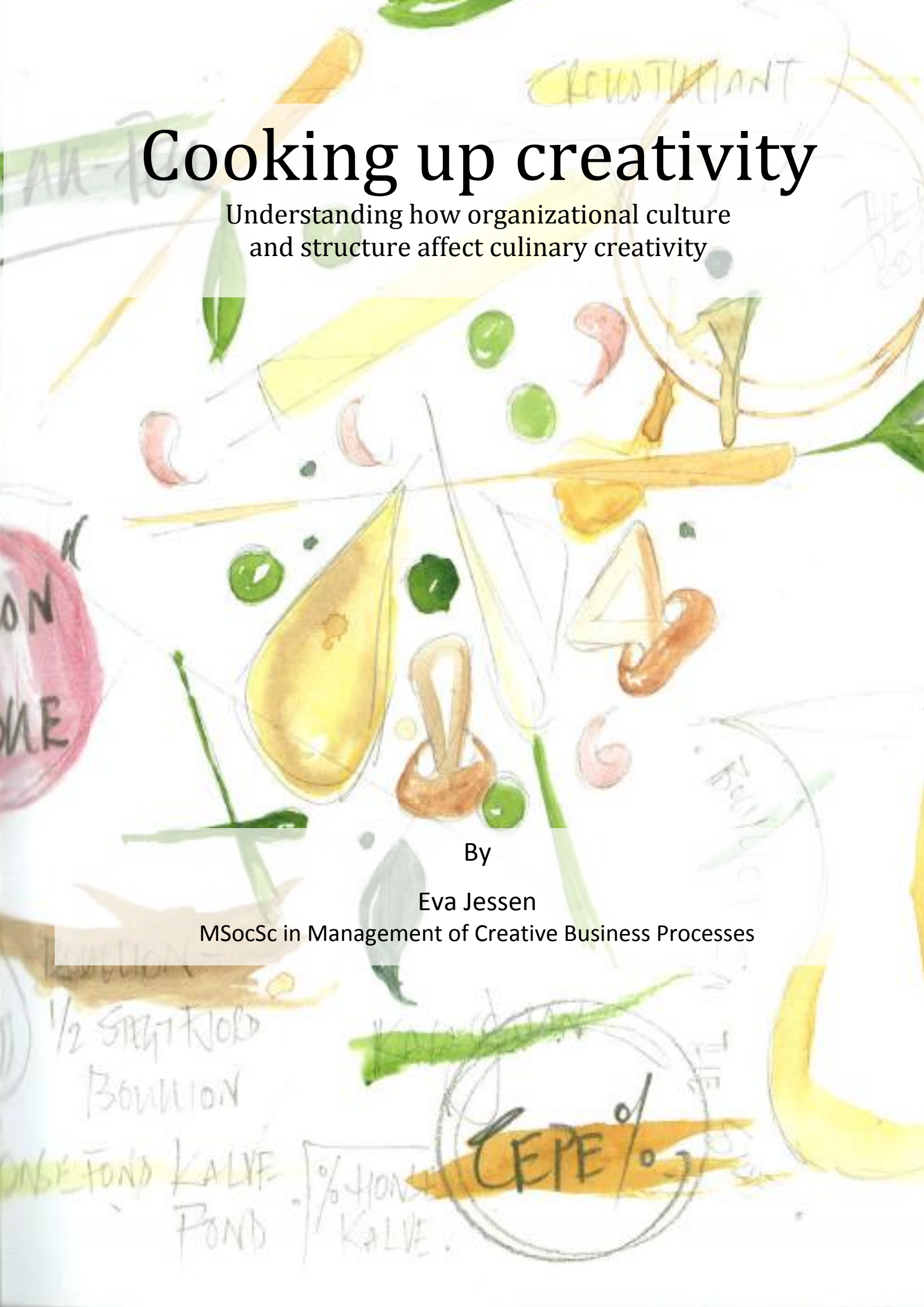
Cooking up creativity

Understanding how organizational culture and structure affect culinary creativity



By

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MSocSc in Management of Creative Business Processes

Cooking up creativity

Understanding how organizational culture
and structure influence culinary creativity

Master thesis

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Executive Summary

Creativity and innovation are considered key components of any successful business in almost any industry and haute cuisine restaurants are no different – but how does creativity flourish within an industry where most organizations are characterized by strict hierarchical structures and autocratic leadership styles. The purpose of this thesis has therefore been to investigate *how organizational culture and structure affect culinary creativity in haute cuisines restaurants, with a focus on a northern European culinary capital.*

The thesis reveals that the organizational culture found in the restaurants included in this study, display a constant focus on improving both cooking skills and culinary products, as well as a constant process of new product development. The head chefs are not only skilled in the art of cooking but appear to be excellent at communicating their goals and ambitions to their staff, as these ambitions were echoed by the rest of the cooking staff. However, it has also become apparent that chefs perhaps to a too great extend rely on the guidance (and approval) of their head chef, which has fostered a culture where chefs do not offer their ideas (or thoughts) unless specifically instructed to by the head chef.

This paper also reveals an organizational culture where head chefs, due to the institutional impediments of authorship, are reluctant to put dishes on the menu that they cannot claim authorship of. A restaurant's reputation is closely linked to the reputation of the head chef, which means that the head chef takes on the role as artist whereas other chefs in the kitchen are regarded as craftsmen, whose it is to execute the head chef's culinary visions. However, the higher the level of skills achieved by a chef, the less content her or she will be in the role as craftsman. As there is only room for one 'artist' in the kitchen, the most skilled chefs will seek new opportunities outside the restaurant. The restaurant thus loses one of its most skilled and valuable resources, who in return moves on to be a potential competitor.

The predominant organizational structure found in the industry has not changed much since the introduction of the French brigade system several centuries ago, and although this organizational structure allows for little individual freedom, it does allow for a great flexibility needed when exploring creative ideas.

Finally, this thesis also argues for an inclusion of the restaurant industry in the overall framework of the creative industries, which many authors have neglected to include or address.

Contents

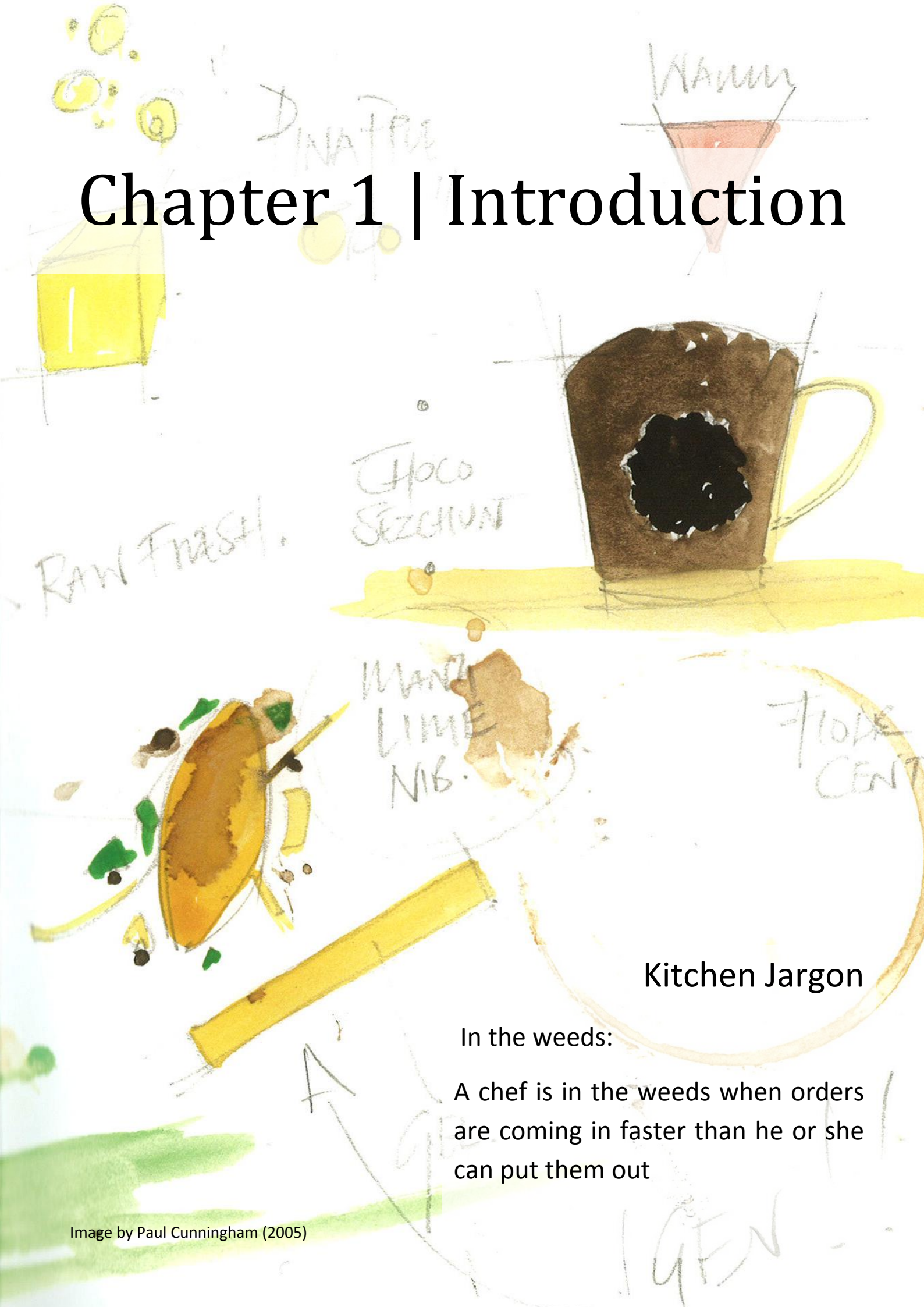
I am a culinary school dropout – It all happened in the fall and winter of 2000, after attending the mandatory six months introductory course. The teachers did a very good job of preparing us for what would happen when we started our apprenticeship in the real world and explaining to us, how tough a job we were about to embark on. Perhaps the teachers did a too good job in explaining us the realities, because even before setting foot in a professional kitchen, I decided that this was not an industry for me. Horror stories of both physical and psychological abuse were enough to make me recoil and instead I settled on a comfortable life in the more civilized academic world.

To all of you how stuck it out in the restaurant industry, I applaud you, I commend you, some days I even envy you.

Eva Jessen

May 2011

Chapter 1 | Introduction



Kitchen Jargon

In the weeds:

A chef is in the weeds when orders are coming in faster than he or she can put them out

Image by Paul Cunningham (2005)

1. Introduction

Creativity and innovation are considered key components of any successful business in almost any industry and haute cuisine restaurants are no different – but how does creativity flourish within an industry where most organizations are characterized by strict hierarchical structures and autocratic leadership styles. Current literature suggests that creativity, which is a prerequisite for innovation, is best fostered through supportive and harmonious work environments where employees have a high level of autonomy in their day-to-day work (Cummings & Oldham 1996, 1997; Amabile 1996). This is in contrast to the realities of the restaurant industry which is a volatile business, known to be tough both physical and emotional.

While rapidly changing and uncertain environments have increased the organizational complexity in many businesses, the organizational structure of most restaurants have stayed the same and still operate under the French brigade system[1], perhaps best characterized as embracing classical management views as describes by Frederick Taylor and Henri Fayol (Brooks 2003). This does not imply that the art of cooking has not changed, because a lot has happened since the shift from *cuisine classique* to *nouvelle cuisine*, and within the last decade the *New Nordic Cuisine* movement. Increasingly new technologies are incorporated into cooking methods as the demand for constant innovation is high. Serving a delicious and perfectly cooked meal is simply not considered adequate as haute cuisine diners are expecting a certain degree of novelty in the cultural goods that they consume (Lampel, Lant and Shamsie 2000). Restaurants need to constantly evolve, while still delivering a quality product. The external pressures from restaurant critics are immense, leaving no room for mistakes - which is somewhat ironic when you take into consideration that many culinary innovation are the result of mistake (i.e. puff pastry). Despite this development in cuisine and a focus on creativity and innovation – the way of organizing within the kitchen is still influenced by traditional hierarchical structures.

[1] Will be explained further in the field description (section 1.5)

1.1 Research Question

With the above mentioned paradox in mind, I take on the following research question:

> ***How does organizational culture and structure affect culinary creativity in haute cuisine restaurants, with a focus on a northern European culinary capital***

Organizational culture is a somewhat general concept which can be defined in many ways but for the purpose of this thesis, organizational culture should be viewed as a reflection of "*the underlying assumptions about the way work is performed*, […] *what is 'acceptable and not acceptable'* [and] *what behavior and actions are encouraged and discouraged*" (Atkinson 1990, 13). I view the organizational culture as central in the individual's perception of their work environment and this thesis aims at including the perspectives of individuals occupying the industry, rather than just observing the industry from the outside. Organizational structure (or organizational design) is closely linked to, and influences, the organizational culture and I therefore find it important to include this aspect and especially when investigating a field such as the haute cuisine restaurant industry, where strict hierarchical structures dominate.

1.2 Purpose and Relevance of Thesis

This thesis serves dual purposes, not only does it explore and provide a new perspective on culinary creativity, this thesis also contributes to a literature in the field of the creative industries. There is not one clear and concise definition of what constitutes the creative industries[2] and which sectors are to be included. In fact many authors in the field have actually neglect to mention the restaurant industry as part of the creative industries. Perhaps this lack of attention is connected to the fact that the restaurant industry as a whole is very diverse and includes everything from your local falafel joint to Michelin starred restaurants. I am not arguing for the inclusion of my local falafel place, nor can I exclude that any creative endeavors take place, as this thesis has only sough to investigate the high end segment of the restaurant industry. The lack of focus on the restaurant industry as part of the creative industries, further argues for the relevance of this thesis, as current literature does not reflect the realities of the creative labor taking place in haute cuisine restaurants.

This thesis does not intend to pursue a normative purpose and arrive at a 'best practices' outcome. Rather, it should be seen as an exploratory study, that through inductive qualitative research methods, provides a new perspective on the restaurant industry and possibly lays the groundwork for further research in the field. Even if I do not intend for this thesis to have a normative outcome, I

[2] I concur with Caves' definition that creative industries are "[…] *supplying goods and services that we broadly associate with cultural, artistic, or simply entertainments value*" (Caves 2000, 1)

do believe that the conclusions arrived at by the end of this paper, will help us to better understand the obstacle as well as opportunities in the industry.

I find this thesis to be relevant not only because it is an area which has not been studied greatly before, but also because it is an industry which is considered of great importance for future economic growth in Denmark. As such it is not an industry with high profit margins, and many restaurants even actually struggle just to stay afloat. However, relative to its size, the haute cuisine restaurant industry generates considerable media attention in connection with Michelin star announcements[3], the Bocuse d'Or[4] and not least the S. Pellegrino World 50 Best Restaurants. This attracts the attention of not only tourists and particularly foodies[5] but also makes Copenhagen and Denmark an attractive place for the creative class (Florida 2002). Moreover, creativity and innovation taking place in the haute cuisine segment of the industry, plays a vital role in the further development of Danish food culture, as trends trickle down to the mainstream food industry and in the end, the general population. That gastronomy is now of considerable importance is also reflected in the newly established MadX – a government initiative with the purpose of heightening Danish food culture at various levels (fvm 2010).

1.3 Delimitation

Before clarifying the delimitations of this paper I would like to address an assumption on which this thesis rests. This thesis is based on the assumption that the work environment in the restaurant industry is autocratic and therefore differs from other creative industries. I base this assumption on various sources describing the industry, among other the many research papers focused on occupational stress or bullying in the industry (Bloisi and Hoel 2008; Murray-Gibbons and Gibbons 2007; Robinson 2008; Johns and Menzel 1999) and of course also from the more general media portrayal of the industry.

There are two main delimitations which need to be addressed - firstly, in this thesis I limit the scope of analysis to the haute cuisine segment of the restaurant industry. I find this part of the industry most interesting and relevant to study in relation to creativity because culinary trends emerge and mature in the high end of the restaurant industry before trickling down through the industry to 'lower' level restaurants – thus the creativity at this level is more interesting for observation.

[3] Copenhagen in the city with most Michelin stars, relative to the number of inhabitants (Østergaard 2011)
[4] Unofficial world championships of the culinary arts
[5] Food tourist who base their choice of travel on the culinary experiences available

Secondly, I wish to address that even though this thesis seeks to understand culinary creativity and draws on Copenhagen as a research setting, the findings arrived at should not be viewed as strictly applying to the Danish gastronomic scene. Throughout the research process I have sought information from secondary sources outside Copenhagen, because I believe that some issues in the restaurant industry should be considered universal. It is an industry that, much like many other industries, is becoming more and more globalised and today it is not only Danish chefs who go abroad to gain valuable work experiences and inspiration, but increasingly chefs from abroad are also coming to Denmark as well - all of which will have an influence on the environments in the kitchens. Still, a majority of head chefs in the Danish haute cuisine kitchens are Danish and seeing as the head chefs are the most influential factor in shaping the organizational culture, the Danish restaurant scene is influenced by the Scandinavian culture[6] and thus seems less authoritarian than kitchens run by a head chef trained in classical French kitchens.

Finally, I need to clarify that this thesis only focuses on kitchen staff involved in the culinary production – therefore not waiting staff, dishwashers or restaurant managers and owners, if different from restaurant manager or head chef.

1.4 Central Concepts

In this section I briefly clarify some the central concepts used throughout this thesis. I find it important to do so because the meaning of some concepts can vary depending on one's perspective. This way ensuring that readers and author have a shared understanding of central concepts.

