"OUI, CHEF!"

A Sociohistorical Analysis of Organizational Culture in the American Fine Dining Kitchen Brigade and its Effects on Health from 1903 to 2019

Cassandra Gonzalez

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Executive Summary

The fine dining industry in the United States has long been associated with poor health among its workers. Harassment, abuse, depression, anxiety, substance abuse, poor diets, and a lack of access to health insurance and sick leave are all barriers to good health in the industry. Recently, attention has been drawn to these issues with many in the business blaming these health challenges on the work culture supported by the brigade, the organizational system and hierarchy used in most fine dining kitchens designed following principles from the military and the Efficiency Movement. Using the theories of organizational socialization, organizational culture, and a culture of health this research utilized a sociohistorical approach to examine whether the brigade has indeed contributed to poor health, identify key aspects of brigade culture, and examine proposed solutions to these health challenges. Through examining the development and implementation of the brigade from 1903 France to the present day in the United States, this research contributes to an understanding of how defining characteristics of brigade work culture have played a role in poor health for cooks and chefs over time. This research found that brigade culture has contributed directly to an unhealthy environment including inadequate health and safety policies, poor communication and management practices, limited worker autonomy and participation in decision-making, low levels of support, inflexible working hours, unclear tasks and organizational objectives, high and unrelenting workload, unsuitable tasks for employee competencies, and bullying and psychological harassment. Additionally, systemic issues, unaffordable health insurance, low wages, and lack of protections for hourly workers were found to have played a role in shaping the poor health of cooks and chefs.

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First, go into your kitchen. Put a giant pot of boiling water on the stove and stand in front of it for eight hours. Occasionally stab yourself in the hand with a sharp knife. Find a right-wing radio show, the more rabid the better, and turn it up to ear-splitting volume. Pretend that when they are yelling at the president, they are actually yelling at you. Imagine that each insult is very personally directed at your stupid face. Try not to cry. When the eight hours are up, imagine that this is every day of your life and ask yourself if you still want to be a chef. Yes? Then congratulations! You are exactly the kind of masochist who is ready to cook in a professional kitchen!

- Amanda Cohen, chef and owner of Dirt Candy in New York City, 2012

So, you want to be a chef? You really, really, really want to be a chef? If you've been working in another line of business, have been accustomed to working eight-to-nine-hour days, weekends and evenings off, holidays with the family, regular sex with your significant other; if you are used to being treated with some modicum of dignity, spoken to and interacted with as a human being, seen as an equal — a sensitive, multidimensional entity with hopes, dreams, aspirations and opinions, the sort of qualities you'd expect of most working persons — then maybe you should reconsider what you'll be facing when you graduate from whatever six-month course put this nonsense in your head to start with.

- Anthony Bourdain, late former chef at Les Halles in New York City and journalist, 2000

1. Introduction

The American fine dining industry has long been known as a tough workplace. Workers tend to labor for low wages and limited benefits (Shapiro, 2018). Health issues, including poor mental health, substance abuse, sexual, physical, and psychological abuse, and poor diets, have been shown to be rampant among restaurant cooks and chefs (Murray-Gibbons & Gibbons, 2007; Bloisi & Hoel, 2008; Mahadevan & Feldman, 2011; Bainbridge, 2018). The industry has suffered losses of some of its members due to depression, burnouts, and suicides (Kinsman, 2018; Marx, 2018). Others have chosen to leave the fine dining kitchen to pursue cooking work in large chains, resorts, hotels, food media, recipe development, and other non-restaurant cooking jobs that are known to be more flexible, less stressful, and better paying (Pomraz, 2015; Sherman, 2015). This has led to a shortage of fine dining cooks that has, in part, prompted the industry to examine how to attract and retain employees (Hardman, 2018). One result of this is the questioning of restaurant work culture and an examination of practices and norms that have become entrenched as integral parts of restaurant life.

One overarching practice is the use of a brigade system. This hierarchical division of labor and chain of command is a defining feature of fine dining restaurants. Some in the industry have blamed the culture created by the brigade for the poor health of restaurant workers (Twachtman, 2017). In 2017, late chef, author, and journalist Anthony Bourdain, explained the historical relationship between the brigade and poor health and well-being in a commencement speech delivered at the graduation ceremony at The Culinary Institute of America (CIA),

> *It was still an abusive system from the very beginning. It was built up around the military model, the brigade. And it was designed to employee largely lost children, not the smartest kid in the family, the one who the families in Europe couldn't afford to send to university. The losers and misfits of the world were thrown in, usually underage, where they were broken. The system was not designed to uplift or to educate. It was designed, and in fact,*

to some extent, it still is, the sort of hazing and pushing and pressure that I was guilty of also....For many years, the system was to push, to haze, to pressurize, to see, to try, to make them break to find out now, rather than later. And this is why so many chefs and so many people in our industry are fucked up.

Today, a growing number of chefs are rejecting the strictness and hierarchy of the traditional brigade. They no longer want it to be an environment of abuse and stress where individuals are broken down. They are calling for a redesign that allows for more flexibility, collaboration, and enjoyment of their work (Twatchman, 2017). They argue that redefining how a kitchen is organized will lead to better health outcomes for their staff.

Because the existence of health issues in the restaurant industry is already well-established, this research focuses on outlining a history of the brigade in America and developing a sociohistorical understanding of how the culture of the brigade has potentially contributed to the health changes faced by workers in the restaurant industry as argued by Bourdain and others in the industry. It utilizes the theories of organizational socialization, organizational culture, and a culture of health to identify the hallmarks of brigade culture, trace its development over time, understand the process through which members of the brigade are initiated and socialized into the system, and understand how this process and the defining characteristics of brigade culture relate to health.

The History of the Brigade

Restaurants as they are known today can trace their origins to post-Revolution France, when the former private chefs of the nobility transitioned to serving the public (Trubek, 2000). Over time, public restaurants became more embedded in French culture and, by the early 1900s, dining out was firmly part of middle and upper-middle class life. When home chefs had served the aristocratic class, they had had the luxury of only needing to serve a single family that had ample free time to linger over meals. Middle and upper-middle class diners, on the other hand, did not have that time as they had their own work and family responsibilities to attend to. These groups wanted the experience of being cooked for

without sacrificing too much of their day. Increasingly, they also wanted to be able to order the dishes they were in the mood for rather than being served the meal of the day as had been practice in private homes and in early restaurants. Despite different cooking times for different dishes, restaurant-goers also expected their food to all be served at the same time. To address these demands, the brigade was introduced into restaurant kitchen structure.

Designed in 1903 by French chef, restaurateur, and culinary writer Auguste Escoffier in his book of recipes and restaurant management guidelines, *Le Guide Culinaire,* the kitchen brigade originally aimed to increase the efficiency of restaurant kitchens by outlining a structure for cooking and serving food. It had two major influences, the military and the Efficiency Movement. The careful choreography of the brigade and the system of preparing aspects of meals ahead and finishing dishes to order, or *a la minute,* as requests came in, made meeting the new customer expectations possible (Fuhrmeister, 2016).

The brigade utilized a hierarchical chain of command and delegation system. (Jensen, 2017). In the kitchen brigade, each cook carried out a highly specialized task to contribute one aspect to each meal and was ranked according to their experience and expertise. They were divided into teams with subhierarchies as factory workers were in Efficiency Movement guidelines. The head chef took on a role similar to a military commander in chief. Their rule was law and they were to be obeyed immediately and without question. This made knowing what to do at any given moment simple and streamlined the food preparation process.

The Efficiency Movement (also known as Taylorism and Scientific Management) of the early 20th century outlined specific principles that Escoffier wove into his brigade (Escoffier, 1987; Kanigel, 2005). Fredrick Taylor, father of the movement, had advocated for a focus on time, order, productivity, and efficiency to identify and eliminate waste and poor uses of time. His movement was designed to complete more work more cheaply and in less time. The Efficiency Movement was designed specifically for factory work where producing more pieces meant greater profits. He was not concerned with worker critiques of the system, believing workers should be focused on implementing rather than understanding the system they worked in. He also believed that an ideal worker should be "so stupid and phlegmatic

that he more nearly resembles in his mental makeup the ox than any other type" (Burkeman, 2016). He aimed to address issues of low education and low English literacy in factory worker populations. Taylor believed that less educated workers were not qualified to give input into planning their own work. This idea has been critiqued for dehumanizing the worker, leaving no room for the worker's own thoughts or the pursuing of their own goals (Sandrone, 1997).

Still, these ideals appealed to Escoffier and he implemented Taylor's work principles into the brigade design. Taylor's four principles that were woven into the structure of the brigade were:

1. Replace rules of thumb with science, creating organized knowledge
2. Achieve cooperation of human beings over chaotic individualism
3. Work for maximum output
4. Develop all workers to the fullest extent possible for their own and the company's highest prosperity

These principles prioritized output, structure, and efficiency over worker needs. It would enable restaurant customers to be served more quickly maximizing production and profits. Escoffier also believed that the rigidity of the brigade would help maintain a sense of order and professionalism in the kitchen preventing the abuses he had experienced as a young cook, and his system also served to unify and institutionalize his staff (Lee, 2014). The brigade was also seen as an educational opportunity, a way that order and discipline could be introduced to troubled youth without other educational or career options. French-American chef, Eric Ripert, described how this belief played out at the vocational school where he studied cooking in the 1970s in Perpignan, France in his 2017 memoir, *32 Yolks: From My Mother's Table to Working the Line.*

> *There were more than a few borderline juvenile delinquents in our midst. Instead of sending them to a correctional faciality, the courts shipped the boys they thought could be saved to Perpignan for the rigid discipline. As we would soon learn, the "brigade system" was as military as it sounded. (p. 97)*

The brigade remains in use over one hundred years later in fine dining restaurants all over the world, including in the United States. The system has been influential in cultivating workplace practices and culture as it defines relationships and dynamics between cooks as well as the structure of the workday. The brigade kitchen is carefully designed to best serve customers, but is not necessarily designed to make working easier, more enjoyable, or more supportive for workers. Food blogger G. Stephen Jones describes the brigade system as, "specialized almost to the point of dysfunction" explaining how the strict division of roles in the brigade leaves little room for improvisation in the event that a staff member falls ill or needs a break or in the case of other unexpected challenges (2014). Though Escoffier sought to introduce organized discipline into restaurant kitchens and was an advocate for professional and supportive environments, the inherently rigid and militaristic nature of the system has been linked to the stress, pressure, and autocratic nature of modern restaurant work and therefore many of the health risks associated with the profession (Cullen, 2012).

In his 2000 book about his experiences as a young cook and chef in New York City, *Kitchen Confidential: Adventures in the Culinary Underbelly,* Anthony Bourdain described the brigade.

> *You are, for all intents and purposes, entering the military. Ready yourself to follow orders, give orders when necessary, and live with the outcome of those orders without complaint. Be ready to lead, follow, or get out of the way. (p. 361)*

In Bourdain's 2000 conception of the brigade, the system is viewed as a necessary structure to ensure that the work day flows smoothly. Kitchens operate under time pressure with customers expecting their food relatively quickly, even in fine dining settings, and with financial incentives to serve as many customers as possible during opening hours. The common belief is that there is no time to discuss and explain why things need to be done but rather, there needs to be complete trust in the leader, obedience to their directions, and commitment to action. If one member of the team fails, an entire meal can be ruined. The entrenched belief that it is absolutely the best system possible has kept the brigade running into 2019.

The Structure of the Brigade

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                    ┌─────────────┐
                    │  Executive  │
                    │    Chef     │
                    └─────────────┘
                    ┌─────────────┐─────────────────────────────┐
                    │   Chef de   │                             │
                    │   Cuisine   │                             │
                    └─────────────┘                             │
                    ┌─────────────┐              ┌─────────────┐
                    │  Sous Chef  │              │ Pastry Chef │
                    └─────────────┘              └─────────────┘
                    ┌─────────────┐              ┌─────────────┐
                    │ Line Cooks  │              │   Pastry    │
                    │             │              │   Cooks     │
                    └─────────────┘              └─────────────┘
        ┌─────────────┐      ┌─────────────┐    ┌─────────────┐
        │ Prep Cooks  │──────│   Stages    │    │   Pastry    │
        │             │      │             │    │   Stages    │
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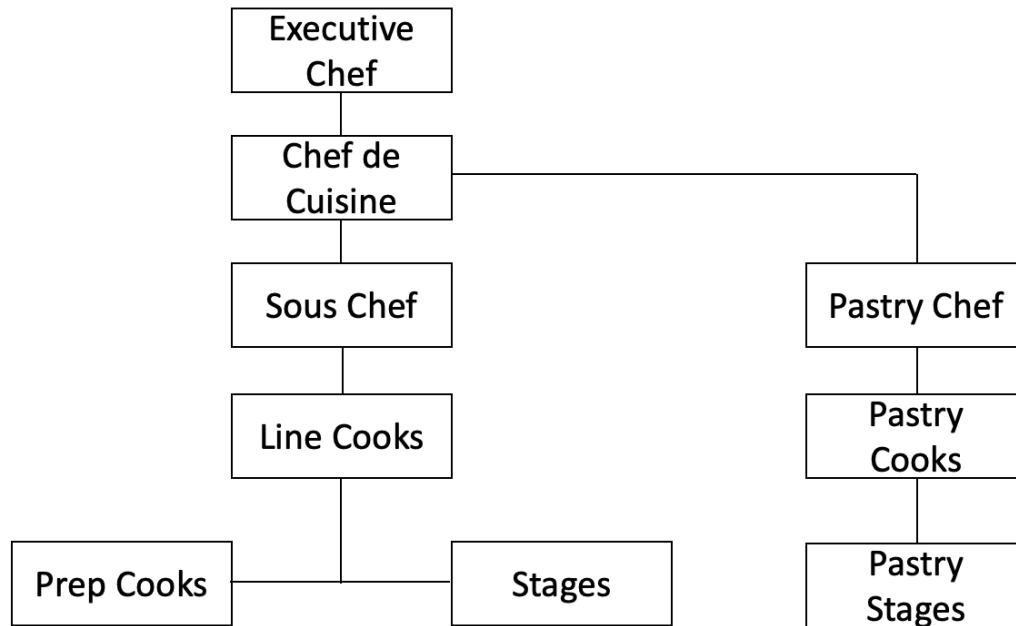
Figure 1.1 Standard Brigade in the US

An understanding on the basic structure of the brigade is essential to understanding its culture and customs. In a classical French kitchen, a staff of cooks is led by a *chef de cuisine,* literally the chief of the kitchen. This chef designs menus, may oversee business aspects of the restaurant, and, during service hours, is usually stationed at "the passe" where plated dishes are inspected before being sent out to customers. It is the chef's responsibility to call out orders, delegate tasks during service, and manage quality control. They are like the conductors of the kitchen, overseeing the bigger picture of a meal for a table and managing timing so that each dish is done at the same time. Chefs do very little actual cooking focusing their attention on creative work and management. The title of chef is a coveted one and is not given lightly. Though colloquially one might refer to anyone who cooks professionally or even a talented home cook as a chef, in the brigade, chef is an honorary title earned through years of work and an accumulation of skills, knowledge, and experience.

Occasionally, the *chef de cuisine* is overseen by an executive chef, often the celebrity or better-known face of a restaurant who may oversee multiple establishments and be more involved on the business end of running the restaurant than the actual food preparation side.

They may still have creative input on the menus, and menus created by the *chef de cuisine* are designed with the aesthetic and creative approach of the executive chef.

The *chef de cuisine* is assisted by a *sous chef*. They are second-in-command, fill in in the *chef de cuisine*'s absence, and also may fill in for other staff. They often give suggestions for new dishes. They also take on a supervisory role that includes training new staff, assigning daily preparation tasks before service, and coordinating scheduling and logistics.

Cooks falling under the sous chef are known as *chefs de partie* or, more commonly in the United States, as line cooks. Line cooks do most of the actual cooking in a kitchen. The exact hierarchy among line cooks varies. The most prestigious and largest restaurants have the most elaborate structures and most clearly defined roles. Smaller, more casual establishments often have a simplified structure with a head chef supported by a team of line cooks all with the same title and interchangeable responsibilities.

Commis or prep cooks fall under those doing working the line during service and this role is where many aspiring chefs start. Prep cooks are responsible for doing many of the major tasks in a restaurant that need to be done in bulk. They help set up the line cooks for the day by chopping vegetables, butchering meats, and making stocks, sauces, and other staple items. They may assist the line cooks during a meal service as needed, making sure that cooks always have all the supplies that they need to execute a dish.

