Introduction: So, without further ado, I'd like to introduce our speaker for this afternoon, Dr. Chunyan Song received her BA in 1997 in English and Literature from Beijing Language and Cultural University. She received both her MA and her PhD in Sociology from Arizona State University. Her teaching and research interest include immigration, demography, sociology and education, Asian-American experience, interethnic contacts, international education, sociology and family, and women working family. She has published several articles and peer reviewed journals on some of these areas and she's also given many presentations in different contexts including recently presentations on food and children that we're going to talk about today. She has two current research projects: A joint research project with three other scholars on social and cultural factors on child feeding practices among preschool aged children and her second project is a joint research project on the academic performance of immigrant children using the New Immigrant Survey. This afternoon, she will be speaking on Feeding China's Little Emperors in the Age of Globalization, so please join me in welcoming Dr. Song.

Dr. Chunyan Song: All right. Thank you, Sarah. From the introduction you could tell that this topic that I'm going to cover this afternoon is going to be a new one that I have just started a few years ago, two years ago from now. Since 2009, I started the new project on my research looking at child feeding practices and comparing the American child feeding practices with child feeding practice in Japan and also in China.
We also have a collaborator that we might have data that is going to be collected from Germany, so it's going to be very interesting. And so, this afternoon, I'm going to share with you some of the preliminary findings from the data that we collected in China back in 2009 and also in summer 2011, only a few months ago actually, right before I came here. I was running STS statistic analysis like crazy because I want to show you some of the findings from the newest data addition that we did. And first of all, I want to talk a little bit about why actually I picked this subject, so I'm going to move on to the next slide.
Here is a picture of my two children. I know I recognize a few of you and you probably already know, I have two kids and my daughter is, yeah, just turned 7 years old and she's in second grade right now. My son is 4 years old and so, I was born in China and I actually grew up in China until I was 25 years old and then came here for graduate school. So I was eating Chinese food, eating something different compared to the food that I consider American food before I took on the project. And then I get married to a vegetarian Irish, Scottish, American husband and he is vegetarian. Vegetarian is not completely absurd subject for Chinese but definitely it has been a very challenging experience to negotiate with my husband what to feed our two beautiful kids, what’s the best way to feed them. And when I was doing those research about my own children and I start to think about some of the sociological perspective, you know, that I learned as a sociologist and try to understand why we eat the way we eat. And if we cannot understand why we eat the way we eat or what type of food actually we choose why actually we are doing that. It is sometimes just pretty hard to change the way we eat, at least for me. I have to know why. I have to figure out exactly, but living in the US probably you already figured out, there’s just so many different philosophies about food, about nutrition, about diet, there's raw food, there's vegetarian, and even with vegetarian, there are vegans. They are vegetarians who eat shrimp, eat turkey, but not something else, who eat seafood, not something else. There are also people who do not eat dairy or eat dairy or eat this and that and so it's easy to get really lost.
So in 2009, I started to think about the subject seriously as a research topic and I talked with a nutrition professor here on campus, Dr. Keiko Goto and she’s originally from Japan and also another professor from the Nutrition Department which is Julie Schnieder. All three of us have young children and we share something, you know, really we feel motivated about and we kind of decided to take on this subject and to look into what are some of the social and cultural factors that affect our food choice and also affect the way we eat, the way we eat because Americans do eat differently. All right, so I'm going to move on to the next one.
Since the 1960s, if you look at the global diet, not only in America, but worldwide, the world population has gone through a dramatic shift in the diet that we eat and consume. And we are heading to the direction of eating more processed food either because the lifestyle we have, we do not have time to prepare everything from, you know, from scratch and also we're heading to the direction of eating more sugary food, food that do not really give us much nutritional values, no vitamin, no, you know, mineral stuff and the result of this shift in global diet is the global obesity issues. Today, according to the World Health Organization, there are about 44 million obese children in the world and among the 44 million, 35 million of the 44 live in developing worlds, which could be largely due to the fact that McDonald's is being introduced to other countries, every corner of the world. Actually, all the major fast food chains such as McDonald's, Kentucky Fried Chicken, they are making more profit outside the US now than in the US. McDonald's food is also viewed something different elsewhere as compared to the US. In the US, although it's already widely known that fast food is not good for you, although sometimes we all tend to drive through, though we know it's bad, right? But elsewhere McDonald's food could be viewed as food from a rich country, food resembles civilization because the burger that, you know, sold somewhere else in a third world country cost just as much as here in the US. It's very expensive and people would sometimes tend to think more expensive foods are better.