Haute Cuisine

The literal translation of haute cuisine is 'high kitchen' or 'superior cooking'. Haute cuisine is characterized by elaborate preparation and presentation methods, often served in small portions but also comprising of and extensive number of courses. In the 1970s the term *la nouvelle cuisine* was used to describe a new way of cooking, which at the time was in opposition to the traditions which characterized haute cuisine. These cooking and presentation methods were thought to be more simple than haute cuisine, which was largely influence by the great French cooking traditions (Mariani 2006). I have chosen not to use the term *nouvelle cuisine* because the nature of nouvelle cuisine is so much assimilated into modern cooking practices that it does not make sense to make a distinction between haute cuisine and nouvelle cuisine. When I choose only to use the term haute cuisine in this thesis and not distinguish between the different culinary influences, I do so with the

[6] According to Hofstede (1980) Scandinavian culture has a lower power distance, lower level of individualism and is influenced by 'feminine' values in comparison to i.e. the US.

understanding that haute cuisine is a term which connotes a higher gastronomic level – and thus separates this segment of the rest of the restaurant industry.

Creativity vs. Innovation

Creativity and innovation are often two terms used interchangeable, so I find it important to provide a brief explanation of how I distinguish the two concepts. I subscribe to Teresa Amabile's definition of creativity "[…] *as the production of novel and useful ideas in any domain*" (Amabile 1996, 2). 'Useful' implying that an idea has the potential to add value either short-term or long-term and 'novel' pertains to all ideas that are unique compared to those currently available. Whereas innovation if defined as "[…] *the successful implementation of creative ideas within an organization*" (Amabile 1996, 2). Thus innovation cannot occur without some form of creativity.

Throughout this paper I use the term culinary creativity which can mean many things (i.e. product development for a retail setting). In this thesis the term only pertains to culinary creativity within a restaurant setting. Culinary creativity in a restaurant setting can relate to cooking methods; tastes and new flavor combinations; smell; visual aesthetics and composition; textures; presentation methods; and even sound. Finally, I also consider new interpretations of classical dishes as a creative culinary endeavor.

1.5 Field Description

The restaurant industry is highly diverse and ranges from the local family owned falafel place, national and international chain restaurant, and to top rated Michelin starred establishments. Seeing as it is such a diversified industry, this field description only pertains to what can be labeled as the haute cuisine segment of the restaurant industry.

Though many women are part of the restaurant industry as a whole, the kitchens of the haute cuisine restaurants are male dominated (Lusher 2009; Jakobsen and Ellerbæk 2010). The industry is also characterized by a 'macho' culture and in order to be successful and move ahead, one needs to develop a thick skin as it is a tough industry which tear on you both physically and emotionally (Thisted Højlund 2006). An emotionally tough industry because tempers fly high when there is pressure to deliver a perfect product within a restricted timeframe. A physical tough industry because chefs work long hours and chefs on their feet for most of those hours while juggling hot pots and pans. When talking about the culinary profession, there is a tendency to only focus the most hectic and chaotic part of a chef's work – service, which is when guests are seated in the dining room

and served. However, a chef's workday can be split into three sections: prep, service, and clean-up, of which prep and service is allocated almost equal time.

Management styles within a kitchen are run by an authoritarian hierarchical model and many haute cuisine kitchens are influenced by Escoffier's brigade or *partie* system. Introduced by Georges Auguste Escoffier in the 1800s, the brigade system can best be characterized as a particular way of organizing kitchen staff into smaller units (referred to as a *partie*), where every employee is a assigned a well-defined role in an effort to ensure efficiency and consistent quality output. Chefs operate within fixed parameters and are given professional titles that relate to their place in the kitchen hierarchy as well as the specialized tasks that they perform (Gillespie 1994). Placed at the top of the hierarchy is the Head chef (or Chef de cuisine), who is responsible for setting the menu and the overall leadership of the kitchen. The Sous chef (or assistant head chef) is the second in command and nothing goes out of the kitchen unless it has been approved by the head chef or the assistant head chef, also referred to as *running the pass*. The further down in the hierarchy, the Chefs de Partie are responsible for their respective products such as meats (Rôtisseur), salads (Garde Manger) etc. Figure 1.1 is meant to illustrate a 'typical' kitchen hierarchy but this will differ from restaurant to restaurant, depending on it size as well as style of cooking.

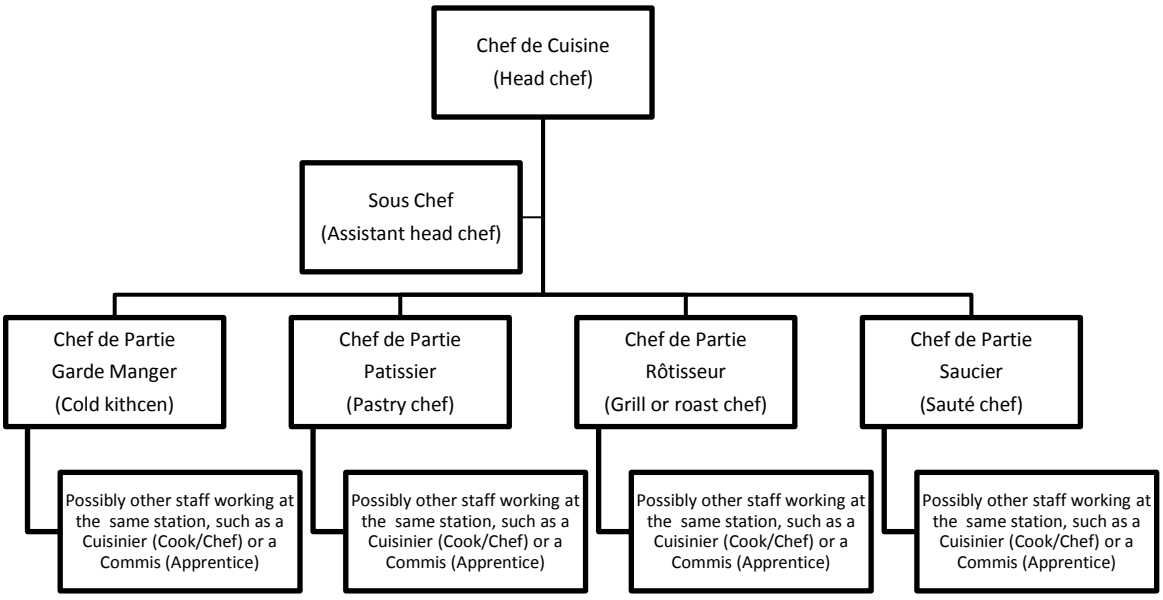


Figure 1.1 | Kitchen hierarchy

(own contribution)

What sets the restaurant industry apart from many other industries, is that success is not measured in monetary terms – but rather in the accolade given by restaurant critics and fellow restaurateurs.

Not that financial issues are of no concern to the management because many restaurants struggle to stay afloat. In 2010 alone, two of Copenhagen's (then) twelve Michelin starred restaurants were forced to close due to financial trouble. Noma, which in 2010 and 2011 was rated as the best restaurant in the world and is the only restaurant in Copenhagen to hold two Michelin stars, only earned a revenue of 660,000 DKK in 2009 in spite of an annual turnover of nearly 28,000,000 DKK. Produce and salary for the kitchen staff was nearly 20,000,000 – which is a huge amount when you take into consideration that much of Noma's kitchen staff is volunteer and thus not paid labor (Ritzau 2010). Instead of measuring success through financial parameters, success in the restaurant industry is predominantly based on the external evaluations made by restaurant critics. Reputation is everything and a review from an acknowledged source can make or break a restaurant. The Michelin guide is considered one of the most authoritative guides and receiving a star (or up to three) is a benchmark that many restaurants strive towards. More recently S. Pellegrino's *50 World's Best Restaurants* list has gained more attention, as the list is not based on reviews from restaurant critics but rather based on votes made by the industry players (chefs) themselves. Perhaps what characterizes the haute cuisine restaurant industry best, is the constant external evaluation, the pressures to perform and deliver perfection.

1.6 Structure of Thesis

Chapter 1: Introduction

In this current chapter I have introduced my motivation for writing this thesis as well as argued for its relevance. I have presented a research question along with the overall purpose of contributing to the theoretical field of the creative industries. Finally, I have described the haute cuisine segment of the restaurant industry in order to provide the readers with a common understanding of the field.

Chapter 2: Literature review

This chapter is divided into two sections; one which reviews current literature within the field of culinary creativity – giving the reader an understanding of the focus areas thus far, while also demonstrating the gap in current literature which this theses intends to fill. The second part of this chapter introduces the theoretical framework. The three main theoretical issues which I have chosen to address relate to: organizational creativity, team performance, and leadership.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The purpose of this chapter is to present and discuss the methodological approach, which serves as the foundation from which the research question is answered. The chapter will account for my

ontological stance and epistemological position as well as address the implications of how these choices guide the research design, such as the data collection strategy as well as the analytical approach. Finally I address concerns relating to validity and reliability in relation to qualitative research.

Chapter 4: Analysis

In this chapter I present the overall findings, which are presented within five analytical themes: work as a lifestyle; no-error culture; artist vs. craftsman; constant process of learning; motivational factors.

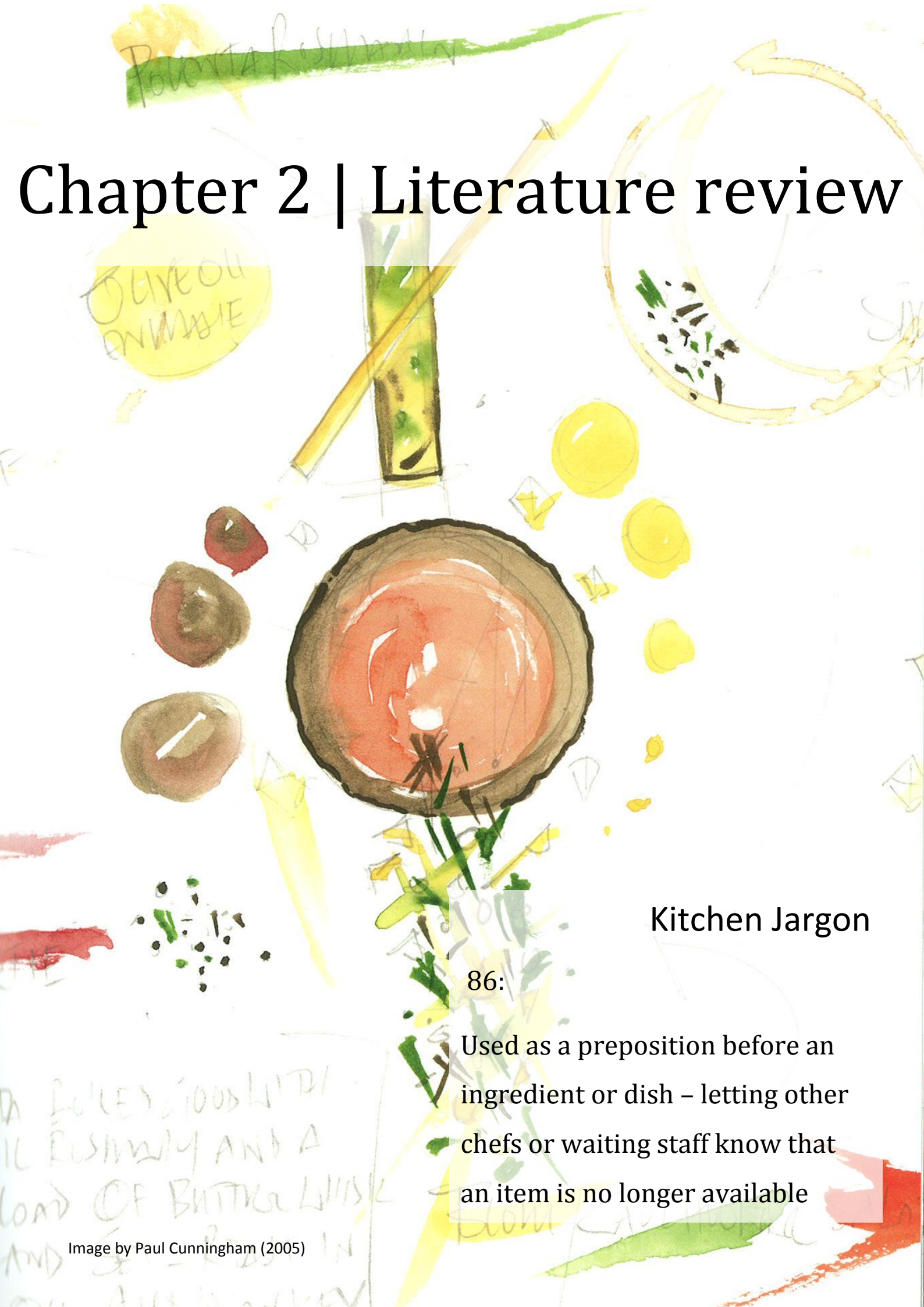
Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion

This chapter has two objectives. First I present what I view to be the most significant characteristics of haute cuisine restaurants. Secondly, I conclude by reflecting upon the key findings in relation to the research question.

Chapter 6: Limitations and Further Research

I start this chapter by reflecting upon the limitation as well as strengths of this study (empirically, theoretically and analytically). Finally, I propose potential perspectives for further research within the field of culinary creativity. Topics that were either outside the scope of this thesis or ideas that were fostered through the process of writing this thesis

Chapter 2 | Literature review



Kitchen Jargon

86:

Used as a preposition before an ingredient or dish – letting other chefs or waiting staff know that an item is no longer available

Image by Paul Cunningham (2005)

2. Literature Review

This chapter will consist of two parts – first a presentation of current literature in the field of culinary creativity and then a theoretical framework which serves as a foundation from which the analysis and discussion of this thesis will be understood. First I will present a brief overview of current literature within this field, in an effort to illustrate that it is an area which has not been explored to a great extend thus far. Secondly, by accounting for the current literature in the field of culinary creativity, I also establish the gap in current literature which this thesis wished to fill.

2.1 Current Literature on Culinary Creativity

This literature review is not focused exclusively on culinary creativity but also includes literature on culinary innovation, as creativity is thought to be a vital part of innovation. Going through current literature on culinary creativity and innovation, I have found there to be four main perspectives on the subject that will be accounted for briefly over the next few pages.

A majority of current literature in the field focuses specifically on the creative or innovation processes. Harrington (2005a; 2005b), and later Ottenbacher and Harrington (2007), have focused primarily on product innovation processes, arguing for a continuous innovation process model – as the foodservice setting limits the creation of 'barriers of imitation', which is easier to attain in a food manufacturing setting. Stierand, Döfler and MacBryde (2009) have criticized Harrington and Ottenbacher's *innovation development process* model for being too linear (the model outlines seven steps in the innovation process) and not accounting for learning processes, as well as neglecting the importance of creative problem solving in the innovation process. Horng and Hu (2008; 2009) approach culinary creativity with a four stage model involving: idea preparation, idea incubation, idea development, and finally verification. However, I fail to see how their research provides us with a better understanding of culinary creativity, as their work merely demonstrates how culinary creativity fits into Wallas' (1926) classical four stage model of creativity. More recently Ottenbacher and Harrington (2008b) have complied a comparative study of culinary innovation processes in Michelin-starred restaurants in the U.S. and Germany, where they found there to be difference in depth and breadth of involvement in the innovation process. U.S. restaurants were found to employ a consensus approach to innovation, whereas the German restaurants were more like to employ an autocratic approach.

In addition, Ottenbacher and Harrington (2008a) have also conducted a study which included Spanish Michelin-starred chefs (in addition to U.S. and German) but this time they sought to investigate the impact of institutional, cultural and contextual factors.

This brings me to the second perspective on culinary creativity and innovation, which is linked to institutional constraints. The resultant industry is highly institutionalized and most frequently addressed as an institutional constraint, is reputation. Reputation is all-important and has a direct influence on which culinary innovations are adopted and diffused (Stierand and Lynch 2008; Leschziner 2007; Svejenova et al. 2007). In their case study on Ferran Andrià[7], Sjevenova et al. (2007) suggest that creativity can be used as a step in initiating institutional change. They identify four mechanisms which Ferran Andrià uses in the process of initiating change: creativity, theorization, reputation, and dissemination. The process can be summarized as follows: "*the [*head chef's] *commitment to creativity generates a continuous flow of new ideas, which are then theorized and, because of the* [head chef's] *reputation, considered worthy of attention. This helps* [the head chef] *reach the public domain and challenge existing ideas, which in turn leads to paradoxes in the field and a potential for change*" (Svejenova 2007, 555).

A third perspective on culinary creative literature looks into the linkages between motivation and job satisfaction in relation to creativity. A study conducted by Robinson and Beesley (2009), demonstrated how an intrinsic motivator such as creativity was deemed more important in securing job satisfaction than extrinsic motivators such as salary and working conditions. Horng and Lee (2009) have instead focused on extrinsic environmental factors, such as the physical, social, cultural and educational environments. Emphasizing the importance of "*a friendly learning environment*" (Horng and Lee 2009, 111) as conducive to culinary creativity.

The final, and least prevalent approach to culinary creativity studies takes its offset in the previously mentioned case study on Ferran Adrià and his restaurant elBulli (Svejenova et al. 2007). Planellas and Svejenova (2007) approach culinary creativity from a business management perspective by illustrating how Ferran Adrià uses creativity as a strategic tool. The reputation of elBulli is maintained through a commitment to creativity and innovation. A strong reputation as innovator in the gastronomic field has allowed Ferran Adrià to set up other businesses under the elBulli brand, such as consulting services and a publishing house, as well as other commercial collaboration projects[8]. The financial gains from these commercial endeavors allows Ferran Adriá and a selective team of

[7] Head Chef and owner of restaurant el Bulli
[8] A line of kitchen textiles, cooking utensils and a line of emulsifiers

tenured chefs to withdraw from the restaurant scene and work on new ideas in elBullitaller, elBulli's permanent creative workshop for extended periods (Planellas and Svejenova 2007; Svejenova et al. 2010).