Stagiaries or stages, are interns in the kitchen. They work at a particular place for a set amount of time, usually either a few weeks or a few months, and are usually unpaid or paid a lower hourly wage than official employees. Many culinary schools require that their students complete a certain number of hours as stages, anywhere from 100 hours to 6-months of work depending on the school. Some working cooks also stage as a way to learn particular techniques, recipes, and cooking styles from different chefs. They may stage in addition to working somewhere else, between jobs, or while traveling. Stages can help cooks build their networks and assist them with getting future jobs.

If a restaurant has a dedicated pastry or baking department, there is often a head pastry chef supported by a pastry *sous chef* and a team of bakers or pastry cooks. A head pastry chef usually still reports to the *chef de cuisine* and executive chef rather than having complete creative control over their department. In larger restaurants, they may have their own kitchen separate from the rest of the staff (Jones, 2017).

Demographics of the Brigade

According to 2018 data from the US Department of Labor, the cooking field is predominately white and male as shown in the graphs below. (Note: US census data allows individuals with more than one racial identity to select all that apply. However, the census does not calculate percentages of people who identify as multi-racial. For this reason, the sums of these breakdowns are greater than 100%.)

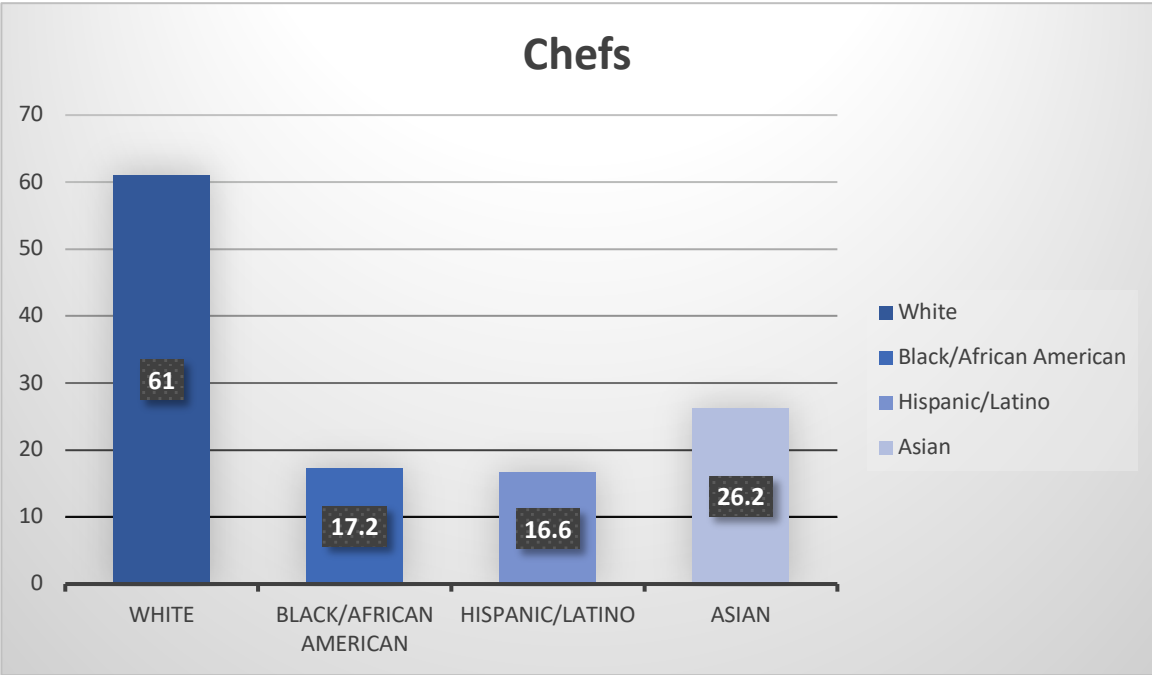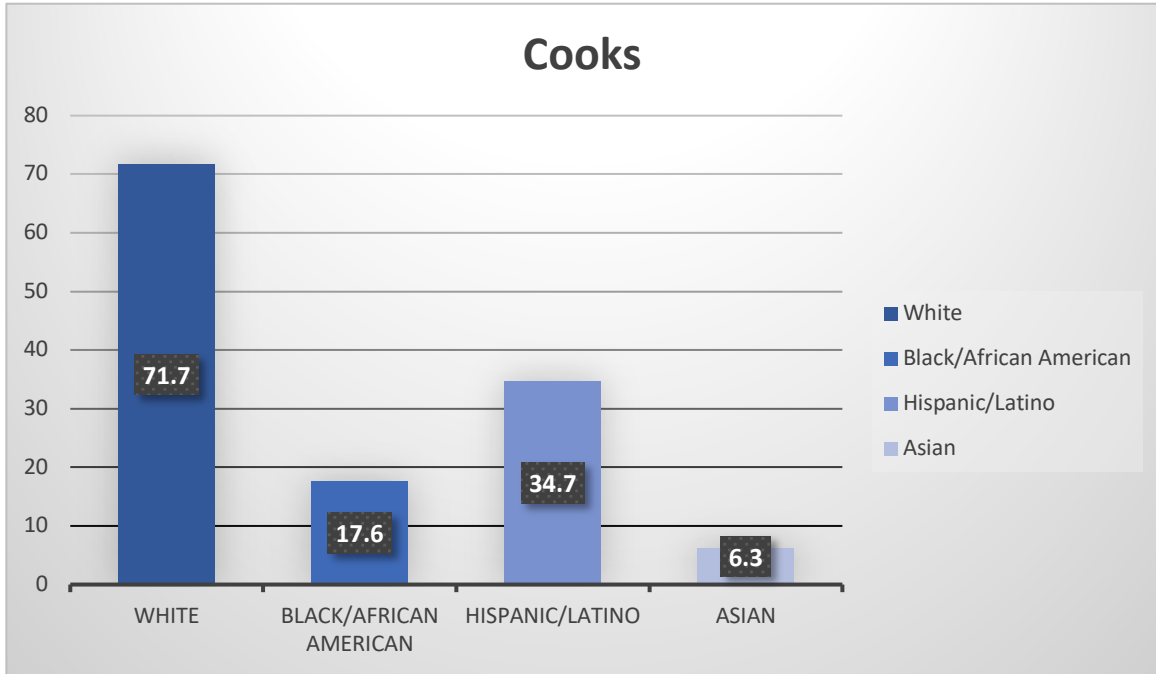

Figure 1.2 Racial Breakdown of Chefs
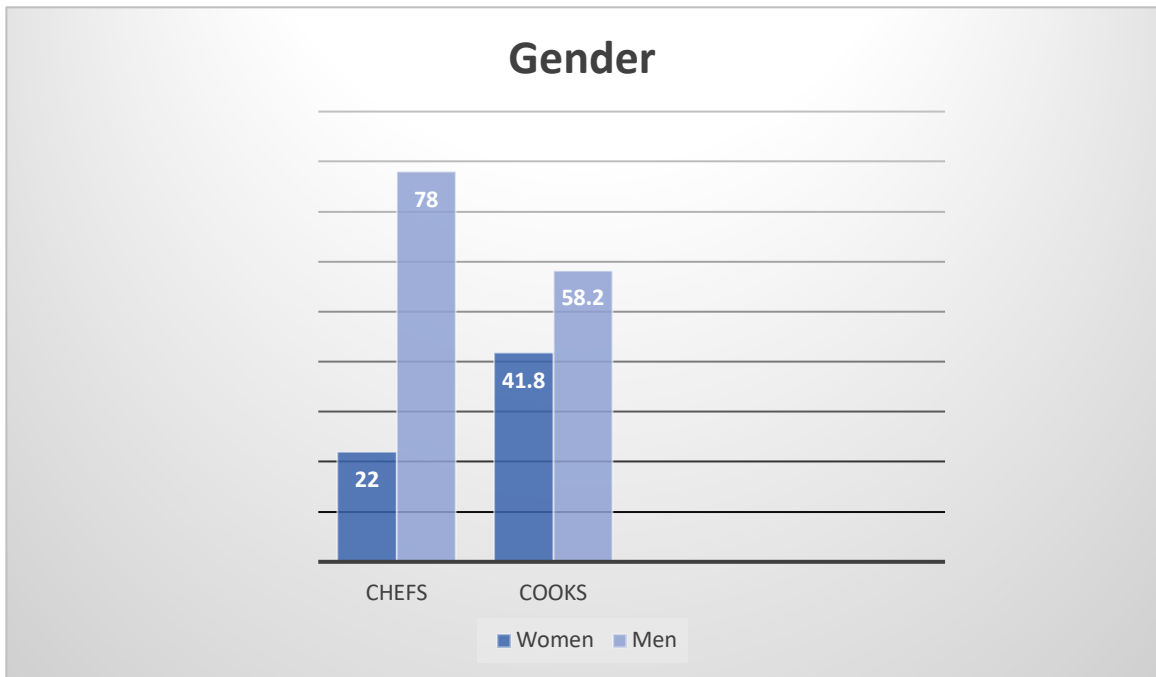
Figure 1.3 Racial Breakdown of Cooks

Figure 1.4 Gender breakdown of cooks and chefs

There is also a gender discrepancy in type of cooking. Most kitchens make a distinction between savory cooking skills including cold appetizers, salads, poultry, meat, fish, stocks, and sauces and pastry cooking including baking breads and sweets, candy making, and ice

cream production. While most positions in the savory kitchen are held by men, pastry kitchens are more likely to be staffed by women earning them the nicknames "pink dungeons" and "pink ghettos." (Harris & Giuffre, 2010; Jennings, 2018). Because pastry chefs generally work under an executive chef or *chef de cuisine* there is a limit to their opportunities for professional advancement. A pastry professional can become head of their realm of the kitchen, but they do not advance to having control over the savory side of kitchens in *executive chef* or *chef de cuisine positions* limiting career opportunities for many women (Jayaraman, 2016).

Additionally, the restaurant industry is the largest employer of immigrants According to the Pew Research Center, immigrants make up 22 percent of those working in food preparation and serving. Pew estimates that ten percent of those immigrants are undocumented (2017). Others argue that the 10 percent estimation of undocumented workers is too conservative and suggest that as much as 20 percent of the industry are undocumented (McCarthy, 2016).

The Department of Labor does not separate data on cooks and chefs working in fine dining from other types of restaurants, but fine dining has a reputation for being even more predominately white, male, and heterosexual than family-owned, fast, and fast casual restaurants so it is likely that the percentage of white males in fine dining cook and chef positions is higher than in the overall numbers. Fine dining is seen as a segment of the food industry steeped in hierarchy and oppression of minorities including women, people of color, and members of the LGBTQIA+ community and has been described as a "chef-bro boys club." (Severson, 2017; Wilson, 2017; Anderle, 2018). This is in part because the concept of fine dining tends to be Euro-centric with ideas of craft, artistry, and refinement being associated with European, especially French, techniques, recipes, and culture. Cuisines from other parts of the world and the chefs that cook those cuisines are often othered as "ethnic" and struggle to enter the fine dining space due to conceptions about what makes a food "refined" or worth a high price. Consumers in the United States tend to associate non-European-cuisine restaurants with being more "authentic" if the restaurants have dirt floors, plastic stools, and more casual environments and tend to punish "ethnic" restaurants that attempt to enter the fine dining space for a perceived loss of "authenticity." In contrast,

diners tend to view restaurants as more "authentically" European if they exhibit more markers of fine dining like white tablecloths and fancy dishware (Morabito, 2017; Kay, 2019). Cultural products of groups privileged by race, class, and gender are valued more than others (Johnston, Rodney, & Chong, 2014). This creates a space that is more accessible to white male cooks and chefs. Additionally, white males are more likely to hold the better paying positions in restaurants and are more likely to be hired for and promoted to chef positions, while women, immigrants, and people of color are more likely to staff the lower paying positions such as prep work or non-cooking roles like dish washing (Restaurant Opportunities Centers United, 2014). These demographics are important to understand as they give context to the culture of the kitchen and further show who gets and maintains power in the fine dining world.

Health Issues in the Restaurant Industry

This section provides summaries of a range of health issues that have been shown to be widely or often experienced by members of kitchen brigades. This includes various aspects of mental and physical health. Though these issues are explained in detail separately, they influence each other and should be considered holistically.

Harassment and Abuse

Sexual, physical, and emotional abuse occur frequently in professional kitchens (Meloury & Signal, 2014; Rosner, 2018). Verbal berating and humiliation as well as physical violence are often punishment for mistakes or part of hazing of new staff members. Workers describe punishments including being punched for delayed delivery of dishes, having hot food or liquids spilled on them for making mistakes, and chefs branding their staff with hot utensils (Wroe, 2014).

Sexual harassment and coercion can affect all members of staff, especially lower-ranking cooks and women. The restaurant-industry is the largest source of sexual-harassment complaints to the federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission contributing 37

percent of all sexual harassment complaints (Restaurant Opportunities Centers United, 2011).

Mental Health

The kitchen lifestyle can have negative impacts on the mental health of cooks including depression, burnout, anxiety, social isolation, and eating disorders (Ross, 1997; Jung, Yoon, & Kim, 2012; Steiner, 2016). Cooks report excessive workloads, feeling undervalued, and difficulty communicating in the workplace (Murray-Gibbons & Gibbons, 2007).

Burnouts are common with shifts surpassing twelve hours being commonplace and some cooks reporting working 70 or more hours per week (Jones, 2013; Hayes, 2017). 70 percent of cooks do not receive paid time off and vacation of any kind is virtually unheard of (Shapiro, 2018). The high rates of burnout and turnover create more stress on remaining staff who are expected to cover labor shortages and skill gaps by working longer, more intense hours until replacements are found and trained (Rowley and Purcell, 2001).

Financial struggles can add to the stress. Cooks exist on the lower end of the economic spectrum in the US. The median hourly wage for restaurant cooks nationwide is $12 with many cooks starting even lower. Nineteen percent of cooks live below the poverty line, and many face pressures to work unpaid hours (Shapiro, 2018). Low pay is an industry-wide issue as restaurant work includes seven of the ten lowest-paying occupations in America, and only 20 percent of restaurant jobs pay a living wage. Women, people of color, and immigrants face the most barriers in securing those living wage jobs (Jayaraman, 2016).

An increasing number of young cooks also struggle with stress related to educational debt. The $12 median hourly wage leaves little room for managing student loan payments along with regular living costs, especially in expensive major cities where most fine dining restaurants are located.

Substance Abuse

Substance abuse occurs more frequently in brigades than in the general population. Food service workers have among the highest in rates of alcohol consumption of any US occupation (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2007). Combined data from 2008 through 2012 from the Substance Abuse and Mental Services Administration found that hospitality and food services had the highest rate of illicit drug use of any industry with 19 percent of respondents reporting illicit drug use within the previous 30 days (Bush & Lipari, 2015). Cocaine is especially prevalent with some cooks relying on it to stay alert and focused during long and demanding shifts (Ocean Hills Recovery, 2018). Cooks also smoke more tobacco than the general population. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, food service workers, along with miners and construction workers, smoke more than individuals in other professionals. Thirty percent of those working in the accommodation and food service sector have been found to smoke (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2015).

Poor Diets

Cooks are also at risk for poor nutrition. Mahadevan & Feldman found that cooks in their New Jersey case study had difficulty with making healthy food choices citing lack of time, eating alone, low availability of high-quality food, and easy access to indulgent foods as reasons for poor eating habits. Cooks reported being most focused on making their customers happy and viewed their own needs as secondary. Healthy eating was also viewed as being insufficient to undo the effects of a stressful job and therefore not worthwhile. In their survey, only one chef had eaten a home-cooked meal in the past 24 hours with all others reporting eating food prepared at work or purchased from fast food and convenience stores. They saw eating indulgent foods as part of the process of unwinding after work along with drinking and smoking. These dietary choices were despite the majority of cooks having decent knowledge of what constituted healthy diets and lifestyles (2011).

