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ARTICLE

The practical craftmanship and social practices of apprentice chefs in a professional kitchen setting

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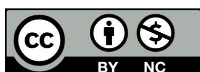

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The practical craftmanship and social practices of apprentice chefs in a professional kitchen setting

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Abstract

The background for this article is a project that explores the concept of apprenticeship training as an educational learning framework in the training of chef students from the chef training program at a technical college in Denmark, as well as in two high-end Danish restaurants. Here I conducted anthropological fieldwork over the course of six months in late 2022. As a chef's assistant, I explored and experienced how craftmanship was studied, assimilated, learned, and mastered, mainly using senses. I also experienced how newcomers are socialized into and expected to challenge and submit to the prevailing logic and doxa of the field and profession through master-apprenticeship training practices. That means that as an essential part of the learning schemes that newcomer apprentice chefs are expected to understand and master, this article seeks to unfold both a kind of practical craftmanship as well as certain social aspects of the socialisation processes practiced in the restaurants as an often unsung part of vocational educative practices.

Keywords: apprenticeship, chef, vocational education, craftmanship, social learning

Introduction

> I began slicing 200 lemons into 400 lemon halves, pressed their juice, peeled the fruit flesh from their skin, and cut the skins into quarters. From there I worked my way up to doing parfaits and ended up with doing evening service, cooking, and preparing starters and serving main courses (Author's notebook).

Drawing from the empirical data gathered during an anthropological fieldwork over the course of six months, this article aims to unfold both the practical and often sensory-based learning practices as well as the educative and formative social learning aspects of apprentice chefs in a professional kitchen. Through anthropological fieldwork conducted at a chef training program at a technical college in Denmark, as well as at two well-renowned high-end Danish restaurants, this article shows that as well as the practical craftmanship behind doing chef's work, the newcomer apprentice chefs must also be socialised into the social fields of a professional kitchen. Or as John, a highly experienced and awarded chef at the culinary schools puts it:

> "Apprenticeship training is about passing on a culture. It can be rather frustrating for some students. Here they go from being boys to becoming adults, as they arrive at school Monday morning. It's all about: how are you a chef?"

Research aim

Through thorough empirical excerpts, I aim to show how apprentice chefs are expected to figure out, appropriate and subjugate the ruling logics and doxa of the social field of the kitchen, as they are also there to explore and assimilate the active workmanship and practical craftmanship of the trade of chefs.

Through theoretical and conceptual frameworks of the British sociologist, David L. Collinson, the Danish anthropologist Charlotte Baarts and through empirical excerpts from the project dataset, this article seeks to elaborate on the aim of the research.

Methodology

The framework for this article builds on the two-year Frascati-funded research project: *Heard that, Chef!* anchored within VIA Research Centre for Pedagogy and Education, at VIA University College, Denmark. During the project I undertook anthropological fieldwork as an apprentice chef and undertook the tasks a novice apprentice chef, would be expected to do.

With a background in Educational Anthropology, fieldwork is my craft and my basic method (Hastrup, 2004). Therefore, with this project, I am seeking to construct an empirical object around the chef training program at a technical college and two selected restaurants in Jutland, Denmark. These places constitute my empirical object, understood as the physical and actual places where the fieldwork is carried out (Hastrup, 2003, p.15; Hastrup, 2010, p.57). This is how the geography of fieldwork must at times be almost laboriously constructed. This is a known condition in modern anthropology (Amit 2000, p.6). The anthropologist must enter the world he or she explores, and that is done by taking place within it (Hastrup, 2003, p.10). Heavily inspired by the Danish anthropologists Charlotte Baarts (2004) and Cathrine Hasse (2015), I sought to become an *engaged anthropologist*, by using participant observation

and full participation as methodological tools. As a learning individual and anthropologist in the world being explored, I therefore took on the role of an apprentice chef as far as possible, during my time in the restaurants (Hasse, 2015).

In contrast to more classic approaches to anthropology, my rather prevalent way of involving, interacting, and participating in the kitchens takes inspiration from autoethnography, which distinguishes itself by the divide between participant and observer being blurred and sometimes even ignored. This means that some of the empirical excerpts presented here refer explicitly to me as a writer of research articles. Autoethnography aims at reflectively recreating the researcher's experience to establish a connection with the reader and encourage him or her to consider their own experiences. This has led to criticism of considering autoethnography's primary objective to be therapeutic rather than analytical (Méndez, 2013). In this article, the anthropological approach is considered to be a useful aim for making way for an honest and deeply processed take on the events and occurrences from the fieldwork. This take on the anthropologist’s involvement within the research process, is continued and reflected upon in the paragraphs on analytical strategy in this article as well.

