



Master's Thesis Evaluation Form

Student's name: Xeniya Yegorova

Thesis title: Are We What We Eat? A Study of Identity Reconfiguration of Russian Immigrants in Prague through the Prism of Food Practices.

Name of the supervisor: Martin Hájek, PhD.

Name of the opponent: Dino Numerato, PhD.

What are the strengths and weaknesses of the thesis? Please give your reasons for the suggested grade in detail below.

1. *Does the author show understanding of one or more theories, and use theory to generate a hypothesis or to make the problem area more understandable.*

Comments: Yes, the author introduced the concept of identity, explained its use in social sciences in the last decades and defined in what meaning she used it in her research. The idea to connect the processes of ethnic and consumer identity reconfiguration has already been proven to capture significant aspects of identity work of migrants.

2. *Is the research question articulated clearly and properly? Is the research question sufficiently answered in the conclusion?*

Comments: The research question is defined in the section 4.4.: "whether or not a change on one level of identity [linked to food consumerism] produces a change on another level of identity [connected with ethnicity], which in turn impacts the overall identity structure [of the immigrant]." The results showed that in case of Russians immigrants in Prague, the ethnic and food consumption identity facets are not as tightly related to each other as supposed because their identity seems to be related rather weakly to a particular food consumption style (a national/traditional cuisine).

3. *Is the thesis based on relevant research and literature and does it accurately summarize and integrate the information?*

Comments: Yes, the author used enough academic sources, extracted relevant information and integrated it properly into her argumentation.



4. *What is the quality of the data or the other sources? Are the sample method, data collection and data analysis appropriate?*

Comments: The research was based on interviews with twelve respondents sought out in a sort of opportunity sampling (I would not use the term “random” for such sampling). However, since there is not any list of Russian immigrants living in Prague available it was practically the only way how to do the research. I appreciate the use of vignettes as stimuli for conversation, which uncovered some aspects of identity that would not be accessible by direct questioning. On the other hand I think that longer and narratively oriented interviewing would bring richer data because both ethnicity and food consumption are biographically anchored matters.

5. *Are the findings relevant to the research question? Are the conclusions of the thesis based on strong arguments?*

Comments: Yes, the findings correspond to the research question. Author also discussed the limitation of her research.

6. *Are the author’s thoughts distinguished unambiguously from the borrowed ideas?*

Comments: Yes.

7. *Is the thesis containing original/innovative research (in terms of topic, approach, and/or findings)?*

Comments: The findings are original because it is taken for granted that food consumption is one of the strong markers of ethnic identity, especially when related to the religious affiliation. Perhaps we witness a growth of transnational identity that is linked more to the person’s sociocultural status than to her primary ethnic identity.

8. *What is the quality of style and other formal requirements?*

Comments: Good. There are some minor problems with text formatting.

9. *Are there any other strengths and weaknesses of the thesis, which are not included in the previous questions? Please list them if any.*

Comments: -

10. *What topic do you suggest for the discussion in the thesis defence?*

Comments: In the end of the thesis author briefly mentions some recommendation for further research, in particular a use of mixed methods approach. Why that would brings better findings than just extending and deepening the conventional approach?



Overall assessment of the thesis:

Despite some minor critical comments the thesis fulfils all necessary standards required and I recommend it for a defence.

Proposed grade: very good

Date: July 8th, 2016

Signature:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of stylized, overlapping loops and lines.