Health Insurance and Sick Leave

Sick leave is still viewed as a luxury in the industry with 90 percent of restaurant workers reporting that they do not receive paid sick days (Restaurant Opportunities Centers United, 2011). In most kitchens, the expectation remains that workers show up when sick or injured since each member of staff carries out a specialized role and cannot easily be replaced. Sick cooks report to work for fear of causing difficulties for their coworkers or receiving reprimands from their chef or restaurant management (Jayaraman, 2016). Two-thirds of restaurant workers have reported either preparing, cooking, or serving meals while ill, putting themselves, their coworkers, and diners at risk (Restaurant Opportunities Centers United, 2011).

Additionally, in a line of work where knives, hot oil, exhaustion, and slippery floors are constant risk factors, restaurant workers comprise one of the largest groups of injured workers in the United States (Filiaggi & Courtney, 2003). Nearly half of workers surveyed by Restaurant Opportunities Center United had suffered work-related cuts or been burned at work. Still, a worker might be expected to continue their shift despite cuts, burns, or falls so as not to disrupt the flow of service. Additionally, as low-income workers without paid days off, many cooks cannot afford to go days without pay to recover from illness or injury (Teel, 2015). According to the United States Department of Labor, the restaurant industry ranks third nationwide for total number of occupational injuries and illnesses (2011).

Health insurance coverage is also rare with 90 percent of restaurant workers reporting it not being provided by their employer meaning that workers are unable to get treatment for illnesses or injury, potentially prolonging or exacerbating any problems (Restaurant Opportunities Centers United, 2011). Even in instances where restaurant owners do offer health insurance, many workers decline it as buying into company insurance still often costs more than they can afford. In a study by payroll processing firm, ADP, a $45,000 annual salary was the tipping point at which opting in to a company insurance plan is financially feasible (2012). With line cook annual pay typically falling between $20,802 and $29,675, purchasing insurance remains too costly for most kitchen workers (Salary.com, 2019).

Appeal of the Brigade

The health challenges associated with the hard work, the low pay, and the long hours in a kitchen brigade are not industry secrets. These issues are widely documented and visible in media. Still, culinary school enrollment has experienced steady growth and seeking a career in the kitchen has become a popular option for both young students finishing high school or college and career-changers. It is therefore important to understand what drives people into the kitchen with potentially a full understanding of the risks and the poor odds for making cooking a long-term career.

A part of the draw to cooking is identity. All work provides some sort of identity (Snow & Anderson, 1987). However, cooking as a career provides an uncommon opportunity for creating and expressing multiple unique identities. In the research of anthropologist Gary Alan Fine, cooks frame themselves in four ways. First, cooks see themselves as professionals, highly skilled workers carrying out important tasks. Secondly, they view themselves as artists, people who get to create beautiful, interesting things. Thirdly, cooks are businesspeople; a restaurant's main objective is to exchange food for money and chefs need business savvy for their restaurants to survive. Lastly, cooks see themselves manual laborers working with their hands and bodies and producing tangible products for sale. Fine argues that even more definitions are possible including as craftsmen who create simultaneously utilitarian and enjoyable products and scientists who manipulate nature, using different ingredients and heat to transform raw ingredients. He sees these identities as fluid, shifting over time, and as socially, temporally, and spatially situated (1996). This makes the work interesting and allows cooks to craft their own unique identities over time. They have opportunities to decide how their work defines them rather than being passively defined by it. They can be drawn to the work because of how it allows them to develop a particular identity, not just because of the work itself.

Another draw is the low barriers to entry. Though cooking school is an option, a culinary degree is not required to start working in an American fine dining restaurant. This enables those without the financial means to pay for school or those lacking an interest in formal

education to learn on the job and work their way up over time. It is one of the few professions left in the United States where this is still possible. This attracts members of marginalized groups to the profession and it has historically welcomed individuals who face barriers to many other types of work. Anthony Bourdain described these marginalized cooks and the reasons they were drawn to the kitchen.

> *So, who the hell, exactly, are these guys, the boys and girls in the trenches? You might get the impression from the specifics of my less than stellar career that all line cooks are wacked-out moral degenerates, dope fiends, refugees, a thuggish assortment of drunks, sneak thieves, sluts and psychopaths. You wouldn't be too far off base. The business, as respected three-star chef Scott Bryan explains it, attracts "fringe elements", people for whom something in their lives has gone terribly wrong. Maybe they didn't make it through high school, maybe they're running away from something-be it an ex-wife, a rotten family history, trouble with the law, a squalid Third World backwater with no opportunity for advancement. Or maybe, like me, they just like it here. (p. 76, 2000)*

Additionally, there are cooks who are drawn to the industry because of a true love of hospitality. Cooking is associated with home, feelings of comfort, and family. Many who cook take pride in the caretaking and nurturing aspect of cooking professionally also enjoy how eating out is part of creating joy and an opportunity for celebration among their patrons (Haas, 2005; Bourdain, 2017). Former chef and writer Michael Gibney described the love of hospitality in his 2014 book, *Sous Chef.*

> *The self isn't even part of the equation. Cooking is altruism. It's not about you. It never will be. It's only about what you do for others. And that's what hits me where I live. There is honor in it...what matters is the guest. That person on the other side of the kitchen door. The one you'll never meet, the one who has no idea what you look like or what your name is. The one who trusts you to keep her safe, the one who is about to ingest what you have made. The one you are nourishing, taking care of, looking after – she is what matters. (p. 165)*

Lastly, some are drawn to the profession by the military influence and the brigade itself. Simon Wroe, a chef turned writer, described how the military mentality of the kitchen drives cooks despite the abuses like those he witnessed as a cook. In one instance, he saw a chef

pour molten sugar over a cook's hand as punishment for a mistake. The cook did not complain and returned to work the next day.

> *While scalding caramel may be a hardship too far (and one that reduces, rather than improves, productivity), in general the system works …This unflinching army mentality not only makes every kitchen tick, it makes you work faster and harder than you thought possible. Why a person chooses to become a chef, why they decide to put themselves through all this, is another matter. Love of food can only partly explain it. There are easier ways to master cooking coq au vin or tunnel-boning a leg of lamb. A second, more destructive appetite is at work. A pursuit of some violent glory. Yet it comes back to the same military principles. Cheffing is a food fight, and he who does it must love the fight as much as the food. (2014)*

The brigade and its military mentality attract those who thrive in competitive and aggressive environments while simultaneously providing structure for those who might lack it in other aspects of life, giving individuals essential and clearly-defined roles and senses of purpose (Haas, 2005). The structure can be comforting and motivating and having a team dependent on them can inspire cooks.

In fact, some cooks have been found to report high job satisfaction despite the low wages, abuse, and health challenges. Sociologist Gordon Marshall found that cooks in his research explained this discrepancy in multiple ways. First, many felt that they got to do something that does not count as "real work" in a sense getting paid to engage in a hobby or leisure activity. Others cited the proximity between themselves and their customers as part of the appeal. This proximity blurs lines between work and leisure as customers become friends. Third, cooks report enjoying feeling as though they are participating in an informal economy (1986). However, other cooks, such as those interviewed by Gary Allen Fine throughout several Minnesota restaurants reported dissatisfaction with their work because of the heavy constraints placed on them by the management to meet customer demands. Cooks in his research also reported frustration with the hierarchy and noted that the friction between chefs and cooks caused by the large power difference was a sore point (2009). These varying perspectives show that cooks can have vastly different experiences because of their own

expectations and temperament and the particular dynamics and culture at their place of work.

Together, these issues show how restaurant kitchens have become a perfect storm for health risks with multiple risky behaviors and situations emerging in the workplace.

2. Theoretical Framework

In this section, I outline the theoretical frameworks, organizational socialization, organizational culture theory, and a culture of health that were used to analyze the work culture of the brigade and its historical development as well as examine recent shifts towards improving health in the industry.

Organizational Socialization

Van Maanen and Schein's (1977) conception of organizational socialization argues that any group of people interacting over an extended period of time will develop both explicit and subtle mandates for behavior. A work environment is one such group. In a workplace, individuals commit themselves to a particular way of life including relationships, rewards, demands, potentials, and rhythms. Once learned, this culture becomes viewed by insiders as "natural." Founders can create a culture that is so firmly entrenched it outlives them. New members can bring about change and seek to alter the culture, but older members tend to search for ways to make sure that the status quo is not disrupted and that cultural solutions already established are not questioned. In the organizational socialization process, this teaching of behaviors and perspectives is considered customary and desirable in the workplace. Participants in the culture develop a perspective and a lens that they use to interpret their experiences in the work environment.

This socialization exists to both create and fulfill the needs of the individual workers and the organization though the organization usually comes first. Additionally, organizations are embedded in broader environments and are created and sustained to benefit other groups. In the case of restaurant brigades, cooks are internally socialized into a work environment by chefs and more senior cooks in order to serve their external audience, the customers and critics that dine at their restaurants.

Organizational Culture Theory

Building on the concept of organizational socialization, Schein later developed organizational culture theory to explain how this socialization occurs over time as well as more clearly define what culture is. Culture, following this theory, is broken into different layers from implicit to explicit (2017). Organizational culture as a whole can be defined as the accumulated shared learning of a group as it solves its problems of external adaptation and internal integration. The culture of an organization or workplaces is formed as it deals with demands and challenges in order to survive and grow. This shared learning becomes reinforced once it is thought to have worked well enough to be considered valid and worth passing on to new members. As groups evolve over a period, they work to integrate individuals into an effective whole and adapt to the external environment for longevity (Pronk, 2010). There are three defined levels of culture characterized by their different amounts of visibility to outside observers and how explicit those elements of culture are.

Artifacts include the visible structures and processes in a group. These are observable to outsiders and can include products of the group, the physical work environment, clothing, manners of address, emotional displays, language used, technology and its products, and myths and stories told about the group. The processes explaining how behaviors are made routine are also part of artifacts as are structural elements including organization charts, charters, and formal descriptions of how the organization works.

The second level, *espoused beliefs and values*, reflects group thoughts about what should be. These beliefs and values can be congruent with underlying assumptions, but they also may be incongruent and give members of the group mixed messages about expected or appropriate behavior. They can include the ideology or philosophy of the organization, and they can be rationalizations or aspirations for the future.

Lastly, *basic assumptions* are formed when solutions to problems continue working. They can be elements of the broader culture related to geographic location or time period or directly related to the occupation and particular workplace. Basic assumptions are often

unspoken. They are nonnegotiable and become taken for granted. They embedded in the culture so much that those who do not uphold them are often viewed as "foreign" or "crazy". The distinctions between the layers are not always firm and each layer influences the others.

Culture as a whole is so firmly entrenched and becomes difficult to change because it provides stability for organization members and becomes linked to the success of the organization. Sometimes, this link to success is purely correlational though it becomes viewed, by members of the group, as a causal relationship.

This framework provides a lens through which to examine the rituals, practices, and norms of the brigade and understand how they became adopted over time and solidified as important and sometimes necessary parts of restaurant work.

Behavior and Artifacts: visible manifestations of organizational culture

Espoused values: formalized statements of organizational culture

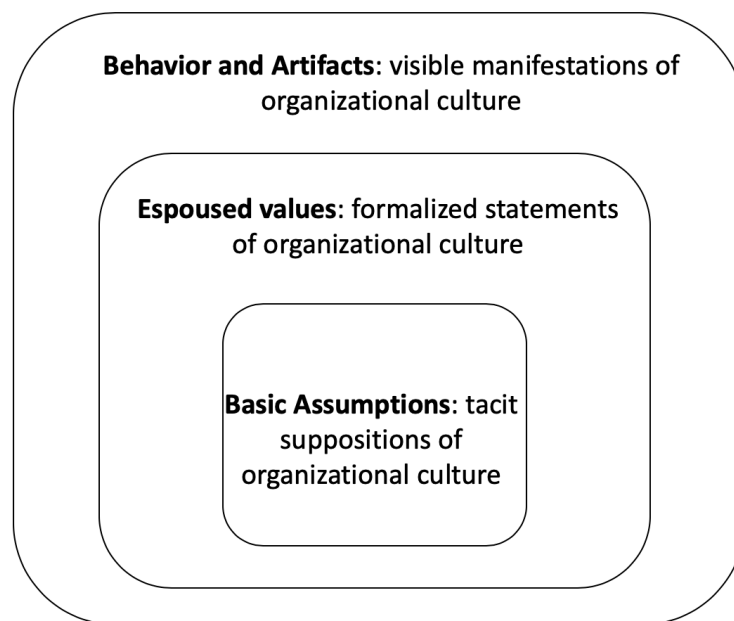**Basic Assumptions**: tacit suppositions of organizational culture

Figure 2.1 Layers of organizational culture

A Culture of Health

The conception of a culture of health builds upon Schein's work and applies the definition of culture specifically as it relates to the context of health (Pronk, 2010). A culture of health is

described as one that addresses issues related to worker job fulfillment, work and family balance, worker performance, and team performance and creates structures, processes, and access to resources to support both management and workers in achieving health-related objectives, reducing health risks, and optimizing function and performance. A culture of health creates a workplace culture that allows both the business and the individuals within it to thrive. It is an interaction between personal values, organizational values and norms, and business performance. Leaders in a business are responsible for creating a workplace culture and recognizing and addressing situations in which components of an organizational culture have become detrimental to a business' competitive potential in the marketplace or the health of its workers. This theory is used in the second half of the research to examine proposed solutions and changes already occurring in the culture of brigades.

3. Methodology

Research Objective

While the health risks associated with working in restaurants are well-documented, research on brigade culture and how that culture may have historically contributed to poor health for cooks and chefs is lacking. Research into how to potentially use the brigade's culture to improve health outcomes is also scarce. This research aims to explore these gaps through a sociohistorical analysis of the origins of kitchen brigade work culture and how that culture came to support systems that negatively impact the health of restaurant workers. It also seeks to understand the recent interest in changing this culture and the solutions being proposed and implemented right now.

This research focuses on work culture in fine-dining restaurants and focuses on the work experiences of the brigade of chefs and cooks. While fast and fast casual restaurants may share some similarities with fine dining restaurants, they are different enough to warrant their own analysis as they do not usually operate using a brigade system. Similarly, other "back of house" employees including dishwashers, porters, and bussers, and "front of house" employees including hosts and waiters contribute to the culture of the restaurant and face many of the same risks, but they are not technically members of the brigade and their situations are unique in terms of pay grade, work hours, and types of labor and thus also would benefit from separate analysis (Hutton, 2010). Much of the current conversation concerning health concerns in the industry is being led by chefs in fine dining establishments and their knowledge and experience tends to speak to those environments so those perspectives are the focus of this research.

This analysis also includes some of the French history of restaurants as the American kitchen brigade is based on a French system. However, this research focuses on the specific challenges faced by American restaurant brigades as these brigades are situated more broadly in the American context. France has universal health care while the United States does not, affecting the accessibility of preventative health care and treatment for restaurant

workers (Rodwin, 2003). Additionally, as this research was guided by personal experience in the industry, I was best able to identify characteristics of American fine dining versus other types of establishments or restaurants in other countries.

Research Question

Has the culture of the modern kitchen brigade contributed to poor health among cooks and chefs?

Research Sub-Questions
- What have been the defining aspects of the brigade?
- How did the culture of the brigade develop?
- How have members of the brigade been socialized into the kitchen as an organization?
- How does this socialization into this culture relate to health?
- What are the proposed solutions and how do they relate to culture?

Data Collection Method

This research covers the time frame from 1903, when the structure for the brigade system was first outlined in *Le Guide Culinaire,* to the present.

This research utilized several forms of data and includes both primary and secondary source material. The first was existing academic literature on health issues in the restaurant industry. These articles contributed to the bulk of the background information establishing the key health issues prevalent in the industry and the state of current research on the subject.

Second, was media coverage including in newspapers, magazines, blogs, documentaries, and television programs. These sources were valuable in tracking the public conversation about health and the restaurant work environment while also often giving insight into existing analysis of the culture.

Third, was original writing by cooks, chefs, and restauranteurs in the form of memoirs, blogs, and books. Published writings gave insight into the type of restaurant kitchens the chefs

worked in but also gave insight into the types of voices valued in the industry. These sources also gave insight into practices and traditions that are not formally outlined in the brigade's structure.

Fourth, was formal training information from culinary schools. These sources gave insight into the values, rules, and ideas that are most formalized in kitchen culture.