In addition to classic anthropological methods such as participant observation and full participation, which constitute the project's main methodological framework, the project also has clear inductive and phenomenological inspirations as part of its theory of science framework (Hastrup, 2010). Phenomenology can be described both as a direction and a method, a style and a way of thinking that is used in many contexts, from art to more scientific fields. Within an anthropological frame phenomenology has accompanied and acted as scientific theoretical and philosophical inspiration and catalyst for decades (Atkinson and Hammersley, 2007, p.2). Within this project, the phenomenological approach means taking on the fieldwork with a certain frame of mind or a special attitude toward gaining insight into apprentice chefs’ perceptions of something. That means that I am indeed there to listen carefully, which means for some time setting aside the assumptions, theories, and reflections we commonly have on apprenticeship learning or the work life of chefs in general (Jacobsen, Tanggaard and Brinkmann, 2015, p. 218). This is indeed where a phenomenological science philosophy meets the practical framework and craft of anthropology. My primary aim is, therefore, to describe what happens, the context in which the action occurs, how the people involved perceive and discuss their own actions and those of others, and what results from it (Atkinson and Hammersley, 2007, p.7). Through this interpretivist practice, I acknowledge that the social world cannot be understood in terms of simple causal relationships or by bringing social events under the purview of general law. Thus, I immediately take on my fieldwork practices with an intentional phenomenological receptiveness to what the field conveys. In other words, I allow myself to spend a lot of time in the field to understand which questions it would make sense to ask (Hastrup, 2003, p.416; Frostholm and Walker, 2021, p.65).

Research ethics

Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) emphasise a primary concern regarding the aim of the research process and to what extent the production of knowledge should be pursued, based on the costs of the informants involved (Atkinson and Hammersley, 2007, p.209). Because of this, it is impossible to

simplify the role of a social researcher to, say, the ability to observe, as the process depends on relationships built on mutual understanding and sympathy.

Any comprehensive ethical analysis should take the process of acquiring the informants' trust - and subsequently, formal access to their narratives into account. For me, the first step in this was to ensure that the people and the restaurants involved in the project were in full anonymisation. Every mention of a person or a restaurant within this article is therefore altered for the sake of anonymisation.

Hammersley and Atkinson emphasise that participants in research must give their informed permission after being fully informed about the majority of the study's topics. That includes an implicit option to leave the study at any point (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007, p.210). Although the before mentioned approach should be considered, the reality of anthropological fieldwork can come off quite different. During my time in the kitchens my strategy in gaining the trust of my informants, and thereby access to their narratives and cultural exchanges, seemed to be an ongoing demystification with my purpose being there, actual hard work as a chef's assistant and, to my luck, my ability to think for myself. The latter was directly addressed by Lucas, an experienced apprentice chef at Restaurant Concept: "Colour me impressed… You just take on a new assignment, without being asked to do so". This means that, as much as working according to fixed sets of ethical guidelines may seem ideal, I found that relying on an immanent gut feeling, while working as a chef's assistant, was equally important. Hammersley and Atkinson call this *ethical situationism*. This means navigating according to context, distinguishing between right and wrong along the way and could be a justification of many researchers' actual ethical approaches in social studies (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007, p.219). During my time during the fieldwork, I unfortunately sometimes came off as too much of an observer and too little a chef's assistant, which was quickly addressed by the head chef: "We can't have people standing around doing nothing!" "Why doesn't he have an assignment yet? Fix him some work – could be the parfaits", he told Martyn – a chef at Restaurant Concept. That meant putting away the notebook to instead work hard at my workstation.

Analytical strategy

The anthropological analytical process takes it very first beginning with a sensory impression within the anthropologist. Then it finds its way within a written form in his notebook, for then lastly to hopefully end up in some published work. This is indeed a peculiar and sometimes cumbersome process. As for how does the anthropologist choose what analytical perspectives to pursue between all the different snippets of *lived life,* he puts down as jottings in his notebook? The analytical strategy behind this article takes inspiration from *post-humanistic thinking* (Taylor, 2016). Post-humanist thinking constitutes a multifaceted collection of transdisciplinary theories, that in different ways, challenges binary figures, such as *theory and practice* or *data and analysis* (Taylor, 2016, p.6). Inspired by Danish anthropologist Helene Falkenberg (2022), this subtle break with more established traditions allows me to not understand data as pure representations of the static truth about certain social phenomena, but instead, as something that takes shape in multiple intra-actions between myself as an anthropologist, other research subjects, the aim of the research, the field itself, and the theories that inspire this work. In

other words, this onto-epistemological position recognises the anthropologist as a part of the world he explores. This validates the researcher's connection to the world as a significant source of the scientific knowledge being produced. By applying this way of thinking about analysis, the idea that the researcher adopts an impersonal, objective perspective while keeping a distance from the outside world is indeed challenged.