So anyway, so I want to also show you a map that I got from the World Health Organization. This is the map from, I believe, is 2005, this is the most recent data showing the obesity rate across the globe here. The darker the color, the shade, means the higher rate of obesity of its population and as you can probably already tell, America here, has the darkest shade which means 30 to 40 percent of Americans adult population are considered obese and compared to the two research site that we are collecting data from, which is Japan and China, as you could tell, they are among the leanest nations in the world, so far, right, so far. And with obesity between zero to 5 percent, I believe for Japan and China which is about around 2 percent. My father who has visited me several times and in Chico and he used to try to, you know, try to tell a joke. He said, one of the biggest reason I want to come to America is as soon as I land on, you know, land at the airport in San Francisco, I'm no longer considered fat.

He was not very big, but you know in China, he's considered kind of heavy, but as soon as he gets to San Francisco, he's no longer one of the, you know, the heavy duty guys. So, this is how serious we are here and that also shows that, you know, if we can look at other countries or other culture, look at how they feed their people especially how they feed the next generation and what are some of the factors that contribute to the way that their children then probably we can learn from them and also we can learn from the lesson we have in America. By the way, the current generation of American children under age 18 is the first generation that is expected to live shorter than their parent's generation. This is the first time that we ever actually have a generation that is going to live shorter than their parents because of all the house-related problems due to those obesity issues. But anyway, so I'm going to move on to the next one.
So, let's go ahead and talk about the children from China. I call them China's little emperors and because they are little emperors or little princesses and China has a huge population. Does anyone know what the population size is in China? 1.6, 1.5 billion? For a country with 1.5 billion people, that's a lot of people. In Chico, you enjoy your personal space, you can enjoy the park, but in a lot of countries where population density is a huge problem and that can create a lot of problem, so since the end of 1970s and early 1980s, China started to implement a very strict family planning policy, so most of the children living in the east coast, along the coastline in China, were the most densely populated regions in China, are single children, single children in the family but there's also a misunderstanding. There are many children in China who also have siblings that's because if you belong to ethnic minority, you can have more than one child. If you live in regions where you have to use a telescope, you know, to see your neighbor, you can have more than one, sometimes as many as you want because we do not have to worry about population density at all. But 90 percent of China's 1.3 billion or 1.5 billion people live along the narrow coastal area and that's where most of the problem that, you know, China has to deal with population density. So most of the kids you see in China are going to be single child. And in China, they have about 260, 260 million children under the age 18, which is 1/5 of the world's total children population.
So, when talking about the Chinese little emperors, actually there are a lot little emperors there, a lot of little princesses. And why they actually the term, the metaphor, little emperor, that's because when you have only one child, they're going to be treated like little emperors, right? They carry the family name and they're the only little baby that you're going to have and then you have four grandparents, two parents, all of those attention just focused on only one child. Some of the scholars refer to this as the 4-2-1 syndrome, refers to the fact that some of the little emperors might be a little bit spoiled. I will share with you some of the child feeding practice that I observed on those little emperors, not only we have 4 grandparents but we also have nannies, you know, baby sitters, trying to chase, you know, a little toddler to feed the baby down the hallway or something.
And the generation of China's little emperors grew up in a different time from their parent's generation, from their grandparents' generation. China was extremely a poor country until the 1980s when they started the economic reform and I think actually in the 1970s, China actually was ranked pretty low according to the UN's GDP, whatever, ranking was kind of the poorest countries and when China started to implement the one-child family planning policy meanwhile, they also started to implement the economic reform and the economic reform as you could tell from the graph here from the 1980s, early 1980, all the way to 2000, 2011 and China has been growing pretty fast economy wise and the average GDP gross for China in the past 20 to 30 decades is around 13 to 14, 15 percent. Do you know what the average gross rate for the US was during the same time? Six, I think it's probably three I heard, yeah, 3 percent. And so, what does this mean to the life of the people who live during this economic boom? What does it mean to the children who grew up during the economic boom or the single children who grew up during the economic bloom? On one hand, the lifestyle of people changed. People got busier. There are more, you know, more ways to make money. There are more ways to make more money and so the parents might get busier and when you have a busy life, you tend to buy more processed or semi-processed food because it's easier, more convenient. And also it means the parents have more money to spend on their children and on the food and food is one thing and toys, all the other things that you can buy for the children. According to a survey that is done in Beijing China, the capital of China in the early 1990s, and Chinese children decide 70 percent of a family's budget, so how much the parents actually spend their money around their kid's decision, 70 percent of the family budget will be decided by the child's need.