Overall, most of the current work in this field base their empirical data on restaurants that have attained a Michelin star or more. I consider this to be somewhat troublesome as a Michelin star cannot be viewed as an indicator for creativity or innovation[9] but rather a benchmark for food and service quality. Secondly, a majority of the research presented above focus solely on the creative efforts of a single individual (usually the head chef) and neglect to reflect upon other organizational members' role and creative contribution.

On a final note I would like to draw attention to the ethnographic work of Gary Alan Fine - though not focusing on culinary creativity, his seminal work within the gastronomic field has been significant in my understanding of the culinary work culture (Fine 1996).

2.2 Theoretical Framework

The second part of this chapter intends to establish a theoretical framework from which my analysis should be understood and ultimately facilitate a better understanding of how creativity within an haute cuisine restaurant is affected by its organizational culture and hierarchical structure. The theoretical concepts addressed in this section are not specific to the restaurant industry, but rather general theoretical perspectives on organizational creativity, team performance and leadership.

2.2.1 Organizational Creativity

As mentioned previously, creativity as a business strategy is becoming more and more important in almost any industry and correspondingly, creativity as a research field is gaining more attention. The study of creativity can, and have been approached from various angles, ranging from Freud's psychodynamic approach (1908/1959) where creativity is thought to originate from the tension between conscious reality and unconscious desires driving the individual, to the more recent cognitive (Finke, Ward and Smith 1992) or social-personality approaches (Barron and Harrington 1981; Amabile 1983; Eysenck 1993), which are concerned with understanding the underlying processes of creative thought and personality variables, as well as environmental factor influencing creativity (Sternberg and Lubart 1999 or 2008). Creativity as a research field is constantly evolving

[9] The Michelin guide has been criticized for being too conservative (Frank 2008a)

and over time, and as illustrated above, the focus has shifted from understanding the characteristics associated with individual and artistic creativity, which were viewed as a personality trait, to understanding organizational creativity which is viewed as an element that can be actively sought out and fostered through the 'right' environment. Moreover, creativity is now used as a label to describe not only a tangible outcome but a process as well. Though this thesis looks at culinary creativity from an organizational perspective, I am not arguing that individual creativity is of no importance in organizational achievement, because organizational creativity and innovation is dependent upon the individual creativity retained by its organizational members and thus individual creativity plays an important part in organizational creativity (Shalley &Gibson 2004). I take my departure in the more recent confluence approaches to creativity (Csikszentmihalyi 1988; Amabile 1996; Sternberg and Lubart 1995), which differs from the earlier perspectives by *"[…]conceptualizing creativity as a multidimensional construct, and creative accomplishment as representing the interaction or confluence among these dimensions"* (Feldman 1999 el. 2008, 169). Early theory on the subject of creativity could be said to be 'de-contextualized' by only focusing on cognitive processes and personality traits, while neglecting to take into account environmental factors, as well as social and contextual factors (Lubart. T. I. 1999 el. 2008).

The confluence approach to studying creativity has produced a number of theories ranging from Amabile's componential model of creativity (1983, 1996) and Csikszentmihalyi's systems approach (1988), to Sternberg and Lubart's investment theory of creativity (1995). Common to all of them, is that they account for various aspects of creativity and view organizational creativity as a multifaceted and always evolving asset, not only dependent upon the organizational members but the organizational structures as well and the interaction between these. Amabile's original componential model of creativity put forth three main components that facilitate the creative process: domain-relevant skills, creativity-relevant processes, and intrinsic task motivation (Amabile 1983; 1988). Later recognizing that task motivation should be separated into two components, one within the individual (intrinsic motivation) and one outside the individual (extrinsic motivation), she acknowledged the work environment's importance on organizational creativity (Amabile 1993; 1996). It is important to point out that the componential theory of creativity does not only pertain to organizational creativity but can just as well be used to describe 'intrapersonal' creativity that does not take place in an organizational context (Amabile and Mueller 2009).

Encouraging or obstructing creativity

A shift in focus from individual creativity to organizational creativity has paved the way for research investigating team and group dynamics in relation to creativity. Organizational creativity and subsequently innovation stems from the individual talent and creativity of it organizational members

but it is the organizational structures that mediates the individuals' potential and channels it into a creative output However, in the componential theory of creativity it became apparent that the work environment plays a significant role in facilitating the creative process, which has led to an increased interest in how organizational creativity can be fostered through the environment. Based on the componential theory of creativity, Amabile et al. 1996 have developed KEYS, a tool for qualitatively assessing the perceived work environment for creativity. It is important to mention that I only draw in KEYS in an effort to better understand the conditions under which organizational creativity can thrive or which factors can hinder it, but that I will not be using the KEYS scale for empirically testing the level of creativity in the restaurant industry.

Figure 2.1 | KEYS: Assessing the Climate for Creativity

(Adapted from Amabile et at. 1996)

Encouragement of Creativity

Encouragement of creativity can occur at three levels: organizational encouragement; supervisory encouragement; and work group supports. Organizational encouragement refers to management's willingness to take risks, the interest in generating new ideas, as well as fair and supportive evaluation of ideas. If individuals are expecting to be criticized for their ideas, it will undermine the creativity. An Idea flow across the organization will also lead to the generation of creative ideas – seeing as individuals are exposed to other potentially relevant ideas. An overall important aspect of organizational encouragement is to have participative management. It is suggested that reward and recognition systems should only be used to corroborate good work, but if an individual's only purpose is to gain a reward, it will undermine creativity. Supervisory encouragement requires the supervisor to clearly define the problem(s) at hand and set appropriate goals corresponding to this. Amabile et al. (1996) suggests that this is facilitated best through an open interaction between supervisor and subordinates. In the end, the supervisor must show their support and confidence in

the team's ideas and work. Work group encouragement propose that teams are comprised of organizational members with a diverse background, thus optimizing the potential for exposure of a greater variety of ideas and positively impacting creative thinking. This is in line with concept of idea flow throughout the organization, which should also help to create a sense of shared commitment among team members. Finally, an environment which promotes mutual openness to ideas should be encouraged and ideas should be challenged in a constructive manner. Many of the aspects mentioned above are somewhat overlapping, making it perhaps superfluous to divide *encouragement of creativity* into three subordinate levels.

Freedom or autonomy

According to Amabile and colleagues creativity flourishes when individuals and teams have a relatively high level of autonomy. The thought being that autonomy gives individuals a greater sense of being in control, which subsequently fosters a higher sense of ownership and commitment to a project.

Resources

Resources refers to monetary resources, materials, facilities, as well as information. In terms of monetary resources it is a natural assumption that the amount of resources allocated to a creative project, will have an effect on the outcome – if resources are limited it may restrict an individual or team in their work. However, allocation of resources may also play a psychological role in people's perception of the importance of their work, thus affecting the intrinsic value of a project.

Pressures

Pressures can be grouped into two categories, one which fosters creativity and one which hinders it. Challenging work is considered a positive pressure in organizational creativity, so if an individual perceives their work to be challenging it will stimulate intrinsic motivation. Excessive workload pressure is considered to have a negative effect on creative achievement, the thought being that if a task at hand seems daunting it will overwhelm the individual and he or she will be less likely to conjure up a creative outcome. Amabile et al. (1996) argues that workload pressures will especially have a negative effect if it is a condition which is inflicted by others as a means of control, as oppose to self-imposed. However, time pressure which is perceived as important for the successful completion of a project can have a positive effect because it will be perceived as a work challenge.

Organizational Impediments to Creativity

It is suggested that formal and rigid management structures can obstruct organizational creativity. Amabile et al. (1996) argues that individuals will view these elements as controlling, thus lowering

intrinsic motivation. This suggests that the organizational structure and thus culture plays a vital role in generating creative outcome.

On a final note, I find it important to address that most research in this field has focused on how to foster creativity and only little effort has gone into exploring factors that hinder creativity. Though KEYS primarily focuses on the positive influences, some of the dimensions could also have a negative impact on creativity if not applied appropriately or adequately (Amabile et at. 1996).

Motivation as an important factor in creativity

Motivational factors are often described as the driving force behind creativity but there is often (if not always) made the distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation is a result of personal involvement in a domain, and the enjoyment and satisfactions that a person gets from being involved in a creative activity is viewed as a reward in and of itself. Whereas extrinsic motivation is characterized by external rewards or social approval (Collins and Amabile 2008). Because intrinsic motivation is self-based it is considered to be the most critical factor to creative achievement. In her earlier work, Amabile (1988) proposed that only intrinsic motivation would be conducive to creativity, whereas extrinsic motivation would be destructive. It is assumed that a high level of intrinsic motivation and a low of extrinsic motivation allows an individual to work independently and feel less pressured to conform, thus resulting in more novel and creative output (Csikszentmihalyi 1990).

Some of the more recent work within this field acknowledges extrinsic motivation as having a positive influence on creative outcome and even Amabile has revised her view on extrinsic motivation (1993). However, theories vary greatly in terms of which aspects of extrinsic motivation are considered to have a positive effect on creative achievement and to which extend it plays an important role. Common to them all, are the notion that the positive effects of extrinsic motivation are dependent upon an initial high level of intrinsic motivation (Amabile et al. 1996; Collins and Amabile 2008; Amabile 1993). Amabile labels this 'motivational synergy' and argues that "[…]*any extrinsic factors that support one's sense of competence without undermining one's sense of self-determination should positively contribute to intrinsic motivation*" (Collins & Amabile 2008, 306). Amabile points out that creativity is influenced by motivational factors at various stages in the creative process and that intrinsic motivation plays a crucial role in the earlier stages of the process, where the individual is engaged in problem identification and idea generation. Synergistic extrinsic motivation can then support at stages where novelty plays a less important role.

2.2.2 Team Performance

We are in an era of innovation - requiring creative thinking and constant idea generation. Production stages are sometimes complex and product life cycles are becoming shorter, so great efforts must be made in order to optimize coordination and collaboration within, and sometimes even outside, the organization. For a brief definition of what constitutes a team I find Nijstad's characterization most appropriate: that "[t]*eams are a special kind of group. One characteristic that I associated with teams (and not necessarily with all groups) is interdependence* […]" (Nijstad 2009, 165). Teamwork is especially significant in service industries and in the restaurant industry working in well functioning and dynamic teams is directly related to a successful outcome. Chefs in a haute cuisine kitchen functions as one team – but in addition each station also functions as a subordinate team. Meaning that there not only is a great interdependence between subordinate team members within in each station, but also an interdependence between the different stations (i.e. guests at one table may order different main courses, being prepared at two different stations and therefore requiring great coordination between the teams). This means that there within teams needs to be shared goals and that the team members are held mutually accountable. So unlike groups, teams require interaction and coordination.

Effective team characteristics

Working in teams is not in itself a guarantee for success and accordingly many scholars have looked into what constitutes an effective team. Some of the most commonly agreed characteristics are:

- A sense of commitment to the team
- Shared goals and objectives
- An acceptance of and conformity to team norms and values
- A feeling of mutual trust and dependency
- An open expression of feelings and disagreements
- A free flow of information and communication

Table 2.1 | Characteristics of effective teams
(Adopted from Mullins 2002,
as cited in Brooks 2003)

It is believed that a sense of commitment is increased by feelings of responsibility for the team's work and that without a sense of commitment, team members are less willing to make the possibly needed short term personal sacrifices for the overall benefit of the team. Team commitment is also through to be related to the extent to which the individual identify with their work environment (Schippers et al. 2003). In order to be effective, teams also need clear goals and objectives to which the members can focus their efforts, as well as evaluate their performance. Norms, explicit or implicit, are the ground rules that define appropriate and inappropriate behavior within the team (Levi 2001). Most group norms are implicit and develop, unconsciously, over time by the mutual influence and interaction of team members but in particular team leaders play a central role in shaping norms. Mutual trust and dependency is the belief that team members can depend on each other to achieve a common goal, and "[t]*his is especially true when team members perform a conjunctive and highly interdependent task, with a single output, and where the performance of the team is potentially measured by the poorest group member's performance along with that of the other teammates* […]" (Mach et al. 2010). An environment that supports the open expression of feelings and disagreements is thought to be more effective at solving problems. Moreover, the encouragement to share diverse opinions will also have a positive influence on the quality of decisions made (Levi 2001). Finally, a free flow of information will increase a team's mutual development of knowledge.

Cohesion and performance

There seems to be a discrepancy in opinions on the effects of team homogeneity and heterogeneity. Some argue that diverse teams can enhance innovation and productivity because it increases the search scope and amount of different ideas and knowledge available in the creative process. While others believe heterogeneity in teams to be a source of conflict, dissatisfaction and lower productivity, and that homogenized teams have a higher level of cohesion and therefore will be more effective (Nijstad 2009; Katila and Ahuja 2002; Chesborough 2003). Group cohesion refers to the interpersonal bonds that tie a group together and a majority of theorists argue that cohesiveness within a team has a positive impact on performance (Mullen and Copper 1994). Cohesion within a team implies that the members feel a sense of shared identity and belonging to the team, making team members more satisfied as whole group and better able to cope with stress and conflicts within the team. It is important to stress that a team can have a high level of cohesion but that its members might have very different skills or professions and thus be very heterogenic at the same time (Levi 2001). Though cohesion between team members is considered desirable, the concept of *groupthink* is thought to have a damaging effect on creativity and independent thinking – as groupthink is "[a]

mode of thinking that people engage in when they are deeply involved in a cohesive in-group,[and] *when members' strivings for unanimity override their motivation to realistically appraise alternative courses of action*" (Janis 1972, 9 cited in Nijstad 2009, 140).

Reflexivity and organizational learning

Team reflexivity if often highlighted as a crucial component of effective teams and organizational learning. Reflexivity can be defined as "*the extent to which group members overtly reflect upon, and communicate about the group's objectives, strategies* [..] *and processes* […], *and adapt them to current or anticipated circumstances*" (Schippers et al. 2003, 781). Amy Edmondson (1999; 2003) proposes that learning within a team setting is best facilitated through leadership behavior which promotes *psychological safety.* A psychological safe environment is one in which the team members feel "[…] *comfortable making suggestions, trying things that might not work, pointing out potential problems, and admitting mistakes* […]" (Edmondson et al. 2001, 131). The concept of psychological safety rests on the premise that people are naturally inclined to care about what others think of them and will, consciously or unconsciously, avoid behavior that has the potential to threaten their image (Edmonson 1999). Organizations striving for innovation often face uncertainty, requiring its organizational member to ask question and experimenting in the quest for novel ideas. However, if the organizational members do not perceive their work environment to be psychological safe, they will refrain from raising questions or possibly seeking guidance, in order to minimize the risk of being perceived as ignorant, incompetent, negative or disruptive (Edmondson 2003). Edmondson stresses that it often is the role of the team leader, who influences psychological safety and that "[a]*utocratic behavior, inaccessibility, or failure to acknowledge vulnerability all can contribute to team members' reluctance to incur the interpersonal risks of learning behavior*" (Edmondson 2003, 265). By abstaining from the behavioral patterns just described, and by facilitating and encouraging a psychological safe environment, team leaders improve and encourage organizational learning.

2.2.3 Leadership

This section on leadership should be viewed as an extension of the previous section on team performance. The formation of objectives (or goals), values and norms is greatly influenced by the team's leader and especially in the restaurant industry where the head chefs function as team leaders and play an important role in shaping the work environment. Leadership can mean many things and can be addressed from many angles but it is generally agreed that the role of the leader is closely linked to the facilitation of creativity and innovation. For the purpose of this thesis, I choose

to focus in particular on leadership characteristics as described by Friedrich et al. (2010). In their study, Friedrich et al. (2010) also focus on influencing factors at group level such as team diversity, which has already been addressed in the previous section on team performance, as well as influencing factors at organizational level (such as organizational structure). However, I choose only to include the elements of their study which deals specifically with leadership behavior.

Leadership characteristics

In their study evaluating how leaders' influence innovation, depending on type of innovation (product or process) as well as the level of innovation complexity, Friedrich et al. (2010) have identified three main leadership characteristics which influence creative and innovative processes. The main objective of this thesis is only to look at creative processes but seeing as creativity is a prerequisite for innovation, I find it relevant and valid to include literature that focuses on innovation.

Leader expertise (either, or both, technical and organizational expertise)	Acquired skill and knowledge within a given domain. Developed through experience and practice in this domain
Creative problem-solving skills	Only managing the creative process is not sufficient because leaders need to be able to engage and contribute to the creative thought processes
Transformational leadership behavior	Defining a mission that engages team members, as well as providing structure to ill-defined creative problems

Table 2.2 |Leadership characteristics

(own contribution – inspired by Friedrich et al. 2010)

Leader expertise

Friedrich et al. (20010) argue that a leader's technical expertise is more useful when it comes to product innovation, as he or she is more likely to be able identify novel product ideas, assess the viability of a product as well as possible barriers in the development process. Process innovation, on the other hand, requires the leader to posses organizational expertise in order to facilitate both the social and bureaucratic steps needed to implement process innovation.

Having both technical and organizational expertise is considered important when dealing with complex innovations. Technical expertise enables a leader to better understand and incorporate information from other domains whereas organizational expertise allows the leader to effectively coordinate the knowledge from different domains. However, when it comes to simple innovations, too much expertise can hinder creativity, as the leader is more likely to "[…] *approach creative problems with a more defined, scripted response developed after years of practice*" (Friedrich et al. 2010, 10).

