

### Supervisor's review

First, I would like to provide a context to Jiayi's Huang thesis. Jiayi has attended my course on theory in anthropology and anthropology of ritual during her 2nd year of studies. At the beginning of her 3rd year, I agreed that I would supervise her thesis which would be an ethnography of certain rituals of the Chinese year/calendar celebrated among the Chinese diaspora in the Czech Republic. We assumed that some of the rituals would be celebrated not only at home but also at restaurants owned by members of the Chinese diaspora. Being Chinese, Jiayi was an insider to this field only partially as she came to Prague from her home-town as a student without being part of any transnational networks.

Jiayi successfully found a Chinese couple which owns a restaurant in Prague 3 and which agreed to take up the role of her gatekeepers into the field and gave her an informed consent to carry out and ethnographic research in their place, which is anonymized. As she has been attending the course on ethnographic fieldwork as well, she came up with the idea that she could start working in the restaurant to get a better access for her participant observations. She has worked and carried out her ethnographic research in that site since November 2019 till February 2020. However, the field notes which has been turning in occasionally were more an ethnography of food than of the social events at the restaurant. In February 2020, the pandemic came into picture and Jiayi had to leave to China. She re-appeared in May 2020. We decided to use Jiayi's fieldnotes and to convert the thesis in an **ethnography of the Chinese restaurant in Prague as a hub for transnational food practices of social actors negotiating between cultural difference and proximity**.

I directed Jiayi towards a certain body of anthropological literature, but she has decided to look more on her own. In June 2020, Jiayi sent me a more or less ready text which was supported by theoretical literature which I considered only partially helpful (more about this later). Nevertheless, I liked the methodology chapter and her data. Therefore, I urged her to work on the theoretical part and to rework the interpretations accordingly. Due to the lack of time, Jiayi improved this only partially. She has submitted the thesis with my approval in July 2020, as I found it acceptable, although with many reservations. However, Jiayi could not attempt for the defence. In September, she had to extend her studies by one more year. We agreed that apart from studying for one of the comprehensive exams, she would improve the theoretical part of the thesis and the analytical part. Nevertheless, Jiayi had to leave to China to spend the pandemic there. She re-appeared in June 2021 and submitted the same text for the defence without any consultations during this academic year.

Therefore, my opinion on her text has not changed: The theoretical chapter is an extensive literature review, providing 1) a basic understanding of food as object of anthropological research (Sahlins, Lévi-Strauss, Harris) in the chapter 2.3.; 2) a basic introduction into anthropology of globalization 3) research on Chinese food practices in the diaspora, mostly the USA, 4) introduction into the research on Chinese diaspora in the Czech Republic and its food practices (Moore and Tubilewicz). However, the student somehow couldn't tie these strings together, in order to effectively formulate a research problem, which appears rather too broad and its diverse formulations throughout the text are not very coherent. Nevertheless, the methodological steps taken are justifiable, supported by a relevant methodological literature (Punch) and very well described. Mainly, I appreciate her exemplary positioning and careful and sensitive ethical approach. The empirical part presents her data in the

form of ethnographic descriptive snapshots, such as *One day in the restaurant* (p. 24-26), smaller vignettes and quotations from transcribed interviews with her informants – the owners, chefs, waiters and customers. The data are structured more or less systematically according to these groups of actors. Chapter about customers are further divided according to their place of origin (Chinese, other South-Asian countries, Czech). She also explores the interesting feature of the „triple menu“ as a cultural product offering three different modes of engaging with the so-called Chinese food. To simplify it: the Czechs would not be offered the same things as Chinese and vice-versa. However, her interpretations remain mostly on the descriptive level, failing to connect to the body of literature and falling too often into the trap of the idea about a homogeneous and coherent whole – one big monolithic „national Chinese culture“, although e.g. the staff comes from only one particular village. Jiayi’s theoretical hopelessness is clearly visible in the conclusion, where she interprets her data with the concept of creolization (Tibere) which has not appeared in the text anywhere before. Despite all this, the presented data are valuable and could be elaborated further.

From the formal point of view, the text is acceptable, with minor reservations: the list of the literature is not according to the norm and the text would have benefited from language editing.

**In conclusion: despite the problems mention above, I consider Jiayi Huang’s bachelor thesis as defendable and I suggest to grade it very good or good depending on the result of the oral presentation.**

In Prague, 14th of September, 2021

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