And compared to a typical American families, the America and the kid only could decide around 30 to 40 percent of the family's budget, so this is how, you know, what the difference between the Chinese little emperors and the American little emperors. And meanwhile, the Chinese children also live in an age that is a global, you know, a global economy expansion age, most of the top corporations, you know, the food corporations like formula companies and diaper companies, fast food chains, all moved their business to China and it's hard to walk two blocks in Beijing without actually seeing a McDonald's. And at the beginning, you know, people especially working class parents, tend to view McDonald's food as something like, you know, rich people food because it's more expensive and it's cleaner, always have a clean toilet and bathroom and as a result, it is also considered necessary introduction to western culture or to high class or, you know, a higher class, social class culture if you bring your kids to eat in McDonald's. McDonald's although it's a fast food chain, but it's never fast. If you want to eat in China, you always have to wait in line because it's just so popular. So, let's move to the next one. So, as a sociologist, I start to think about why we actually eat this way, how long China is able to actually maintain the low obesity rate that actually has been seen in the last hundreds of years. And by the way, there are also research evidence, strong evidence suggesting the obesity rate among Chinese children is growing really fast in the last few decades and I forgot exactly the statistics, but they started to have boot camps, summer camps for obese children, so that shows it's a serious problem.
So from a sociological point of view, the way we eat are decided by many, many different factors that beyond our own individual’s choice. And here is the beautiful framework from a sociologist, Flora and that’s one of their articles looking at what actually, you know, affect our choice on food. And also how healthy we are. So we are mainly affected by two different things. The food we eat, the calories we intake and the calories we burn. These are considered the physical activities. These two are affected by all those factors that are in our environment, in our physical, social, political environment and among those environments, it could be political, political capital, you can just think of it as political factors. What is the regulation, government regulation on food, what type of food could be sold at school or could be sold, you know, in a grocery store and how do they decide where to get the food. And social capital is a very interesting concept. This is one of them. I’m going to focus on today. Social capital really refers to the social network, who you socialize with, where do you actually get the information about healthy choice from, is it from media, does the government actually provide professional advice, or are we getting it from professionals, those are the social capital. And human capital refers to the education level you have, the occupation that you have because we tend to socialize with people that we see more often. If you get a college degree, your friends probably are more likely also are college educated people. You work at the university and you tend to socialize with professors or with your own classmates and as a result and your choices here will be affected by your human capital here.
There are also cultural capitals here. Cultural capital really is the idea of the way we look at the world. Cultural capital refers to your thinking, the way you look at things because there are many, many different ideas about food. Of course, the cultural capital could also be affected by many of the factors here, so let's move on. The other ones we couldn't really measure in our study, so it's going to be for the future, so let's move on to the next one.
And on top of that, another sociology theory that looks at, you know, its relevance to food is symbolic interaction theory and everything in our society or around us carries a set of symbols. Food also has symbolic meanings, symbolic meanings. And frequently or consciously, unconsciously we tend to use food to distinguish, to use as a social marker to distinguish between us and them. If they eat dog then they are Koreans and they are not us. They are not normal. We also use food to define who are normal and who are not normal. They are vegans. They must be hippies, right? So it's those types of things. We also unconsciously tend to label certain food with social class. Brown rice used to be viewed as lower cost social class food and because the refined rice is hard to get. Only the rich people could afford to eat the white rice and so now, of course, everyone knows brown rice is good for you and also, there's certain food that are considered rich people food. McDonald's, I think certain countries are considered as rich people food. If you can buy a burger, you must have a lot of money. If you can drink Coke that means you can afford it that also means you must have a lot of money. Having a lot of money actually in a lot country's culture is considered as a good thing. As a result, the food is also considered a good thing and constantly we also use food as a way to accept others or to be accepted, to win the trust of people. If you go to someone's house and it's sometimes rude to turn down offers if they give you something they want you to try. If you go to a foreign country, if you want to win the trust of the people, it is usually, you know, actually you should try to food. Meanwhile for immigrant population for example immigrant population when they settle down in America and if they still only eat their food that are not really considered a mainstream by the whole society, they're considered as someone who refuse to assimilate into the American culture, so there are a lot of type of things that are going on behind
food.