Creative problem-solving skills

Instead of merely managing or overseeing the creative process, Friedrich et al. (2010) argue that leaders take part in the creative problem-solving. In the process of evaluating team members' ideas, the leader begins to "[…] *generate additional ideas or alternative perspectives of the problem* [and] *provide alternative examples that will help direct the continuing idea generation of the subordinates*" (Friedrich et al. 2010, 11). So a creative leader takes on both a generating and evaluative role in the creative process. Friedrich et al. further argues that the evaluative role is most significant when dealing with process innovation because this type of innovation can often result in diverse outcomes, which he or she needs to take into account. While process innovation is more often internally initiated, product innovation is more likely to be initiated by external factors such as changes in the market or competitors. Subsequently, team members are less likely to be familiar with the external factors driving the product innovation in comparison to internal factors driving process innovation. A leader thus needs to be able to not only evaluate the work of team members but more importantly direct as well as participate in the generating of ideas (Friedrich et al. 2010).

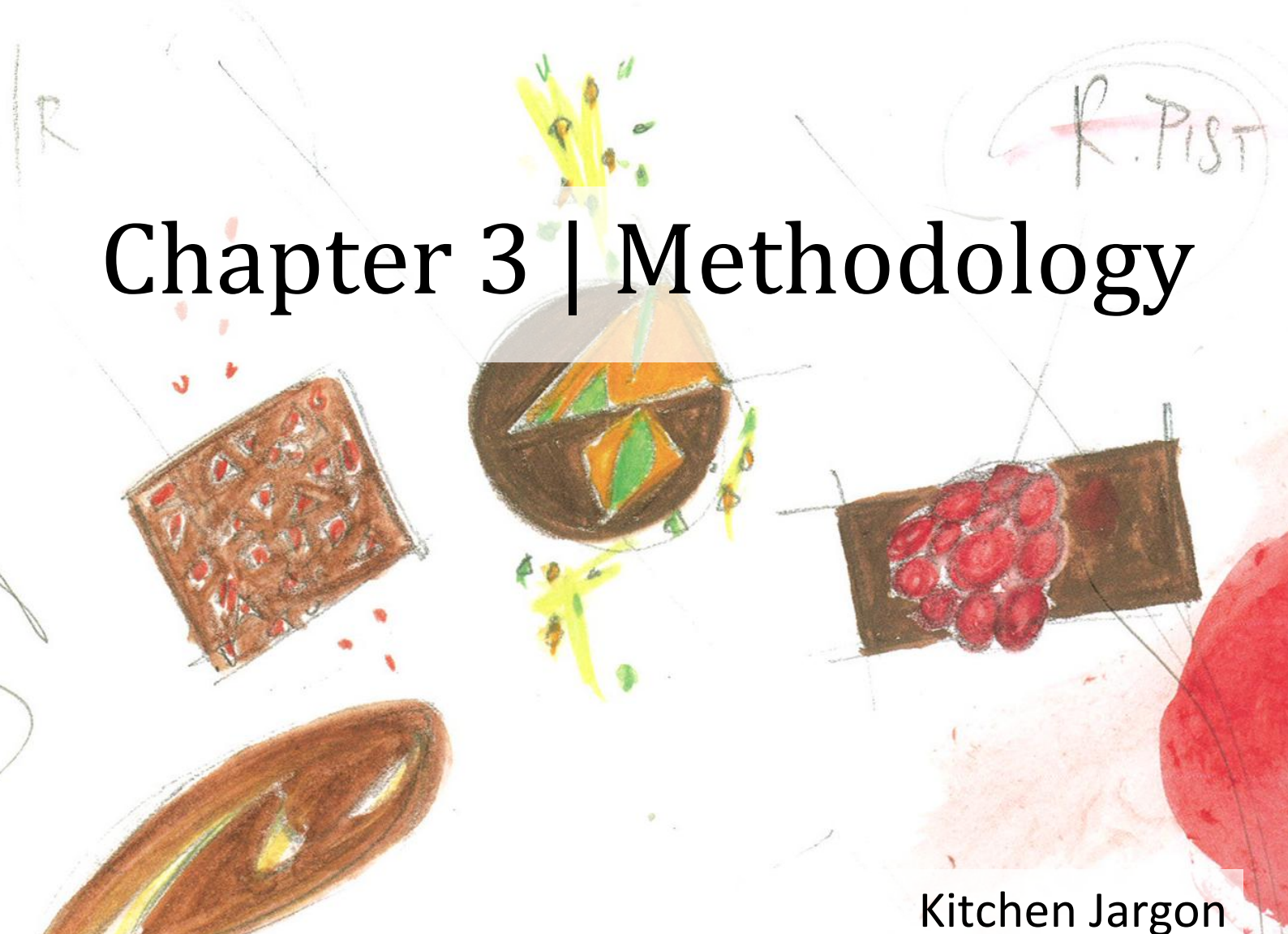
When distinguishing between simple and complex innovation, the importance of both evaluative and generative properties of a leader is stressed. However, it is argued that evaluative properties play a more significant role during complex innovation processes which focuses on long-term outcomes, as complex innovations have a broader scope and thus a wider range of factors which must be considered. In simple innovation processes, evaluative skills are more important when focusing on

novelty. Generative properties are considered to have the most positive effect when dealing with complex innovations (Friedrich 2010).

Transformational leadership behavior

Being able to define an innovation project's mission is deemed crucial in both process and product innovation. In process innovation it is more important for the leader to define a mission which engages and coordinates the project team members. Engaging team member is vital, as the outcome of process innovation can seem intangible and therefore clear definition of the overall purpose is needed. Process innovation often involves different organizational actors with different objectives, so coordinating the team members is crucial. The outcomes of product innovation are more tangible and therefore easier to convey to others. In such projects the leader's role in defining a project mission will therefore be focused more on defining a scope that guides the process of idea generation. Finally, with regards to level of innovation complexity, Friedrich et al. (2010) argues that defining a mission is more crucial in complex innovations and that an overly defined or inflexible mission can impede idea generation is simple innovation processes.

Chapter 3 | Methodology



Kitchen Jargon

Mise en Place:

French which translated to “putting in place”. Every chef prepares his or her personal mise en place during prep work in the kitchen – making sure that they have all of the basic ingredients and utensils that they will need during service (such as salt and cracked pepper, parsley etc.). Sometimes a chef’s utensils are also referred to as a *batterie de cuisine*.

Image by Paul Cunningham (2005)

3. Methodology

The purpose of this chapter is to present and discuss the methodological approach that serves as the foundation from which the research question is answered. I will first and foremost account for my ontological stance and epistemological position. Then address implications of how these choices will guide the research design, such as the data collection strategy as well as the analytical approach. As stated in the introduction, the main purpose of this thesis is to understand how the organizational culture and structure affect creativity in haute cuisine restaurants - a field within the creative industries which has been neglected in previous research, necessitating a strong explorative and inductive approach, aimed at generating new theory through empirical enquiry. Finally I address concerns relating to validity and reliability in relation to qualitative research.

3.1 Research Philosophy

I subscribe to the constructivist paradigm and thus believe in a subjective worldview. More specifically I define myself as a social constructionist and concur with the ontological notion that *reality* is the world which is created (constructed) in the process of social exchange, as opposed to being an autonomous objective entity (Bryman 2003). As such the focus of social constructionism is not to arrive at one objective reality but rather to uncover "*[…] the different meanings with which our worlds become invested*" (Burr 1998, 13). The social constructionist approach, as well as other interpretive approaches, is closely linked to the theoretical tradition of symbolic interactionism, which is based on three central beliefs: The belief that individuals will act towards objects in their environment based on the meanings that they attach to these objects. The belief that meanings of objects evolve through social interaction, and lastly, the belief that meanings are created and changed through processes of interpretations (Esterberg 2002). This means that there are multiple realities and that they are always changing or evolving. Adhering to a relativist ontology and thus a subjective worldview, does not imply that I will refrain from striving towards staying as unbiased as possible throughout the research process (Denzin and Lincoln 2000). My own experience in the restaurant industry, however short-lived it may be, has had an impact on how I perceive the industry and how I interact with its members. Rather than believing that it will be possible for me to stay 'truly' objective, I am keenly aware of my role in the research process and how it influences and shapes the final outcome. As a result, I have not only been assessing the quality and nature of the data while collecting and analyzing it, I have also been evaluating my role as researcher.

My ontological position influence my epistemological stance, and subsequently the methodological choices made and equally important in the choice of methods applied, is the nature of my research question. By asking '*how the organizational culture and structure affects culinary creativity*', the purpose of this thesis becomes focused on meanings, reflexivity and sense-making (Easterby-Smith et al. 2008). Accordingly, I choose to employ qualitative methods, rather than quantitative methods, as these are better suited for capturing the subjects' perspective as well as the contextual complexity within the field. The remainder of this chapter will focus on describing the research design and how qualitative data has been used in an effort to understand culinary creativity.

3.2 Analytical Approach

When looking at the overall structure of this thesis, as presented in the introductory chapter[10], it may appear to be a linear process. However, in reality the process can best be described as a circular one, where the production (or construction, if you will) of new knowledge is the result of a constant process of iteration. The research process is perhaps best described as serving an inductive logic. As can be seen from figure 3.1 I take my departure in the empirical world where the first priority is to gain an insight into the context of the restaurant industry, before settling on a research design strategy. In this case a preliminary contextual understanding was achieved through informal conversations with friends working in the industry, previous research within the field, as well as news articles and autobiographical accounts of renowned chefs (Bourdain 2007; Cunningham 2005; Redzepi 2010). The design of the research strategy was primarily based on my research question, as well as my ontological and epistemological positions presented above.

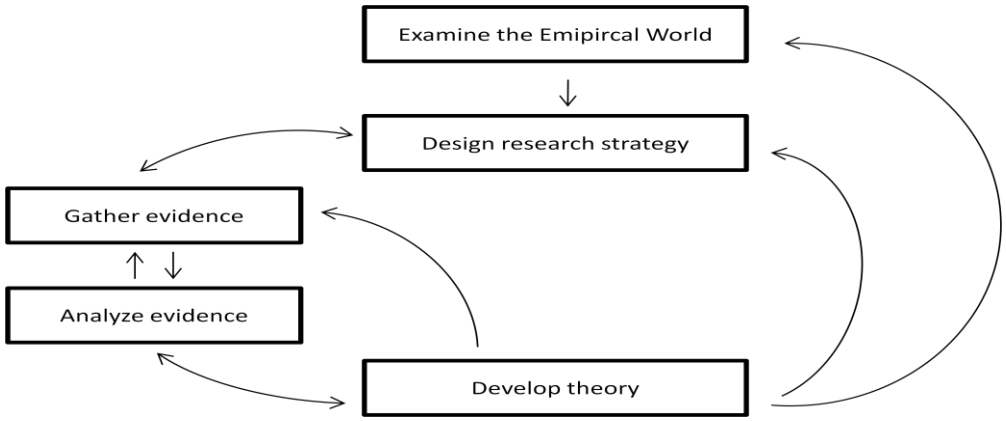


Figure 3.1 | An Inductive research approach

(adapted from Esterberg 2002)

[10] Section 1.6

3.2.1 Grounded Theory

In line with the overall inductive approach described above, I choose to employ a grounded theory approach which best can be described as "[...] *systematic inductive guidelines for collecting and analyzing data to build middle-range theoretical frameworks that explain the collected data*" (Charmaz 2000, 509). Grounded theory is a method well suited for an exploratory study such as this, where little is known about the subject at hand and a certain flexibility in the research process is needed. As such, the method does not prescribe ways of conducting interviews or observations but merely emphasizes the interrelationship between data collection, data analysis and the importance of conducted them simultaneously. Collecting and analyzing data should not be treated as a linear but circular and iterative process, whereby analysis of data starts at an early stage and influences the subsequent data collection where emerging ideas can be explored further. The systematic and consistent treatment of data, involving coding and conceptualization of data, means that emerging concepts are thus 'grounded' in the empirical world. The emerging concepts thus serve as building blocks for understanding how the organizational culture and structure influences creativity within the restaurant industry (Corbin & Strauss 1990b). The more specific details of how data has been coded and analyzed will be addressed in the next section.

3.3 Data

Acknowledging that literature in the field of culinary creativity is somewhat limited, it could be argued that I am starting somewhat from scratch. Subsequently this thesis will be characterized by an explorative inductive approach and seeing as the main purpose of my thesis is to generate new knowledge, it seems most appropriate to employ qualitative data methods rather than quantitative data methods. Qualitative methods are better suited at providing me with rich data. Rich in the sense that it provides me with insights into the way chefs act towards each other and the 'objects' in their world, and most importantly, what meanings they attach to them (Esterberg 2002). Meaning that cannot be extracted from quantitative data. Thus quantitative data is more appropriate when seeking to verify predetermined variable, whereas qualitative data focuses on discovering and defining these variables (Corbins & Strauss 1992). The methodological tools for collecting empirical data varies from primary data in the form of interviews, to secondary data comprised of articles as well as documentary film. These will be accounted for next.

3.3.1 Primary Data

The purpose of primary research is to generate data which is specific to the research question at hand. For this thesis the primary data consists of six semi-structured interviews conducted in June 2010 and December 2010, ranging from 20 to 40 minutes. Before going into details of how the interviews were prepared and conducted, I will briefly address the sampling strategy from which restaurants were selected.

The focus of this thesis is within the field of haute cuisine restaurants, which naturally limits the population from which to collect samples. Since this study is explorative in nature it makes little sense to use a probability sampling strategy. Seeing as I am interested in exploring a particular phenomenon within this part of the restaurant industry, that is creativity, I choose to make use of a purposive sampling method because I wish to ensure that restaurants representing certain creative attributes are included in the sample (Berg 2001). At first I contemplated only including restaurants from the Michelin's Guide Rouge seeing as it is considered the most authoritative guide and a benchmark within the industry. However, I discovered that a Michelin star is not synonymous with culinary creativity or innovation and it has even been argued that the guide is too conservative and leaning more towards classic French cuisine (Bjørn 2010)[11]. Instead, I focused on restaurant reviews from numerous dependable sources (also including the Michelin guide), and selected restaurants which had been described as creative and innovative, or in words denoting this. Due to the organizational structures in gourmet restaurants, I found it pertinent to obtain the different perspectives from various hierarchical levels. The 'realities' of an apprentice is likely to be different from that of the head chef., not only due to the differences in their level of skill but also because of their placement in the hierarchy. So instead of having a one-sided account from the head chef, I sought to include respondents from three different hierarchical levels within the same restaurant, thus allowing different opinions and experiences to emerge. Figure 3.2 illustrates the different respondents, their hierarchical position as well as level of training.

[11] Should be noted that the opinions are changing and some argue that Michelin inspectors are becoming more 'open-minded' (Kjær 2010).

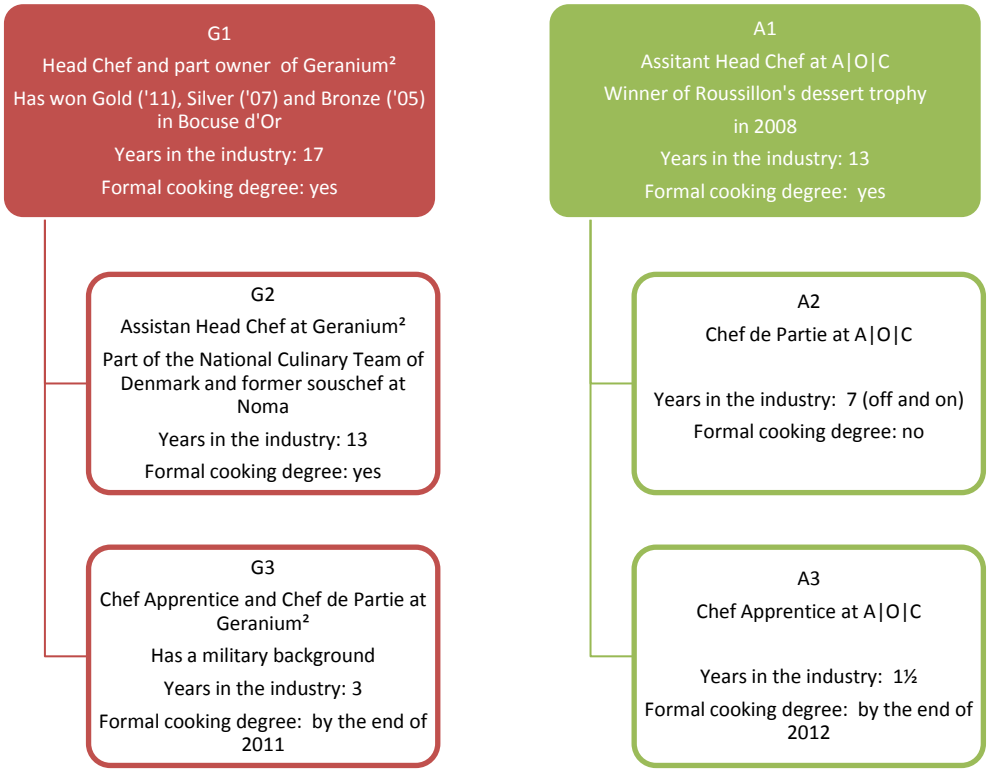


Figure 3.2 | Interview respondents[12]

Having conducted all the interviews and finalized the analysis, I realized that none of the respondents were female. In retrospect it would have been appropriate to have this side represented, but seeing as the restaurant industry is male dominated, I believe that the respondents are still representative of the industry (O'Doherty Jensen & Holm 1997).When I think of it, I don't remember seeing any women in the two kitchens I visited and when I have not chosen to go back into the field in order to get the female perspective, it is because I don't believe it to be vital in my understanding of the creative processes taking place within the restaurants.

Semi-structured interviews

I choose to make use of semi-structured interviews as this seemed most suited for the explorative nature of this thesis. Interviews are an efficient way of obtaining information about what is not easily observable, such as emotions and opinions. Choosing to conduct semi-structured interviews are more flexible than standardized and structured interviews by giving the researcher the possibility of probing for more in-depth responses when deemed necessary (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008).