The sources used in this research were widely varied to give as complete a picture of the functioning of brigades as possible. Criteria for inclusion of information followed the evidence guidelines from Harvard University (2007). Because historical records are fragmented and a researcher cannot recreate historical events in a laboratory setting, only part of a historical narrative can be reconstructed. Therefore, selection and thoughtful interpretation of data sources is critical. Decisions about what to include or exclude in research are subjective but are necessary in order to manage the amount of information potentially available about a topic. Data were selected by first answering these four questions and their sub-questions:

- Who produced the source? What is their agenda? What is their knowledge? What gives them authority to write or speak about this subject?
- When was this source created? Is it representative of other sources created at the same time? How is it a product of its context with regards to time and place?
- Why did the author produce this source? What audience is it intended for? Is it fiction, nonfiction, scholarship, news, art, or propaganda?
- How does this source compare to other sources used? What point of view does it come from? Does it incorporate or neglect certain evidence?

Sources were included if they were written by either someone who had worked in the industry or someone who had intimate knowledge and experience with it as in the case of researchers specializing in the industry or journalists working on food beats for various newspapers and magazines or their own food blogs. They were included if written between the introduction of the brigade in 1903 and the present. They were included if they were

specific to the United States context or contained information relevant to understanding the European influence on American brigade culture.

Sources were found through snowballing. Because I was conducting this research as someone who had worked in the industry, I started with books and publications I already knew had information related to the subject. I also searched for information on practices I had witnessed or participated in during my own fine dining work experience. From these sources, I found links and references to other works and names of other key industry stakeholders.

Data Analysis

This research took an interpretative historicist approach in analyzing the data. Organizational socialization and the development of organizational culture is a process that is created over time making this approach a suitable way to study the phenomenon. The historicist approach blends sociology and history. Historical social research sees events as not singular moments in time but rather analyzes events as part of larger trends and patterns. It looks at social structures and processes in time and space, the development of processes over time, temporal sequences for analysis of outcomes, the interplay of meaningful actions and structural contexts, and the particular and varying features of specific kinds of social structures (Hays, 1974). This interpretive historical sociology seeks to develop meaningful interpretations of history by focusing on culturally-embedded intentions of individual or group actors in a given historical setting. It seeks to identify how restaurants became dependent on the brigade structure using Stinchcombe's (1987) understanding of path dependency. There are two causes of path dependency. First, a mode of operation is selected among alternatives at a critical juncture. This moment is critical as it becomes more difficult over time to return to the original options. Secondly, there are general processes of reproduction over time that entrench the mode of operation.

This method was chosen for this research for several reasons. One is its unobtrusive nature allowing sensitive subjects to be explored without invading privacy or putting subjects at

risk (Mathieu, 2007). Because it relies on documents and historical data, the risk of the research itself influencing outcomes is nonexistent. Additionally, in this particular case, key players in the restaurant industry are celebrities and thus inaccessible for original interviewing.

To apply this method to the research, the development of the brigade was looked at both from a micro perspective, tracking the development of its culture in kitchens and a macro perspective, positioning the development of the brigade more broadly in the context of the culture of both in France and the United States throughout the development.

This research utilized both manifest and latent content analysis in order to implement this interpretive historicist approach. Manifest in the case of understanding what was explicitly written or said in both print and other media including direct explanations of brigade culture. Latent content analysis was used to interpret underlying meanings or suggestions in the sources that gave insight into the culture without explicitly stating it. The units of analysis differed depending on the length of the source. In the case of news articles and focused works, the unit was the entire piece as those documents focused specifically on one issue of restaurant culture. In longer documents including books and documentaries, relevant chapters, paragraphs, or scenes were the unit of analysis. These units were coded deductively using an open coding process according to the major themes that emerged in the process following occupational culture theory and a culture of health. Codes were sorted into five categories: context for background information; behavior and artifacts, espoused values, and basic assumptions for information related to organizational culture; and, finally, into culture of health for information relevant to the movement to bring greater focus on health into restaurant operations. Once codes emerged, further information was searched for to gain as complete a picture of the history and present the realities of each category as possible.

Codes:

Context	Behavior and Artifacts	Espoused Values	Basic Assumptions	Culture of Health
History	Language	Culinary Education	Class	Awareness
Harassment & Abuse	Physical Kitchen Design	Dedication	Fame Culture & the Celebrity Chef	#MeToo
Mental Health	Standards of Dress & Uniforms	Hospitality & Pride in Work	Hegemonic Masculinity	Female Chefs
Substance Abuse	Professionalization	Drinking, drugs, partying	Competition	Self-care
Poor Diets		Hazing	Late Capitalism	Role of Consumers
Health Insurance & Sick Leave		Family	Sustainability	Structural Change
Appeal of the Brigade				

4. Results

Organizational Culture of the Kitchen Brigade

In this chapter, I outline the organizational structure of the kitchen brigade separating the different themes and aspects into the layers of organizational culture theory: behavior and artifacts, espoused values, and basic assumptions. The processes of organizational socialization into each aspect are also outlined both from a historical perspective, showing how the aspect evolved over time, and also from a perspective of how individuals in modern kitchens are socialized to display and value these aspects of the culture.

Behavior and Artifacts

Language

In Escoffier's original brigade, French was the language of the kitchen. This French language usage has been passed down through the brigade system over time. Today, when observing a kitchen in the United States, one can hear many French terms being used throughout a service. It is a formalized practice beginning in culinary schools and utilized at least to some extent in many brigade kitchens (Jones, 2009). Most of the titles of ranks in the brigade remain in French or in shortened versions of the original French words. Cooks refer to different cuts, techniques, and dishes in French, for example, calling the prepared elements of dishes set up before service their *mise* or *mise en place.* In culinary schools, French is used to describe specific sizes for chopping vegetables and students are tested on their abilities to create perfect *julienne, batonnet,* and *brunoise.* Most notably, the standard response to any command from the chef during service is, "*Oui, chef*!" This is a common way to confirm that directions have been heard and will be implemented.

Beyond the traditional French-language terms, kitchens have evolved a broader unique vernacular. A thorough understanding of kitchen lingo is critical to any cook's success. Some of the vernacular used in kitchens comes from the original French terms used in restaurants while other terms have developed to be United States-specific. Some of the important terms communicate crucial information to other cooks and the chef. For example, a cook

overwhelmed with orders can say they are "in the weeds" when they have become overwhelmed with orders and need help and an item is "86-ed" when they have run out of the necessary ingredients. Kitchen lingo also consists of unique insults and swears. Sociologist and former cook, Scarlett Lindeman, describes the unique language of the kitchen as clever, efficient, and often crude. She argues that it serves to increase workplace solidarity and set cooks apart from outsiders (2013).

Additionally, because of the high number of immigrants from Mexico and Central America working in kitchens today, Kitchen Spanish, a type of pidgin Spanish, is utilized. It facilitates conversation between Spanish-speaking and English-speaking staff as members of each language group incorporate elements of the other's language into their communication. Insults and swears are major parts of Kitchen Spanish allowing the teasing and scolding of the kitchen to cross cultures (Hunsberger, Kuo, & Ramirez, 2018). Co-creating a shared language contributes to unity and bonding while facilitating communication for service efficiency.

Physical Kitchen Design

Figure 4.1 Cooks on "the line"

The physical space of the kitchen is the concrete, visible structure that the kitchen brigade exists in. It was designed by Escoffier to facilitate the movement of dishes between stations (Escoffier, 1987). The layouts vary with the size of the restaurant and the budget of the business, but all are designed to maximize food production. Extra inches of kitchen space can mean less space for tables and therefore fewer customers and less money. This makes for a physical system that enables the greatest amount of food to be cooked and served to the most customers possible.

This also means kitchens are often crowded and hot and sometimes in basements beneath the dining room in order to maximize the available space while minimizing rent costs. These cramped quarters contribute to the danger and stress of working in a kitchen with cooks having to squeeze past each other while navigating hot pans and sharp knives. Kitchens are often crowded with cooks and become stiflingly hot during service. This can lead to exhaustion and dehydration as well as flared tempers as cooks navigate each other in small spaces (Fine, 2009).

Another key issue with kitchen design is that its close quarters make it so that cooks and the chef are in full view of each other the entire time they are working. This being visible throughout the workday forces cooks to constantly need to prove their competence (Cullen, 2006). This also makes it difficult to take pauses while working as any rest or stopping work must be done in front of the entire staff and there is social pressure to not look lazy. As open kitchens have become more popular in recent years to allow diners to watch their food being prepared, a layer of audience pressure has been added to this dynamic (Tuttle, 2012).

Standards of Dress and Uniforms

The modern chef uniform originated in France. The original was designed by Marie-Antoine Careme in 1822. His design included a toque (a tall hat), an apron, trousers, and a double-breasted jacket. Escoffier took this design and standardized it. The elements he selected served both practical and symbolic purposes.

Figure 4.2 Marie-Antoine Careme's design

The Toque – Escoffier's toques served as a symbol of status and experience. The pleats in the hat were added as a chef mastered new techniques while the height also indicated knowledge. The height of the hat indicated rank and wearing the tallest hat also made the head chef very visible in a busy kitchen, making them tower above the rest. For consumer protection, toques also kept hair contained and out of food.

The Jacket – Chef jackets were made white for multiple purposes. White suggested cleanliness, perfection, and power. White was also good for deflecting heat keeping chef's cooler than if they wore darker colors. The jacket was double-breasted so that a chef could switch sides in the event of a spill and still look presentable for the remainder of their day. Using cloth French knots instead of buttons helped prevent buttons from popping off into food and also made for fast removal in the event of hot spills.

The Apron – The apron was added for safety and cleanliness.

Pants – While the original pants were white, Escoffier changed the design to a black and white hound's-tooth pattern to better hide spills. The pants were loose-fitting to allow them to be removed quickly in the event of hot spills or fire (Culinary Agents, 2018).

This standard uniform has remained fairly similar over time. Keeping it standard in kitchens showcased pride in one's profession as well as membership of a unified team. Not allowing cooks to personalize their looks has been seen as a way to keep the focus on the food and the work rather than on self-expression or differentiation (Culinary Institute of America, 2019). In the most formal kitchens and the highest end restaurants and in many culinary schools, the uniform differs very little from Escoffier's.

Figure 4.3 A typical modern culinary school uniform from the Culinary Institute of America

The use of uniforms in kitchens links the brigade more widely to professions that also have strict dress codes. Uniforms tend to conjure images of order, discipline, respectability, and status. They also tend to be associated with masculinity. Uniforms come with standards of

"do's" and "don't's" and thus are statements about what is acceptable in a particular context. They create boundaries for acceptable behavior and function as shorthand for ideal attributes for those who wear them. However, uniforms are also associated with transgression, resistance, and challenge as individuals fight against the system (Craik, 2005).

In modern restaurants, styles of dress are changing to be more informal, more creative, and more accommodating to different bodies showcasing this resistance and challenge. There has been a recent growth in companies designing uniforms with more color, more cut and design options, and to fit women, who were often left with ill-fitting men's uniforms until very recently. More chefs today are using their dress in the kitchen as an extension of their creative identity and chefs have become especially aware of their appearance over the last twenty years as open-kitchen designs where customers can see the cooks have become more popular (Bobila, 2018). In many kitchens, bandanas and baseball caps are preferred over a toque. Yoga pants or jeans might be worn instead of traditional hound's-tooth pants. T-shirts or the more breathable, shorter sleeved dishwasher shirts are often favored over traditional coats (Adler, 2017; Deam, 2019).

Figure 4.4 Chef & restauranteur Camille Becerra, of restaurants in New York, Paris, and Tulum, with members of her staff often wears a wide-brimmed hat and colorful aprons.

Figure 4.5 Line cooks, Marie Manalo and Nick Kennedy, at Redbird in Los Angeles make use of baseball caps as head coverings

Tattoos are also an unofficial part of the uniform in many kitchens and the reasons many in the industry have for adorning themselves with them are varied. For some, they suggest toughness and resilience. For others, especially women, they can be used to replace the jewelry they are not allowed to wear because of health codes. They can allow for another way to express oneself. They can simultaneously make one part of the team if the rest of the staff is also tattooed and make someone unique in terms of the particular styles and designs. Many chefs incorporate food and cooking tools into their tattoos as a way to show their commitment to their work and how their professions are more than work but integral parts of their identity. Though tattoos have become increasingly accepted in various social settings, they still connote a degree of rebelliousness and toughness in American culture (Arvela, 2017). Because of this, they showcase commitment to a line of work outside the mainstream, especially if they are located on areas not easily covered like hands or necks.
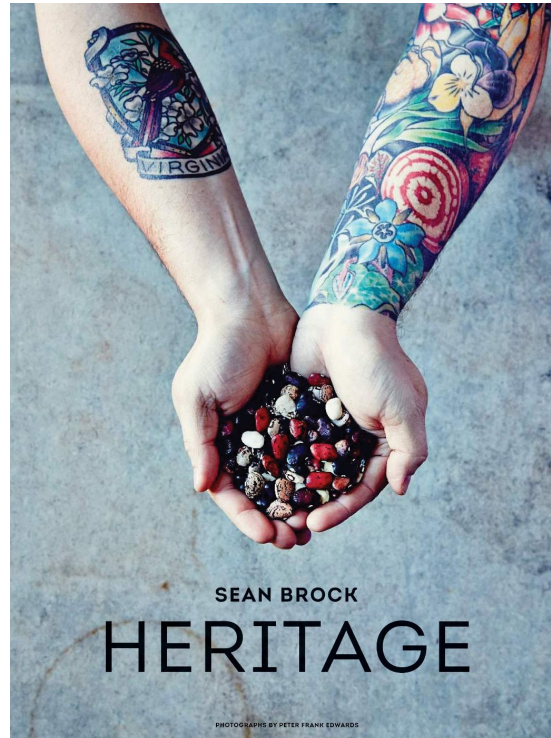
Figure 4.6 Chef Sean Brock's tattoos featuring heirloom varieties of the Southern vegetables he is known for cooking featured prominently on the cover of his cookbook, *Heritage*

Professionalization

The professionalization of cooking has also been a highly visible and formalized part of the brigade. Before the 1970s, cooking was viewed as manual labor. It was a job rather than a profession. It also was not a job many people aspired to but rather a job that one fell into.

In 1976, the status of the chef officially shifted after leading chefs campaigned the Department of Labor for their status to be changed to that of professionals from that of domestic workers. These chefs sought to lend legitimacy and status to their work. They wanted their legal status to reflect the expertise, hard work, and knowledge they brought to their field. This legal change was part of stimulating more educated and upper- and middle-class individuals to not only dine out but to pursue cooking careers of their own and join the ranks of kitchens (Friedman, 2018). Cooking professionally became something to be proud of and something to aspire to. In 1996, anthropologist Gary Alan Fine conducted an interview with a Minnesota line cook who described the professionalization of cooking.

I learned that it was a lot tougher as a cook years ago [than] it is now. Cooks and chefs years ago were not respected. They were thought of as drunks and dummies, and they didn't know anything, and it was easy to be a cook, and it was easy to be in this business. That's changed now. The culinary profession has grown, and it's getting to be a profession where not just anybody can get into it.... I'd have to say it's a profession. That's the attitude that you take on as a person.

The young cooks of the 1970s and beyond increasingly came from wealthier backgrounds than the cooks of the past, often were white, and were likely to have sampled high-end cuisine through their families or through travel. They were also more likely to have gone to culinary school before seeking out their first restaurant job (Bourdain, 2000). This has continued in the subsequent decades until now. Cooking, especially fine dining cooking, has continued to be an increasingly popular career option as some of the stigma and prejudice associated with cooking has lessened.

Culinary Education

Figure 4.7 A class at The Culinary Institute of America

While cooks can still enter restaurants at low-level positions like prep cooks and dishwashers and work their way up without investing in formal education, part of

legitimizing the profession has been the establishment of culinary schools and formalizing the training process for cooks. Formal culinary education in the United States began in 1927 with the opening of Commercial Cookery and Baking training at the Frank Wiggins Trade School in Los Angeles (Mandabach, Revalas, & Cole, 2002). Growth in this period was slow and a decade later, there were still only five culinary training programs total in the country (Mandabach, 1998). After World War II, more programs opened at community and junior colleges to train returning veterans in an industry that was stimulated by the growth of the postwar economy (Scarrow, 1981; Mandabach, 1998; Brown, 2005).

In 1946, The Culinary Institute of America, at the time called the New Haven Restaurant Institute, opened. In 1951, it became the first culinary college to be granted a charter by the state of New York to offer an Associate of Occupational studies degree (Culinary Institute of America, 2016). In 1973, Johnson and Wales University opened its College of Culinary Arts and began offering associates degrees. Still, community and junior colleges offered the bulk of options for culinary schools and by 1980, there were still only four higher level options for culinary education (Scarrow, 1981).