Falkenberg even seems to defy a traditional idea of acknowledging data as representations of reality, to instead view data as *relata,* in that it is constructed in intra-relationships between the researcher, the aim of the study and the related theoretical work, similar studies, etc. Data as relata thus emphasises the idea that data is mutually constructed in relation to the specific phenomenon (Falkenberg, 2022, p.13). By applying the post-humanistic inspired framework, means that I follow an analytical strategy, that relies on dwelling on the affective moments in the analysis process. Falkenberg notes this as pursuing the field notes that *glow*. This simply means revisiting those field journal jottings, that one cannot seem to shake from the memory, because of an affective connectedness to them (Falkenberg, 2022). Inspired by this seemingly radical take on the relationship between and inter-connectedness between the researcher and the data, the analysis of the data relies upon adopting an open attitude towards the data/relata, a traditional coding and sorting practices, otherwise would not convey. In this, the phenomenological ideals interwoven in the methodological framework behind this project are seen in the analytical framework as well.

Theoretical framework

Apprenticeship training is probably the oldest and least formalized form of learning that exists. It is considered the most used form of learning in vocational training as an experienced employee instructs a less experienced one as part of the work (Sprogøe and Pedersen, 2015). The purpose of this research is not to formalize or in any way explain the didactics or format of the apprenticeship training practices, but to uncover, show and nuance some of the phenomenological practices it contains. It is with inspiration from the Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky (2001) that I do not regard vocational learning and mastery as detached from social and cultural processes, but as an embedded part of the entire learning and mastery process (Vygotsky, 2001; Wittek and Brandmo, 2021, p.37). The question of how master apprentices practice the craftmanship as a chef, therefore becomes as much a question of understanding how to behave socially and culturally in the performance arenas of the craft as it becomes a practical technical flair and feel. Also, the British anthropologist Tim Ingold (2000) insists on a showdown with the idea that technical and social activity is perceived at an analytical level as separate from each other. Within that theoretical framework my project is therefore not looking for the craft practice understood as detached from the social practice, but as an integrated part of it.

I note a similar analytical conclusion in the works of Collinson (1989; 1992) who explores the relationship between masculinity, humour, and working-class culture. Based on anthropological fieldwork carried out at a truck factory in northwest England between 1979-83, he focuses on the organisational significance of humour among the workers on the floor. In this context, he describes how the humour points to several conditions. Firstly, humour helps to create solidarity communities and

construct group identity among the employees. Secondly, Collinson points out that men, regardless of whether they work in a factory or an office, most often seem to invest in a humour practice that is characterized by its masculine and sexual character (Collinson 1992, p.104). Throughout the analyses of this article, I compare my findings with the findings within Collinson's work, to strengthen both the international perspective and highlight the rather large timespan between Collinson's work and my own. This seems to hint at some somewhat general, relatively well-grounded, and continuing assumptions about social practices of men in the workplace, their masculinity practices and the seemingly humorous exchanges found within.

From within a Danish context, Baarts covers the topic of safety based on an anthropological fieldwork conducted among concrete workers on a construction site. Based on a methodical approach, known as anchored participation, Baarts herself is apprenticed as a concrete worker and through this acquires a broad knowledge of how sociality is created in practice in a working community. In this, she describes how the community among concrete workers takes shape in the form of different stories and dialogues, which help to create a linguistic expression and diversity that can be described as practicing a special jargon. Baarts argues that being able to practice the jargon helps determine which social positions the individual worker will be able to occupy in the community's internal hierarchy (Baarts, 2004). Baarts treats this perspective further, as she focuses more in-depth on humour as linguistic practice, among other things on the inherent duality of humour, where it is, on the one hand, funny but at the same time serious. In this context, she describes how humour expressed as linguistic practice in some contexts goes from just being funny to in a subtle way communicating something about the norms and cultural 'rules' that exist within social communities. She also describes how humour contains inclusive and exclusionary elements that are expressed depending on whether one knows how to adapt to community norms (Baarts, 2004; Baarts, 2006). Baarts' focus on the linguistic practice - the jargon - is interesting to consider for my further analysis, as I see humour as a form of social interaction and exchange expressed through a distinct linguistic style. In this, I further describe how the language practices that unfold in the kitchens inform about the recognized rationales for norms, rules, and social hierarchies, which as a newcomer one must learn to act in relation to.

