Review

of Scientific supervisor for a master's thesis of Zhang Ruoyu

" Socioeconomic Factors of Consumption and Production of Aquatic Products (comparative study of Beijing and London)"

Zhang Ruoyu's dissertation topic is a comparative case study of fish and seafood production and consumption in China and the UK. The research belongs to the general field of the sociology of food.

Recently, the consumption of fish and seafood in Europe and China has been increasing at a tremendous rate. Both in London and in Beijing, fish and seafood are perceived not only as food, but also as elements of prestigious and demonstrative consumption. In addition, culinary traditions in the cooking of fish and seafood have become elements of the national culture - everyone knows “fish and chips” in England, or carp in sweet and sour sauce in China. What social factors influence the consumption of these foods in Chinese and English societies? What is more important - income or education? Zhang Ruoyu's dissertation is devoted to these questions.

First of all, it should be noted that we do not have sufficient national or international statistical information on the consumption of fish and seafood. The author had to collect the necessary information bit by bit. Therefore, it was necessary to conduct our own empirical sociological research, based on an Internet questionnaire survey among 450 respondents in London and Beijing. There are 44 questions in the questionnaire, the sample is random, but, of course, it is not representative, which we did not set ourselves as a scientific task. The results were processed using the IBM SPSS software package.

In general, the research has been completed, the topic has been disclosed and some scientific results have been obtained that help us to better understand the nature of the consumption of aquatic products in European and Asian societies. The topic of fish and seafood consumption is considered in both Chinese and European scientific literature, but their comparison is carried out for the first time, which is the novelty and scientific significance of the dissertation.

The dissertation consists of two parts, the first is devoted to the economic-sociological approach to the study of aquatic products consumption, the second explains the social and economic factors of aquatic products consumption through the empirical study.

The following scientific results were obtained in the dissertation:

- the social history of the development of fish and seafood consumption in Europe and China is presented, for this the works of Rongguang Zhao and other scientists are studied; the processes of the development of fish markets in China and England are described;

- statistical data on the production, export and import of fish and seafood in the UK and China are collected; China is the largest producer and consumer of aqua products in the world, and the UK is one of the leading countries in this area in Europe;

- the main theoretical and methodological approaches to the analysis of food consumption are studied; among the economic approaches to consumption the concept of absolute income by J.M. Keynes; James Duesenberry's Relative Income Concept; Permanent Income concept by M. Friedman are considered.

- The main sociological approaches are presented as well - the concept of conspicuous consumption by Thorstein Veblen; postmodern concept of symbolic consumption by Jean Baudrillard and poststructuralist approach by Pierre Bourdieu

- the main factors affecting the consumption of fish and seafood are revealed; family size, religion, overseas education experience, income, and marital status are strongly correlated with the consumption of aquatic products from different extents, but an obvious correlation among consumption and occupation / work industry, education level, age, and gender is not observed.

 - important differences were identified in the field of buying fish and seafood - if the Chinese mainly prefer markets, then the British prefer supermarkets, the British are also more active in online shopping, and so on

In general, the dissertation is well written, the empirical study covers 450 respondents. Classical and contemporary scientific literature on the topic of the dissertation is studied.

 The work meets all the requirements for master's thesis in the program "European Studies" and deserves an excellent mark if well defended.

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