Personally when I first came to America I tend to, you know, regard pizza, sandwiches, cheese, dairy, and milk as American food. I would never consider myself as someone who was too stubborn and refused to assimilate to a culture. Once you get there, you need to merge yourself into the culture. I was eating too much pizza and all of those other bad foods and I didn't know that the American food culture is more diversified than the way that the media portrayed it outside of the U.S. And then meanwhile the food also is a socialization process when we eat and we socialize with each other. Actually the word companion is derived from the Latin word, bread. When you break bread with each other is you have companionship. Here, how many times do you go to a restaurant or when you eat at the cafeteria and you see individuals eating their lunch themselves? How many times do you eat lunch by yourself? Anyone? I ate lunch by myself today. And, you know, a lot of cultures in a lot of countries, it is very rare when you to go to a restaurant to see only one person eat by themselves. Eating is always social, always social. And here in America, because people have different lifestyle, different schedules, we--in the university for example we tend to maximize, we want to maximize the use of the facility that's why different people have different schedules, so the classrooms were always used. Capitalism, right, is all about efficiency. As a result, we have lunch breaks at different times. People have different schedules. You rarely see your roommates even. It's hard to come up with a common time to sit down for lunch. Not only we do not eat together, but also we go bowling, some people go bowling by themselves. There's a book written by Sociology Professor from Harvard, the title is called Bowling Alone. Have you seen anyone bowling alone by themselves? This is a typical characteristic of how industrialization and capitalism actually deteriorate human relationship. Eating should be a social process. You should not
be eating by yourself.
Okay, all right, so let's move on to our study. So, I'll give you a quick overview of why I actually choose the subject and what are some of the sociological guidelines that we are following and this is our--actually, the two step that we already accomplished. We want to--because food is still a relatively a new subject within sociology and people tend to think food is only a nutrition subject. As you could tell, food is not just about nutrition, it is also about sociology. And so, because very little had been done on the subject, so we decided to start our research project with a qualitative approach, so in 2009--2010, summer 2010, we collected data.

We conducted 50 interviews in each of the three countries in the broad project. We conducted interviewers with caregivers of preschool-aged children in Chico and we also conducted interviewers in Nanjing, China and we also had an international student who went back to Japan during the summer and she conducted interviews for us in Japan, so we have qualities of interviews from three countries back in 2010. Based on the data that we collected on the interviews and we designed their survey questionnaire and so now we knew, you know, what are the general ideas out there. So in 2011, a few months ago, during the summer break, I got a small grant towards the data collection in China. So I went to China and I collected 500 questionnaires among caregivers of preschool-aged to second grade-aged children. A perfect age for my kids, so that is a learning curve for me too, and we choose this age group because usually, you know, kids are weaned at age 1 or 2 and then they start to explore all the food and really the type of food you offer to kids at this early stage really will decide their taste, you know, their choice later in life and we collected 300 questionnaire in Beijing which is the capital of China, that's a really big city and for comparison purposes, we also collected 200 questionnaire from [inaudible], China, which is
my hometown and it is a much smaller city compared to Beijing. The population there is a lot different from the population in Beijing.
So I’m going to quickly show you a map to show where the two cities are. So, this is the map of China. This is Beijing, the capital here and my hometown is somewhere around here. It's a small city with only 10 million people and it's considered to be too small to be on the map here. Ten million, yes. Anyway, so the data collection was pretty interesting and I want to show you a few photos.
This picture was taken from a school that is actually in my hometown, the small town with only 10 million people and this is considered a very low class, a bad school. The school is located in a village that is being urbanized as you could tell from some of the buildings being built, being urbanized and as you could tell, the yard of the school is just concrete cement. There is no green grass at all. This picture was taken during the recess. The only thing they could do was basketball and some of the girls were sitting under the shade in the tree there. And most of the kids who attend this school are either kids from the village or kids of migrant workers who moved to that area to do manual labor. So I have another picture to show you here from the school.