Though immersive, descriptive, and somewhat humorous empirical excerpts from the professional kitchen work field among apprentice and trained chefs, the following analyses elaborate both a practical craftmanship focus as well as a developed understanding of the social interactions in a professional kitchen, starting with an analysis of understanding the practical craftmanship among the chefs.

Research findings part 1: understanding practical craftmanship

Professional kitchens are first and foremost professionally run workplaces, where both fully educated and apprentice chefs perform their specific craft. Throughout my time at the chef training program, I notice how there is a distinction between the teachings revolving around the development of a finely tuned sensory apparatus and theoretical knowledge about food chemistry, for example. John a highly experienced and awarded chef and teacher at the chefs' training program, says it better as he tells his students during a lecture on the French kitchen*: "It's equal parts nature and science, hermeneutics and*

humanistic philosophy – We talked about sensory information yesterday, remember?". That is; there are some exact sciences to the practical craftmanship as well, and that shows in the restaurants on an everyday basis:

> During preparation at Restaurant Concept, the least experienced apprentice chef in the kitchen asks: "What's that in the cucumber marinade? I mean, I wanted to check with you, before I just stir it out", as he checks with a more experienced and award-winning colleague. "That's just water, that didn't infuse" "Heard that, chef!", the apprentice chef counters, as he continues to stir in the slightly thickened green liquid.

Or:

> At Restaurant French, two well-experienced apprentice chefs are gathered around a large cobber pot with a thin dark brown substance in it. It has been simmering away for 20 minutes. It's a gastrique, I later learn. The chefs are tasting it, checking for the right consistency. *"Hmm yeah… The question is if the collagen or the sugar thickened it?",* Rico asks as he licks the backside of his spoon. Tim his colleague lifts his eyebrows as he tilts his head slightly looking into the pot: *"Hmm yeah… I really wouldn't know.".*

Not everything comes down to scientific formulas or food chemistry understandings. Most often the chefs are to rely on the senses to really practice their craft. For example, Rico and Tim need to taste the gastrique, to see if it turned out, the way they wanted it. Embedded in the professional work is a certain form of concrete and bodily internalized practical knowledge, which the skilled chefs act on and which the apprentice chefs are learning to discern and understand daily, as a part of their work and educational practice. For example, it is about knowing and sensing exactly when a food or an ingredient is as it should be:

> At Restaurant French, the head chef, Charlie smells an oyster he just opened by forcing open its shell holding an oyster knife and a kitchen towel in his hands close to his abdomen. Small wrinkles form on the back of his nose as his mouth remains closed while his lips curl slightly. He nods for himself. The oyster checks out apparently.

This empirical excerpt functions as an example of the daily practice of chefs all over the world. But how exactly does one come to know how an oyster should be opened or what it should smell like? What this excerpt should convey among other things is, that a considerable part of the craftmanship behind doing a chef's work relies on sensory science and in building an arsenal of sensorial and haptic understandings, as well as a basic trust in those, as a part of the practical craftmanship of doing chef's craft. At the chef training program newcomer apprentice chefs are trained, and often reminded to develop and rely on their sensory apparatus as a way of understanding and comprehending the craft:

> Mads a highly experienced teacher at the chef training program is taking five young chef students through their first mandatory apprenticeship tests in the school's industrial kitchen. One part of the practical test is to properly cook a pork chop, that the students themselves cut from half a pig carcass lying on the wide stainless steel kitchen counter. The students have turned on the gas: *"Okay guys. It is about senses, this. Does this pork chop cook?"* Mads asks the small crowd of students. *"Listen to it simmer.",* he continues, putting his finger behind his left ear. *"Yes, it cooks fairly okay. Turn the heat down, then. It's about sensitivity and intuition, guys!"*

As we experience Mads is rather clear and verbal about the use of senses. This is indeed their craft.

Not everything can be sensed or felt, though. Of course, some technical, theoretical knowledge and practical skill is tested, as the students are expected to locate and cut their pork chops from the pig carcass as the excerpt from the earlier show. What really comes through here though, is how Mads conveys the notion of using the senses or intuition, as he also calls it. With a finger behind his ear, he literally shows how the ears are the tool the students need: *"Listen to it simmer.",* he goes. The practical craftmanship seems to be rooted bodily within the sensory apparatus of the chefs. But how exactly is this seeming intuition or sensory skill learned or experienced? Bourdieu (1990) writes about habitus:

> "The practices of members of the same group or, in a differentiated society, the same class, are always more and better harmonized than the agents know or wish, because, as Liebniz again says, 'following only (his) own laws', each 'nonetheless agrees with the other'. The habitus is precisely this immanent law, lex insita, inscribed in bodies by identical histories, which is the precondition not only for the coordination of practices but also for practices of co-ordinations." (Bourdieu, 1990, p.59).

