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"We are service people, and we stay until the job is done": enactments of professionalism in restaurants

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ABSTRACT

In response to calls for increased professionalism in the restaurant industry, this paper aims to show how it is constituted in the daily practices in the industry, and to clarify ideas of professionalism held by the practitioners in the industry. Micro practices of daily activities performed by restaurant practitioners were identified in 13 small restaurants: 8 in a tourist destination and 5 in cities. The sayings and doings in kitchens and dining rooms noted in transcripts of interviews and observations were sorted with an insider's interpretation. The findings were then analysed by means of components of practice theory: knowledge and learning, communication, corporeality, and time use. Among the restaurant practitioners, professionalism is conceived to be a combination of craftsmanship, a customer orientation involving observant management, and loyal perseverance. This conceptualisation is important to understand in discussions about how hospitality and culinary arts education can develop.

The restaurant industry constitutes a large part of the hospitality sector, whose production of commercial meals contributes to the tourism sector and, in turn, economic development all over the world. To attract customers and grow in a sustainable way, the hospitality sector requires updated forms of professionalism, which the restaurant and hotel industries, as well as their researchers, have known for decades. As early as 1989, Sheldon stated that commercial meal making, cooking, and serving in restaurants were the least professional parts of the hospitality industry and recommended that the industry act to enhance its professionalism. Although several researchers have demonstrated the benefits of mobilising higher education to increase professionalism in restaurants (Hegarty, 2011; Mack, 2012; Sheldon, 1989; Woodhouse, 2016), the restaurant industry still faces problems in appealing to and retaining competent personnel, given the often-harsh working conditions and low wages that deter young people from entering and remaining in the industry. Robinson, Solnet, and Breakey (2014) findings from a study of occupational commitment reveal chefs' dissatisfaction with their jobs and their feeling of a lack of meaning in their work, which they characterised as "boring" and "repetitive". More recently, in a survey of chefs and culinary arts educators and students in the United Kingdom, the lack of managerial and leadership

skills was highlighted as a major problem for professionalism in the restaurant industry (Marinakou, Giousmpasoglou, & Cooper, 2016). Perhaps most tellingly, Richardson (2008) found that among hospitality students with work experience in the industry, 43.6% claimed that they would not pursue work in the tourism and hospitality industry after graduation. Of those respondents, 96.3% identified their previous experience in the industry as the top reason for their decision to seek work elsewhere.

Consequently, researchers have called for ways to challenge the traditional methods of learning and teaching in the culinary field in order to reach more just working cultures in the industry (Hegarty, 2011). In a survey by Marinakou et al. (2016), there were suggestions for a rethink and redesign of the existing culinary arts programme curricula in the United Kingdom. However, in the restaurant industry the traditional way to become a professional is still by gaining long-term craft experience, which Fine (1996b, p. 99) documented during his cultural study of chefs: "Knowledge derives from particular experiences in 'real' restaurant kitchens… [Cooking] skills cannot be learned from books, from home cooking, or from trade-school education". What hospitality education teaches seems far removed from what the industry expects in terms of skills and knowledge (Lugosi & Jameson, 2017; Richardson, 2008; Woodhouse, 2016). Although researchers have asked chefs and other hospitality workers in various surveys and interviews to share their views on professionalism in the industry, it also remains necessary to clarify understandings of professionalism in restaurants as it appears in its daily enactment and expression by practitioners. To that end, we turned to practice theory to facilitate a deeper understanding of what constitutes the mundane ideas of professionalism in restaurants, with an eye for what knowledge is collectively created and transferred in the industry and how the transfer is performed. Perspectives of practice theory on professional learning can guide assessments of the extent to which the combination of leaders, peers, and their work organisation locally stabilise a situated practice and its reciprocal power relations (Gherardi & Perrotta, 2016). Such practice perspectives can help the understanding of how professionalism is formed in the restaurant industry. The practice theoretical perspective will be further elaborated in the section on the theoretical framework, while the next section will survey views on professionalism.

Professionalism

According to the sociologist Julia Evetts (2003), professionalism generally refers to a system of normative values held by people who share a professional identity informed by their similar experiences, education, scientific understandings, and expertise. In that sense, professions are denominations of personalised work activities performed by people, such as doctors, lawyers, professors, and engineers who, as relatively autonomous bearers and practitioners of knowledge systems sanctioned by society, execute work tasks considered by their clients and the public to be valuable, require exceptional proficiency, and are complex (Brante, 2014). Such understandings of professions, professionals, and professionalism seem to apply most readily to intellectual, nonmanual occupations. By contrast, craftsmanship – for instance, fine dining-cooking – though specialised and built upon individual proficiency, does not seem to constitute a professional occupation because it is not based on science and because its outcomes

have commercial purposes. Nevertheless, identity and occupation in craft trades are highly related; their practitioners, much like more traditional professionals, describe themselves with the phrase "I am a …" in reference to their occupations (Ulfsdotter Eriksson & Linde, 2014). By extension, this occupational attitude can be coupled to a more inclusive denomination of professionalism, such as organisational professionalism.