[12] Abbreviations will be used when quoting a respondent

It is important to stress that questions changed from the first round of interviews to the second, as I gained new insight and progressed in my analysis. Interviews were conducted in the interviewee's native tongue in an effort to allow the respondents to express themselves as uninhibitedly and accurately as possible. Any excerpts from the interviews are translated by me, being careful as not to distort the meaning in the process[13]. Interviews were conducted face-to-face on site[14] as not to be an imposition to the respondents and their work. When searching for respondents for this study, some restaurants declined the invitation, often citing time constraints as the main reason. Interviewing the respondents in their work environment had some positive as well as negative sides. On the positive side, respondents were situated in an environment well know to them, likely making them more at ease with the situation. On the negative side, conducting the interviews in the restaurants meant that the respondents' colleagues were sometime within earshot, though it was not my impression that respondents didn't answered my questions candidly. Being situated in a restaurant environment also made it more difficult to transcribe the interviews afterwards, due to some background noise.

3.3.2 Secondary Data

While primary data is tailored towards the study at hand, "[t]he aim of secondary research is to extract new findings and insights from existing data" (McGivern 2006, 151). In this study I have had to rely on secondary data when it proved to be more difficult to gain access to the restaurants than first expected. Many restaurants reported time constraints as the main reason for not wishing to participate in the study. The secondary data used, consists mainly of magazine articles featuring head chef interviews and a film documentary produced by the Danish Broadcasting Corporation (DR).

Secondary data can in some cases prove to be just as valuable as primary data. And not only is it less time consuming to collect but in this case, it provided me with an insight into a particular restaurant, Noma, which would have been difficult to obtain otherwise. In the case of DR's documentary, *Noma på kogepunktet*[15], a film crew followed the daily life in the highly praised restaurant for a period of four months. Something which would have been very difficult, if not impossible, for me to do. After the documentary aired the head chef at Noma, Rene Redzepi, was disgruntled with the editing and complained that the documentary focused too heavily on his outbursts of rage. I of course take into consideration that this is a documentary which has been edited with the purpose of telling a specific story, but in my analysis of data I have primarily focused on the interview sequences of the documentary.

[13] Quotes in the original language can be found the transcripts (see appendixes)
[14] In the restaurants
[15] Translates to 'Noma at boiling point'

In the next section, I will touch upon the overall analytical approach of the thesis and go into details of how the empirical data has been treated.

3.3.3 Data Analysis

In order to be able to treat data consistently, I transcribed interviews as well as the documentary film. In the process of transcribing the documentary I made sure to include non-verbal communication so this could be included in the analysis as well. I was left with 79 pages of interview and documentary transcripts, as well as 37 pages of secondary interviews collected from magazines and online news sources. Employing a grounded theory approach involves going through the data numerous times, breaking it down into conceptual labels before putting it back together in new ways, thus building new theory which is grounded in data (Corbin & Strauss 1990a). I initiated the first cycle of coding by using an open coding process[16], thus remaining "[…] *open to all possible theoretical directions*" (Charmaz 2006, 46 cited Saldaña 2009, 81). The first coding cycle fosters provisional themes which can be very varied and 'pointing' in different directions, however "[e]ach *concept earns its way into the theory by repeatedly being present* […] *or by being significantly absent"* (Corbin and Strauss 1990b, 7). Demonstrating a concept's relevance in the evolving theory limits any potential biases on my part. So however intriguing I may find a particular concept, it cannot be included if it does not prove to 'hold' continuously throughout the research process. In order to develop the most salient categories, I conducted a second cycle of coding and this time focused on the initial codes which seemed to be most fruitful from an analytical perspective (Saldaña 2009). Data which was coded with similar codes were grouped together and labeled under an overall category, encompassing what was deemed most significant to that category. Throughout the data collection and initial coding process, analytical memo writing was used in order to capture my initial reflections of the data. Finally categories where formulated into themes which are presented as analytical concepts in the next chapter of this thesis (chapter 4).

3.4 Validity and Reliability

It can be debated whether or not it is appropriate to use the terms 'validity and reliability' when it comes to qualitative research. Some argue (i.e. Guba and Lincoln 1985; 1994) that using the terms 'validity and reliability' are not appropriate when addressing qualitative research seeing as qualitative research is inherently different from quantitative research and should therefore not be

[16] Sometimes also referred to as initial coding

evaluated using the same measures. Guba and Lincoln's parallel to the concept of validity and reliability is labeled *trustworthiness and authenticity*, which sets forth various criteria for assessing qualitative research (Guba and Lincoln 1985; 1994). Though it is an important and valid consideration to have in mind that qualitative research serves a different purpose from that of quantitative research, I still choose to use the terms 'validity and reliability' because many of the *trustworthiness* and *authenticity* standards are concerned with evaluating the research after it has been carried out, rather than serving as a guideline for ensuring rigor throughout the research process. Instead, I concur with Morse et al. 2002, who argue that Guba and Lincoln's measurements of trustworthiness and authenticity, redirect the responsibility of judging validity and reliability towards external 'auditors' such as the consumer of qualitative research: Thus serving as merely an evaluative element which is applied after the research process has taken place, instead of making sure to incorporate 'evaluation strategies' for good qualitative research into the research process itself. To ensure that the findings in my thesis can be considered as valid and reliable, I adopt the *verification strategies* of Morse et al. (2002), which have been described as "*the process of checking, confirming, making sure, and being certain"* (Morse et al. 2002, 17). These verification strategies address five different areas that a researcher needs to have in mind when planning as well as executing qualitative research, in the effort to "[…] *incrementally contribute to ensuring reliability and validity, and, thus, the rigor of a study*" (ibid). The verification strategies are as follows:

Methodological coherence: This simply means that there is a coherence between the research question and methods applied. Coherence between choice of data, analytical procedures and so on. I would argue that the purpose of this chapter has been to establish this coherence.

Sampling sufficiency: Sampling must be appropriate and consist of the participants who best represent or have knowledge of the research topic. Morse et al. argues that negative cases should be sought, which I have not done. Seeing as this an exploratory study it can be difficult to pinpoint what constitutes a negative case and instead of collecting data from restaurants which could not be considered creative, I chose to focus my resources on cases where I was sure creativity would be present.

Collecting and analyzing data concurrently*:* Through previous experience and my network, I may have some sense of what the restaurant industry is like. However, the more 'engaged' I become in the field, the broader my perspective becomes and thus shaping the further research. As Morse et al. explains, it is the "[…] *mutual interaction between what is known and what one needs to known*"

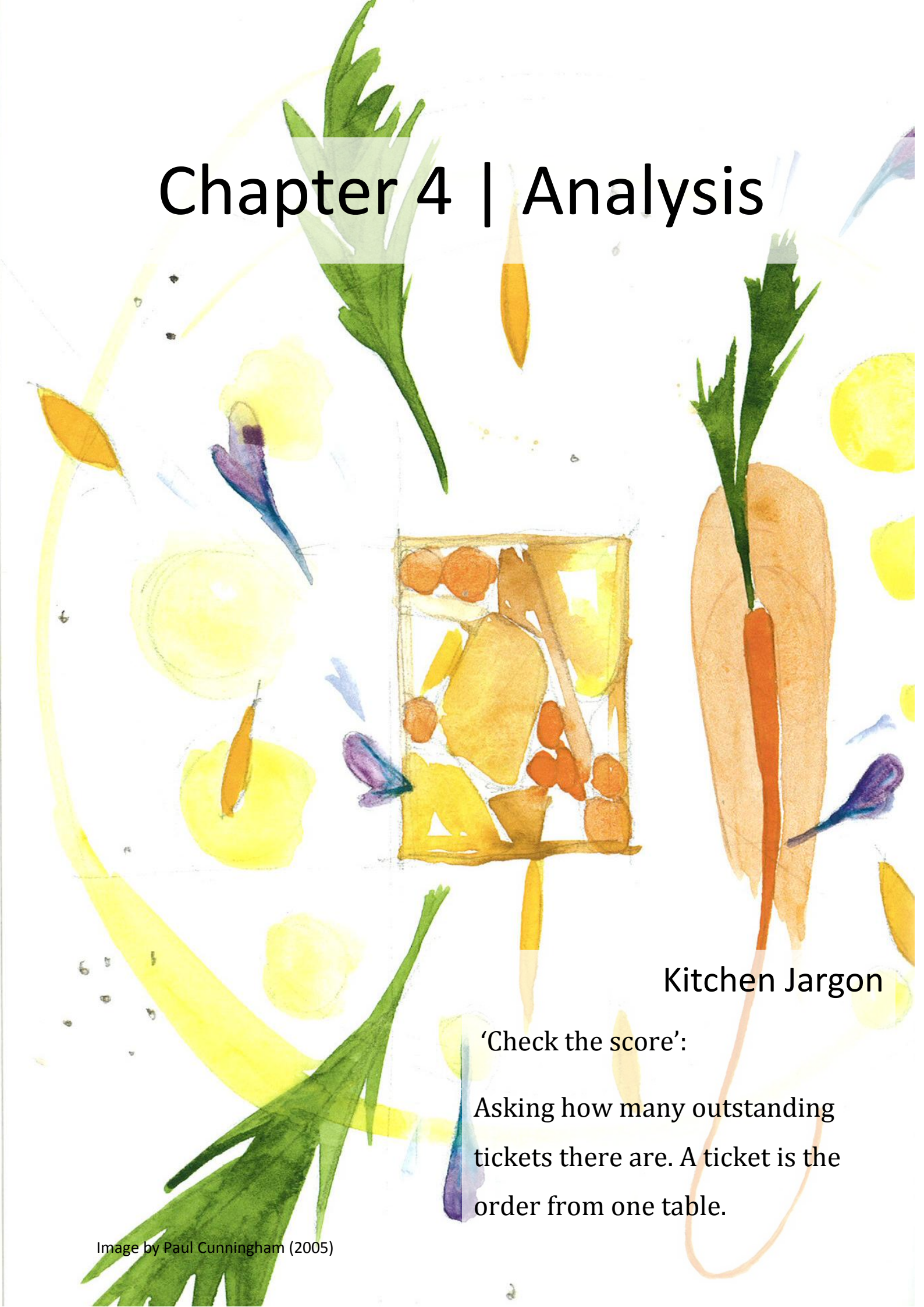
(Morse et al. 2002, 18). This particular verification strategy is concurrent with the basic principles of the grounded theory approach which I am employing.

Thinking theoretically: Meaning that emerging ideas are reconfirmed in new data and that new ideas are verified in "old" data: Again this is an approach which is also a significant part of the grounded theory method, where one makes sure that ideas have 'earned' their way into the analysis.

Theory development: Continuously moving between a micro perspective (of data) and a macro perspective (of conceptual understanding).

I also believe that transparency is an important factor when it comes evaluating of the validity and reliability of a study because it makes it easier for the readers to draw their own conclusions with regards to the research process. The detailed accounts in this methodology chapter, as well as the diligence demonstrated in other chapters will help to elucidate how this thesis arrives at its conclusion.

Chapter 4 | Analysis



Kitchen Jargon

‘Check the score’:

Asking how many outstanding tickets there are. A ticket is the order from one table.

Image by Paul Cunningham (2005)

4. Analysis

In this chapter I present the five main analytical themes arrived at through a grounded theory approach. The first analytical perspective addresses issues of how a chefs' identity are closely linked to their occupation, the personal sacrifices it take to work at the top gastronomic level and the passion for their work, which some chefs describe as a hobby.

The second theme examines the no-error culture within the restaurant industry and looks at how chefs constantly strive towards perfection in their work and the implications of having to perform under pressure.

A third analytical concept looks at how the head chef takes on the role as artist, while other chefs are to be considered as craftsmen. I address the significance of the head chef and his/her role as an inspirational leader before going into details of the other chefs' contribution to the creative process, and sometimes lack hereof.

Then in the fourth analytical theme I addresses how a constant focus on development and learning takes place at different levels: the personal level, which means that chefs are always focusing on improving their culinary skills; the organizational level, which mean that the head chefs' constantly focus on improving dishes and develop new ideas; and finally across organizational boundaries, where chefs will go to other restaurants on internships.

The fifth and final analytical theme explores motivational factors, both intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation.

4.1 Work as a Lifestyle

The main objective of this introductory analytical theme is to offer an understanding of the personal implication as well as incentives of being chef.

> *"In many ways it becomes a way of life"*
>
> G1, 3

This analytical theme addresses issues of how a chef's identity is closely linked to his occupation, the personal sacrifices it take to work in an haute cuisine restaurant and finally the passion for their work, which some chefs describe as a hobby.

Identity as a chef

It is not uncommon that people's identity is closely linked to their occupation but in this part of the restaurant industry (haute cuisine) the phenomenon seems to be especially present. Whether it is due to the long hours spent in the kitchen, leaving little time for anything else, or the distinctive culture, I can only speculate. The chefs I interviewed seemed to be highly aware of the industry's reputation of a poor work environment and often tried to downplay these aspects of their job. However, at the same time I found that they continually reinforced my perception of the restaurant industry as a tough place to work. I would argue that the chefs, to some extent, take pride in the industry reputation and makes them feel part of an 'exclusive' club because not everybody can 'hack' it. When asked to describe the industry to an outsider like me, a chef responded: "*Brutal* […] *it is tough and you have to like it. I mean, I can't really… I can't really understand why people would want to work in restaurants, if they didn't like it. You really have to be passionate about the work you do, because it is tough*" (A2, 1-2).

In his autobiographical book, *Kitchen Confidential: Adventures in the Culinary Underbelly*, Anthony Bourdain describes how working as a chef gives you the sense of being part of a subculture and "[…] *a secret society with its own language and customs*" (Bourdain 2007, xvi). So what makes chefs identify so strongly with their occupation is that it gives them a sense of belonging or a feeling of being part of something bigger. Even more so, a recurring theme throughout the analysis of data has been the depiction of how the choice of becoming a professional chef has been a turning point in their lives. For some becoming a chef has been a way of keeping out of trouble, or starting over: "*It was actually while I was doing time, that I thought; 'now you have to pull yourself together'. And then, uh, then I had to choose what I wanted the most and that was of course to cook. Then I started training as a chef* " (Noma 2008, 7). Others describe how being a chef has given them a sense of

purpose and direction in life or how they felt 'out of place' before joining the culinary field (A2; A3; Noma 2008).

Working as a chef can take its toll on a person. Not only does it require physical stamina but an emotional endurance is equally important if you are to operate at the gastronomic level of a Michelin starred restaurant. Burnout is not an uncommon phenomenon in the industry and early retirement is twice as high in the hotel and restaurant industry compared to other industries, and eight out of ten will go into early retirement (Ravn 2008). Burnout also seemed to be present in the minds of many of the respondents and was frequently addressed:"[…] *but I could see myself working in the kitchen at thirty-five or thirty-eight. But when we get into the forties, then I don't know. Then you are starting to get tired*" (A3, 5). This raises an interesting question: if their self-perception and identity is so closely linked to their profession as a chef, what happens when they can no longer keep up and are 'forced' to quit - a loss of identity? This is a question which is not within the scope of this thesis but nonetheless an interesting point to consider.

Personal sacrifice

Being a chef and operating at the highest level doesn't come without a cost. Chefs work long hours, often fourteen to sixteen hours shifts, leaving little room for anything else (G1; A1; Noma 2008; Aggersbjerg 2010). When asked what the worst thing about the job is, a chef replied: "[…] *I guess everything outside of the job and the toll it takes on your personal life… and your physical health and your mental sanity. […] I mean you can get very frustrated and you can get very discouraged. You work very long hours for extended periods of time and you find your emotions… you are a bit strung out. So, I say the worst part of the industry is just keeping motivated with the job. Day in and day out. And of course what happens outside of work and how you are able to balance*" (A2, 2).

Working as a chef at this level thus requires total dedication and often personal sacrifices. For some the sacrifice is too big: "[b]*eing chef… I am completely… and waiter as well… that is gone. You have to really want it to be in this business because it is really tough… and you work a lot. And it takes a toll on your free time and your friends and family and stuff like that. That, I was probably not ready for*" (Noma 2008, 24). There is nothing exceptional about a young apprentice's decision of dropping out but what make this quote from DR's documentary interesting, is that the young apprentice in previous scenes had expressed his total dedication to the restaurant and his passion for the cooking. Going through my data, I kept stumbling upon what could be characterized as the restaurant industry workers' mantras; '*You have to really want it*' and '*I am really passionate about this*' (Noma 2008; Bollerup Adersen 2010b; A1; A2; G1; G3). The personal sacrifice of being a chef at this level is so great that you have to really want it in order for it to be worth it. However, the phrase above (or variations of it) were repeated so many times, that I came to think of it as a cliché. Not only do you as

a chef have to show dedication through your work, you also have to express total dedication at all times. As a chef you have to let your peers know that you are as dedicated as them. As Anthony Bourdain describes it *"*[*y*]*ou can't be seen as a clock puncher in a good restaurant. You have to care. If you don't, you lose your status in the little society. You're seen as a traitor and a liability*" (Morse 2002, 58). Chefs do not only have to show dedication to their work, they also have the pressure of knowing that any mistakes they make will affect their team members, who have made personal sacrifices to be there.

Work equals hobby

Having just depicted the personal sacrifices it takes to be in this line of business, one might wonder why anyone would want to work in the field of haute cuisine. However, in the interview sessions, whenever issues of personal sacrifice and the long hours spent in the kitchen were brought up in the conversation, it was often followed by the immediate response of their passionate and interest in their work and that the long hours therefore were insignificant. Many even described their work as a fulltime hobby: "[…] *you do it just as much because of the interest you have. Because, at least for me, it is a kind of hobby. My hobby I make a living from*" (G2, 5). Common to all of the chefs interviewed is that they are extremely dedicated to their work and have a passion cooking. However the point at which they became so passionate differs very much from person to person. Some describe themselves as always having an interest and passion for cooking and then starting in the field, while other started as an apprentice just as something to do and then, not until they were in the field, did it develop into a passion.