As of 2010, the United States had over 550 post-secondary culinary arts programs. Seventy-five percent of those are associate degree programs at public institutions, primarily community colleges. The remaining quarter of culinary programs are private for- and non-profit institutions (Maas, 2010). These different programs differ in their offerings, the prestige associated with them, and overall time and financial investment required to complete them.

Vocational and technical programs are often two-year associate degree programs where a general foundation in math, writing, English, and communication is taught alongside culinary classes. These degrees are the most affordable type of formal culinary education and are often offered through community colleges that also offer other types of technical training. Graduates of these schools may enter fine dining, but many of them work at smaller chains, resorts, country clubs, and hotels, or in institutional settings. Cooks trained in this setting are more likely to view themselves as tradespeople rather than as artists or business people

(Fine, 1996). Despite lower prestige associated with cooking in resorts, country clubs, and hotels, chefs working in those setting earn higher salaries than those in fine dining (Duan, 2008).

Other cooks may earn bachelor's degrees in culinary arts taking four years of cooking classes along with broader coursework in math, writing, and English. Four-year cooking programs may also emphasize other aspects of food such as business, nutrition, hospitality management, or food technology. These degrees can cost 7 to 10 times what vocational and technical programs cost (Hertzman, 2006). These programs can include several month-long certificate programs, 2-year associate degrees, and 4-year bachelor programs. Students pursuing these degrees can also have aspirations to work in other aspects of the food industry including television, magazine and newspaper writing, and product development.

The cost of education for cooking varies widely. While a public trade school program can be relatively affordable, like the certificate of Competence in Culinary Arts at Maui College in Hawaii that costs $6, 800, a 4-year program at the Culinary Institute of America, a private institution, costs $141,680. In the United States, students either pay for their education through college funds set up by their parents or other family funding, through scholarships, through federal or private loans, through working, or a combination of the four.

Differences in educational background have caused riffs in kitchens both in France and the United States. When chef Eric Ripert graduated from culinary school in France in the 1970s, there was a divide between cooks who had gone to culinary school and cooks who had apprenticed the traditional way in kitchens, an educational approach that has since fallen out of practice in both Europe and the US (Fine, 2009). "They believed that the only way to become a great chef was through apprenticeship and by surviving the physical and verbal abuse of the kitchen," he explains in his memoir, "not by memorizing recipes and taking notes and making a soufflé once a semester like I'd done for the last two years." (2017) A similar divide can be seen between cooks who have worked their way up through stations without formal education and culinary school graduates. Learning to cook in school is viewed as not learning the "real" way.

Despite most chefs saying that a culinary degree is not a prerequisite to work in their kitchens and the starting pay rate for cooks being similar no matter one's educational background, schools are attracting more students with the promises of a leg up in the industry. Schools have been criticized for misrepresenting the post-school job market and for failing to emphasize that most students will not earn chef salaries until several years after graduation, if ever. These promises have become a subject of controversy and law suits in recent years (McKeever, 2013; Canavan, 2014).

Despite all this financial risk, students might choose the school route for a number of reasons. They may believe it will help them get a head start over their untrained peers, they may face pressure from family to pursue some type of formal education, and they may also seek a less stressful learning environment than the professional kitchen. While learning on the job is possible and has been the traditional route, a working kitchen is designed for production rather than education. For cooks looking for an environment in which they are more able to make mistakes, ask questions, and experiment, culinary school is an attractive option (Cohen, 2013).

Behaviors and Artifacts Summary

Much of the behaviors and artifacts of the kitchen have historically served to unify staff and keep the focus on the system and the team rather than the individuals working. Through standardizing dress and language, cooks and chefs have shed individual identities and come together to work as a unified whole. Dress and language also serve as links to the original French brigades. These behaviors and artifacts also show how restaurant professionals want to be seen by outsiders.

In more recent years, however, there has been pushback to the extreme homogenization and unifying as cooks and chefs seek to bring their own style and creativity into their work. Additionally, through an increased focus on professionalization and education, the industry has more recently attempted to shed its historical reputation for attracting people from the margins of society known for behaviors like substance abuse.

Dedication

The concept of dedication is of high importance in the fine dining kitchen. Because cooking at this level is seen as an art form and a passion, members of the brigade are often expected to put their work over all other priorities (Honest Cooking, 2013). Cooks can be locked into schedules that cause them to miss important events with family and friends and personal occasions. They can feel pressured to work off the clock when they are unable to complete their workloads in the amount of time they are officially allotted. They may feel financial responsibility towards the company and feel that staying clocked in and earning more pay might put the future of the business at risk. They may also feel guilty asking for better financial compensation, seeing intangible rewards like skills, camaraderie, and ownership over their work as more important. Though $12 is the median hourly wage for cooks and data is not available separating average wages in fine dining restaurants versus other types of restaurants, it is common that cooks working at higher end restaurants are paid less hourly than those working in more casual establishments as a result of both the pressure to work off the clock and the assumption that prestige and opportunity are forms of payment. This mentality has origins in the European kitchen. In 2008, chef of what was then considered the world's best restaurant, elBulli in Spain, Ferran Adria, admitted to having 25 unpaid stages on his staff and 10 paid cooks. He justified relying disproportionately on free labor in his for-profit business saying that elBulli was neither a business nor a restaurant but rather, "a way of understanding life" (Mintz, 2018).

Dedication extends to how cooks respond to injuries and illness. There is a sense of fatalism with regard to cuts and burns as cooks believe that they simply are part of the job and will happen no matter what. However, there is also a sense of pride in this knowledge that they will be hurt and continue working through it (Fine, 2009).

The dedication issue can uniquely affect women, especially when they have families. While male chefs are more likely to have partners that take on the bulk of domestic work and childcare, women chefs are more likely to face the pressure of a "second shift" at home while

struggling to put in the extra hours needed to prove dedication. Because women are less likely to be in the top-ranking and top-paying positions, they are also more likely to depend more heavily on income from their partner's work and struggle with paying for childcare or household assistance. Women cooks also face pressures when pregnant to engage in "macho maternity," taking the shortest leave possible for delivery and postpartum to illustrate their commitment to work (Harris & Giuffre, 2010).

Hospitality & Pride in Work

Cooks often have a genuine passion for hospitality and take immense pride in their work. These values are often explicitly part of culinary training and reinforced by chefs. Cooks take pride in their craftsmanship, speed, and creativity. They are aware of how essential they are to the functioning of their restaurants, knowing that issues would arise in their absence. They also often sincerely enjoy providing hospitality and being part of creating spaces for celebration and enjoyment for their customers.

They also may enjoy the physical aspects and the team aspects of the work, comparing it to playing sports as Boston chef Michael Schlow did to cook-turned-psychologist, Scott Haas,

> *Cooking has certain similarities to sports. The prep work in a kitchen is like*
> *pregame workouts. The teamwork needed on the field is the same as*
> *working on the line. If one guy has a bad day, others on the team help out.*
> *The fact that we wear uniforms in the kitchen makes me think of uniforms*
> *on the field. And as a chef I think back to when I was a pitcher in college: the*
> *game doesn't start until the ball is thrown. The chef is in control. (2005)*

Other cooks in Haas' research described the allure of the kitchen as a dance or meditation. Haas himself loved the amount of meditative presence he had to bring to a meal service. With so many immediate demands, he relished the opportunity to only think of the dishes he as preparing at any given moment,

> *...cooking in a restaurant was the first time in my life that I was forced to*
> *achieve a complete state of immediacy. There was no looking back, no*
> *looking forward, no chance of distraction – all I had was a mandate to cook*
> *and cook and cook and cook. My entire world was reduced to six feet in four*

directions: the stove, the mise en place, the wait station, and the center of the kitchen where the chef stood expediting orders.

Haas also argues that the tangibility aspect is important to cooks; the results of labor can be seen clearly and there is no question of what has been achieved. Lastly, Haas likens chefs to performers with a desperation to be loved. Cooking is a unique art form in which a chef is judged anew every time they make a dish and the results of all their efforts are gone in minutes. Haas believes chefs are drawn to this opportunity for validation but also argues that this association between the food one makes and oneself leads to the short tempers in kitchens. The stakes and the stress become high when one's work becomes so deeply tied to their personal expression and sense of self-worth.

Drinking, Drugs, and Partying

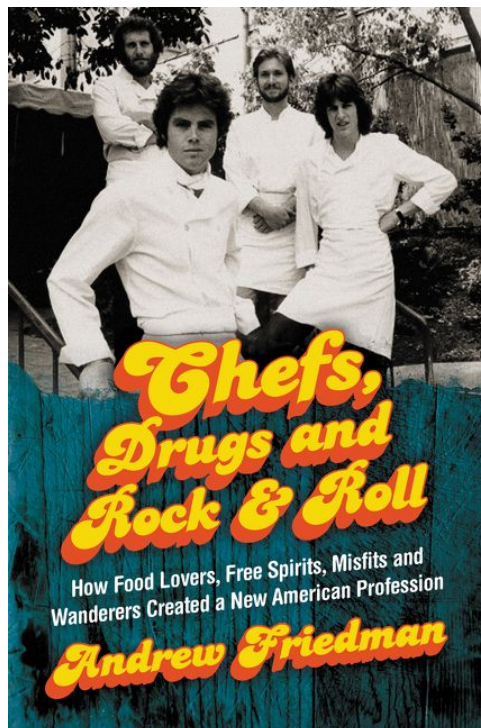

Figure 4.8 Much of Friedman's book focuses on the fame, celebrity, and partying associated with cooks and chefs

Drinking and drug use as part of brigade culture became highly visible in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. This is partially related to how chef's grew in popularity at that time and those at the highest end of the industry enjoyed rock-star lifestyles. Chef and media personality Susan

Feniger described the time to author of *Chefs, Drugs, and Rock and Roll: How Food Lovers, Free Spirits, Misfits, and Wanderers Created a New American Profession,* Andrew Friedman,

> *We were partying at that time. Jesus Christ. We'd finish our shift at eleven,*
> *we'd all be going out to Moustache Cafe and party all night long. That was*
> *the late seventies, the days of pot, and lots of coke, and lots of drugs, and we*
> *would party all night and I'd come back into work at seven in the morning.*
> *(p. 65)*

This fit in with wider trends at the time. The 1980s in particular in America were a time of excess, luxury, and hedonism, and those characteristics were complimented by the fine dining scene and the partying that went with it (Rossinow, 2015). Cocaine, by the 1980s, played a role both in the kitchen and among the clientele of restaurants helping the brigade stay alert and active during their shifts while facilitating long nights of partying afterwards. Wendi Matthews, a former manager at Spago in Los Angeles also described to Friedman,

> *Lots of cocaine and lots of Quaaludes. Lots of hip, cool, young people.*
> *Everybody was sleeping with everybody. And it was sort of that same feeling*
> *at the restaurant. There were customers coming upstairs and sneaking off*
> *into the storage area to get high, and employees and people sleeping with*
> *everybody. It was the same sort of feel. It was like being at a party all the*
> *time. (p. 118)*

However, lower ranking cooks or chefs that have never gained celebrity status also have reported engaging in heavy drug use. Jason Sheehan, another cook who later became a writer, argues that cooking attracts people drawn to adrenaline rushes and the heat, intensity, and constant stimulation kitchens provide. On days that the kitchen does not provide enough excitement, he argues, drugs can make up the gap. He also argues that because restaurant cooking is about pleasure, being a good chef requires that one be more open and willing to experiment than people in other lines of work. This sense of adventure and daring helps cooks understand how to provide the most pleasurable experiences for their customers.

> *Chefs are curious. They're adventurous. They're risk-takers by nature—the*
> *kind of people who would, in fact, eat salad from a stranger in the park. I*
> *never knew one who didn't have some serious impulse-control issues—who*

was able to blithely pass up any new thing that passed under his nose.
There's just something latent in the genes of the great ones that makes them
always starving for new experiences, for new kicks, for more fun (2009).

Additionally, drinking has often been permitted and even expected in restaurant work with "shift drinks," free drinks provided by the restaurant to employees for a day of work, playing an important role in rewarding good efforts, socializing, and winding down with colleagues after difficult days (Kjeerheim, et al, 1997; Duke, Ames, Moore, & Cunradi, 2013; Jacobs, 2018). This is also a logistical issue because of the late working hours. Bars and clubs are often the only places open for after-work socializing once restaurants close. Cooks who have been working all day are often too wired at the end of a shift to go home and straight to sleep making it important to have an after-work place to wind down (Haas, 2005; Danovich, 2018). After suffering through difficult shifts together, alcohol further helps forge bonds between cooks. Drinking can also be part of the draw towards working in restaurants as individuals who already consume alcohol heavily might pursue careers where tolerance for heavy drinking is known (Frone, 2003).

One respondent to a mental health survey of restaurant workers conducted by organization, Chefs with Issues, described the industry and substance abuse:

> *The overall state of the restaurant industry is a disaster. Drugs and alcohol*
> *are encouraged. You are considered an outcast if you don't engage in these*
> *things. Drugs and alcohol almost destroyed my life and almost ruined my*
> *relationship. And the restaurant industry hugely contributed to this. Servers*
> *would literally leave coke in the bathrooms at one of the restaurants I worked*
> *at. It's just insane. (Kinsman, 2016)*

These bonds are useful during the workday as cooks who feel close to each other are more likely to support and help each other during the work day (Friedman, 2018). This is in line with existing research on social drinking. Social drinking, especially among males, has been shown to facilitate social bonding, most of all during initial group formation. Male social drinkers have been shown to exhibit increased individual and group-level coordination of smiling and speech behaviors over time and an increase in self-reported bonding (Kirchner

et al, 2006). It is also useful in helping bond diverse groups of cooks that may face barriers of class, race, ethnicity, and educational background making them more able to relate to one another when drinking than they typically are.

Alcohol is also a way for patrons, especially fellow members of the industry to show gratitude towards cooks. Industry members visiting each other's restaurants might drop off beers for the kitchen staff to thank them for their meal. Some restaurants even outwardly suggest the practice, listing "kitchen beers" on their menus as a way for customers to purchase a round of drinks for the brigade (Gentile, 2014).

Smoking is also part of the substance abuse culture in restaurants. Though tobacco can have a negative effect on a cook's work, making it more difficult for them to taste accurately, smoking is one way that cooks can take a socially-acceptable break as it is in other fields. Genuine addiction is seen as a valid reason to stop work (Sarna et al., 2009). While pausing simply to get fresh air or sit down has negative associations and is often viewed as lazy, taking a break to smoke is often seen as fulfilling a legitimate need. Taking a smoke together is also a way for cooks to talk and socialize for a few minutes, away from the chaos of the line. Cooks with less education and those living below that federal poverty level have been found to smoke more than their more educated and higher-earning counterparts (Simmons, 2011; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2015).

Figure 4.9 Cooks taking a smoke break

Hazing

Hazing has long played a role in assimilation in the military and other organizations. It can be defined as "an activity that a high-status member engages or suggests that they engage in that in some way humbles a newcomer who lacks the power to resist, because he or she wants to gain admission into a group." (Nuwer, 2001).

The abuse that takes place in many kitchens can be considered hazing. It is often viewed by restaurant workers as a critical, if problematic, part of the socialization of new employees into restaurant work. As it does in sports teams, the military, and fraternities and sororities, hazing in the kitchen serves as an initiation ritual that supports and maintains groups by encouraging cognitive, behavioral, and emotional processes of social dependency (Dias & Sá, 2012). Hazing in a kitchen can include harmless, if embarrassing, tricks like assigning newcomers pointless tasks or errands but it can also be more dangerous and humiliating (White & Steen, 2008; Wroe, 2014). Newcomers are likely to make mistakes and punishment and humiliation are seen as tools to encourage them to be more focused, learn the techniques and recipes necessary, and avoid future mistakes. With this, hazing is seen as helping to shape "good" members of the group (Robbins, 2004). Eric Ripert explains that hazing is a product of fear of failing customers and failing the head chef, "We were all hard on our commis because we were always afraid, and cruelty is one of fear's most common by-products." (2017)

With time and experience, a cook can go from the abused to abuser perpetuating the cycle (White & Steen, 2008). Hazed individuals may even see these rituals as fun and rewarding. According to Cialdini (2001), this is due to individuals twisting painful experiences in order to construct them as more enjoyable than they actually are. Restauranteur Jen Agg described this twisting of experiences in her 2017 memoir, *I Hear She's a Real Bitch,*

> *There is an absurd, militaristic, master-servant relationship that happens in restaurant kitchens. It's a pattern that is hard to break, and one that I've seen over and over again. Men bond with bosses who treat them like dogs and then throw them a bone with a few "atta boys" and a couple of cold beers after service, like somehow their brutal behavior ceases to matter when the gas is turned off. This kind of chef leadership style doesn't ever*

Hazing rituals have also persisted in kitchens because they are thought to help develop a toughness that serves cooks when faced with the demands of the work environment (Alexander, MacLaren, O'Gorman, Taheri, 2012; Bloisi & Hoel, 2008). Surviving the stress of the abuse and the kitchen in general becomes a rite of passage and another way of proving one's commitment and dedication to the craft (Murray-Gibbons & Gibbons, 2007).