Organisational professionalism

Professional identity based on belonging to a vocation, whether as a chef, teacher, personnel administrator, or photographer, derives from more than merely knowledge content and education. As Noordegraaf (2007) has suggested, professionalism today can be conceived as sets of complex linkages between individual and collective actions, as well as between the world of work and the outside world. By way of such interconnections, individuals' work knowledge and skills not only make them valuable to various organisations but also force them to adapt to norms and values determined by peers, managers, and the surrounding communities. For example, skilled chefs are attractive in the labour market but also have to fit into rather hierarchical work organisations and produce strictly set courses regardless of their own creative knowledge. Currently, the product of the reconceptualisation of professionalism from a strict denomination of autonomous professions to vocational identities that foremost belong to organisations is often termed "organisational professionalism". Furthermore, there is an increased use of the discourse of professionalism in companies with the aim to recruit staff in promotion statements and to motivate employees in the maintenance of work identities, career decisions and senses of self (Evetts, 2013). For the purpose of our study, we defined professionalism in terms of individual attitudinal dimensions of the value system, including self-identification as being proficient in a vocation, particularly the vocations that we studied: chefs, head chefs, waiters, and restaurant managers.

Professionalism in the hospitality industry

Brotherton (1999, p. 168) has defined commercial hospitality as "a contemporaneous human exchange … designated to enhance the mutual wellbeing of the parties concerned through the provision of accommodation and food or drink". In commercial hospitality, a customer orientation, according to both Lee (2014) and Hussey, Holden, and Lynch (2011), ranks among the central dimensions of hospitality professionalism along with occupational knowledge, a feel for quality service, a code of ethics, self-awareness based on reflective practice, and the ability for self-management. Likewise, in Mack's (2012) survey, chefs and culinary educators indicated that top areas for improvement for chefs and cooks were their interpersonal skills based on respect for others and their work ethic. Furthermore, as renowned chefs have stated in interviews, acquiring communication skills as leaders (e.g. head chefs) and public figures and becoming managerial were means to enhance professional reputation and were essential to professional development (Roosipõld & Loogma, 2014). In the restaurant industry, professional competence is considered to be a generic, integrated, and internalised capability to deliver sustainable, effective performance based on knowledge, skills, and attitudes (Mulder, 2014). Gustafsson, Östrom, Johansson, and Mossberg (2006) have asserted that professionalism in the making of a restaurant meal requires reflection on preparation, planning, and production, as

well as knowledge of guests' reasons for dining out. Lynch (2009) has posited that a chef's preferred identity as a professional is incorporated in his or her cooking and draws upon an internal discourse about the practical matters of work (e.g. time remaining to prepare a dish and personal presence in the kitchen space), which Demetry (2013) has confirmed. Among those practical matters, a major part of kitchen activity is the continuous, time-consuming handling of objects (Fine, 1996/2009; Jönsson, 2012; Wellton, Jonsson, Walter, & Svingstedt, 2016), and the norms and standards of the culinary craft include the artisanal requirements of the products that chefs compile (Fine, 1996/2009). In turn, as Balazs (2002) has observed, those creative work processes make daily work joyful and are crucial for keeping knowledgeable, experienced employees in the industry.

Making meals in restaurants involves dining room personnel and their serving skills and a knowledge of hospitality. Concerning sequencing, the process practically involves placing food orders to chefs and timing the delivery of courses with other activities in the dining room (e.g. clearing tables and serving wine), as shown in Whyte's (1948) classic study and later confirmed by Marshall (1986). Waiters' vocational status diminished during the 1970s and 1980s as their craft knowledge became redundant when chefs took their place in the dining room (Lundqvist, 2006). However, the status of waiters as restaurant professionals has been restored in recent years via the practice of sommeliers' handling of wine – a craft of its own that cannot be co-opted in the kitchen by chefs (Jonsson, Ekström, & Nygren, 2008).

In the restaurant industry, being a professional has traditionally been equated with being a craftsperson who has acquired practical experience during many years of hard labour, mostly in the form of apprenticeship learning with hierarchical overtones (Cameron, 2001; Mack, 2012; Pratten, 2003; Woodhouse, 2016). Nevertheless, in a survey by Pizam and Shani (2009), hospitality students expressed the view that the personal sacrifices required by the industry also afford pride in and the self-fulfilment of an ability to perform demanding tasks, which signifies personal strength and character. Mack (2012) has pointed out that chefs understand how to become professionals "through the ranks, tested by fire" in a rite of passage that not only creates bonds among chefs with similar experiences, but also makes them reluctant to welcome change, and the literal and figurative scars of that rite of passage are considered to be badges of honour (p. 87). Chefs also construct their status as professionals in relation to their daily work activities by using occupational rhetoric to justify that what they do is admirable or necessary, if not both (Fine, 1996b).