What this introductory analytical theme has shown is how operating as a the level of haute cuisine requires substantial sacrifices, as it requires total dedication and leaves little room for anything else in the lives of the exceptional chefs. Nonetheless I have also outlined how these personal sacrifices are counterbalanced by the self-actualization needs that are fulfilled by taking part in the culinary creation and the sense of belonging to an exceptional team.

4.2 No-error Culture

Operating at the highest gastronomic level does not only require passion and dedication as described in the previous analytical concept but also means being constantly evaluated from critics, leavings no room for making mistakes. In order to be voted the best restaurant in the world on S. Pellegrino's ranking list, a majority of the 806 jury members will have had to dine at the restaurant within the past eighteen months. That combined with the Michelin Guide inspectors and other restaurant critics, a restaurant like Noma can expect at least one if not two critics to be seated in the dining room every day (Guldagger 2010).

> *"In our line of work you have to work really hard to reach success. Perfection has to be achieved every night right? That is a psychological pressure which can be difficult to handle"*
>
> Noma 2008, 1

This analytical theme addresses the issue of no error culture within the restaurant industry by examining how chefs constantly strive towards perfection in their work and the implications of having to perform under pressure.

Striving for perfection

Going through the data, I found the term *perfection* uttered quite often. However, it is a term which can be difficult to grasp, because what constitutes perfection? I choose to define perfectionism as "[…] *behavior linked to the process of setting very high standards or demanding goals of achievement for oneself or for others and evaluating performance based on those standards*" (Leonard & Harvey 2008, 585-586). In the restaurant industry I found that these standards are often, if not always, set by the head chef. Not only do chefs have to deliver a product that lives up to the head chef's standards but they have to deliver it at just the right time and deliver an almost identical product over and over again. Oftentimes a dish will not be served to a guest before it has been approved by either the head chef or assistant head chef, because everything going out of the kitchen has to be perfect and thus inspected beforehand. One of the head chefs explains that "[*w*]*hen you reach this level…. this is the other side of the coin. Then there is no room for mistakes. If something is served to the guest which is a mistake, it is almost unforgivable*" (Noma 2008, 2). From an outside perspective such a statement may seem exaggerated but in haute cuisine kitchens perfection is all there exists.

In the restaurant industry the head chef's professional reputation is very closely linked to the restaurant's reputation. This close link means that the head chef takes it as a personal insult when other chefs in the restaurant are not performing up to par. This became evident in a scene from the documentary, where the head chef is reprimanding a chef for making a mistake: "[…] *do you understand how ridicules it makes me feel that… how many times have we talked about? Ten times? Do you understand that when you do it now, it… I feel like you are giving me a fuck finger*" (Noma 2008, 5). Later in an interview the head chef explains that his exasperation and outbursts are brought on by the feeling of having invested so much time and effort into the restaurant, that it is difficult to stay calm when mistakes are made and as he puts it "[…] *there is just so much personality in it*" (Noma 2008, 5). The dishes served in the restaurant should be seen as an extension of the head chef, his ambition and identity (Guldagger 2010).

Not only does a chef have the pressure of performing to the satisfaction of the head chef but he or she also feels a pressure from other colleagues. When asked about the work environment in the industry, an apprentice responded that "[…] *because there are a lot of people who all are really interested in what they do, we also have… there are quite high expectations to the level we are at. For this reason we easily get irritated if people are not living up to the expectations in our head*" (G3, 4). Another chef puts it into perspective by explaining that because everybody else is working really hard, you have to do the same (G2). As mentioned in the previous analytical theme, being a chef requires dedication and often involves personal sacrifice when working long hours. In the kitchen there is a great interdependency on each other's work, so making mistakes means letting down your team members who have made a personal sacrifice to be there.

The strong focus on perfection also means that mistakes in the kitchen don't go unnoticed: "*Out there* [in the Kitchen] *I demand that they do their best every day and that they are super motivated. Uhm, and sloppiness I can't tolerate... at all. And they are told this*" (G1, 10). Chefs are immediately notified if their performance is inadequate but at the same time there is the prevailing belief among chefs, that you have to be able to 'shake it off' and carry on working: "w*ell it affects you but you can't let it get to you too much because you, if you do, you will not be able to carry on. It will just affect your work*" (Noma 2008, 17). Several chefs report that the critique and harsh tone at times can defeat their self confidence but continually stress that it is their own responsibility to 'man up' and keep going (G2; Noma 2008; A2). The head chef has an interest in elevating his team members' performance but at the same time engages in behavior which has the potential to jeopardize this.

The constant focus on perfection also presents a paradox within the restaurant industry. When asked about how new dishes are developed, a chef reveals something very significant about the industry mentality: "*You can spend a really long time setting it up* [a new dish]. *Rarely a dish will be just right the first time around. Perhaps you think that; 'oh now it is good'. And then you think; 'this is perfect'. But as soon as you have something which is perfect, right, then you start to look at it in a different way*" (G3, 4). Chefs are thus constantly striving towards achieving perfection which doesn't exist. This point is underscored in a scene from the documentary where chefs are in the process of developing a new dessert in the restaurant. The head chefs starts off by stating his approval of the dish but then, later in the process, his perception changes and he exclaims "*we need to be extraordinarily critical* […] *and we are not there, we are nowhere near it*" (Noma 2008, 11). The head chef at another restaurant puts it into a broader perspective and explains that as soon as you think you *have it* you will start to slack off and thus affecting the quality of your work (G1). It is not surprising that many chefs describe themselves as their toughest critic (G1; Noma 2008; A1; G2) and only by being overly critical towards their own work, can they ensure that the expectations of external critics are met.

Working under pressure

A big part of being a chef is not only having to deliver a perfect product to the guests but also having to do it while working under extreme pressure. As mentioned above, there is a high level of interdependency on each other's work in the industry and teamwork is often emphasized as a critical component of success. Several times I have stumbled upon the notion that *service* in a professional kitchen is the equivalent of playing a Champions League semifinal every day (Nielsen 2010; G2). This is also reflected rhetorically in the kitchen: "[c]*ome on boys. It is the next thirty minutes that will define if we win or lose*" (Aggersbjerg 2010, 90). Chefs are not only working under time pressure, they also have to work through pain and physical discomfort: "*When I first started at elBulli. The chefs were constantly yelling 'come on. You do not slouch'. In the beginning it really irritated me, but later on I came to understand why they did it. When you work 14-16 hours at a time you are always tired and if you are not in constant movement, you will crash*" (Aggersbjerg 2010, 90). Working in a haute cuisine kitchen, thus requires both physical and emotional stamina.

From an outsider's perspective looking into the kitchen it can seem as a very chaotic environment, but in fact everything is very orderly. Throughout the day, before service starts, chefs will congregate several times in order to plan ahead for the rest of the day and night, as well as evaluate the progress of the day when service has ended. Everything which can be done to eliminate mistakes and minimize surprises during service is organized during prep. "*When we make mistakes, it is often due*

to poor planning, and we are not permitted to make any mistakes. The flipside of Noma's success is that people are expecting perfection every times. It is a huge psychological pressure" (Aggersbjerg 2010, 85). Other than planning and preparing for service, chefs spend time creating and testing ideas - new dishes served in the restaurant have been thoroughly tested before making it way to the diners' table. The process of developing a new dish varies greatly in length but common to all restaurant in this study, is that the dishes have been scrutinized from every angle (taste, textures, composition etc.) and often tested in various versions before settling on the final outcome (A1; A3; Noma 2008; G1; G2; G3). Despite careful preparation it is not possible to completely eliminate surprises, however sometimes uncertainty can even foster creativity by pushing chefs out of their comfort zone. This was the case at Noma where a head chef from another Michelin starred restaurant in town, having made a reservation under an alias, turned up at the restaurant accompanied by a restaurant critic's wife. At first the head chef at Noma was infuriated because the menu which he had been planning on serving had already been consumed by the other head chef several times before. Not wanting to allow an industry peer to have the satisfaction of being able to point fingers at his lack of ingenuity, he was forced to create new dishes on the spot, without prior testing - some of the dishes turned out so successful that they were added to the regular menu the very next day (Skyum Nielsen 2009). In their book *Artful Making*, Austin and Devin address issues concerning improvisation versus control and argue that "[t]*he key to improvisation is preparation*" (Austin & Devin 2003, 142). This can perhaps sound paradoxical but in fact the example from Noma illustrates this point perfectly. If the head chef had not acquired a certain skill level through his many years of training, he would not have the capabilities of maneuvering within uncertainty and would not have been able to improvise successfully.

Finally, I wish to address a work environment issue within restaurants which I find particularly interesting. That the tone in the kitchen is sometime rough seems to be accepted by the chefs and never once did I come across the opinion that the head chef demanded too much or were out of line in their critique. Perhaps this is because the chefs were reluctant to share this opinion with me or did not want to seem disloyal, but even more so I believe that it is because it is an accepted part of the industry, almost to be expected. When talking about the harsh tone and critique from the head chef, a chef reveals a prevailing perception in the industry: "*yeah, and the worst thing though, is that he is always right you know. It is not like, he is… he would never get angry with you for like a stupid reason. It is also about, he wants you to learn. He wants… because we are all spending like 16 hours in the kitchen every day – you got to be doing it for the right reasons you know*" (Noma 2008, 18). Critical

evaluation of one's work is both accepted and even expected by chefs, who view it as part of their training and culinary evolvement.

I also found that many of the chefs will internalize the critique, something which became evident in a scene from the documentary where the new chef, Piotr from Poland, did not perform as required: "*To be honest, like, I was feeling like I am going to quit this job, to be honest. I was like, I was thinking I don't want to be here… why I do it. I am working so many hours, I am not good enough. Maybe I should go to a place like… I don't know, place like, maybe… I have been working before, maybe to some hotel, like. I don't know. I have been working like five star hotel, fine dining restaurant, but never, never so high standard*" (Noma 2008, 17). Chefs will often internalize critique seeing as the head chef is never thought to be wrong or unreasonable. In the restaurant industry it is imperative that you take accountability of work. Interestingly, the head chef will also claim the responsibility of the staff's underperformance, attributing it to his own poor judgment of chefs' skill level (Noma 2008; G3; Bourdain 2007).

4.3 Artist vs. Craftsman

Today being creative and innovative is just as important an aspect of the restaurant industry as it is in any other industry. However, it appears that there is a clear distinction between being a culinary artist and a culinary craftsman. Head chefs express a desire to get other chefs involved in the creative process and to a certain degree they do take part in this process. Yet, at the end of the day, chefs are hired for the purpose of executing the ideas and visions of the head chef.

> *" You want creatively thinking chefs, who can perhaps also be part of developing the kitchen. That they really understand why it is so important that the last two percent of energy are put into this dish "*
>
> Noma 2008, 11

This analytical theme looks at how the head chef takes on the role as artist, while other chefs are to be considered craftsmen. I address the significance of the head chef and his/her role as an inspirational leader before finally going into details of the other chefs' contribution to the creative process, and sometimes lack hereof.

Head chef as an artist, chefs as craftsmen

Before embarking on this research project I had little knowledge of the creative processes taking place in restaurants. What I have found is that the culinary creative process varies from restaurant to restaurant, and that it can even vary from time to time within the same restaurant. However, I did find some common aspects across the restaurants studied. As mentioned previously, a restaurant's reputation is closely linked to the professional reputation of the head chef in charge and vice versa a head chef's reputation is closely linked to the restaurant's success, which to a large extend is based on external reviews. Everything coming out of the kitchen has the stamp of approval from the head chef, who therefore runs a tight control over the creative process of developing new dishes. A restaurant's creative output is thus the product of the head chef's visions and ambition, while the other chefs' work is centered around bringing this vision to life. One of the chefs interviewed, describes his job in relation to the head chef in the following manner: "[…] *our task is to understand what his vision is. What his perspective is… try and get a hold of his thoughts* […] *we, I mean, we copy his thoughts, right*" (G3, 2). I therefore make the distinction between head chefs as artists and other chefs as craftsmen. However, chef are part of the creative process but their role is concerned with providing the head chef with feedback on his ideas, fine tuning dishes and making them operational in the kitchen.

Despite the clear distinction in roles and the head chef's position as 'lead designer', data shows that the head chefs view the involvement of others chefs in the creative process as important (G1; A1; Noma 2008; Aggersbjerg 2010). Only occasionally will chef be asked to contribute with ideas for new dishes and I have found that it is always within a restrictive framework of ingredients, specified by the head chef (G1; G2; A1; A3; Noma 2008). Involving chefs in the creative process should also be seen as a strategy which head chefs deliberately use in the development of the chefs' skills (G1; Noma 2008). The thought being that the more chefs experience the process of developing a dish themselves, the better they will become at executing it in practice, because "[m]*any chefs are mechanical and robot-like in their approach to the food and ingredients. That means that they can follow a recipe but that they don't understand it*" (Aggersbjerg 2010, 90). In the documentary about Noma, we are witness to an episode where the head chef scolds an apprentice for not cutting the asparagus in the correct length: "*These are too long. Fabio come here. Come here! And cut these away, okay! Why are they too long, why, why do I think that they are too long? Do you at all understand why I think that, or do you just do as you are told? Do you know why they are too long?*[…] *can you get these into your mouth when they are this big. Use your common sense.. right?"* Noma 2008, 7-8). The apprentice was expected to know the head chef's thoughts behind the execution of a dish and 'just' following orders were not considered adequate. The notion of chefs being too robotic-like was something that I encountered several times and it was always considered as negative and a hindrance in creative thinking (G1; Noma 2008; Aggersbjerg 2010). This can seem somewhat paradoxical seeing as chefs, throughout their apprenticeship and continual training in the kitchen, are taught to be disciplined and obey orders from the head chef without asking too many questions. In order to make the transition from chef and craftsman to head chef and artist, a chef will have to 'unlearn' part of what he or she has been trained to do.

Head chef as inspirational leader

A head chef functions as team leader in the kitchen and is responsible for formulating the overall culinary mission and providing structure to the other chefs. And in addition, the head chef is usually the most experienced and skilled chef in the kitchen and thus able to identify novel ideas, as well as assessing the viability of new dishes and any possible barriers in the production. Through his or her expertise, the head chef often functions as inspirational leader and throughout the data collected, it was evident that the chefs respect and admire their head chef. To a modern knowledge worker such as myself, it may seem puzzling that you would nurture respect for an management figure who at times will yell at you for making mistakes but in the restaurant industry chefs seem to accept this behavior: "*It is not just some jerk who is yelling at you. It is a man you have deep respect for, a man*

who is deeply respected in the industry. So you can… you have something to look up to" (Noma 2008, 8). Admiration is not a prerogative that is automatically granted to the head chef but is earned through showing dedication and willingness to also do the brunt of the work. As Anthony Bourdain explains: "C*ooks always like to see their* [head] *chef come in before them, leave after them, and always work at least as hard, or better yet, harder than them. And they want their* [head] *chef to be capable of doing anything they're able to do. Because you're going through what they're going through, there's camaraderie*" (Morse 2002, 58). In the kitchens I visited while conducting interviews and in the documentary film as well, I noticed that chefs at all levels were pitching in with even the most tedious work such as picking herbs. Not only does the head chefs reinforce team spirit by partaking in the more dreary work during prep but it also gives them the opportunity to 'bond' with staff. Service is the most hectic time during the day and working under pressure can sometimes cause tempers to rise, while prep is time for collegial bonding and chit chat. In general there seems to be a code of conduct within the restaurant industry which is centered around loyalty and 'earning' respect from your peers. So when Noma hired a restaurant manager with a business degree and no industry experience, he also needed to step into the kitchen to earn their respect and to show that he was a team player: "*I wanted to show that I gladly would try to do the same as them. I didn't want to 'sit on my throne' and I wanted to experience how tough it was. Because it was tough*" (Nielsen 2010, 28).

That head chefs function as inspirational leaders also becomes evident when many chefs and head chefs refer to head chefs they have previously worked under (Redzepi 2010; Frank 2008b). The head chefs serve as inspirational leaders by either showing exceptional managerial skills or representing a novel culinary style, and in some cases both qualities are present: "*this season at elBulli is definitely something I will remember for the rest of my life. It is almost the equivalent of being a musician and getting the opportunity to work in the presence of Beethoven* […] *For many years to come, there will not be a chef who will influence cuisine as much as he does. Ferran is a phenomenal leader. Everything is well thought out her – even the staff meals – there is a real special atmosphere, or energy, people are extremely motivated* […] *We work as one big team, there is no doubt about who is in control: it is a robot-like discipline, and you simply do as you are told. I am not least impressed by his ability to teach people to execute tasks exactly as he wants things done* (Frank 2008b, 2).

A strong leader figure can be very important during chaotic periods such as service, where clear and precise order are needed to keep things running smoothly. However, at other times, such as the creative process of constructing a new dish, having a dominant leadership figure can have a negative effect. Chefs who are constantly seeking the approval of their mentor, the head chef, are not always truthful in their evaluation of a new dish. This was evident in the documentary, where chefs

participating in a tasting session, would wait to see the response of the head chef and then adjust their opinions accordingly (Noma 2008). The head chef in question has later acknowledged this consensus-phenomenon[17] and now makes a point in being the last individual to offer feedback when working on new dishes (Redzepi 2010).