Baarts writes with reference to Bourdieu's concept of habitus:

> "The competencies incorporated in the body - habitus - are, on the one hand, a result of the individual's experience with the exercise of practice, just as the competencies, on the other hand, result in an adjustable exercise of practice." (Baarts, 2004, p.67).

Through their practice and exploration of their craft the apprentice chefs develop their habitual dispositions as they make use of practice-oriented knowledge and experience, which, in continuation of Baarts' point, is both shaped by the work they do, but also shapes the work itself. With the following excerpts, I show just how the habitual embedment of a chef's practical craftmanship comes through in an everyday work setting at Restaurant French:

> During preparation hours at 10.39 Eric, a nearly fully qualified apprentice chef, is at his improvised cutting station at the corner of a table in the narrow square kitchen. He cuts big chunks of pink tuna with slow but thorough movements. The more irregular pieces are trimmed into more rectangular ones with the knife. After each cut, he evaluates the chunks by holding them flat in the palm of his right hand and aligning them with his eyesight closing one eye. The ones deemed good enough are slapped gently into the cutting board.

What comes through above, is how Eric's seeming experience with tuna as a material is, as Baarts claims, at the same time both formed by – and still forms his habitually shaped sensory apparatus. Through the use of his eyes and hands, he expresses a craft, that is seemingly developed and trained through his bodily exploration and experience of the material. Following Bourdieu, it comes through as an immanent law. The following excerpts once more show immanent knowledge and practical craftmanship being practiced as a bodily practice:

> Charlie, an experienced young head chef rinses a rather large number of blue mussels in a big metal container stirring them with his hand. He then puts them into the palm of his hand three at a time inspecting them closely, tapping them with his index finger. The ones whose shells remain open, are dead and thrown into the bin at his feet.

We here witness a practice that can seem clear and obvious; dead mussels should not be served and are therefore discarded. The example thus shows how Charlie performs his craft practices based on an intuitive and sometimes inexplicable flair – a kind of sensitivity and intuition that is rooted in his sensory and bodily internalized experience with the craft as it comes off like second nature to him. Another example of flair and intuition as parts of practical craftmanship is seen in the following:

> The kitchen watch says 07.30 pm, and service have been underway for a while. There are three chefs in the small square kitchen with a large collection of stoves, barbeque grills and gas burners in the centre and different crowded workstations to all sides. The three chefs silently pass by each other. One is overlooking the frying of fish on the fry station in the middle, while one is opening oysters, smelling each of them in the process, wrinkling his nose slightly each time. One is carrying two containers of romaine lettuce for use alongside the beef tartare he is preparing. Three minutes later they all work soundlessly together at the hatch arranging one main course on a white porcelain plate. All of them remain mute the whole time, while one is spraying small dots of pureed greens from a spray bottle, the other garnishing notoriously cut out radishes on the side of the plate, while another arranges small chunks of tuna on top of it all. *They all work together as parts of one machine,* my fieldnotes from that small event, state. The next day one of the head chefs stated*: "Remember guys – We are a machine down here!"*

The examples are characteristic of the way the apprentice chefs carry out their daily work and craft based on what in Baart's words would be described as non-linguistic or bodily tacit knowledge (Baarts, 2004, p.14). She also describes this silent or unspoken form of knowledge as: "...bodily knowledge integrated into the body and learned through the body." (Baarts, 2004, p.64). Bourdieu unfolds his theory of practice and claims that knowledge is constructed, not passively recorded and that the habitus - a system of structured, structuring dispositions - which is formed in practice and is always focused on practical functions, is the fundamental element of this construction (Bourdieu, 1990, p.52). When I thus argue that the apprentice chefs' knowledge of the craft is constituted by a bodily embedded experience with a certain practice – habitus, I mean to further argue, that this practical knowledge and experience is constructed within the practice and with the practical purpose in mind. The knowledge, that the apprentice chefs make use of is thus linked to a specific trade that cannot be separated from the specific practice of which it is a part. Baarts describes:

> "The logical principles of language can only to a limited extent comprehend the habituated rule structure, by which practice is constituted. Practice cannot be articulated until it is unfolded in time, as practice is temporary and only exists while it is unfolding." (Baarts, 2004, p.82).

With the following excerpt, I aim to show how the well-integrated habitual bodily competencies come through and are reflected upon by Charlie, the experienced chef at Restaurant French:

> "Concerning the communication in the kitchen today … we are quite quiet today. That's because the apprentice chefs on the team today, will be fully qualified and done with education in two or three months. They've been here forever, it seems, and of course, they know the drill.".

