

**Scientific supervisor's review
of master's degree thesis by Wang Yuxiang
"Socio-cultural embeddedness of tea consumption practices:
the experiences from citizens of London and Shanghai"
(MA Studies in European Societies)**

The subject area chosen by Yuxiang Wang can be described as bearing indisputable features of novelty. Tea drinking and tea consumption seem to be part of our mundane life but the research on how these practices are shaped by individuals' social positions and embedded in their culture are scarce. The paper delivered by Yuxiang Wang seeks to compensate for this gap in scholarly knowledge. The challenge in such a research is certainly not to shift to marketing studies and instead remain in the realm of sociology and cultural anthropology. Yuxiang Wang manages this perfectly well, and his paper makes an excellent and insightful sociological ethnography of tea consumption in two big cities, London and Shanghai.

One of the important advantages of the research project is the consistency of the chosen theoretical frame that mingles Bourdieu's theory with the concepts of conspicuous consumption and symbolic consumption and borrows some analytical tools from sociology of culture.

In his empirical research, Yuxiang Wang uses the method of semi-structured interviews with tea lovers from two cities. Here, I would like to emphasize how massive and demanding the tasks formulated by Yuxiang Wang in his empirical research are (a complicated method to apply, two cities to approach, two sets of data to analyze!), and what an impressive volume of materials he has managed to collect, with 15 informative and absorbing interviews from each city, 30 in total, not to count the pilot ones. Thus, Yuxiang Wang has demonstrated his impressive ability to work under pressure, adjust to the challenging realities of the pandemic and the current limited opportunities of academic mobility, and achieve the best results possible within the shortest time. He has shown himself as a highly disciplined, hardworking, motivated and talented student and a skilled researcher.

As a result, Yuxiang Wang has managed to formulate a set of nontrivial conclusions on how tea drinking and consumption practices and patterns can signal about the class positions of the consumers, serve as distinction tools and means of (self)identification, like in Shanghai, or, vice versa, bridge together representatives of different classes, as in London. Moreover, tea consumption can be highly ritualized and symbolized (Shanghai), or routinized and not really going beyond the basic needs of the consumers (London).

The analysis of the paper conducted in Blackboard system (Safe-Assign program) has revealed only 1.4 % of textual matches. The further analysis of these matches has shown that they are of exclusively technical nature (front page, paragraph numbering and references), which convincingly proves the absolutely independent character of Yuxiang Wang's work.

Thus, I can conclude that the MA thesis written by Yuxiang Wang covers the results of his original research, is rich in theoretical reflection and empirical findings and fully meets the standards of the professional community. I evaluate this paper highly and wish its author good luck in his future scientific career for which he has all the skills and capacities.

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