chi 2014).

- Specific image through branding
    - Freedom/Privileges for NSFs taken away as national security is prioritised
    - **Collective > Individual** (asian society)
    - projecting a specific image through branding as a national duty rite of passage
    - Conscription as a social leveller
        - shared experiences/responsibility foster cohesiveness
        - moralistic vision that Singapore is founded on meritocracy
        https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Journals/Military-Review/English-Edition-Archives/March-April-2017/ART-004/
- Elitist vision
    - Sight differences in citizenship (PR vs citizen), differing attitudes towards the nation and what it means to be a singaporean.
    - Cohesiveness and social harmony

Thank You