The apprentice chefs know how to act in practice without an actual need to put their actions into words, it seems. This practical knowledge shows that the chef's experience with the execution of the craft constitutes a kind of common-sense bodily memorised knowledge – in that way *every body* in the

kitchen indeed functions as a part of a well-oiled machine during service – and the head chef seems to know that; it is apparently indeed a part of their craft. This common-sense understanding of the craft can be described with Bourdieu's conceptual apparatus as a kind of *practical sense:* He writes:

> "This durably installed generative principle of regulated improvisations is a practical sense which reactivates the sense objectified in institutions." (Bourdieu, 1990, p.57). Baarts also describes how the individual acts based on a practical sense – a logical relationship, built up over time and incorporated in the body (Baarts, 2004, p.68).

This habitual experience means that the craftmanship practices constitute completely natural and self-evident rationales for the chefs. In the following, I aim to show how the learning or practical knowledge, that the apprentice must adapt to, is not learned solely through the means of recipes and traditions or established regulations. There seems to be a bodily adaptation and common-sense logic conveyed or almost directly taught by the more experienced toward the newcomers:

> One afternoon, early into service at Restaurant French, Charlie, the head chef of the day tells Nick the newly arrived apprentice chef: *"You must never take your greens across the gas! Are you with me, chef? Move that kale closer to you, then. Also put that kale in iced water ASAP!", "Yes, chef!",* Nick counters. A little later Nick is arranging a piece of fried cod on a plate to be served as a main course. A few seconds prior, he was balancing the fish on a spatula from the frying pan to the serving station. Charlie overlooks his work from another station. "*Hey Nicky, bring the frying pan with you from the gas – not just the fish! Should you drop that piece, it's all from the beginning once more"*. *"Yes, chef!*", Nick replies.

The British professor of anthropology Christopher Y. Tilley (2007) finds, that in a constant dialectical relationship, situated, contextualized social action produces meaning, with generative rule-based structures serving as both the medium and the product of the action. (Tilley, 2007, p.260). The learning or practical knowledge that the newcomer apprentice chef must adopt to seems to be professional kitchen logic – at least to Charlie and his peers. Following Tilley, to a newcomer like Nick, this logic seems to be constrained to the exact situation or context that he finds himself in now. He would not have learned to bring the pan with him or to ice-water the kale in any other way, than from the rather innocent stepping-out-of-line example above. As previously pointed out by Baarts, the practice exists temporarily and is thus linked to the time in which it unfolds. The meaning given to practice in time is constructed, according to Tilley, through a situated social action that appears to be in a dialectical relationship with the rule structures, that have been set up around the craft itself.

Through the various examples given here, I find that most craftmanship practices are linked to a bodily internalized practical knowledge – a practical sense that is developed through the chefs' actual experience with the food, their tools, and each other. Craftmanship and practical knowledge are negotiated and assessed when the employees are in direct contact with the material, which means that the work they perform cannot always be unfolded on a discursive level. In other words, the knowledge production or formal as well as informal educational practices that take place in the kitchen do not appear to be conveyed solely *by the book*, but most of the time *by the body*.

Research findings part 2: on social common-sense understandings

A form of cultural know-how is also linked to the special corpus of technical craft skills, which is, among other things, made up of what Baarts calls the *social sense – sensus communis*, a kind of social common-sense knowledge (Baarts, 2004, p.27). She writes:

> "The knowledge of how to behave socially is created through the development of the social sense... By entering into social relationships, people can come to understand others and know how to act socially." (Baarts, 2004, p.35).

It is in the tension between social and practical knowledge that the newcomers to a field, like newcomer apprentice chefs in professional kitchens, must learn to be able to act accordingly to become part of their respective restaurant-, kitchen and chef communities. Ingold insists on a break with the idea that technical and social activity at an analytical level are perceived as separate from each other and insists that one of the outstanding features of human technical practices, lies in their embeddedness in the current of sociality (Ingold 2000, p.195). On that note, the following analysis will cover some of the social aspects, for example, some of the local banter as well as the oftentimes sexualised, crude, or male-dominated humorous exchanges that flourish among the chefs as an inseparable part of the social relations in the restaurants as well as the actual work process.

Based on her fieldwork among the concrete workers, Baarts explains how language positions the members of the community in a certain order, and thereby gives the community its character. She unfolds this character as the practice of a special jargon and emphasizes in this connection that *"speech is practice"* (Baarts, 2004, p.137). Baarts thereby suggests that community is not only maintained through purely practical work – practical solidarity but is also maintained through a distinctive linguistic style (Baarts, 2004, p.137). On my first day at Restaurant French, I have just changed into my chef's work clothes, as I enter the kitchen, carrying my field journal under one arm.