Workplace training in restaurants

Craftsmanship is craft and task-based knowledge developed via kinaesthetic and aesthetic senses (Yahklef, 2010) during the repeated practice of certain tasks under the close supervision of core members of the craft community (Amin & Roberts, 2008). In research on craftsmanship, professionalism in general refers to the value system informed by disciplined hard work over long periods towards becoming skilled and proficient in a craft organisation (Sennett, 2008). Gertler (2003) has stated that the transfer of tacit knowledge relates closely to the specific social context in which such knowledge has value and will only circulate there. For head chefs, as Wellton, Jonsson, and Svingstedt (2017) have shown, a product of such knowledge is excellence in handling cooking procedures in restaurant kitchens,

dubbed their "mastering of the materiality". Stierand, Dörfler, and Lynch (2008) have argued that the status of haute cuisine chefs has made craftsmanship in the culinary arts – including innovation and creativity – the predominant ideal of how restaurant cooking should be executed. Thus, one of the very few areas in which the master–apprentice relationship still flourishes is the field of haute cuisine, in which the learning process at that level is a continuous affair between the master and his apprentice (Stierand et al., 2008). Within the production processes of a kitchen informed by the master–apprentice relationship, an implicit hierarchy can exist, and restaurant kitchens indeed follow hierarchical structures, although the positions vary according to the number of cooks and chefs in the kitchen (James, 2006). Learning dining-room work involves another master–apprentice relationship informed, especially in terms of social skills, by the sharing experiences of service encounters between newcomers in the industry and skilled personnel (Lundberg, 2010).

The literature on professionalism in the hospitality industry consists of discussions on both education and ethical values, as well as findings of work conditions in restaurants constituted by long-term workplace training and hierarchical orders. Meanwhile, topics that would clarify our understanding of professionalism in the hospitality industry and afford a conceptualisation of how professionalism is perceived, especially in restaurants, are less studied. Consequently, to expand understanding of the field, we have turned to practice theory to identify ideas of professionalism held by actors in the restaurant industry.

Theoretical framework

Practice theory suggests that practices are courses of routinised events – sayings and doings – situated in places and times that involve the use of materials (Gherardi, 2012; Reckwitz, 2002; Schatzki, 1996). Reckwitz (2002) has defined practice as

> a routinized type of behaviour which consists of several elements, interconnected to one another: forms of bodily activities, forms of mental activities, "things" and their use, a background knowledge in the form of understanding, know-how, states of emotion and motivational knowledge. (p. 249)

In work organisations, *practices* can be defined as how work is accomplished relationally, as well as how mundane objects aid in achieving activities, and how talking enacts and defines work, and how temporal elements shape bundles of entwined practices (Korica, Nicolini, & Johnson, 2015). In the intention to deepening theoretical understanding of how practice shapes professionalism, research was conducted on the practices in work organisations that can be linked in particular to research on hospitality organisations.

In practices, knowledge and materiality, including spaces, are intertwined. As Gherardi (2009) has pointed out, objects and tools embody knowledge and anchor practices in their materiality. That dynamic is particularly relevant to restaurants, where things and spaces define work procedures in kitchens and dining rooms. Yahklef (2010) has added that what people know is manifest in what they do, their bodily practices, and their habits, as perceived in their wording, gesturing, bodily composure, and agitation, and other forms of expression, which are important in the manual work of cooking and serving. By extension, Nicolini (2012) has pointed out that practices shape signs as expressions of communication (e.g. language), as in how professionals use and develop an internal way of communicating about their work.

Time and timing are crucial in restaurant work and have to be considered when defining professionalism. Time in workplaces, Orlikowski and Yates (2002) have argued, can be referred to as "temporal structures in practice", meaning the way that people in work organisations experience time by routinely having organised, shared everyday practices.

Practices are moreover not only patterns of action performed by practitioners in a way that makes sense to them, but also socially restrictive and developed via constant, dynamic refinement by practitioners, including knowledge development (Nicolini, 2012). The way in which professionals learn has to be considered as a practice including not only individuals, but also materials and their intermediaries. Knowledge transfer in the craft-based restaurant industry can be understood from a practice-based perspective since professional learning occurs during participation in organisational practices (Elkjaer & Brandi, 2014). Furthermore, workplaces, as situated learning contexts, facilitate the learning of knowledge that bears traces of materiality, language and symbols, and social structures developed over time (Lave & Wenger, 1998/2011).

Gherardi and Perrotta (2016) have posited that professional practices consist of both canonical parts, identifiable as formal prescriptions of tasks and jobs, and noncanonical ones. Whereas the former are transferred by way of formalised education and training, the latter are transferred while participating in work practices, implicitly developing the identity of the practitioner, and are learned and transmitted unconsciously. Practices also comprise the centrality of interests and power in everyday life (Nicolini, 2012), of which reciprocal power relations, including unstructured learning trajectories for new-comers, are a part (Gherardi & Perrotta, 2016). Elkjaer and Brandi (2014) have suggested that professionals' learning practices might not focus as much on reflection, motivations, and understanding as on how to anticipate and handle organisational complexities concerning time, space, materiality, and other practitioner activities, in which performativity and power are central.

In sum, we suggest here that the following components of practice theory are relevant for the understanding of ideas of professionalism in the restaurant industry: knowledge and learning (Elkjaer & Brandi, 2014; Gherardi, 2009; Lave & Wenger, 1998/2011), communication (Nicolini, 2012), corporeality (Yahklef, 2010), and time use (Orlikowski & Yates, 2002).

