



The Migration of Experts and Savoir-faire

The Case of French Cuisine Professionals in Shanghai

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ABSTRACTS

This article focuses on the practice of French cuisine in Shanghai and questions the permanence of this professional niche. It combines an anthropological approach to culinary techniques with a sociological approach to workforce migration, tracing the ways in which the discourse and practices of chefs and maîtres d'hôtel working in French cuisine's restaurants employ forms of ethnocultural and technical legitimacy. The case of Shanghai, a city undergoing rapid transformation in its modes of consumption, provides a clear illustration of the shifts that have occurred over the last ten years in the hierarchy of Western migrants and Chinese locals: the symbolic and material privileges offered to the former are beginning to disappear, and professional recognition is increasingly becoming based on savoir-faire and a strong work ethic.

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Keywords: China, French cuisine, migration, knowledge transfer, training

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