> The head chef sits at a table in front of the kitchen. "So – welcome! As you see, we have an all-boys team! And if you are gonna write one thing down in that journal of yours it's gonna be this:
>
> "When you employ women, you employ trouble."! The four apprentice chefs in the kitchen laugh. "By the way…", Yushua an experienced apprentice chef follows up: "The banter here is equal parts racism and misogyny". "He's right!" the head chef yells out as he leaves the kitchen to meet with his wine dealer: "Boys, be well! This is the elite team!".
>
> A few hours later, during preparations, Ronan Keating's when you say nothing at all comes through the Bluetooth speaker. Yushua notices and says: "That's what I tell my girlfriend: the best thing is when you just shut up!". His colleagues laugh as they all momentarily stop their work to look at Yushua acknowledging him with their laughs.

Among other things, the excerpt above shows a valuable insight into some of the cultural and social practices going on, on an everyday basis in professional kitchens and other male-dominated workplaces all over Denmark and the UK (See Baarts, 2004 or Collinson, 1992). Misogynist masculinity or highly sexualised jargon often comes through as the content of the banter found within the kitchens and throughout the laughing lines, which mix themselves in and out of the normal more practical or

professional communication running through the restaurants. And that is, even though more than half of the kitchen staff from both places, do not refrain from talking warmly and indeed lovingly of their girlfriends ever so often. Collinson also points out the importance of being able to participate in the exchange that occurs based on a joke:

> "Social "survival of the fittest" is the underlying principle behind the highly masculine pressure to be able to give and take a joke, to laugh at oneself and expect others to respond likewise to cutting remarks." (Collinson, 1992, p.110).

In playing along with the head chef, the team of apprentice chefs, and especially Yushua, shows that, with his understanding of the social game, he is both able to accept and retort within the current jargon, which thus contributes to him being able to join the existing communities of the kitchen. In *Language and Symbolic Power* (1997), Bourdieu explains how linguistic exchanges are, on the one hand, made up of a system of general linguistic tools such as the correct use of grammar, and on the other hand adapted to the social and cultural context in which the exchange takes place. The language is thus used in special discourses, that arise from the social and cultural conditions of the context. At the same time, linguistic exchanges express the power relations that implicitly exist between the individuals involved in the exchanges. These inherent power and dominance relationships express, for example, who is allowed to speak and how the recipient is assumed to react (Bourdieu, 1997, pp.37-39). In this perspective, the kitchen jargon can be seen as an expression of such a discourse, as it is precisely based on the social practices and cultural forms found here. In general, the dominant relationship that exists between the head chefs and the less experienced apprentices is explicitly expressed through the practiced jargon.

Collinson finds that newcomers to practical fields of practice are quick to be informed of the criteria for group acceptance and social doxa of the field. Being able to get with the humorous exchanges is a sign that the lessons of practice have been learned (Collinson, 1992, p.111). Yushua's example illustrates that he gained an understanding of how he is expected to participate in the social game. Namely by accepting the jargon and accepting the seemingly harsh environment revolving around misogyny and sexualised behaviour. With Collinson's point in mind, the apprentice's sense of the social *'rules of the game'* therefore constitutes a special knowledge or learning, which the newcomer must gain an understanding of. Collinson also points out that group acceptance is based on individuals' similarities and differences from the dominant cultural values. In this sense, individuals are assessed based on whether they threaten or support dominant discourses among group members (Collinson, 1992. p.99). In both restaurants, I experienced two indeed homogenous groups of chefs. Oftentimes they vocally expressed that, as we see with the "elite team" or in terms like "the experienced team" or as James a head chef sings in an improvised song one late evening during service: "*We are a team of six men in a teeny tiny kitchen, and it's fucking awesome!".* Such factors also make the small communities at the restaurant form their own cultural norms and regulations on a coherent small-scale level.

> During a late morning briefing at Restaurant Concept the head chef, the restaurant owner, and three apprentice chefs, out of which two are quite experienced, run through the preparations for the day, going through the 'mise en place'. "Did we freeze that rabbit yesterday?", one asks. "Yes,

> chef", another answers. "Who's on biscuits?" "I don't mind baking the biscuits!", the newly arrived apprentice claims and continues: "Actually I'm having a nice time baking". "You're not here to have a fucking nice time!", the head chef cries, bursting into a laugh as his gaze finds his colleagues. Everybody laughs.