And I took a picture of a few kids. As you could tell, although most of the kids are kind of lean and this kid definitely is a little bit chubby.
And I also have a few pictures that my sister just forwarded me last week for the purpose of this presentation. I forgot to, you know, take some pictures at the preschool we visited and this is the way that kids in Chinese preschool eat. Most of the Chinese preschools unlike American preschools, they provide hot lunch, not only hot lunch, hot three meals a day. Most women in China also work full time, so kids at start, you know, at preschool age, 3 years old, they attend preschool full time, so which is usually 7:30 until 4:30 in the evening time and the school provides hot breakfast, lunch and early dinner before they leave and also two snacks and this is the way they eat. And parents do not have to pack their lunch. It is such a pain to pack lunch, right? And also most of the kids just throw it away and all the wrapping and everything get into the garbage dump. It's such a bad thing for the environmental and all of the bowls are metal and they have an on-site kitchen. I'm not sure whether this is breakfast or lunch by the way, but the kids are eating dumplings with vegetables and meat inside and here is a more, you know, zoomed view of the thing is celery. I took a deep look and it's celery that they eat and here's some cabbage inside the dumpling. This is my sister's little boy.
So I want to share with you some of the preliminary findings about what we actually found from the schools. Here's the brief view about what really is culture capital, and what culture capital measures. Culture capital, defined by the sociologist Bourdieu, refers to the culture practice and norms that determine how we see the world, how to explain what happens (Bourdieu, 1977; Flora and Gillespie, 2009).

- **Beneficial culture–specific food**: animal organs, warm water
- **Not suitable culture–specific food**: too much prunes, food with strong tastes, etc

And from our Chinese data, both qualitative and quantitative data, we find there's a unique characteristics from the Chinese data compared to the US data and Japan data and Chinese caregivers are more likely to use temperature of food. In America, we tend to think temperature of food doesn't matter, but more than several Chinese parents or caregivers actually emphasize cold water is bad or cold food is bad. Warm water is good. Grandma said, I always carry a little thermos with warm water inside, so can give to the grandkid. And another is animal organs. In America, we do not eat animal organs or not much at all and that's because, we can't afford to, right and also, there are some studies or science saying it's not good for you, but in the Chinese culture, they strongly believe that some of these specific animal organs will be specifically beneficial for you if you need something. For example, if the kids wants to have a good eyesight, you need to eat fish eye. If you want to have something else, you need to eat that or eat a fish head you will be smart, something like that.
And so, there's still a very strong prevalence of traditional belief either superstition or maybe there's some scientific evidence behind it. And when we ask them, you know, what type of food are not suitable and some of the culture, you know, specific items come up with like too much prunes are not very good, not good. I don't why. I guess too much of everything is not good. Food with strong tastes are not suitable for kids and this is, you know, but when I ask American caregivers and moms in Chico, they tend to say, oh, you know, say processed food is not good, food with too much sugar, food with too much fat. They tend to emphasize specific, how do you say, terminology, nutritional terminology, rather than Chinese caregivers emphasize an item, so that's something we find. So, let's move on to the next.
In our survey, this is the survey. I'm still cleaning the data, so those tables are very preliminary, so one of the questions we asked whether they agree or strongly agree Chinese food is an important part of your culture, of my culture because if you strongly identify with your food or link your food with your culture identity that can help you to protect you from the invasion of McDonald's or Kentucky Fried Chicken.

And so this is the distribution based on the cases that we have already entered into the data about 300 cases. So as you could tell, the majority of the Chinese caregivers overwhelmingly either agree or strongly agree that Chinese food is an important part of their culture. It defines who they are.
We also asked whether they believe Chinese food is the best for Chinese people’s health because some people do believe genes and race define what type of food you can tolerate a little bit more or what type of food will work best for you. This is also overwhelming like the majority of them, this is 50 percent, this is about 20 percent, so about 70 percent either agree or strongly agree that Chinese food is the best for them, for their health.
So, let's look at another one and this is an interesting question we asked whether the physical or genetic differences among different racial ethnic groups decide what type of food, you know, fit you or fit, you know, people's health and the majority still said, yes. It will be interesting to see what Americans think after we collect data from America from, yeah, Northern California specifically. So, let's move to the next one.