The aim of this paper is to show how professionalism is constituted in the daily practices of the restaurant industry and to present and distinguish everyday micro practices therein as the most significant parts of restaurant professionalism. Ultimately, we seek to contribute to the discussion between the restaurant industry and educators about the development of hospitality learning.

Methods and materials

Since the study was conducted in Sweden, where most restaurant employees work in small businesses (BFUF, 2014), small restaurants were targeted for data collection. To gather ideas about professionalism from across the restaurant industry, sampling was conducted in 13 restaurants: eight in a tourist destination and five in large cities. The restaurants in the tourist destination emphasised the use of high-quality local food and were chosen through a regional restaurant network. The city restaurants, chosen by means of convenience networks, were all characterised by finesse cooking at a high or excellent level, with one restaurant boasting a Michelin star. The other three rated

between 4 and 4.8 on five-graded scales on Facebook, TripAdvisor, and other equivalent systems. The sample size is justified methodologically by the large amount of data gathered during interviews and observations.

Interviews lasting one and a half hours were conducted with 16 people, all head chefs or restaurant managers. The questions were developed in accordance with the literature on restaurant work and the pre-understanding of the first author (see section pre-understanding), and concerned whom their restaurant hires, what background and experience is relevant to working there, what education the jobs require, what kind of introduction to the workplace, as well as instructions are provided, how the employees learn, whether the restaurant offers opportunities for additional education and training in the workplace, and what is expected of employees and managers. These topics were also raised in conversations with staff and managers during observations. Both the interviews and the conversations also addressed personal career paths or reasons to enter and stay in the restaurant industry. Totalling 130 h (an average of 10 h/restaurant), the close observations of everyday restaurant life revealed the sayings and doings of restaurant staff and managers. Observations paid particular attention to what restaurant staff and managers did and how, what staff and managers said to each other, how staff were introduced to and instructed about the work, how staff learned in practice, what errors were acceptable, and what power relations were apparent. All data-gathering was conducted by the first author.

Pre-understanding

At the beginning of the study, the first author's knowledge, acquired by many years of working as a chef, headwaiter, and owner and manager of a restaurant enterprise, provided several ways to get closer to informants. That method aligns with the views of Labaree (2002) and Stierand (2015) on how insider knowledge enables the interpretation of organisations' language, habits, routines, and norms through shared experience. Insider knowledge also facilitates the study of how the acquisition and content of the restaurant practitioners' daily work were enacted. For example, by paying attention to the dexterous, efficient handling of materials in certain activities of practitioners during observations, it was possible to recognise work skills honed during long experience in kitchen and dining room work (e.g. meat-cutting techniques, the hygienic packaging of food items, the carrying of trays, and the ways of greeting guests). Although awareness of the impact of pre-knowledge about the field was crucial to the researcher, following Alvesson and Sköldberg (2008), a repeated reflection upon possible presumptions and analysis of the cultural context was undertaken to prevent personal experiences from interfering in data collection.

Data analysis

Firstly, the daily mundane work activities in kitchens and dining rooms were identified in the transcripts of interviews and notes from observations, including conversations, and then categorised in terms of their properties and dimensions (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Secondly, the categories were searched for components of practice theory: knowledge and learning (Elkjaer & Brandi, 2014; Gherardi, 2009; Lave & Wenger, 1998/2011),

communication (Nicolini, 2012), corporeality (Yahklef, 2010), and time use (Orlikowski & Yates, 2002), all of which were used to analyse the ways in which everyday activities were performed in the restaurants that stood out as manifestations of professionalism. Expressions of professionalism occurred mostly in the sayings of practitioners, the communicative signs described by Nicolini (2012), in remarks between informants during work, in explanations of informants to the researcher concerning, for instance, cooking procedures or opinions on service implementations, on lists and in written instructions, and in the silence in the workplace. Thirdly, insider interpretation of the data was performed in order to recognise the commonality of the circumstances of work activities in the different restaurants and the related learning trajectories pointed out by Gherardi and Perrotta (2016) together with identifiable formal and informal norms.

Findings

Materiality – consisting of tools, food stuff, inventories, and spaces – implicit in the findings clarify that restaurant work is inevitably anchored in materiality (Gherardi, 2009). These material circumstances are prerequisites in the daily practices and demand consideration to understand how cooking and dining room work is executed. Therefore, it is critical to underscore the importance of the things and spaces in restaurants, even if it seems self-evident that all activity in restaurants is embedded in materiality. We have highlighted micro practices of cooking and serving in this paper in order to capture ideas that contribute to an understanding of professionalism inside the restaurant industry. The linkage between the four theoretical components shown below, and restaurant work lies in the content of the daily practical work. This content consists of the practitioners' ability to swiftly communicate and execute cooking and serving due to their bodily and mental knowledge of their work routines. An ability (craft skills) that they foremost have acquired through many hours spent working in kitchens and dining rooms. A gathered experience that contributes to sense-making of their professional roles.

The findings are presented in four sections, based on the practice theoretical components that were used in the data analysis:

- *Knowledge and learning*, including craft skills in kitchens and dining rooms;
- *Communication*, including instructions, statements, small talk, short orders, silence, tickets with instructions, and notes to colleagues;
- *Corporeality*, including body movements and tempo; and
- *Time use*, including perseverance and sense making.