Though hazing practices can be dangerous and psychologically damaging, research supports their effectiveness in creating social dependency (Dolinski et al 2002; Galanter, 1999). Hazing includes both physical and emotional pressure making initiates more dependent and attached to their superiors (Auerbach et al. 1994; Moreland and Levine 1989; Rajecki, Lamb, and Obsmacher, 1978). The need for creating this dependency in the kitchen is clear. Chefs need to be able to rely on employees to come in to work every day prepared to work long and difficult hours for minimal pay.

It also serves as a method to eliminate young cooks who will quit under pressure before a chef has invested time and energy into teaching and training them. It is rationalized as better for a chef to find out a cook cannot handle the stress of a kitchen in their early days before they have been given responsibility or promotions (Bourdain, 2017).

In a 2010 *Gastronomica* article, "Why are there no great women chefs?" Charlotte Druckman argues that the brigade system's hazing is partially to blame for the gender imbalance in the professional kitchen. Women are relative newcomers to the professional kitchen, only recently tolerated in many restaurants where, historically, cooking outside the home was seen as a male pursuit. She argues that they are hazed aggressively as all newcomers to the brigade are but are often hazed more than males because they are presumed to be unable or uninterested in the competition of the typical kitchen. Women also have to overcome stereotypes that women make poor leaders, are too emotional, and are not cut out for male-dominated work by enduring hazing. This pushes women out of cooking work and also prevents them from entering the male-dominated space to begin with. New York chef,

Victoria Blamey explained that though she did not frame many of her experiences with fellow staff members as sexual harassment though they would grab her and make jokes,

> *I would always try to brush it off by making fun back. It was a way to defend myself. I think women in general, we try to be the hero. We have to be strong to be cut out for this job. I'm not saying you have to behave like a man, but you have to remember that we are still being judged based on gender. How we work as chefs—it's consuming. It's literally the role of surviving. You survive situations that are uncomfortable or situations that are hard. We work with a cold, we work with a broken arm, we work with a burn or a cut, you know? I'm not the person to be like, "Oh, I'm gonna stay at home because I have a cold and I don't feel well." I think it's that way for everyone in this business, for both women and men. (Reset the Table, 2019)*

Blamey's explanation also shows how women might feel extra pressure to prove toughness, coming to work when sick or injured.

Family

Tight bonds forged through working, drinking, and struggling together lead cooks to conceptualize their colleagues as family (Agg, 2017). This conception of the restaurant as a family contributes to the bonds of loyalty formed. This loyalty translates into showing up for one another whenever possible and covering for each other if necessary. Brigades are also like families in that they have expectations for behavior and ideas of how one should carry themselves as a member. The fictive kinship of restaurants promotes camaraderie and mixes work and sociability (Kim, 2009).

The concept of family comes into play most explicitly with the conception of the "family meal", the meal prepared for the staff. It is usually served before the restaurant opens for a service. Not all restaurants offer a family meal and cooks with an especially heavy workload may forgo it to continue working, but, in situations where staff does take some time to eat a proper meal before service, it can be a time to come together, talk, share dishes representative of their culture and upbringing, and take a coveted moment of rest before the rush of service (Merwin, 2012; Brickman, 2013; Satran, 2017).

Figure 4.10 The staff at Saison in San Francisco eat family meal out on the sidewalk

Espoused Values Summary

The espoused values of the brigade largely have to do with group solidarity and group bonding be it over substance abuse, family meals, a passion of the industry, or hazing a new group member. These practices can directly influence health, as consuming drugs and alcohol and physical violence directly harm the body and hazing can cause psychological distress. The ideas of dedication and family create deep bonds or perceived bonds creating situations in which cooks and chefs might put the good of their coworkers or workplace before their own health. These aspects may or may not be explicitly stated as new brigade members are socialized into their workplace and are not formalized but are instead learned and shared over time.

Basic Assumptions

Class

The shift from cooking as a blue-collar position to a highly popular though still manual labor position is tied to a shift in the class backgrounds of cooks. Before the 1970s, cooks were unlikely to have formally studied cooking and there were far fewer fine dining restaurants than there are now. They were likely to have come from working class backgrounds and to have not performed well in traditional school environments. The chefs that entered the field starting in the 1970s were a diverse group, not all from working class backgrounds and often bringing formal education and travel experiences with them into the restaurant world. Instead, they are were describes as a mix of different backgrounds.

> *...baby-boomber college boys, career changers, lawyers, and Ph.D.s excited*
> *by the intellectual, creative, and physical challenges of cooking, turned on by*
> *the chest-thumping play with fire that the kitchen promised, a more visceral*
> *high even than the thrills and chills of Wall Street culture in the go-go*
> *eighties. (Hyman, 2008)*

In the present day, this mix has continued as more diverse groups of individuals have become drawn to work in the kitchen. A modern kitchen might include recent immigrants, college graduates, career-changers, and young high school graduates, and individuals who have not finished high school. This creates a mix of classes and backgrounds and of individuals entering the profession by choice and those entering by necessity.

Those with more class privilege enter restaurant with less risk for poor health outcomes (Bartley, 2004). They are also in better positions to leverage their class status to advocate for better health. Historically, cooks with fewer other career options and precarious immigration statuses have faced greater risks with advocating for better conditions. Cooks without visas can more easily feel pressured to work for very low wages without benefits knowing that options in the job market are limited for them (Kim, 2009). They could be easily replaced and might have found finding other work difficult. Individuals of more privileged social classes do not have the same concerns as they might have other skillsets and

connections that they can use to find work in other fields. They might also have better access to resources to support their advocacy.

Fame Culture and the Celebrity Chef

Early chefs and cooks were not widely known, and customers did not seek out dinners prepared by anyone in particular. They did not have television chefs but rather cooks, "fat, sweaty, chain-smokers in funny hats and undershirts." (Hyman, 2008). In the 1980s and 1990s, this began to shift. The James Beard Foundation was established in 1986 to promote American cookery and American chefs. In 1991, the foundation hosted their first awards ceremony which they called "the Oscars of the food world." (Hyman, 2008) The decision to describe the event as Oscars-esque is telling. The Oscars are associated not just with honoring excellence in a field but with glamor and the celebration of celebrity itself. To introduce this idea into the cooking scene was a new practice in the early 1990s.

In 1993, chefs became more prominent in American culture with the debut of The Food Network, the first 24-hour cable channel devoted entirely to food and cooking. Daytime programing focused on more on domestic cooking, featuring more women cooks cooking in home kitchens. Evening programming, however, focused more on cooking competitions and the professional kitchen and featured male chefs more prominently reinforcing the idea that home cooking was for women and restaurant cooking was for men. Even though not all of the chefs featured in food media are fine dining chefs or even professional cooks, this glamorization of culinary arts contributed to a growth in culinary education programs and the rise of the celebrity chef (Brown, 2005; Severson, 2007; Müller, Van Leeuwen, Mandabach, & Harrington, 2009).

Today, chefs are even more visible with multiple channels offering exclusive food content as well as 24/7 streaming options like Netflix's *Chef's Table, Cooked,* and *Salt, Fat, Acid, Heat* and Bon Appetit Magazine's Youtube channel. Food magazines in print and online constantly put out "best of" lists and awards and profiles on chefs making them a greater

part of public consciousness than ever. Because of all this exposure, young cooks today might enter the industry aspiring to fame unlike the cooks of decades past.
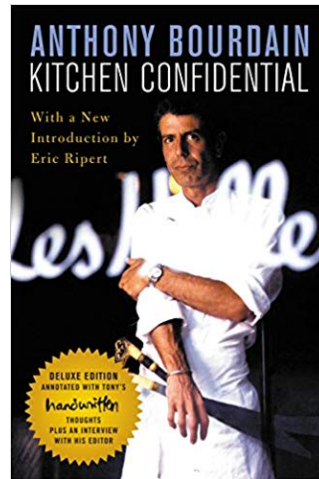
Hegemonic Masculinity

Figure 4.11 Anthony Bourdain's 2000 book launched his career out of the kitchen and came to be known as the handbook of hegemonic masculinity in the kitchen.

Hegemonic masculinity refers to masculine ideals including courage, inner direction, aggression, technological skill, mastery, autonomy, group solidarity, adventure, and physical and mental toughness. What sets hegemonic masculinity, also referred to as "toxic masculinity" apart from simply encompassing traditionally masculine traits is that it also focuses on the winning and holding over of power and both the forming and destroying other social groups in that process (Donaldson, 1993). This type of masculinity has long been valued in the functioning of a brigade. The best-known profile of hegemonic masculinity in the kitchen is Anthony Bourdain's 2000 book, *Kitchen Confidential: Adventures in the Culinary Underbelly.* Often described as the "bro-bible" of the kitchen, Bourdain documented his experiences as a young cook in the 1980s and 1990s without filter. He described drugs, alcohol, abuse, hazing, sex, and harassment. Bourdain described an instance of a cook demonstrating his physical toughness while also shaming him for not being tough enough when he burned himself,

Whatchoo want, white boy? Burn cream? A Band-Aid? Then he raised his own enormous palms to me, brought them up real close so I could see them

properly; the hideous constellation of water-filled blisters, angry red welts
from grill marks, the old scars, the raw flesh where steam or hot fat had
made the skin simply roll off. They looked like the claws of some monstrous
science-fiction crustacean, knobby and calloused under wounds old and new.
I watched, transfixed, as Tyrone - his eyes never leaving mine - reached
slowly under the broiler and, with one naked hand, picked up a glowing-hot
sizzle-platter, moved it over to the cutting board, and it down in front of me.
He never flinched. (p. 42, 2000)

Later, Bourdain would regret his role in supporting "bro-culture" in the kitchen as he became an outspoken advocate for women, immigrants, and the creation of a more refined kitchen culture. What had been an honest account of his life and experiences in the kitchen, experiences he had once romanticized, participated in, and enjoyed, also inspired many young men to enter kitchens and behave the same way, lured in by the lifestyle of cooks as much or even more than by the craft of cooking.

While cooking in the home has largely been the domain of women in most cultures, restaurant cooking, and the chef profession have historically been dominated by men and hegemonic masculine culture. The culture of kitchens is similar to other male-dominated professions including the military, architecture, and management consultancy. Gwen Hyman argued in *Gastronomica* in 2008 that kitchens have become a final bastion of cowboy culture in America.

These chefs made themselves tough, rough-edged, sexy, in a very hetero,
rebel-without-a-cause, cowboy-boots-and-blue-jeans kind of way...Members
of the boomer generation that rejected cultural imperatives, tired of the
more ordinary grind of the nine-to-five working life, and accustomed to
making – and getting – their way in the world, this new order of self-
proclaimed taste-makers abandoned the safety of the office for the adrenalin
rush of the kitchen, the no-holds-barred cowboy culture that could be a
chef's life.

Kitchen culture has evolved to distinguish itself from the motherly home cooking. Women, trans and nonbinary individuals, and men who fail to fall into the hegemonic masculine ideal are often pushed into more marginal niches in the kitchen such as the pastry section or salad station or must adopt hegemonic masculine behaviors and traits to be successful (Burrow,

Smith, & Yakinthou, 2015). Women, especially, can also feel pressured in this culture to trade sexual favors for advancement opportunities (Jayaraman, 2016).

The brigade is also an example of a hierarchy of masculinities and reinforces and rewards homosocial behavior, defined as "the seeking, enjoyment, and/or preference for the company of the same sex." (Lipman-Blumen, 1976) Communication within a brigade relies on the repetition of rituals and acts of masculinity. Cooks are also expected to maintain masculine stoicism in the face of abuse or distress. Head chefs lead by example displaying masculine norms of physical endurance, command of authority, ambition and sometimes aggression. Partying after work solidifies the homosocial bonds between cooks and the friendships formed at those moments improve communication and workflow during shifts. Machismo is celebrated. (Lee, 2014; Friedman, 2018).

Hegemonic masculinity is also related to the "tough-it-out mentality" of the kitchen which challenges workers to continue working through stressful conditions, abusive situations, illness, or tiredness. Pushing through reinforces ideals of physical and mental toughness (Kinsman, 2016; Patterson, Finkelstein, Pépin, Téllez, & Magaña, 2016). Surviving the stress of the kitchen is even romanticized as a sort of "hero's journey" in which individuals that persevere through the harsh environment become revered and idolized (Alexander, MacLaren, O'Gorman, & Taheri, 2012).

Competition

The act of cooking is not inherently competitive. Cooking in the home is about sustenance, community, and nourishment. Restaurant cooking, however, is for a wide audience. People dine out not because they need to in order to survive but because they want to. This wide prominence has contributed to the competitive nature of restaurants. Restaurants are subject to frequent evaluations from peers, from patrons, and from food media. In the United States, there are three major guides and organizations that bestow annual awards to the best in the business: the Zagat Guide, the James Beard Awards, and, another French import, the

Michelin Guide. These awards were established in the 1990s and early 2000s, once again shifting the culture of the kitchen and placing a new emphasis on achievement and prestige.

There are also smaller awards in newspapers and magazines on local and national scales. Awards can be beneficial for cooks and the restaurants they work at. They recognize the creativity and dedication of chefs while promoting them to wider audiences. There is a constant pressure to maintain status once an award is given. A Noble Prize winner is forever a Noble Prize winner. A chef, on the other hand, can be awarded three stars for their cuisine one year in the Michelin Guide, and two the next. Every year and truly every service is an opportunity to maintain or lose one's status. The loss of status can be devastating. Marco Pierre White, a chef in London, described the pressure and prestige of the Michelin guide in his 2008 autobiography, *The Devil in the Kitchen: Sex, Pain, Madness and the Making of a Great Chef.*

> *Its rating can make or break careers, restaurants, even entire towns. Three stars, the guide's highest rating means that your place serves 'exceptional cuisine' and is 'worth a special journey,' but that's an amazing understatement. A restaurant with three Michelin stars is a monument to the highest -- the most extreme -- expression of the art of cooking."*

Under Michelin's system, restaurants are reviewed annually by a team of secret diners. The secrecy of when the reviews take place and of who is conducting them makes every meal potentially the one that must be the perfect display of the restaurant's skill. Stars bring publicity and more business to restaurants and can bring in an enormous increase in the profitability of an establishment overnight. They also bring more pressure, higher expectations, and more risk. Losing stars can be devastating and chefs not only have their professional and creative reputations to worry about but also the financial stability of their business and the livelihoods of their employees at stake. In Europe, chefs including White have famously "given back" their stars, asking to be removed from future guidebooks and excluded from visits from reviewers, citing the mounting stress and anxiety that comes with stars as their reasoning. In 2003, French chef Bernard Loiseau committed suicide as rumors swirled that he might lose stars in the upcoming Michelin guide. His restaurant ended up

retaining its three stars but by that time, Loiseau had passed away. In a BBC2 documentary, *Michelin Stars: The Madness of Perfection*, Loiseau's wife explained how even on the day that she found her husband dead in the kitchen, dinner was still served indicating that serving customers and creating a pleasant atmosphere for is viewed as a top priority even over grieving. (Sitwell, 2012; AFP, 2017).