And this is the question we want to measure whether the belief, the link between social class and food, actually people do believe food from rich countries or rich culture are also better. This is a very interesting, actually, finding, although I thought that Chinese caregivers might tend to view western food as better, more nutritious, the kids need to drink cow milk or need to eat yogurt, but as you could tell that about 80 percent of the caregivers either strongly disagree or disagree about food from rich countries are better, so they do not buy that. Okay, let's move on to the next one.
This is the interesting thing, although they do not think food from Western countries or from richer countries are better, nutritionally better, but they also think that eating western food is a good and necessary cultural exposure for the children, so taking the kids to the McDonald’s is the one way to introduce their kids to America or to the American culture and they either agree or strongly agree there's about a combined I think at least one-third of the caregivers who think though.
So, the next thing we try to look at is social capital. How the social network actually contribute to the caregiver's knowledge of the way they feed our children.
We try to measure where they get the information, where they get the information about what is good, what is bad and we also hypothesize that social class is linked to social capital or to the source of information you get about food, so basically your education, your job will help to decide your social network, who you socialize with, what type of moms, what type of people you socialize and then meanwhile we also are governed by the media, what the media and the TV and the magazines, all the other things tell us which is good, which is not, which is not good and they’re all linked together and in the interviews that we collected in Chico, most of the moms or the caregivers identify the professionals either pediatrician or doctors or the internet as the primary source of information that it get guidelines about how to feed their kids.
But in the China data, this is the sentence we asked. I get most of the information and skills on child feeding from family and friends as you could tell, this is about 58 then plus, less than 10 so about close to about 70 percent of the Chinese caregivers tend to actually identify the source information as family and friends as people. They have people face-to-face interactions rather than relying on professionals. That could mean that in China, there's a weak, you know, how do they say, the government did not actually have a strong supply of those official channels to get nutritional information and it could also mean in America that we're less social than people from other culture.
This is interesting, social capital also, for family wise, also means the family structure that we have. Who are the people living in the family? In most cultures, nuclear family is becoming the norm, but in a lot of other cultures when you have younger children and you also tend to have multi-generation families and this is from the Chinese data. This data applies to only the first and second grade kids and because we're still claiming data and about 17.3 percent of the kids in the data says they also grandparents living with them because we are collecting data in Northern California right now, so we do not have a data from the US to compare, but I would probably anticipate the proportion of grandparents living with their grandkids is going to be much, much lower compared to here. And later I will show you actually another chart about why actually having grandparents living with you matters about, you know, child feeding. So, let's move on to the next one.
We asked them during mealtime at home, my children or my child eat mostly at the table with the family. This is from the China data, this shows about let's see, 45 percent then about 50 percent, 95 percent of the respondents said either agree or strongly agree, actually the majority, 50 percent, half of the respondent say strongly agree, they sit down at mealtime together as a family. How many times actually I sit down with my kids during mealtime at home. Well, it’s getting better. It’s very hard. It’s very hard when you have to be the only one to do the cooking, do the cleaning, do the, you know, supervision and washing hands and everything, it's much harder. And when you have help, when you have grandparents living with you, or when you have other relatives living with you it’s much easier and even in the Chico data that we conducted, the quality interview, the face-to-face interview with the moms, the people who actually have more people living in the house tend to sit down, eat meals together more often than if you are a single parent or if you are just two parents one child or another siblings which is much younger, so that shows family structure is really important to the socialization during mealtime of the kids.
This is some of the preliminary findings. I’m going to tell you briefly what the future is for this project. We plan to finish the survey data collection in all three countries by spring 2012, or by summer 2012. We were going to collect survey data in Japan, but the earthquake and the tsunami kind of delayed everything. This evening some of the students are going to an event to collect data from the Hmong community, so after we’re also collecting data from the Hispanic community and Caucasian community in Northern California. And in springtime, our collaborator in Japan is going to help us to collect surveys in Japan and hopefully, we’ll also have data in Germany because the situation in Europe is very different. Their government is much stronger, has a tighter control about what are going to be considered actually, you know, good food. What are--they also are very into organic food. All right, after we finish all our analysis in the near future, we also hope that we can apply some of the findings to an intervention program because one thing that we know what factors actually effect the way we eat, it is a different thing that we just, you know, close the paper or locking the drawer and forget, just continually eat our pizza, right? I feel strongly about needing to take action to help change the food culture around us because we do not want to become the generation that is going to live shorter than our parents. We do not want our grandchildren to live shorter than our children and I think this is what we have so far. I also want to share with you during my research, we also came up with another aspect that we couldn’t really measure the school lunch program.