Knowledge and learning

Interviews with head chefs and conversations with chefs on the floor who had a culinary education revealed perceptions that the profession of chefs is based on knowledge and practical skills in both kitchens and, notably, in dining rooms. In conversations and interviews, all informants acknowledged that chefs identify themselves as professionals in terms of experience with cooking procedures and artisanal competence.

Craft skills are acquired and accumulated during many hours of working in various restaurants. Those chefs with more experience bring to the kitchen their own learning experience from apprenticeships and from working in other kitchens. All chefs had been

introduced to new workplaces in similar ways, primarily by immediately participating in the daily practices, but also by watching the activities of the head chefs – that is, the masters. Two young chefs working in the same restaurant kitchen expressed how learning in the particular production processes of kitchens is accumulated into knowledge, which is then reinforced:

> I've had a great development here [in the restaurant]: the best thing I've done in my life… I learn by myself – a successive schooling, said Chef E. Chef N added what you learn depends on what kind of place you're in, but often, you notice that you know something when you do it at a new workplace. (Observation notes)

The introduction and schooling of personnel was important to all of the managers, especially in the dining rooms, where the "lost" craftsmanship from times past seemed to be a professional ideal:

> In the dining room, I think… we actually need the old-school people who teach the younger. It's important that the old school lives on and keeps up the hospitality, the service. (Interview with A, head chef and manager)

On the one hand, all of the head chefs who worked in the city restaurants and some of their personnel viewed education as chefs at the secondary school level as a sign of professionalism, although one that required work experience to be more complete. The same idea emerged among restaurateurs in the tourist destination given their preference to hire only people educated as chefs at secondary school. On the other hand, no manager, owner, or staff member in any of the restaurants mentioned higher education as a prerequisite for becoming more proficient in their vocation. Only one staff member and two of the interviewed managers in all of the restaurants had degrees in the culinary arts, which they did not highlight when being hired:

> Neither H. nor I mentioned that we had culinary arts degrees. I was handpicked and got my job, not owing to the degree, but to my service personality. But once you're in the organisation, the restaurant owners may become interested in using your academic knowledge. (Interview with J, restaurant manager)

A head chef with no formal education expressed that because he was "born" into the restaurant industry – his parents had operated several restaurants – his extensive experience made him knowledgeable, efficient, and professional:

> There are damn few questions and situations that come up today that I can't deal with. I know how to handle every part of the business. I guess that's a condition to run a restaurant. (Interview with K, head chef)

That assessment also shows that being observant and sharp minded is necessary to successfully deliver an effective, hospitable performance in restaurants, which is a considerable part of restaurant work experience that builds professional competence. In the restaurants studied, the daily work of the head chef or restaurant manager, apart from being a leader or a master, consisted of efficient decision making about the meals produced. Having knowledge of and showing a profound interest in quality food products were also ways of reinforcing one's professional status. As a sous chef said:

> You learn all of the time. You never get fully trained, especially about how to use ingredients. You learn from colleagues. To make a sauce, the ingredients: It's one hell of a process. Adjusting the food, adding it in portions: It's important to work with one's whole register of tastes. (Observation note)

By contrast, the ideas of nonprofessionalism, lack of formal cooking education, and experience can be expressed in other ways. One head chef noted that she was made to feel inferior by male colleagues for her lack of secondary school education as a chef:

> You can feel it when you're in a meeting with the restaurant association of the tourist destination and all of the chefs who are men sit together. I mean, I'm a woman, and I have no chef's education. I kind of sink a bit, you know… I kind of get the feeling that "She shouldn't say anything; she's not even a proper chef". (Interview with M, head chef)

Thus, on some occasions, formal education can be considered valuable, especially to distance oneself from nonprofessionals.

Altogether, becoming a professional in the restaurant industry relies upon how craft skills are accumulated over the years via experiential learning in different workplaces supervised by masters or peers with more experience. The budding professional also continuously acquires the ability to observantly and decisively manage the service process. Although work experience was most highly valued among the informants, education at the secondary-school level also contributes to professionalism, especially in a normative sense to distinguish oneself from unschooled or inexperienced personnel. However, informants indicated that academic education in the culinary arts was of very little or no significance to professionalism in the restaurant industry.

Communication

In the restaurant industry, communication occurs not only in written instructions, statements, small talk, short orders, and the exchange of small tickets, but also in the absence of talk – that is, silence. The prevailing attitude advanced by the most experienced practitioners on kitchen staffs was that a focused atmosphere is necessary in the workplace, which was apparent during observations. Every staff member would be concentrating on the task at hand, and kitchens were usually quiet all the time. One experienced chef stated,

> We who have worked a long time do not communicate that much… It is often easier to do things by yourself than to ask someone. You have to keep a lot in mind. Everyone knows what to do, so it's quiet here at work. (Observation note)

During service, only short calls and confirmations were heard in the restaurants. For example, when orders arrived at the kitchen, chefs always said, "Thank you", to waiters to confirm that they had registered the order. The same expression of thanks occurs among members of the kitchen staff to prevent misunderstandings. To ensure communication between shifts, chefs make lists of what has to be prepped for the next day and write instructions to colleagues about what needs to be done on small tickets. This is especially important, according to one chef, as one must be considerate to other personnel in making a good transfer. The practices were also common routine in all of the restaurants for the smooth daily operations.