Chefs holding back ideas

It seems that head chefs are not only passing on their culinary skills to their chefs but also their high ambitions. Numerous times I came across chefs who expressed a desire to one day take on the position as head chef themselves (G2; A2; A3). One of the apprentices interviewed, talks about the head chef and how inspirational he is because he is always generating new ideas. When asked what the apprentice does with his own ideas, he explains that ideas are tested but indirectly reveals that it is mainly with the intention of being used outside the restaurant, for competitions or to be used in the future (G3). The chefs do not view this behavior as withholding ideas from the head chef because it is so ingrained in the organizational culture that you only offer ideas when specifically asked to by the head chef. The chefs' ambitions does not come as a surprise but the desire to take on the position as head chef could also be linked to feeling a lack of ownership in their work, as expressed by one of the chefs: "*I don't want to be thirty years old but working a 100 hours a week for somebody else*" (G2, 4). Perhaps head chef are slowly staring to recognize that chefs need to feel a greater ownership in their work, or can be used as a creative resource, because there seems to be a shift in practices and chefs are getting more involved in generating new ideas. In one of the restaurants I visited, they had introduced a weekly ritual where any chef who wished to participate, could present his own dishes to the others in the kitchen. If the dish is deemed interesting enough by the head chef, the dish will be refined and go through the process of testing and tastings, and possibly be placed on the menu. However, when asked for more details about how often chefs or apprentices showcase ideas, they were a bit reluctant to answer clearly and it seems that they do not make use of this opportunity frequently (A2; A3). It is difficult to conclude whether this is due to a lack of psychological safety among the chefs, and thus a reluctance to shared ideas because of a fear of being 'ridiculed' for ones ideas. Or simply a matter of not being able to, or having the time for generating ideas. The second restaurant I visited was newly opened and still in the process of getting into a regular routine, but here the head chef also expressed an intention to implement the same concept of weekly presentations of ideas. In a third restaurant, and the first to implement a strategy

[17] Groupthink

for sharing ideas[18], the weekly session is not voluntary but mandatory. Ever Saturday one chef from each of the kitchen's five stations will have to present his or her idea for a new dish, which is then tested and debated by all the other chefs. The head chef at this restaurant stresses that this session is not meant to 'exhaust' the other chefs of their ideas, and that rarely the dishes will make their way onto the guests' plates. Instead this process is part of their training, which the head chef explains in the following way: "*It has been surprising to me how many chefs come to our kitchen, from some of the world's best restaurants, but don't really know what they themselves like about food. They are all trained to perform and deliver, not to think independent thoughts about a given dish or ingredient. They follow a recipe instead of just using it as a guidance. That is a problem, because in the end it is the performing chefs – themselves – who create the magic*" (Skyum-Nielsen 2010, 15). Though I consider this a sympathetic view on the culinary profession, and different from many other restaurants, the statement also seems somewhat contradictory to what happens in real life. A recipe is not considered only a guideline, as it was illustrated in the documentary that this particular head chef would get very angry and reprimand his chefs when not executing a dish exactly as prescribed by the head chef himself.

To summarize this analytical theme it could be said that the head chefs' reluctance to give up control over the creative idea generation, is closely linked to the restaurant industry's 'institutional practices' of claiming authorship and earning a reputation. A restaurant's reputation is closely linked to the head chef, who therefore does not wish to 'claim' authorship of dishes that he/she have not been the source of.

[18] Since 2005 (Skyum-Nielsen 2010)

4.4 Constant Process of Learning

The issue has already been briefly addressed in previous sections, so when I choose to devote an entire section to this topic, it is because it is such a central part of what it means to work in the restaurant industry – the constant focus on improving.

> *"Our challenge, for many years to come, is to maintain renewal and sustain inspiration, so we don't go in circle and repeat ourselves. Autopilot is our worst enemy"*
>
> Redzepi 2010, 16

The constant focus on development and learning takes place at different levels: the personal level, which means that chefs are always focusing on improving their culinary skills; the organizational level, which is the head chef's constant focus on improving dishes and developing new ideas; and finally across organizational boundaries, where chefs will go to other restaurants on internships.

Chefs constantly developing their culinary skills

Looking at the data, it becomes clear that chefs have a strong focus on the continual improvement of their cooking skills (A2; A3; G3; Noma 2008). Even chefs who have been working in the industry for close to ten years, seem to have a very humble view on their own skill level, asserting that they still have a lot to learn (A2). Many of the chefs also expressed feeling a sense of learning every day and not viewing their daily tasks as just work but an opportunity for learning and improving their skills. The constant focus on refinement of skills is also closely linked to a desire to do their job well, seeing as "[t]*he kitchen is one of the last true meritocracies, where you are judged entirely on job performance*" (Morse 2002, 58). In the restaurant industry, mastering a certain skill level also allows for more freedom. The higher level of skills a chef will acquire, the higher he or she is able to climb the hierarchical latter, thus giving him or her more influence. Improving skills will also make the chefs more equipped at handling uncertainty.

The process of developing culinary skills is not just learning different recipes and techniques, it is just as much about acquiring tacit knowledge. Cooking is a craft that requires 'learning by doing' and as chefs and apprentices learn to perform their tasks, they develop both tacit and explicit knowledge. Tacit knowledge can be defined as unconscious (or difficult to articulate) knowledge and experience (Hinds and Pfeffer 2003). Tacit knowledge in an haute cuisine kitchen, relates to how tasks are performed and the preferences of the head chef. Since head chef are rarely alike, this also means

that chefs will have to adapt to the preferences of a new head chefs, when changing workplace. Chefs will need to acquire tacit knowledge about how the palate of this head chef differs from the previous, what his or her aesthetic point of view is, etc. This also requires quite a lot from the head chef, who has be to able to articulate and convey their culinary point of view.

Finally, improving one's skills is a step closer towards becoming a head chef. As mentioned in the previous analytical concept, many chefs aspire to become head chef themselves but express a great appreciation for the skill level required to take on such a position (A2; A3; G3, Noma 2008): "*If you have the, the right experience, good knowledge, I can maybe do some of my things… open my restaurant. If not then I can get a good job. I know like, after Noma, if I stay like one year or maybe two years, if this happen, I can like go everywhere, because with the experience I can work in every single… maybe not every single, but most places in the world*" (Noma 2008, 14).

Constant developing the cuisine

While the average chefs are focused on improving their culinary skills, head chefs are focused on developing the cuisine of their restaurants. Head chefs are to a large extend driven by the process of constant development and a quote from the head chef at Noma illustrates this perfectly: "*The day that it won't be interesting anymore to come to work and where the innovation has stalled and autopilot is fully on, and where we are just running as a well oiled machine without progressing. Then, at least that is what I tell myself, then my time at Noma will be over*" (Noma 2008, 27).
It is important to make the distinction between the head chef's focus on generating ideas which lead to the development of new dishes, and then the focus on constant optimization of existing dishes. Chefs describe their job as involving a great deal of repetition and a focus on executing the same dish every time, as not to vary too much from one service to the next, as guests expect to be served the exact same dish as they have read about in reviews (A2; G2). However, at the same time chefs express a focus on the continuous incremental improvements of existing dishes - meaning that their work is based on reconceiving rather than replicating. Replicating means that only a pre-specified outcome can be produced, whereas reconceiving can cope with unanticipated demands (Austin and Devin 2003).

The desire to be creative and innovative is not only driven by the head chef's passion to do so. There is also an external pressure that increases as the a restaurant reaches a certain gastronomic level (reputation) and guests, restaurant critics as well as industry peers are expecting the restaurant to continuously develop and conjure up new ideas: *"Last week we had a guest from London, who in the*

course of two days ate lunch, dinner and lunch. He was served a total of 42 dishes, and of course expected us to give him something new every time" (Aggersbjerg 2010, 89). The pressure to sustain creativity and innovation rests on the head chef who is responsible for the continuous development of the menu. One of the restaurants included in this study has made use of, what I earlier in the literature review referred to as 'creativity as a business strategy' (Planellas and Svejenova 2007; Svejevona et al. 2010). In 2008 restaurant Noma founded Nordic Food Lab, a non-profit test center located on a houseboat just across from the restaurant (Bjerrum 2008). Since the Nordic Food Lab is funded through both private and public funds, the purpose as such is not generate new dishes for the restaurant but rather to research old and forgotten Nordic ingredients. However, chefs employed in the Nordic Food Lab also work in Noma's restaurant and thus 'harvest' ideas from the lab to be implemented in the restaurant (Fri 2008; Flyvbjerg 2010).

Learning through networks

Before entering into the field I had a preconceived notion that chefs would be very protective of their recipes, seeing as the use of intellectual property rights is not present in the restaurant industry compared to other creative industries. However, I found the opposite to be true because not only do chefs have an appetite for learning, but many head chefs also have a strong desire to pass on their knowledge and culinary vision onto others (Redzepi 2010). In the constant strive to always learn new things, to evolve, chefs and even head chef will go abroad for shorter periods to stage[19] or work in other top ranked kitchens: "*I am going a month to New York, to work. I am going to work at Per Se. I think that it is number three, number four best in the world, of restaurants. It is really exciting, and then again a bit like, okay, what is happening, all of a sudden I am going to New York, right. It is really cool that they trust me in this way, that they are sending me to a place like that, right*" (Noma 2008, 23). It is not only the apprentices or chefs who travel abroad on internships, also a head chef will sometimes take on an average chef's job in other restaurants (Skyum-Nielsen 2010).

[19] Work for free

4.5 Motivational Factors

Motivational factors are of great significance in haute cuisine restaurants. Chefs need to keep themselves motivated in order to perform and deliver an exceptional product every day, while dealing with the external pressures.

> *"We are fully booked, all the time. Waiting lists… and we are just barely making it. We have to have a really high turnover every day, just to break even […] But this restaurant has never been about that. It has never been about scoring ten percent… never. Here it has been about creating something and getting people to feel that they are part of something… more important and bigger than just creating a profit"*
>
> Noma 2008, 2

This analytical theme addresses the issue of intrinsic motivation, such as a sense of accomplishment, and identifies three aspects of extrinsic motivation: keeping guests happy; pressures of external reviews from restaurant critics; and acknowledgment from industry peers.

Intrinsic Motivation

Without any exceptions, every chef, apprentice and head chef interviewed and featured in the documentary and articles, expressed a high level of intrinsic motivation (A1; A2; A3; G1; G2; G3; Noma 2008). A great passion for the work itself is needed in order to accept the long hours and personal sacrifices required to work at this gastronomic level. As the quote highlighted above illustrates, the restaurant industry is not a place where achievement is measured by monetary success and several chefs also addressed this issue and some even seem to take pride in this: "[…] *I don't believe in working just for money. This is not the business for that… for sure"* (A2, 2). As mentioned in the previous analytical concept, it is not uncommon for chefs to work for free, for short periods at a time. The main reason for doing so, is to gain experience and possibly work for a specific restaurant and head chef which they admire and thus want to learn from. However, it also appears that it at times can be used as a way of advancing in the industry and having the 'right' restaurant on your résumé can open doors (Kjær 2010).

When asked about the best sides of his job, a chef responded: "*It is really hard to say. I mean it is just, working with great products and working off and with.. working with people who are passionate, the energy that that creates. I'd say the ability to be creative, spontaneous, confident*" (A2, 2). This quote summarizes some of the main intrinsic motivational factors that most of the respondents

referred to. Chefs 'feed' off each other's passion and the energy generated during *service*, when the coordination of different task between stations is at its highest. The pressure of having to perform during service creates an adrenaline rush which some chefs describe as addictive(Bourdain 2007). When service runs smoothly, without any major incidents, it gives the chefs a feeling of accomplishment and strengthens their self-confidence. However, if the pressure is too high and chefs are not able to keep up or perform as needed, it can cause self-loathing: "*I am not good enough"* (Noma 2008, 17).

Extrinsic Motivation

I have found three extrinsic motivational factors: making guests happy, recognition from restaurant critics and from industry peers. Some theorists, such as Hertzberg (1968) describe recognition as an intrinsic motivational factor, whereas others categorize it as extrinsic (Amabile 2006). I choose to de define extrinsic motivation as every element which is not directly related to the chefs' actual tasks of carrying out their work and all of the factors addressed below can be characterized as a form of external validation.

Happy Guests

Chefs at all levels often cited 'happy guests' as a main motivational factor in their job: "*We are really here for them. We want them to have the best experience of their life*" (Noma 2008, 1). Seeing as restaurants make a living based on their reputation, keeping guests happy seems like a plausible motivational factor. However, I also discovered that the notion of 'keeping guests happy' is often used to legitimize the harsh tone often used during service: "*If something goes out to the guest, which is a mistake, it is almost unforgivable. And it is because, as the situation is now, there is a three month waitlist to get a table, and then the first serving they get is overcooked or salted too much… and they pay a lot of money for this. It is really not fair*" (Noma 2008, 2-3). I found that chefs refer to 'guest' as the main extrinsic motivational factor, but in reality spend more time focusing on restaurant critics and industry peers.

Restaurant critics

That restaurant reviews play a significant role in chefs' motivation to strive towards excellence is unquestionable: "*Any chefs, who claim to be indifferent, are probably in some ways lying to themselves. No way. I also told myself that a smile on the faces of guests was all I needed, but when we received the first star, then it really meant something*" (Skyum-Nielsen 2009, 28). Chefs do not view a Michelin star or good reviews by renowned restaurant critics, as merely a pad on the back for a job done well - because the industry is so much review and reputation based, a positive or negative review can have a great affect on a restaurant's earnings. Being awarded a Michelin star increases, on average, the earnings by 30 percent but losing a Michelin star can mean a loss of 40 percent (Hjort 2010; Sage 2007). It is important to stress that, as stated in the section on intrinsic motivation above, financial measures are not a motivational factor as such. However, seeing as operating costs are very high and profit margins are low, many restaurants have trouble just staying afloat so a certain focus on economic aspects is unavoidable (Pedersen 2011). That restaurant reviews, and in particular the Michelin guide, can be a double-edged sword, becomes evident in this statement made by a head chef: "*It is a proof that the work that you do means something. For someone to honor you with a Michelin star. There isn't one Viagra pill that can generate the same enthusiasm. And afterwards, the anxiety. Because what if you lose it*" (Finnedal 2009, 1). Amabile (1993) has described factors such as the expectations of external evaluation as a hindrance of creativity. An aspect which also becomes evident in this statement made by one of the head chefs at a Copenhagen Michelin restaurant: "*The stars can have both a positive and negative impact. For me it was the striving for recognition. And perhaps it actually took over too much. Suddenly you are not just making the food that you would like most. We definitely - consciously or unconsciously - made some* changes *[…]" (Behrendtzen 2011, 1).* The same head chef also describes how the pressure of being awarded and maintaining a Michelin star, created a hostile atmosphere in the restaurant (Behrendtzen 2011). That the pressures of external evaluation can take its toll, is especially evident in this statement made by a chef just moments after being informed that the restaurant he was working at would be placed as number ten on one of the world's most prestigious ranking lists[20]: "*Then all the hours in the kitchen do really* matter […] *Right now, it doesn't matter that you walk around with a stomachache half the week because of stress*" (Frank 2008, 3). What was interesting to observe during the interviews I conducted, was that many chefs attempted to downplay the importance and emphasis they put on external reviews.

[20] The World's 50 Best Restaurants (S. Pellegrino 2008)

Industry peers

While restaurant reviews take part in shaping the general population's perception of a restaurant, I was somewhat surprised to find that industry peers play just as significant a part in the chef's extrinsic motivation. When asked about the importance of restaurant critics, an apprentice revealed: "*Well I think that we all always have this in the back of our minds, that there could be a critic. But it is not so much the thought of a critic or Michelin, it is more that you want to achieve a goal, a certain level. Actually it is just as much… if you for instance have someone from another restaurant, someone who really knows what this is about - 'you have really made this properly' - that experience is at least as important*" (G3, 5-6).

Chefs, and in particular head chefs, visit each other's restaurants in order to find out what others are producing and keeping updated on the latest trends: "*you can't help but to look at what others are doing* […] *but we do try to stay a 100 percent away from what the others are doing*" (A1, 6). Visiting chefs can be considered and added pressure because in line with the institutional constraint of 'never standing still', head chefs desire to be acknowledge and respected by their peers for their culinary ingenuity and quality (Skyum-Nielsen 2009).

Whether intrinsic motivation or extrinsic motivation plays the biggest role is difficult to say – to a large extend it very much depends on the individual in question because some chefs express a high level of intrinsic motivation whereas others focus more on extrinsic. However, it is possible to conclude that, while external evaluation plays a vital part in the success of a restaurant, chefs are expected to express a high level of intrinsic motivation – as mentioned in a previous analytical theme, a chef's mantra is 'you have to really want it'.