So, I want to show you two pictures. I believe I have the pictures in the end. A typical or a stereotype of American lunch at school are not very nutritious even my daughter who is attending a private school, they have hot lunch twice a week. Usually, I ask her so what do you eat at school: pasta, garlic bread or salad? I really doubt whether she eats the salad. But it's mostly salad or garlic bread, pasta, pizza, so those are the typical foods offered. Also, it seems like if you go to the restaurants, most of the kids' menu include: chicken nuggets, pizza, pasta, or macaroni. It seems like we cannot really imagine anything that is beyond that, the finger food.
I want to show you a typical school lunch from a different country such as China. As you can tell, there are some vegetables, white rice, meat, peppers, bean, an apple, and also some soup. So hopefully with more time we can also take to look at the lunch program to see how we can actually change it to be healthier. So, I think I'm done here and I'm going to just take questions if you have any.

**Question:** It's really interesting to think about the cultural factors that go into this. And one of the things that I'm wondering with the Chinese case in particular is I mean do you see a lot of diversity within. You kind of mentioned this a little bit but I'm wondering diversity within China, so when you’re doing this comparison, you're doing China, Japan, US, but within each of those countries, of course, you alluded to this, there are some diversities, so I'm wondering in the Chinese case, are there exclusive discussions about if we should be careful not to let our kids get like Americans and to see a sort of resistance to the McDonald's food?

**Answer:** Definitely, definitely. China is constantly changing. Actually the speed of social change is so amazing and every year, the norm is a little different. At the very beginning of McDonald's, people definitely viewed everything from America as something better. Something bigger and something better, but now, people’s confidence about your own culture, about your own identity is always associated with your economic status in a lot of cases.
As China become richer, as people, you know, the pockets start to grow and they also become more confident about their own culture, about their own identity, their own food, so as a result the media also started to write about how bad it is to eat fast food. But I can tell it's going to be slow because for working class parents, it's still considered something better. McDonald's start to open close to elementary schools and after school kids will just go to McDonald's and do homework and eat French fries. China and Japan are kind of interesting. Japan is highly industrialized, but now that they are industrialized, they are also able to keep a stronghold on their traditional food. And so we have a lot to learn from Japan. It will be really interesting to see after we finish with the data collection from Japan, what they are doing that makes them a little bit different. The population in China and Japan are very homogeneous. The culture is a lot more homogeneous compared to American culture including the food culture. In America, the population is very diversified. First of all, we have all kinds of different racial ethnic groups that's why we're trying to capture a little bit of everyone. It's going to be very different. And also in China, there's regional difference, so that's why we try to have a snapshot from two cities rather than from just Beijing which is more globalized compared to the rest of the region.

**Question:** You said that there's a lot of social industrial reasons why people might eat in a place like McDonald's because it's associated with being expensive and it's also associated with being in a higher class, but does it have any effect when you tell people that in America—if you eat at McDonald's often, it is most definitely not associated with being in a higher class. Like would that have any effect if people started hearing how eating McDonald's is not regarded as a sign of being part of the higher class in America?
Answer: It takes a whole environment, our own little bubbles around us who decide our thinking. Every time I go back to visit friends and family, I will make sure to tell them. They always want to take me to eat in California Noodle House. That's a restaurant in my hometown because they think ‘you come from California, you must really like California noodle’. I said there's no California Noodle House in California. The next place they want to take me is Pizza Hut. There's a Pizza Hut in my hometown. By the way, the Pizza Hut is really nicely decorated. It looks like a fancy place to be, but the pizza is still just pizza. Then the next place they want to take me is McDonald's. I explained to them that it's not good food. I said the only time I eat McDonald's is actually in China because people want to take me there. It's really hard for them to comprehend without being here. Yeah, the other thing, they also think what type of car do you drive? Do you drive the biggest cars, like Hummers? You are from America. America is the number one super power so you must be driving the biggest car. Actually the richest people in my hometown started to buy Hummers and started to drive the biggest cars in the crowded and traffic jammed street. Social norm will always lag behind. Culture norm also lags behind reality and it's going to take a while.