Brief daily meetings were an important way of tacitly communicating the importance of upholding professional standards. In one of the city restaurants, the manager explained that to exceed the expectations of guests requires the personalisation of service, regardless of the personality of the individual staff members and is done via communication in internal meetings. However, some managers indicated that communication via on-the-spot feedback was the most efficient way to instruct or reinforce knowledge. As one head chef put it,

> I do things very much ad hoc. I want to be part of a natural communicative flow nowadays. Before, when I was younger, I was more of a teacher who called people to special meetings. But now, after all of these years, I can no longer hold on to that. And I get much better responses, better dialogue, when I address important matters on the fly. (Interview with C, head chef)

Such feedback was also clearly part of situated learning processes in restaurants.

In sum, verbal communication is minimised in most of the restaurants studied. Brief, informative, straightforward talk and written lists enhance the focus of restaurant employees and are considered crucial for restaurant professionalism, although communication skills are a necessity during interactions with guests.

Corporeality

The development of bodily and aesthetic senses via the repeated practice of tasks was manifest in the corporeality of chefs and was expressed as having been acquired and upheld via cooking techniques ingrained in their bodies. An older head chef who mostly performs administrative work recounted experiencing the following upon returning to work in the kitchen:

> I stood there filleting and reminded myself of the proper handgrips… It was unbelievably fun, especially since it comes back to you so quickly, like the technique and the touch are in your backbone Actually, that's what it's all about: the touch. (Interview with C, head chef)

Chefs' statements on being experienced craftspeople illustrate how knowledge incorporated in the body makes them skilled and enhances their self-conceptions as true professionals. The following reflection expresses that idea well:

> I'm not sure if it's correct, but since I've been in the business for so many years and come up with so many menus and different concepts, I've become used to creating a lot only in my head. When I was more of a junior chef, then I had to cook the dish and taste it several times, but now I know much more in my backbone about what works and what doesn't. (Interview with C, head chef)

This chef's statement also conveys how professional knowledge accumulated in its specific social context – in this case, the restaurant kitchen – transcends physical enactment – cooking and tasting – and becomes tacit knowledge, a part of which is an acquired aesthetic technique. Bodily knowledge gained from the development of kinaesthetic senses is also how so-called old-timers deftly move around in the materiality of their workplaces:

> There's no stress at all, although the guests will arrive at any minute… Chefs E and N move much more effectively than the apprentice. It's like they have worked out a bodily consciousness in relation to all the benches, stoves, ovens, and materials in the narrow kitchen. (Observation note)

The effective implementation of both preparations and service requires an unhurried pace of assiduous work, which may seem to contradict the idea that focused work demands calm, as here one sees constantly swift activity with little rest, because everyone is on the move constantly, and nobody takes breaks.

Professionalism may also rest in the dress code. Apprentices from secondary-school programmes alone wear traditional chequered chefs' trousers, whereas in modern restaurants chefs wear jeans or other work trousers. The chef's jacket and apron are also significant in the construction of professionalism. A head chef who mostly administers a larger restaurant business and works in the kitchen only occasionally said,

> You need to wear the uniform when you go in to the kitchen to be able to work seriously together with the other chefs. (Interview with A, head chef)

In all, the informants of the restaurants studied seemed to comprehend that a reliable, experienced body containing tacit knowledge is significant to professionalism. Another sign of professionalism is dressing in the appropriate uniform, which creates a sense of embodying one's vocation.

Time use

A way to make sense of the many hours of hard work in the industry – often, more than requested in the schedule – is to take pride in the extra hours and channel them into an ideal of stamina and character. That normative behaviour is one way in which professionalism has traditionally been perceived in the hospitality industry, as an informant explained:

> In my world, 40 hours a week is not much… You need to put in a lot of hours. Working in the restaurant industry is not a 9-to-5 job and never will be. You think that it's fun, so you work a little more. (Interview with A, head chef)

A lifelong career in the restaurant industry suggests that acquired skills and routines develop patience in the face of long workdays and above-average workloads. A chef in his 60s who as still handling all of the cooking for an average of 40 guests daily (i.e. two meals a day), starting at 8:00 a.m. and ending at 9:00 p.m., throughout the whole summer season, said that he relied on his many years of training in the industry to cope. By contrast, young personnel, trainees, and apprentices, as well as chefs who recently earned secondary school diplomas, need to be fostered to become "premium" workers, as an older head chef expressed:

> I don't like to clean a kitchen by myself, either … but some of these youngsters – chefs who have just got their secondary school diploma – they're shocked, most of them, when they realise that it's at least 6 hours of shit work and two of service… You tell them … "You have to realise that this is your adult life, that this is what it looks like in places with ambition". (Interview with K, head chef)

This statement also illustrates the complexity of making a straining, yet somewhat boring, repetitive job more satisfactory. Findings show that in all of the restaurants studied, taking more than a 15-minute lunch break or sitting down to rest was not considered to be part of a regular workday. Relaxing consisted mostly of a sip of coffee while standing beside one's workstation. Assigned duties were to be completed at all times, as expressed by one chef:

> You know, we are service people, and we stay until the job is done. (Observation note)

That assessment also illustrates how making sense of the need for endurance in daily work practices is converted into a professional virtue. The felt need to go a step further in providing guests with excellent treatment is indeed an ideal of hospitality that, in the restaurant industry, also emerges in the passionate attitude towards food and cooking that forms a substantial part of service and cooking vocations, as schooled chefs acknowledged. It also makes staying at the workplace and developing proficiency worthwhile.