Chapter 5 | Discussion and Conclusion

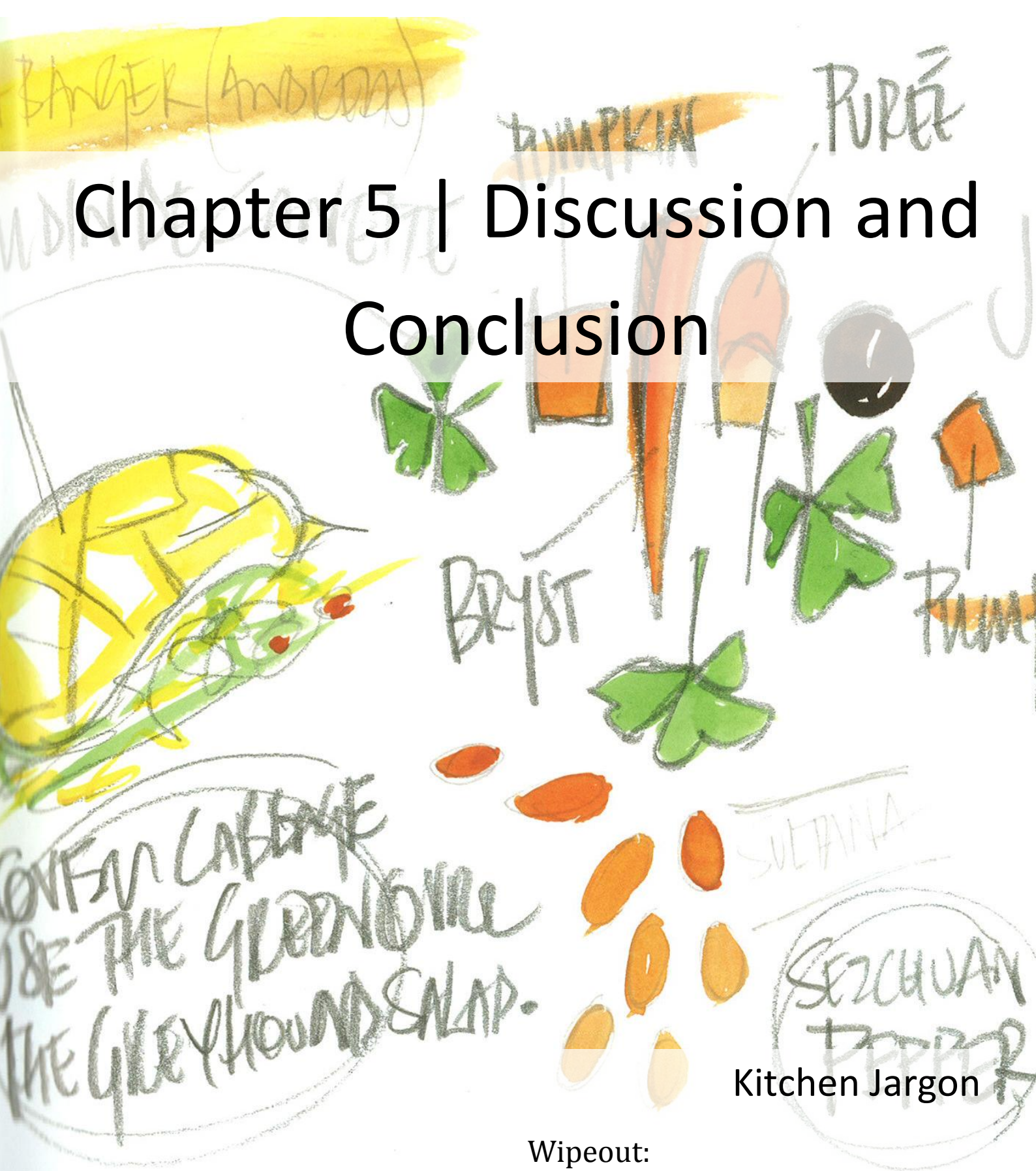


Image by Paul Cunningham (2005)

Kitchen Jargon

Wipeout:

When a chef or a member of the waiting staff drops a finished plate onto the floor, or when a chef slips on a wet floor.

5. Discussion and conclusion

Having outlined main analytical themes above, I will now summarize and reflect upon some key characteristics which I view to central in our understanding of the haute cuisine restaurant industry, before finally concluding of this paper's findings in relation to the research question of *how organizational culture and structure affects the culinary creativity in haute cuisine restaurants.*

Key characteristics of haute cuisine restaurants

As specified in a previous chapter, there exits relatively little literature in the field of culinary creativity. This thesis has sought to contribute to this field by focusing on the organizational context of culinary creativity. In the process of answering the research question, I have found both similarities and differences to the current literature. Unlike Harrington and Ottenbacher (2005; 2007) who view culinary creativity as a distinct and separate stage of idea generation during culinary innovation, this thesis has found culinary creativity to be a continuous process throughout every aspect of culinary work. Like many of the studies referenced earlier (Stierand and Lynch 2008; Leschziner 2007; Svejenova et al. 2007) this thesis found 'reputation' to be a main institutional factor which has a direct or indirect influence on almost every aspect of culinary work. Within the next couple of pages I highlight some of the key characteristics of haute cuisine restaurants.

Perceived discord in haute cuisine restaurants

I start this discussion by challenging the assumptions about the restaurant industry, which I initially based my thesis on. When I decided to investigate the restaurant industry, I did so with the assumption that the industry's autocratic culture and hierarchical structure would go against 'common sense' of how to manage an organization within the creative industries. From an outside perspective haute cuisine restaurants can seem as having discordant work environments, however, throughout the process of interviewing and analyzing data it appeared to me that he chefs and apprentices do not perceive their environment as being disharmonious. Though tempers can fly high, haute cuisine kitchens are structured in such a way that the organizational members have very clearly defined lines and structures to operate and maneuver within. There is no confusion as to the line of commands and they (chefs and apprentices) know what is expected of them and what is needed in order advance in their culinary profession.

Only room for one 'artist' in the kitchen

In one of the analytical themes presented above, I accounted for the different roles in the kitchen and how head chefs are to be considered as artist or *chief designer* in the creative process, whereas the other chefs in the kitchen function as craftsmen, whose job is to execute the head chef's culinary visions. However, I also discovered that many chefs have the aspiration of taking on the position as head chef themselves and I see a distinct connect between these two issues. At the beginning of their career chefs have a somewhat humble perception of their own skills and continually stress their awareness of the many years of hard work needed to prepare and refine their cooking skills before being able to take the role as head chef. However, the higher the level of skills achieved by a chef, the less content her or she will be in the role as craftsman. As there is only room for one 'artist' in the kitchen, the most skilled chefs (who in the long run are not contend with just bringing another chef's culinary visions to life) will seek new opportunities outside the restaurant. The restaurant thus loses one of its most skilled and valuable resources, who in return moves on to become a potential competitor.

Conflicts that arise during service are mitigated during prep

External pressures to perform (restaurant reviews, keeping guests happy, and acknowledgement from industry peers) as well as the interdependence on each other's work in order to succeed, is often what creates friction and tension in the kitchen. However, the negative effect hereof seem to be mitigated through the interpersonal relationships fostered during prep-work in the kitchen.

Flexible organizational structures conducive to creativity

In spite of the very hierarchical structure found in most kitchens, every station usually consists of only a handful of chefs which makes the organizational structure very flexible. This allows for a quickly reconfiguring of team members in the process of testing new ideas or reorganizing the kitchen as menus change over time.

Balancing act between conformity and originality

As in any other business, restaurants need to differentiate their products from their competitors' products. However, some gastronomic traditions seem to be institutionalized in the industry, making it difficult for head chefs to balance between conformity and originality. As Leschziner (2007) has described in a previous study: "[p]*roducts cannot be too original because they must be recognizable for the audience, yet they ought to be distinct enough to stand out among competitors*" (Leschziner

2007, 81). In this thesis I add another dimension to this perspective and argue that the gastronomic traditions referred to above, do not only apply to culinary products, but the cultural and organizational structures as well. Apprentices are 'schooled the right way' and chef learn to follow order without asking too many questions. However, as one head chef reveals, it is important to break free of the institutionalized constraints that are so engrained in the chefs' work (being efficient and robotic-like) in order to think creatively and produce innovative output.

It could further be argued that working in haute cuisine restaurants involve both a high level of creativity as well as the formalization of work. Every single dish is made by hand and chefs will have to make the same dish over and over again (as identical as possible) and have formalized work procedures in order to be able to coordinate their output with other chefs and deliver their product at the right time. Yet, chefs still need the creative skills of being able to maneuver in the event of unforeseen incidents or the variations of an ingredient - one day the tomatoes may be more sweet than they were the day before - and chefs therefore need to be able to balance these small differentiations.

Organizational culture which focuses on constant development

Head chefs are good at articulating goals and keep focus on the importance of renewing, as well as always engaging in critical reflections of their work . Current literature on the topic of organizational creativity (Amabile et al. 1996) has suggested that autonomy and freedom is needed in order to be creative. The findings of this thesis suggests that creative impulses are not necessarily restricted and occur regardless of a chefs' freedom to be creative. However, whether the creative ideas or notions will be put to use, depends on the chefs' willingness or desire to share these ideas and head chefs' willingness to embrace ideas from others. This thesis argues that a head chef who functions as an inspirational leader, and exhibits a passion for generating creative and novel ideas will serve as an inspiration for other chefs in the restaurant. However, it should be recognized that the most creative individual within the restaurant, the head chef, for obvious reasons does have a very high level of autonomy and freedom to be creative.

Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation seem to be of equal importance

I am somewhat reluctant to draw any conclusions about the motivational factors found in the restaurant industry. Individuals are motivated by different things and this thesis found both evidence of chefs being highly motivated by extrinsic factors, and in particular the Michelin guide, while others seemed to be more internally motivated.

Conclusion

The motivation for writing this thesis was based on the incongruity between current literature suggesting that creativity and innovation is best fostered through an organizational environment of harmony and autonomy, and the realities of the restaurant industry which is characterized by strict hierarchical structures and autocratic leadership but still seem to be very creative. The purpose of this thesis has therefore been to examine how the organizational culture and structure of haute cuisine restaurants influence their culinary creativity, and secondly to contribute to current literature on the creative industries, where a perspective on the restaurant industry has been neglected thus far.

Due to the exploratory nature of the research question an inductive research approach was employed. Empirical qualitative data consisted of six personal interviews conducted at two different restaurants located in Copenhagen; a documentary film from the Danish Broadcasting Corporation (DR); as well as several interviews and news articles collected from magazines and newspapers. Through a grounded theory method, data was coded and grouped together in categories that were deemed most salient. These categories formed the basis for five analytical concepts, the first of which addressed issues of how a chef's identity is closely linked to their occupation, the personal sacrifices it take to work at the top gastronomic level, and the passion that chefs express - some chefs even describing their job as a hobby. A second analytical concept examined the no-error culture within the restaurant industry and how chefs constantly strive towards perfection in their work and the implications of having to perform under pressure. Then a third, and perhaps most significant analytical concept illustrated the different roles within an haute cuisine kitchen and how a head chef takes on the role as artist while other chefs are to be considered craftsmen, whose most important job is to carry out the culinary visions of the head chef. The fourth analytical theme addressed how a constant focus on development and learning takes place at different levels: the personal level, where chefs focus on improving their culinary skills; the organizational level, where the head chefs constantly focus on improving existing dishes as well as develop new ideas; and a network based framework for learning, which has meant that chefs will go to other restaurants on internships in order to improve on skills or seek inspiration. The fifth and final analytical theme has explored motivational factors, both intrinsic and extrinsic. It was found that intrinsic motivation was of great significance to every organizational member at every hierarchical level, and that the expression of intrinsic motivation was important in demonstrating a commitment to the rest of the team. Extrinsic motivation was found to comprise of three different aspects: a desire to keep guests happy (an extrinsic motivator also used to justify the harsh tone used in the kitchen); the evaluation of restaurant critics; and receiving acknowledgement from industry peers.

Image by Paul Cunningham (2005)

These analytical themes have not explicitly answered the research question but provided a basis from which a discussion could take place. Through the key characteristics and reflections presented above, it was demonstrated how the organizational culture found in the restaurants included in this study, display a constant focus on improving both cooking skills and culinary products, as well as a constant process of new product development. Much of this should be attributed to the leadership of the head chef, who is responsible for setting the goals and keep pushing the team in an effort to evolve. The head chefs are not only skilled in the art of cooking but appear to be excellent at communicating their goals and ambitions to their staff, as these ambitions were continuously echoed by the rest of the cooking staff. However, it has also become apparent that chefs perhaps to a too great extend rely on the guidance (and approval) of their head chef. This has fostered a culture where chefs do not offer their ideas (or thoughts) unless specifically instructed to by the head chef. This study also revealed an organizational culture where head chefs, due to the institutional impediment of authorship, are reluctant to put dishes on the menu that they cannot claim authorship of. This is due to the reputation of a restaurant being closely linked to the head chef. The predominant organizational structure found in the industry has not changed much since the introduction of the French brigade system several centuries ago and although this organizational structure allows for little individual freedom, it does allow for a great flexibility needed when exploring creative ideas.

The research question also stipulated a particular focus on haute cuisine restaurants situated in Copenhagen. Within the last decade we have seen the progression of Nordic cuisine, which has become synonymous with creativity and innovation (Behrendtzen 2007). As this thesis has only sought to explore the restaurant scene of Copenhagen, I can draw no conclusions as to whether or not Danish restaurants should to be considered more creative than i.e. French or UK restaurants, and if in fact they are to be considered more creative, whether this due to a less autocratic leadership style of the Danish head chefs. What this thesis does conclude, is that we (as 'outsiders' and representing academia) need to challenge our assumptions about the nature of haute cuisine cooking and take on a more nuanced perspective of the industry.

Chapter 6 | Limitations and Further Research

Kitchen Jargon

Give it to chef Mike:

Code for “put it in the microwave oven”

Image by Paul Cunningham (2005)

6. Limitations and Further Research

I start this chapter by reflecting upon the limitation as well as strengths of this study (empirically, theoretically and analytically). Finally, I propose potential perspectives on further research within the field of culinary creativity. Topics that were either outside the scope of this thesis or ideas that were fostered through the process of writing this thesis

Limitations (and strengths)

In this section I reflect upon the limitation as well as strengths of this thesis and I have chosen to address these from both an empirical, theoretical and analytical point of view.

Empirical limitations and strengths

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Since the scope of this thesis is focused on restaurants situated in Copenhagen it naturally limits the broad applicability of the study. It should also be noted that this study is primarily based on empirical evidence from three restaurants and I can therefore not be sure to arrive at conclusions that represent the whole haute cuisine restaurant industry of Copenhagen.

The findings would also have been strengthened if I would have had the opportunity to do observation work myself. Though I do not question the sincerity of my respondents answers, I do have a suspicion that some of the chefs interviewed have been a bit 'protective' of their profession's image. After the documentary about restaurant Noma aired on national TV in 2008, it spurred a nationwide debate about the working conditions of chefs, and many expressed an outrage of the autocratic leadership style of the head chef. Some chefs interviewed for this thesis could possibly have an unconscious agenda of balancing out this negative depiction of the industry, or simply not wanting to seem disloyal by focusing on the negative aspects of their work.

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The empirical data employed in this thesis accounts for the different perspectives across the hierarchical structure of the kitchen, whereas other studies have primarily looked at culinary creativity and the role of the head chef. Since the success of a restaurant is not based on the single efforts of one head chef but rather the collective effort of every chef and apprentice in the kitchen, I view their perspective to be of importance as well.

Theoretical limitations and strengths

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The theoretical perspectives drawn upon in the literature review can be considered as somewhat broad and not reflected upon overtly throughout the analysis.

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Because I have employed broad theoretical concepts, the analytical process has not been restricted by the attempt to fit analysis into existing theory and have thus given me more freedom to explore concepts which had not been anticipated beforehand. It should be stressed that settling on a theoretical framework has been an iterative process and thus 'reworked' since the analysis.

Analytical limitations and strengths

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Not every analytical concept presented in chapter 4, has a direct link to the overall research question. However, an analytical theme such as '4.1 Work as a lifestyle' proved to be so predominant in the process of analyzing data, that it could not be ignored. I would also argue that this analytical theme provides us with an understanding of why chefs are so passionate about their work and still choose to work in an industry in spite of the sometimes harsh conditions.

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Using a grounded theory approach in the process of analyzing data, has meant that the findings are grounded in the 'realities' of the respondents. In the analytical process I have also abstained from making judgments about the working conditions in the restaurant industry but rather accepted that these are the conditions that exists and focused on how these conditions influence the process of culinary creativity.

Many of the analytical themes are interconnected (and sometimes overlapping in areas) and I view this to be a strength and testament to the overall cohesion of the entire analytical framework, as no analytical theme is to be viewed as isolated 'incidents'.

Further research in the field of culinary creativity

This thesis has sought to answer how structural and cultural properties within the haute cuisine segment of the restaurant industry have an effect on its creativity. Below I posit some of the contemplations that I have wondered upon during the process of writing this thesis and that would make for possible further research.

The role and effect of guides and restaurant reviews in culinary creativity

For a future perspective it would be interesting to look into the influences of external evaluation such as the Michelin guide and investigating the effects that this has on a restaurant's creative output, as well as the its possible influences in the different stage of the culinary innovation process. I find it intriguing (and somewhat startling) that a guide such as Michelin holds such a great power over many restaurants. In connection with thesis I purchased my first Michelin guide and was disappointed to find that the reviews were very short and somewhat bland. Noma which is the highest rated restaurant in Copenhagen in the Michelin guide, thus only consisted of 23 words long (or short) review: "*Stylish restaurant displaying a charming, rustic simplicity. Quality Nordic ingredients contribute to stimulating, innovative dishes that test the usual culinary boundaries. Smooth service*" (Michelin Guide Rouge 2010, 157).

Level of discord in the restaurant and the effects on creativity

Another future perspective could be to conduct a comparable study of restaurants that are considered to have a high level of discord and those who are believed to have a low level of discord, and examine whether or not this has any significance in the production of creative out.

What are the defining properties of a highly creative restaurants in comparison to less creative restaurants

This thesis has only included restaurants that were considered to be very creative (extreme cases) and it would therefore be of relevance to conduct a study that includes restaurants who are considered to be less creative and innovative (but still deliver a quality product). Perhaps a study such as this will be closely related to the perspective suggested above and show that restaurants with a high level of discord are to be considered less creative than those with a low level of discord, or perhaps it will argue against such a viewpoint. It could also come to the conclusion that the level of discord plays an insignificant role in the creative and innovative output of a restaurant and find that other properties have a greater influence.

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[21] In the text this source is referenced as Noma 2008, seeing as I quote my own transcripts from the documentary (for transcripts, see appendix 7)

Appendices

Appendix 1	Interview A1
Appendix 2	Interview A2
Appendix 3	Interview A3
Appendix 4	Interview G1
Appendix 5	Interview G2
Appendix 6	Interview G3
Appendix 7	Documentary: *Noma på kogepunktet*

This electronic version does not include appendices