The Australian anthropologists John Carty and Yasmine Musharbash (2008) point out, that the core - yet oddly nebulous – the heart of understanding and belonging in social relationships may be found in picking up the laughing lines, understanding the jokes, and developing a sense of humour together (Carty and Musharbash, 2008, p.209). Humour constitutes an important social practice for the chefs in the kitchens, it seems. What initially does not sound humorous or funny at all, turns out to be one of the cultural exchange practices in this kitchen. The newcomer apprentice chef from the excerpt is here not only to learn the practical craftmanship of chefs, but also to appropriate and subjugate the social practices of the place, by developing his social sense along the way. This serves to show just how the humour among the chefs in the kitchens conveys how social relations are established and negotiated among the chefs. In that, the newly arrived apprentice chef is to find out about special humour practice, as it is indeed tested daily.

The British anthropologist Paul Willis (1977) finds, that on a shop floor, there will be frequent conversations that do not seem to be serious or about work activities at all. They are instead joking, *piss-taking*, kidding, or winding up. Being able to engage in this oral cultural practice requires a real skill: the ability to recognize when you are being "kidded" and to be prepared with the right responses to stop it (Willis, 1977, p.55). With the following, I aim to show exactly how language plays an important role in the humorous exchanges or 'pisstakes', following Willis, that goes on as parallel communication incomparable with the practical work taking place simultaneously:

> Anders, of whom the other chefs previously told me: "He's got the biggest penis in town, you know. We won't let him near female guests, so he's permanently 'grillardin' (A grill chef)", is warming a cold cup of coffee is the kitchen's microwave oven, as it beeps. "No worries it's just my coffeelicious!", Anders shouts. "Micro-coffee?", Martyn asks. "It surely isn't micro-penis", Eric laughs. The other two chefs join him.

The small play on words taking place above shows how a seeming *readiness* as well as a creative use of words to pick up and counter the social, yet somewhat sexualised, humorous exchanges taking place among the chefs. Being able to master the jargon, understand the nature of humour and respond accordingly are seemingly all parts of the culturally significant set of norms – the social feeling and the locally situated know-how, which I argue that newcomers must acquire through cultural learning processes.

My experiences of the misogynistic jokes and the overall harsh tone of the banter in the kitchens should make way for a more general discussion on, whether these all-male and otherwise rather homogeneous groups of people attract a certain small group of newcomers, who seem to be able to identify themselves with the expressed culture in the kitchen settings, and thus reproduce the culture, preventing a possible diversity of people in the workforce instead of making way for a more including and diverse work-life culture. Out of consideration of the extent of this article, I must refrain from that discussion for now.

Conclusions

Through empirical excerpts, I have shown how a certain special corpus of technical craft skills as well as cultural know-how serves equally as educative and formative social learning aspects of apprentice chefs in professional kitchens. It is in the field of tension between social and practical knowledge that the newcomer apprentice chef must learn to be able to act within to become a fully-fledged member and integrated part of the practice field of a professional kitchen.

In the initial part of the analysis, I argue that embodied sensory knowledge, a sometimes-non-linguistic knowledge of practice, is linked to the corpus of craftmanship of chefs. When both newcomer and experienced chefs work together in professional kitchen settings, it thus seems to be rooted in an intuitive flair for and practical experience with the craft. In other words, they act based on a practical sense, which often deviates from the written protocols of the craft. This practice is passed on to the apprentices, and I show how the practice of knowledge transfer has everything to do with a development of a practical sense among the newcomers. With the concept of practical solidarity, I point out that the apprentices are gradually, but quickly accepted as part of the group on an equal footing with the skilled chefs, as they gain a practical understanding of the craft. In this context, I argue that situated knowledge of the trade constitutes a special cultural value in the kitchens.

I then establish that the special corpus of technical craftmanship skills is linked to cultural know-how – a kind of social common-sense knowledge that newcomers are expected to master over time. As part of cultural learning, the ability to engage in humorous exchanges is tested. The ability to accept and reciprocate jokes and banter seems crucial for newcomers to be accepted as accomplished members of the small intimate all-male kitchen communities. In general, the chefs portray a male-dominated and sexualised humour. Hence, I argue that a special jargon is practiced in the kitchens, which helps to position the members of the community in a certain order and gives the community a linguistic character. I show that as a newcomer one must gain an understanding of the social game and be able to accept and retort within the applicable jargon. Being able to master the jargon, understand the nature of humour and respond to accusations are thus parts of the culturally significant set of norms found within the kitchens. I find that the community is not only maintained through purely practical work and solidarity but is at the same time maintained through a distinctive linguistic cultural practice, that exists and flourishes among the men.

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