> As Chef E put it, if a restaurant employee is scheduled to work 200 hours or more a month, then he or she better have a good time while doing it, which he attested to experiencing in the kitchen. (Observation note).

To sum up, time use in the restaurant industry shows that perseverance and stamina are personal qualities necessary for restaurant practitioners to develop in order to be able to manage their daily work. To make sense of the high standards and hard work required in the industry, it is only logical to turn the capacity for endurance into a professional ideal.

Discussion

The informants in this study perceived that professionalism – perceived as vocational proficiency in workplaces and organisations in which norms and values are maintained by peers and managers – contributes to their identities at work and their self-esteem. That finding is in line with Noordegraaf's (2007) and Evetts's (2013) conceptualisation of professionalism as constituting individual attitudinal dimensions linked to a vocation, instead of being attributed to socially sanctioned, autonomous, nonmanual occupations (Brante, 2014).

The findings show how the four components of practice theory – knowledge and learning (Elkjaer & Brandi, 2014; Gherardi, 2009; Lave & Wenger, 1998/2011), communication (Nicolini, 2012), corporeality/bodily knowledge (Yahklef, 2010), and time use (Orlikowski & Yates, 2002) – construct the professional practice that can be conceptualised as restaurant professionalism. In restaurants, professional practice is constituted by special knowledge and skills expressed foremost in the importance of extensive experience. Corporeality, in the form of bodily knowledge, is also critical for performing professionalism in the manual making of material things, while the specific way of communicating – in silence, in giving instructions, and in exchanging tickets between shifts – also contributes to a sense of professionalism. Lastly, time use, consisting of a feel for service and endurance for hard, challenging work processes that nevertheless involve friendliness, added to the informants' ideas of professionalism in the restaurant

industry. With findings regarding these four components, we conceptualised *profession-alism in the restaurant industry* in terms of three aspects:

(1) craftsmanship
(2) customer orientation involving observant management
(3) loyal perseverance

The relation between the components of practice theory and the aspects that constitute restaurant professionalism are discussed in the following paragraphs.

Craftsmanship

Professional situated learning (Lave & Wenger, 1998/2011) towards achieving craft proficiency is built into professional practice. Leaders, peers, and the organisation of workplaces determine how daily work should be executed and how new practitioners learn from the first days in the industry. The "mastering of the materiality" (Wellton et al., 2017) in the craft both engenders and cultivates the passionate attitude for the vocation that the "old-timers" in the restaurant industry have. Accumulated work hours spent in the kitchen together with more proficient colleagues – "proper chefs" – make a person a professional. That dynamic is especially true considering how knowledge and skills are ingrained in practitioners' bodies throughout years of work and arguably result in a warranty of their quality in executing the craft. In the restaurants studied, participation in nearly silent, focused work practices every day is considered to foster professionals, which corroborates Gherardi and Perrotta (2016) suggestion that induction into specific organisations constitutes a process of the socialisation of individuals as they become professionals. Interestingly, as observations revealed, neither masters nor apprentices disputed those nurturing activities in the kitchens, because workplace norms were transferred by participating in work practices and in situated learning (Lave & Wenger, 1998/2011). A pervasive theme in this study is that workplace norms implicitly and unconsciously develop the professional identity of practitioners (Gherardi & Perrotta, 2016). The undisputed acceptance of the activities of superiors and colleagues may originate in the hierarchical structures upheld in the industry up to the present (cf. James, 2006; Mack, 2012). It also explains Mack's findings (Mack, 2012) that chefs only perceive a real chef to be one who has earned his insignias through tough experience and hardship.

The passionate attitude towards daily work exhibited by the informants resulted from the reproduction of discursive practices that creates meaningfulness and allows positive identity construction. The informants indicated their long, interesting professional culinary and artisanal experience during their careers in what Fine (1996/2009) has dubbed "chefs rhetorics". Such evidence corroborates the idea that work practices shape valuable experience that can increase a professional's reputation and career opportunities. However, gaining experience in service performance also requires countless hours of work, personable and hospitable engagement (Lashley, 2008), and a variety of service skills.

