**Ron’s notes**

**October 22, 2018**

This week you will be working with three articles that discuss particular meaning systems. In one case it is beliefs about women in China, in another beliefs about families in Europe and India, and in the third beliefs about health in Africa. Recall that one idea of culture is that it reflects shared meaning systems, that is, shared systems of beliefs about people and their psychological attributes. Look in these articles for examples of shared meanings, but also consider where these meanings come from and how they are maintained. And consider, too, the methods that the psychologists use in these studies of culture.

**Chen article**

Connections to other articles in the course

 Gjerde – feminism as an agentic force

 Fivush – social construction, coconstruction

 Globalization material coming up in later weeks

 An indigenous Chinese feminism

Important gender issues in China

 What are the systems of meanings (belief and value systems relevant to the issues?

 Gender stereotypes

 Work-family conflict

Liúshǒu women

Domestic violence

China’s one-child policy

A bit of Chinese history to begin

Traditional beliefs regarding women and their sudden change through social policies about 1950

 Reversion after the cultural revolution

Contemporary Psychology organized with natural sciences and not attentive to gender perspectives.

Many of the concerns expressed, and the study of them, very similar to American work

 Portrayal of women in advertising and in textbooks

 Women working the second shift

Some professions more suitable for men, others for women

 Compare to Hanley’s “invisible wall”

Individual-based vs a family-based work ethic

 Self benefit vs self sacrifice for the family

Why does this difference of interpretation matter?

 How work-family conflict is experienced

 Personality characteristic – maintaining harmonious atmosphere within family, respect

Law on Prevention and Suppression of Domestic Violence

 Belief that these are private matters

 The anticipated new legislation is now in place

Cultural resistance to abandoning the preference for male children

 Imposition

 Education

 Unanticipated side effects

 Labour issues with maternity leave provisions, for example

Beliefs about caring for the elderly – will these change?

Feminism – a bourgeois ideology, diversion from class struggle?

 Tie of Chinese feminism to nationalistic and socialistic revolution (belief systems)

“Women’s experiences always exist in a social context.”

 Indigenous significance of rural women, left-behind women, second-wives, etc.

 Psychological work can’t just be an implementation of Western psychology paradigms

The following are some slides and web pages that touch on various aspects of the material discussed in the Chen article:

 [PowerPoint slides for a presentation on women in modern china](https://www.macalester.edu/~ping/files/others/women_in_modern_china.pdf)

[Article from The Asia Foundation on China’s domestic violence law](http://asiafoundation.org/2016/01/20/chinas-first-law-against-domestic-violence-its-no-longer-a-private-matter/)

[Al Jazeera article on effects of ending China’s one-child policy](http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2017/01/child-policy-affected-china-170129130503972.html)

[Fincher, L. H. (2018). *Betraying big brother: The feminist awakening in China.* London: Verso.](https://www.versobooks.com/books/2863-betraying-big-brother)

[Yun, S. (October 11, 2018). Diary. *London Review of Books. 40*(19), 46-47.](https://www.lrb.co.uk/v40/n19/-shengyun/diary) Sheng Yun describes Chinese attitudes towards marriage, particularly beliefs about the ideal woman for marriage and the problems this belief creates for both women and men.

**Mayer article** (pages 64-67)

Greenfield’s postulate, [David Bakan’s concept of communion and agency](https://www.library.yorku.ca/find/Record/566108)

“compatability of autonomy and relatedness in individual selves”

Family experience is also in relation to a social context – “ecological and cultural contexts”

 Orientation: Collectivism/individualism, Urban/rural

 Structure: Nuclear/extended families, High/low fertility

Three ideal-typical family models (with respect to material matters, emotional matters)

 Independence – western cultures

 (total) interdependence – collectivist, low-affluence cultures

 Emotional (psychological) interdependence – collectivist, higher-affluence cultures

 Modernization

Key idea: Personal autonomy can rise while emotional closeness remains strong

Kagitcibasi’s interest in education and cognitive development in Turkish children

Western rationality (economic modernization) without the loss of relationship orientation

A study of three cultures (Germany, Turkey, India) and two generations (mothers & their adolescent children)

Forms (mechanisms) of cultural transmission:

vertical, horizontal, oblique

 zeitgeist – shared context such as in mass media

 Fivush, Rogoff

Five hypotheses, all verified in the study through questionnaires and factor analysis

 Validation of the three family models

 Predictions of models that best fit Germany, Turkey, and India

 Generational tendency is towards independence

 Within Turkey and India, independence is associated with urban higher SES

 Family models of children is related to those of parents

**Adams article**

Could look at Adams’ stories as examples of beliefs about illness in different cultures, BUT

 Experience of illness is grounded in “constructions of reality”

“Selfways” – beliefs, cultural models and social representations that “afford and promote” particular experience of social reality

He is criticizing mainstream scientific approaches for not recognizing that they, too, are based in **constructions** of reality – not just a “simple reflection of objective reality”

An overly individualistic account

 Atomistic worldview

 Treating belief as a “thin layer of interpretation” vs. giving it a “constitutive role”

 Note his references to “constitutive role of belief”

 … to “cultural grounding of experience”

“ontological experience” of connection to people, places, and spiritual forces

Three examples

 Personal enemies who engage in sabotage

 Genital shrinking panic

 Vaccine contamination

In each case, ask what are the shared meanings and practices within the culture that give credibility to these examples.

Also ask how do the interpretations of Westerners show a Western construction of reality, as opposed to a knowledge of objective truth (Turning the lens)

Notice how Adams uses the term “imposed etic”

Notice how Adams uses the idea of appropriating culturally available concepts

Science is culturally grounded; there is no “objective ‘view from nowhere’”

 Scientific imperialism in the explanation of local experience

Nomothetic, idiographic approaches

The following web page is a serious science article about the genital shrinking phenomenon described by Adams & Salter. Even though the article cites research by Adams, I am pretty sure that Adams would be upset about several aspects of this article. I suggest that you read through it after reading the Adams article and see how many of the problems he describes can be found on the web page.

 [Live Science article on genital shrinking panic](http://www.livescience.com/28015-penis-snatching-panics-koro.html)