Late Capitalism

While the term "late capitalism" has been used since World War II to describe modern capitalism, Marxist political theorist Fredric Jameson popularized the contemporary definition of late capitalism. In his 1991 essay entitled "Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism," he described late capitalism as when a culture is commodified and consumed and when that culture of consumption is then commodified in turn. It describes a culture in which individuals are defined by what they consume. Most recently, as Annie Lowery of *The Atlantic* summarizes, late capitalism has become "a catchall for incidents that capture the inanity and inequity of contemporary capitalism." (2017)

Late capitalism is also a system where the wealth gap between the richest and poorest grows wider. It glorifies overwork. The Occupy Movement, the Fight for $15, and the growth of democratic socialism in the United States have served as counter movements to late capitalism with better pay and working conditions, affordable education, and universal healthcare among their key goals. In particular, gig economy and low-paying jobs like those in restaurant kitchens creating cheap services for the wealthy and no-benefit jobs for the working poor are among the hallmarks of late capitalism. In many ways, late capitalism is the opposite of economist John Maynard Keynes' 1930 prediction that by 2030, economic growth would mean that adults worked fifteen hours or less of the week (Burkeman, 2016). Now, many workers work even longer earning wages below their costs of living.

Work culture in American fine dining illustrates the concept. As in the time of Escoffier, fine dining depends on a class of people with enough disposable income to enjoy high-end meals and with the desire to distinguish themselves through the food they consume. Concentrated

in wealthy urban centers like Manhattan and San Francisco, fine dining restaurant brigades continue to serve expensive, social media-worthy meals to patrons with ample disposable income.

In the restaurant world, the 99% truly serve the 1%. Eating out is uniquely entrenched in American, specifically urban American culture. Restaurants are the site for major life events like birthdays and engagements, the site of business meetings and deal making, and where so much of American life takes place (Jayaraman, 2016). In order to eat out at a fine dining establishment, one must have a decent amount of disposable income but working in a fine dining establishment does not guarantee a living wage and those cooking meals in fine dining kitchens are rarely able to afford a fine dining meal themselves. The pressure felt in kitchens comes from the wealthy class making extreme demands of a class that can often barely afford to feed themselves. Cooks are at once celebrated and looked down on in this system. They are creators of taste and culture and therefore revered, but they are also low income and work with their hands and are simultaneously seen as beneath their customers. These dynamics fuels the stress of the brigade. Eric Ripert described the need for the brigade and, his understanding of ruining a meal for a wealthy patron being worse than potential injury showcases the pressure to satisfy clients at all costs.

> *I understood the hierarchy and discipline of the brigade – and why it's necessary. You work at the level to which you are assigned, performing set tasks within a designated space. You do not think for yourself; you take orders only from the person in charge of your station, and ultimately from the sous-chef, that revered and feared individual who runs the kitchen under the orders of the chef and is the only person allowed to talk during service. Failure to follow orders could result in injury or, worse, a ruined meal. (p. 192, 2017)*

Even without the pressure of the wealthy, late capitalism influences the kitchen by glorifying work for work's sake. Cooks with 70-plus hour workweeks and no vacations or sick leave are among the ultimate "hustlers." Jia Tolentino of *The New Yorker* argues that the root of this is America's obsession with self-reliance. In this culture, it is more acceptable to

celebrate and individual working themselves to death than to question whether the need to work oneself to death is evidence of a flawed economic system (2017).

Basic Assumptions Summary

Though perhaps never explicitly stated no overtly desired as part of kitchen culture, the basic assumptions of the brigade play an integral role in the behaviors and attitudes of cooks. The focus on aggression, dominance, toughness, and serving above all else add to both the stress and the allure of restaurant work. These basic assumptions also exist beyond the kitchen as brigade members have been part of their workplaces but also part of wider culture existing in their time and place. The glorification of work and the pressure to serve the wealthy also show were the pressure to work such long intense days comes from. These basic assumptions give clues to why cooks are willing to work so hard for so little and so willing to put their work before their own health and safety.

A Culture of Health

Following the development of an understanding of the defining features of brigade organizational culture and the processes of organizational socialization that occur in fine dining restaurants, this section explores the recent movement to shift kitchen culture and how this shift relates to the creation of a culture of health. It explores both proposed solutions and solutions that are being implemented already. It looks at how each solutioning addresses the aspects of a culture of health: worker fulfillment, work-life balance, business and individual performance, and the creation of structures processes and resources.

Awareness

As the restaurant brigade began in Europe, so did the conversation about health in the industry. In 2015, chef René Redzepi, owner of NOMA in Copenhagen and founder of MAD, a nonprofit focused on giving chefs and restaurateurs the skills to create change through and within their industry, penned a piece for food magazine *Lucky Peach*'s Fantasy Issue entitled: "Fantasies of a Happier Kitchen." Redzepi saw himself as a member of the old guard of chefs brought up in unhealthy kitchen environments but recognized the need for a cultural shift. He asked, "How can we rectify the screaming and shouting and physical abuse we've visited on our young cooks? How do we unmake the cultures of machismo and misogyny in our kitchens? Can we be better?" He described the changes he had begun to make in his own kitchen like proper breaks for the staff to sit and enjoy a meal together for a full hour and playing music in the kitchen. He pointed to the high rates of dropout in the industry where the majority of the staff in any kitchen he knew was under thirty. "They can only take the abuse when they're young and strong," he explained. This piece can be seen as one of the catalysts for the conversation around health in kitchens that has since become more prevalent in the food industry.

In 2016 writer and mental-health advocate Kat Kinsman surveyed cooks and found high rates of depression, anxiety, eating disorders, and substance abuse. She presented her findings that year at the MAD Symposium, a biannual conference hosted by Redzepi for

restaurant industry leaders focused on promoting education and leadership for change in the culinary industry. While discussion about health, particularly mental health and substance abuse, had been simmering for several years following high-profile suicides of industry leaders and there was existing research on health issues in the industry that showed the extent of the issues, Kinsman and Redzepi's calls were among the first in the industry for a larger reckoning about the responsibility of industry leaders to find ways to support healthier work environments (Magary, 2018; Morris, 2018).

Organizations addressing mental health, the lack of health insurance coverage facing many in the industry, and substance abuse sprung up around the same time, including Kinsman's own foundation, Chefs with Issues (Bell, 2014; Steiner, 2016). These organizations sought to mitigate the effects of working in kitchen environments. Conversation spiked even higher in 2018 following the suicide of Anthony Bourdain, who had become one of the industry's most highly-regarded figures following the success of *Kitchen Confidential*, his travel and food writing and television programing, and his later activism. Bourdain's death also coincided with the #MeToo movement in the restaurant industry in which prominent chefs and restauranteurs across the country were publicly accused of sexual harassment and assault throughout 2017 and 2018 (Kinsman, 2018; Rosner, 2018; Yandoli, 2018).

The conversation around health has continued to become more prominent in food media. Nextflix's *Chef's Table,* a series that highlights the personal stories and cooking styles of chefs from around the world, took time in its February 2019 episode featuring Nashville, Tennessee and Charleston, South Carolina-based chef Sean Brock to address his new self-care routine. While "getting Brocked" had once been how his staff would refer to getting extremely drunk, Brock has become an outspoken advocate for health in the kitchen after realizing the toll stress and overwork had taken on him mentally and physically. After developing myasthenia gravis, an autoimmune condition, and spending time in rehabilitation treatment after an intervention from friends and family, Brock is now sober (Martin, 2016). He prioritizes self-care routines including massages, healthy food, and rest. He now serves on the board of directors for The Heirloom Foundation, a nonprofit organization that describes its mission as advocating "for a healthy and sustainable food and

beverage industry through outreach and education initiatives in an effort to eliminate the stigma that exists in kitchens around asking for help." (Heirloom Foundation, 2019) This focus on Brock's healthier lifestyle, along with other pieces in food media that showcase chef's healthy meals and exercise routines   are a departure from the routines often showcased on many chef profiles like Vice's *Munchies* where chefs tour their cities on late-night eating and drinking binges or programming like *Hell's Kitchen* and *Top Chef* that turn the screaming, stress, and aggression of the kitchen into entertainment. Brock provided insight into his new lifestyle in the episode,

> *I'm 39 years old, and it's crazy to think that for this long, all I've done is work in a kitchen. All I've done is focus on being a great chef. That's a long road. And that's a lot of damage along the way. And to be the chef that I am today, [that] wouldn't have happened if I hadn't immersed myself of workaholism. But it nearly killed me. It literally almost killed me…Now the trick is to keep that edge, to keep that passion, to keep that intensity while taking care of myself. Now my goal is happiness, and the food that is created now is the best food I've ever cooked.*

This increased awareness has brought attention to the need for better work-life balance, opportunities for fulfillment and performance for both individuals and businesses, and the creation of better structures, processes, resources for better health. This awareness has set the stage for the specific solutions emerging.
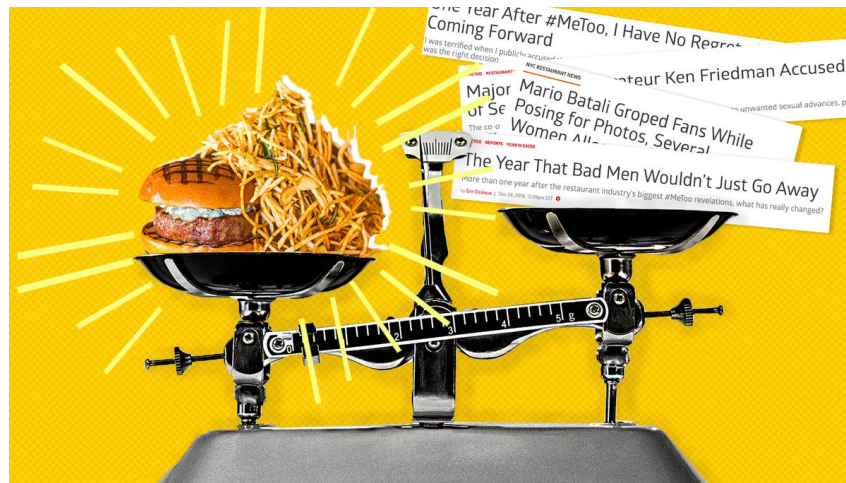
Figure 4.12 In the wake of #MeToo, diners and critics weighed culinary talent against the toxic culture of kitchens.

#MeToo is an international movement against sexual harassment and assault, especially in the workplace. It has brought attention to power imbalances, particularly between men and women and how those imbalances can create unsafe and unhealthy work environments for those with less power. (Khomami, 2017). In 2017 and 2018, a wave of individuals, mostly women, came forward in the restaurant industry to speak about the sexual harassment and abuse they had endured at restaurants throughout the country. One after another, chefs throughout the country were named publicly for the abusive cycles they had perpetuated. This prompted industry-wide reflection and has had varied effects on the industry. In some cases, restaurants have closed as diners stopped wanting to associate with perpetrators and their businesses. In other cases, restaurants have continued to thrive due to loyal fanbases or perpetrators stepping down from their leadership roles and financial links to their restaurants (Burton, 2019). In any case, the discussion about sexual abuse has opened the door for more conversation about sexual and other forms of abuse, stress, and poor work conditions in restaurants. The #MeToo movement has also showcased how the various health issues in the brigade are interlinked. Substance abuse is both problematic on its own and in how it facilitates sexual abuse. The hierarchy of the brigade makes coercion more possible than it might be in more egalitarian workplaces. Limited opportunities for advancement for female staff members can also make them more vulnerable to pressures from superiors that are gatekeepers for their professional advancement. This moment draws

attention to the structures and processes that have contributed to abuse while creating opportunity for the implementation of better worker protections.

Female Chefs

Even before #MeToo, female representation has been growing in kitchens. According to the National Restaurant Association, the number of female-owned restaurants has grown 40 percent in the last ten years (2016). Supporting the rise of female chefs has been proposed as one solution to toxic kitchen culture. As a historically marginalized group in the kitchen, women are viewed as uniquely positioned to lead the future of the industry and to go from victims of the system to champions of change. More female chefs are speaking out about how they are running their kitchens differently than the kitchens they trained in, offering more flexibility and support, creating spaces more inclusive of a range of genders, sexualities, and ethnicities, and having stricter codes of conduct keeping shouting and physical violence out of their kitchens (Becerra, 2016; Adler, 2017).

Figure 4.13 Sarah Hymanson & Sara Kramer of Kismet and Mad Capra in Los Angeles have been vocal about redefining kitchen culture prompting supportive and inclusive language in their kitchens

In a piece for industry publication, *Modern Restaurant Management,* writer Rich Lansdale suggested that women-led kitchens were inherently more peaceful writing, "In female-run establishments, sous-chefs and cooks treats other members of the kitchen with politeness and respect. This positive work environment is allowing creativity to flourish, which maintains a much higher rate of job satisfaction." (2018). In the piece, he asserts that there

are many reports of women chefs teaching manners to their staff, argues that women care more about feelings than men do, and suggests that women are more empathetic than men.

However, as addressed earlier, many women who have been able to thrive in the industry thus far have had to adopt traits and practices associated with many of the toxic elements of kitchen culture. Women can perpetuate the abuse they have historically experienced from male colleagues and from other senior women. According to chef Camille Becerra, this can be part of competition for positions and popularity (2016). As feminist activist Gloria Steinem described women, "We are not more moral; we are only uncorrupted by power." (1970).

Additionally, not all women have experienced the same challenges and their openness to hear other women can vary. Chef Victoria Blamey explained how she had brushed off the harassment she experienced in her career as she tried to avoid feeling victimized. In light of #MeToo, however, she has become more open to hearing other's experiences.

> *I think my perspective has changed very recently because I've become more aware. In a way I have become more skeptical, less trusting of people, for sure. I am trying to understand how to behave in an industry where injustices sometimes happen. I want to try to change that—though I'm not quite sure how you do it. But at the same time, I've also become more curious about other women's experiences. (Reset the Table, 2019)*

Making room for female cooks and chefs addresses worker fulfillment, allowing more individuals to reach their career goals. The approach of many of these women leaders also addresses work-life balance, and the creation of structures and processes that lead to better health.

Self-Care

Some restaurants are taking a personal wellness approach by introducing mediation, healthy food, and exercise into their staff routines. After experiencing burnout, chef Daniella Soto-Innes in New York leads her staff in squats and lunges before service starts and plays upbeat

music in the kitchen. She goes to yoga and spin classes before work and makes sure to get enough sleep and fill her meals with vegetables (Chaey, 2019). She is an advocate for fair pay and rejects the traditional hierarchy, refusing to take sole credit for her success and the success of her restaurants, Cosme and Alta in New York City, "There is not one chef coming up with the dishes by herself," she explains, "That's a lie. You can't execute an idea by yourself…As long as you have a team that is equal, then you all grow together at the same time." Her business partner, Enrique Olvera, sees Soto-Innes' management style as an indication of the future to come for restaurant culture, "The industry will change and become more like the way she runs things: focusing on relationships with your cooks, and the importance of culture and team-building." (Krishna, 2017).

The Role of Consumers

Some in the industry argue that pressure for change needs to come from consumers. Restaurant Opportunities Centers United suggests that consumers ask about working conditions when dining out just ask they ask about how ingredients are sourced or about how specific dishes are prepared. They argue that customers can also play a role in shifting the culture if their attention is brought to the right issues. Consumer demand has prompted more restaurants to carry ecologically conscious options with organic produce, grass fed meats, and vegan and vegetarian options becoming more common with each passing year. Consumer advocacy can support better structures, processes, and resources. Advocating for cooks might also help them achieve better work-life balance.

Structural Changes

Restaurants and food businesses themselves are also organizing to create systemic change. In 2018, Unilever launched its "Fair Kitchens Project" partnering with prominent chefs throughout the country. The project's mission statement calls for "a kitchen culture that's kinder and more open than the one we know." The project has put together a code of ethics and educational materials to give brigades information on creating open dialogue about issues in the kitchen, inspiring staff, supporting each other, building in break time, and

breaking down barriers related to ethnicity, gender, and religion. They are looking to organize and institutionalize a cultural shift that will take place in kitchens one by one but will follow a broader code of ethics and behavior supported by cooks and chefs across the country.

Figure 4.14 Unilever's Fair Kitchen Project showcases chefs supporting their teams.

Another necessary structural change being called for increased wages. Cooks living in poverty and at very low incomes have little opportunity to be proactive about their health. Increasing wages requires changes in legislation, raising the minimum wage on both the state and national level. It also requires a cultural shift among dinners used to being able to dine out at prices that leave little for paying staff. Restaurants operate on thin margins, but often are actually undercharging for their food knowing that most diners are unaware of the true costs of food and therefore unwilling to pay adequate prices. Chef and restauranteur David Chang, for example, charges $17 dollars for a bowl of ramen at his New York restaurant Momofuku Noodle Bar. However, he believes a more accurate price, taking into account overhead costs and a living wage for his staff would be $28 a bowl. However, he keeps the price low because customers at present are unwilling to pay more (2016).