Customer orientation and observant management

Findings reveal an apparent orientation towards service in the tacit, embodied ability to work in a focused way until guests are satisfied. That tendency can be interpreted as a pillar of professionalism in the restaurant industry, and indeed, the managers and the most experienced staff members emphasised the aspect of hospitality in restaurant work at all times. For managers and seasoned staff, the main focuses in their restaurants were anticipating and managing time, space, materiality, and other practitioners' activities, which aligns with Elkjaer and Brandi (2014) ideas about how professionals are made. Thus, an observant managerial attitude informed by the accumulation of experiences with both service and food preparation in the meal-making process is professionally meritorious. Such an observant managerial attitude consists of a distinct, efficient way of making and reacting to quick decisions and having immediate answers to problems regardless of managerial position, for old-timers are often respected as the most proficient. That finding implicitly supports the idea of long, hierarchically informed experience as a hallmark in the restaurant industry.

Loyal perseverance

Restaurant professionalism also surfaced in the acceptance of perseverance and hard work required in the industry and in developing a capacity for work among restaurant workers and managers. The traditional norm of diligence and stamina (cf. Pizam & Shani, 2009) were prized by the informants and manifested in their quiet toil of everyday cooking and service. In terms of Gherardi and Perrotta (2016) ideas, these kinds of norms can be regarded as noncanonical parts of professionalism that implicitly develop the identity of the restaurant practitioner and in which the peer group of more experienced chefs or waiters mediate entry into the profession. Consequently, the enactment of professionalism in the practices of restaurant work shown in the study suggest an established trajectory towards becoming a professional in the industry.

   Although several of the managers mentioned that young, inexperienced staff members can constitute a problem, most of the restaurants offered only few learning trajectories for newcomers, or only unstructured ones, which suggests that hierarchies can remain undisputed (Gherardi & Perrotta, 2016). Especially in the dining rooms, training by following more experienced peers was nearly ubiquitous, and consequently, the canonical parts of learning practices – prescriptions of tasks and job descriptions – generally transferred via formalised education and training were of limited importance to the practitioners. That trend can be explained by the practitioners' perception that education, when it is composed mostly of practical learning, is valuable when it occurs in secondary school, whereas higher education is minimally part of practitioners' ideas of professionalism. The majority of the informants had no professional schooling as chefs or waiters and started as novice apprentices. Since the hierarchical relations (Gherardi & Perrotta, 2016) between highly experienced and inexperienced practitioners were perceived to be indisputable by the informants, apprenticeship and learning from peers were accepted as the most valuable and efficient means of education.

Lastly, the informants' emphasis on customer orientation corresponds with proposals of professionalism in the hospitality sector in earlier research (Gustafsson & Jonsson, 2004; Hussey et al., 2011; Lee, 2014; Mack, 2012; Mulder, 2014; Roosipöld & Loogma, 2014). Contrary to those findings about what matters in restaurant professionalism, however, we did not detect among informants any reflective properties, such as a code of ethics and self-awareness or outwardly directed characteristics, such as an ability to communicate with the public as parts of how they conceived professionalism. Foremost in our findings was that knowledge and skills in cooking and serving, characterised by both generic and personalised vocational properties, signified the sort of craftsmanship that informs professionalism. However, performativity and power, as discussed by Nicolini (2012) and Elkjaer and Brandi (2014), risk becoming central in everyday work practices in restaurants as the expectation of perseverance and rigid learning trajectories found in the study continue to be upheld and enforced by practitioners. That risk suggests that the industry persists in promoting traditional, inwardly directed ideas about professionalism. Since increased motivation and commitment among young personnel by developing managerial and leadership skills could alternatively be in place, their lack emerged as a substantial professional problem in the industry (Marinakou et al., 2016).

Implications

For education, the contributions of the study presented here can inform discussions on how to challenge traditional methods of learning and teaching the culinary arts, as well as clarify ways to not only attract and retain personnel in the restaurant industry but also increase their occupational commitment. The findings in this article may increase the understanding among the industry, vocational schools, and universities about how professionalism is perceived by practitioners and can encourage the combination of craft knowledge with academic knowledge. This can be done by theoretically reinforcing reasoning on how craftmanship is developed and sustained by reflectivity on knowledge involved in the daily work of the practitioners. The culinary arts and hospitality education in Sweden applies academic knowledge in the development of new professions in the industry (e.g. meal creators), which may be considered as an evolution of the higher education in the field.

Moreover, the concepts presented in this study: craftmanship, earned through tough experience, customer orientation earned by long, hierarchically informed experience and loyal perseverance embedded in the nature of restaurant work, can inspire educators and initiate critical discussions together with students on the professional ideals of the industry. Such in-depth discussions can promote students' reflectivity in their encounters with the working conditions in restaurants and their future hospitality careers and how their education can contribute to a much needed change.

For management, less reliance on the workforce's loyal perseverance and hospitality ambitions could afford space for other professional values in the restaurant industry as ways to help attract personnel. By the same token, an increased understanding of the need for education and, in turn, less emphasis on work experience in initiating newcomers into the restaurant industry could support the development of the industry and its sustainable growth. Therefore, future research is required in order to deepen the ambition

for increased professionalism in the restaurant industry through further education. Studies on how introductory courses in hospitality and the culinary arts for restaurant practitioners with no formal education, could enhance reflectivity on daily work, and could promote understanding for the need of academic knowledge in the development of the hospitality sector.

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