Ending tipping is one way that restaurants are trying to improve wages for their kitchen staff. Tipping is a cultural norm in the United States, a practice that developed among European aristocrats and made its way to the United States in the mid-1800s among wealthy Americans hoping to show their European-influenced ways. Tipping was embraced by the

restaurant industry as it allowed restaurant owners to save money and hire newly freed slaves to work for tips alone. There was early resistance, but by 1926, tipping bans had been repealed and the practice has continued to be part of American culture to this day (Oatman, 2016). Tipping is harmful in many ways, but it harms brigade members specifically because of laws preventing tip-sharing. These laws were established to prevent managers from taking tips intended for waitstaff for themselves. However, these laws also prevent tips from going to the kitchen staff. This creates a discrepancy between the pay scales of front of house employees and back of house employees. While tipped servers in many parts of the US make very low wages due to low hourly base pay rates, in a fine dining restaurant in a major city, servers can make a decent income. At New York's Momofuku Ssam Bar, for example, a server can earn $1, 700 for thirty-two hours of work while a cook will $350 over those same thirty-two hours (Hutton, 2010). Many diners do not understand these dynamics and think that part of their tip is going to those who prepared their food (Ferdman, 2015; Janzer, 2018).

Some restaurants have tried to correct for this. One way has been to eliminate the option to tip and instead include a 15-20% (the standard tipping range) surcharge that allows that money to be shared throughout the restaurant. Another method has been to raise the prices of individual menu items to more accurately reflect the true cost of making and serving the food. However, many of these attempts have been met with backlash from servers who end up losing a portion of the tips they are accustomed to getting and from patrons who have grown to believe that they have a right to decide how much tip a meal has earned based on their enjoyment of the meal and service (Ferst, 2015; Dai, 2018).

Another structural change proposed is more flexible work schedules. More restaurants are shifting their operating hours in attempts to guarantee time off. But restaurants could also benefit from more cross-training of employees so that a sick employee or one with personal obligations can more easily be replaced by another when needed. Cooks often pride themselves in how essential they are to their restaurant, but flexibility would take some of the pressure off and allow cooks to nurture their lives outside the kitchen.

Worker-owned cooperatives are also a potential model for the future of restaurant work. In a worker-owned cooperative, employees, rather than investors, control the business, deciding what to do with profits and making business decisions democratically. Arizmendi Bakery, in San Francisco, for example, operates as a worker-owned cooperative. Bakers there make $24 an hour (more than double the national median wage for bakers) along with health insurance, paid vacation, and a share of the profits. When benefits are taken into account, bakers can earn $40-$50 per hour. Dispersing the power balance between employees and employers can also contribute to health through better control over who gets into power protecting members of the business from the abuses supported by hierarchical structure. Workers tend to build more skills in a cooperative because, as owners, they are cross-trained for a variety of roles in the business. This has been shown to contribute to lower rates of turnover as satisfied employees are more likely to stay with a business long-term (Dewan, 2014; Houck, 2018). According to the U.S. Federation of Worker Cooperatives, food service companies are contributing substantially to the number of new and converted cooperatives (2017). Structural change also supports better structures, processes, and resources.

Culture of Health Summary

Each of these possible solutions to building a healthier brigade culture addresses the factors of a culture of health: worker fulfillment, work-life balance, individual and company performance, and the creation of structures and resources. These solutions show the breadth of possible solutions ranging from those on the individual level like self-care practices to those on a much wider scale like raising wages and providing universal health care.

5. Discussion, Limitations, Reflection, and Conclusion

In this section, the research questions are revisited as the results are synthesized. The methods and process are reflected on.

Discussion

Organizational Culture and Organizational Socialization

This research sought to understand the origins of restaurant brigade work culture and the impact, if any, that culture has had historically on poor health for restaurant staff. It looked at the culturally embedded practices of cooks and chefs in the historical setting of restaurant kitchens. It has shown that the culture of the kitchen has had an impact on health outcomes and has since the critical juncture in 1903 when the brigade was formalized. The influence of the military and the Efficiency Movement have defined the cultural practices that emerged over time to reinforce the structure of the brigade, further entrenching it. All the underlying culture that supports it have come to be viewed as natural and inherent to the fine dining business in line with what is expected according to organizational socialization and organizational culture theory. As a case study, the fine dining restaurant brigade in America serves to further the understandings of organizational socialization and organizational culture theory. This research shows the process by which cooks and chefs have developed both explicit and subtle mandates for behavior both over the course of the history of the brigade and over the course of their individual careers. It shows how the military and the Efficiency Movement influenced the creation of these behaviors. The focus on practices that increase group solidarity and team identity create ground for abuses to be perpetuated and advantages to be taken of workers who feel personally connected to their profession, their workplace, and their coworkers. The stress created by this also supports behaviors, like substance abuse, that directly harm health. The layers of the culture have allowed it to be perpetuated and reinforced though generations of restaurant workers.

In this research, the nature of the brigade was found to create a cultural environment with risk factors for poor health as outlined by the World Health Organization. The WHO has

found that a negative work environment can lead to physical and mental health problems, substance and alcohol abuse, absenteeism, and lost productivity, all issues that this research has shown occur frequently in fine dining brigades (2017). The WHO risk factors for health are:

- inadequate health and safety policies
- poor communication and management practices
- limited participation in decision-making or low control over one's area of work
- low levels of support for employees
- inflexible working hours
- unclear tasks or organizational objectives
- high and unrelenting workload
- unsuitable tasks for employee competencies
- bullying and psychological harassment

This research shows how the organizational culture of the brigade demonstrates all of WHO's work-related risk factors for health. From the beginning, restaurant work has been done by individuals not as valued or supported as other members of their communities. Brigade culture emerged and has been maintained because of two defining beliefs. First, that those working in kitchens needed a strict structure and harsh consequences to be motivated to do their work. Second, that the success of many restaurants has been because of this system. Because cooks were long seen as societal outcasts or failures in more traditional lines of work, it was assumed that they lacked intrinsic motivation to do their work as expected. Despite many factors playing a role in business success, the brigade has been framed as a major contributor.

A Culture of Health

This is changing today in the new culture of health in part because the demographic shift in kitchens as well as because of the shortage of cooks. Kitchens are no longer exclusively staffed by members of marginalized and vulnerable groups including the young and inexperienced, immigrants, and those with less education. In the past, those with little

education, less other work experience to compare kitchen work to, or with precarious immigration statuses have lacked the knowledge, information, and social capital to advocate for change. Their vulnerability has been able to be exploited. Additionally, cooks who objected to the system could easily be replaced because new cooks could be trained on the job and there was a large supply of workers in need of accessible jobs. Today, more cooks are bringing privileges related to class, race, age, and education level into the kitchen. Many of the leaders in the health movement are well versed in social justice work and have more knowledge about health than their peers of the past. Additionally, the cooks' shortage has made cooks less replaceable. From a business standpoint, restaurant owners now face more incentives to create environments that will keep staff as replacement workers are no longer in ample supply and investing time and resources in hiring and training new staff at constant intervals is a costly practice. Because most restaurants operate on such thin margins, it is beneficial for the business to keep workers healthy and happy.

The solutions emerging, including the support of women in the industry and the inclusion of self-care practices in restaurants, address cultural change. However, they also make certain assumptions. In the case of women, the focus on promoting their work assumes that all women in the kitchen have experienced the challenges faced by many of their peers and thus are sympathetic to the challenges experienced by many of their fellow women. As with any marginalized group, personal experiences can differ despite widespread trends and norms. While sexual harassment, unequal pay, and fewer opportunities plague women in the industry as a whole, not all women have personally experienced those challenges just as not all men have upheld hegemonic masculinity in their workplaces. Women may not make efforts to change overarching industry issues that they personally feel they have not experienced. They many not grasp the severity of the issue or feel that drawing attention to the issue constitutes a victim mentality. Additionally, this focus puts the burden of remedying a culture developed largely by men on women.

The self-care solution is similarly well-intentioned and could be beneficial. To an extent, kitchen work will always be stressful. Meal services go quickly, and cooks will always be rushing to get food out efficiently to customers. Rushing will always create some level of

stress and anxiety. These self-care practices can help make the best of difficult situations. However, while the promotion of these self-care practices is well-intentioned and may be helpful in managing the stress of working in the kitchen, focusing on these solutions frames the issues of health in the restaurant brigade as individual problems. The focus with this solution is on the individual better adapting to the stress rather than addressing the stressful environment itself. Green juice and squats can help make the day more pleasant, but if a cook still works days exceeding 12 hours and still can barely pay their rent on their income, stress levels will continue to be high and restaurant work will continue to put the health of its staffs at risk.

Additionally, while culture has proven to be an important part of health risk in the kitchen and shifting it could make a substantial contribution to improved health outcomes, the need for structural change should not be ignored. Policy change and better enforcing of existing policies could also protect chefs and cooks. Increased wages, caps on weekly work hours, and mandated breaks could all be valuable policy solutions.

Other Considerations

However, it is important to state that the element of possible self-selection of individuals already struggling with the health challenges frequently represented in kitchens. The brigade culture's known characteristics, especially with the rise of food media, have played a role in perpetuating the brigade's norms and making them more widely known. Some cooks and chefs have undoubtedly been drawn to the industry because of its reputation as a tough environment either because it would be permissive to behaviors, like substance abuse, they already exhibited or because the challenges and excitement associated with the work were alluring in themselves (Frone, 2003). Age may also be a factor. Young adults are more likely to party and experiment with substances than the general population and cooks and chefs tend to be on the younger side of the working population (Olkinuora, 1984). While the brigade shapes individuals, individuals entering the industry also continue to shape and uphold the brigade.

By examining the origins of brigade culture and its defining features, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of the context modern brigades exist in. This understanding is valuable as solutions can be tailored to address specific elements of the culture and systemic structures in place. Through this research, it is clear that there is no one solution to making restaurant work healthier or more sustainable over a lifetime. Instead, change will require multiple solutions involving multiple stakeholders. Some, like creating safe spaces for historically marginalized people and creating flexibility in work hours in each restaurant can take place on the micro level as chefs and restauranteurs can set standards and expectations for behavior and inclusivity in their kitchens. Other solutions, like increased wages and affordable health insurance are more systemic and will require work and advocacy beyond the kitchen. This research shows that the roots of health issues in the restaurant industry are cultural, systemic, and political and that lasting change will come through effort on every level.

Impact

This knowledge does not just affect brigades. Eating out continues to grow as part of American culture bringing more people into contact with restaurants and restaurant workers. Americans now spend more at eating and drinking establishments than on groceries (Philips, 2016). Additionally, much of the barriers to good health faced by restaurant workers are faced by other workers in professions with low autonomy, low pay, and poor access to health care. This has become increasingly relevant politically in the United States as debates over increasing the minimum wage, providing universal health care, and increasing protections for contract and hourly workers have become more prominent (Gaffney, 2018; Jones, 2018; Pofeldt, 2019).

This research also fits more widely into the food sustainability movement. As the rights of farm workers and producers are becoming increasingly prominent topics of conversation, the rights and experiences of those cooking and serving food area also relevant. Consumers

are increasingly interested in where their food comes from and the experiences of those making it.

This research also contributes to theoretical development showing how workers are socialized into an organizational culture and how that culture becomes entrenched over time. It also suggests ways that a culture of health can be further defined by including the specific cultural, systemic, and political changes necessary to support better work culture.

Limitations

This research contributes uniquely to the conversation about health in the restaurant industry by presenting a picture of how the brigade has influenced kitchen life since its introduction in 1903. In this case, a sociohistorical approach was useful for trend analysis. However, this analysis could have gone back even further as some aspects of the brigade, including the abuse of lower-ranking cooks, can be traced back much further. According to Marcel Escoffier, grand-nephew of Auguste Escoffier and former professor of hospitality management, these practices have existed for centuries. In ancient Greece, slaves served as household chefs and went through extensive training and apprenticeship. These chefs were masters of all the other household slaves reflecting the hierarchy of the modern brigade. In ancient Rome, the first professional society of cooks was established as well as the first cooking academy. Much of modern French cooking was influenced by the Italian Renaissance through the marriage of Henry IV and Catherine de Medici. Some scholars argue that much of Western cooking as an art form can be traced to China and India (1987). With all this in mind, showing influence beyond the contemporary military and the Efficiency Movement, this research could have included another layer to examine these origins of the brigade itself by expanding the time frame included.

Additionally, history is always subjective, and any interpretation of data will be influenced by bias. Though a sociohistorical approach was useful for examining the development of a culture over time, it was impossible to be ensured that the sample of data is representative of a time or situation and, in this case, some aspects of kitchen culture had more

documentation of their history than others. Because of the varied availability of data, some of the aspects of culture explored have more details and greater details available about their development over time. Another drawback of this research approach was that external variables could not be controlled. Culture, systemic issues, and self-selection into the industry cannot be separated into controlled variables making it impossible to be certain of casual relationships or the amount of responsibility each issue has for the health issues in brigades. Future research could take a participant observer or an ethnographic approach to understand how cooks and chefs are socialized into the organizational culture of restaurants in real time.

Reflection

Self-reflection is a critical part of a qualitative research process (Burnard, 1995; Bengtsson, 2015). "Pre-understandings" in both planning of the research and the analysis are important to disclose and be aware of. Having personal experience with a subject matter can be an advantage, giving guidance on where to look for information and what information is needed. A researcher's understanding of context and circumstances can also help identify discrepancies in the data (Catanzaro, 1988). However, personal experiences should not affect interpretation of the results and, ideally, a researcher should be able to distance themselves and their own experiences from the results of the research as much as possible (Long & Johnson, 2000; Elo et al, 2014).

Reflexivity involves taking this self-reflection and using it to identify how one's own experiences, beliefs, and attitudes based on their social position (gender, age, race, immigration status, sexual orientation), personal experiences, and political and professional beliefs affect their research.

With this in mind, it is important for me to examine my relationship to the subject and the inspiration for this research. This research was inspired by my experiences as a culinary student, baker, pastry cook, and cake decorator before enrolling in Wageningen. I conducted this research influenced by my experiences as a Latina/Hispanic US citizen, as woman in her

early twenties, and as an individual who entered kitchen work with both a liberal arts bachelor's degree and a culinary certificate. My restaurant work experience took place in New York City. Much of my knowledge of the kitchen and my awareness of the health issues faced by staff working in restaurants comes from personal experience. This first-hand experience was invaluable as I began this research with an awareness of key players in the industry, the real-life challenges faced by many cooking professionally in fine dining in major cities, the context and history of restaurants in America, and the culture of restaurants and food media. My work experience gave me direct knowledge and understanding of how a brigade functions in practice. Additionally, with experience working in both kitchens that were supportive of healthier lifestyles and kitchens that were not, I entered this research knowing that not all brigades function the same and that not all cooks struggle with the same challenges in equal measure. This knowledge also helped me develop a nuanced understanding of restaurant work and identify trends without over-generalizing.

My experience also directly influenced the creation of my research question. While working, I was aware that expectations and behaviors that differed from other lines of work were in place. I resented feeling that my health and well-being was at risk in order to meet the needs of customers. At the same time, I actively participated in brigade culture despite knowing better. I wondered how so many of us, especially those of us with privileges related to our race, gender, socioeconomic background, and educational background, could be so entrenched in the brigade system that we risked our own health. Our differing abilities to pursue other lines of work outside the kitchen were also reflection of access and privilege. All of this personal knowledge and experience helped me think critically and contextually about information I encountered throughout this research process.

Conclusion

This research attempted to understand the present challenges of the restaurant brigade by examining its origins and its culture. It found that brigade's culture, along with self-selection into the industry and systemic issues, has made a contribution to poor health outcomes for cooks and chefs in fine dining restaurants in America. The recent interest in creating a

healthier kitchen was catalyzed by prominent industry-member suicides, the #MeToo movement, and changing demographics of restaurant workers. However, the brigade of the future looks different from the brigade of the past. If current trends continue, it can be expected that more restaurants will be striving to offer more benefits and more supportive and safe working environments to employees. Creating a healthier work culture in restaurants will require both systemic and cultural change.

6. References

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