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Changes in Professionalism: The Case of Estonian Chefs

Abstract: The changes that have taken place in professional life have led to changes both in the occupations and social positions of practitioners. In this article, the authors analyse the implications of occupational changes on professionalisation and professional learning, using chefs in Estonia as an example. The article aims to interpret the theoretical framework of professionalism by exploring the beliefs and opinions of chefs and the assessments of their work. The methodological approach is qualitative, relying on semi-structured interviews with outstanding chefs and experts in the field of food science in Estonia. Based on this analysis, we conclude that the chefs are still experts in their field of cooking but new managerial and leadership roles have become more significant. We argue that professionalisation can lead to hybrid professionalism of chefs, which involves communication with the public, reliance on practical knowledge, nonformal learning and reflexive control over their work.

Keywords: occupational change, professionalism, hybrid professionalism, professional learning, professional knowledge

Many social, technological and ecological changes that are taking place in society have altered the occupation and role of chefs around the world. Svensson (2005) claimed that particular occupations, such as aircraft pilot, professional athlete, fire-fighter, fashion model and cook, have been given higher prestige than might be expected from the required credentials, which may be explained by their popular, fashionable and conspicuous character. Cooks have come “out of the kitchen” and some have become chefs who are food experts, innovators, media personalities, managers, advertisers and salespeople.

In the course of the historical development of occupations, a significant distinction has been made between vocations and professions, the former referring to the lower-level occupations and manual work where practical and tacit knowledge is important. However, the term profession has been related to the liberal occupations, such as doctors and lawyers, presupposing a long and expensive education involving theoretical knowledge and preparing people for self-regulation. However, many influences have contributed to the restructuring of occupations. The first is the trend and pressure to professionalise, created by the knowledge society, thus increasing the knowledge base of almost all occupational fields. In this approach, many new, emerging and integrated occupations, including managers, project managers and others, tend to professionalise, struggling for higher status and a better position in society (Evetts, 2003; Van Ruler, 2005). Second, the standardisation trend guided by the globalising economy affects various occupational fields differently. Third, contemporary knowledge societies with neoliberal climates tend to put pressure on flexible specialisation, with emphasis on consumers, cost control and performance management (Noordegraaf, 2007, p. 763), which leads to the

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integration of previously separate occupational fields (such as management, public relations, etc.) into new occupations and new role profiles of previous/historical occupations (Evetts, 2003). However, the major changes in professionalism have occurred because of changes in customer attitudes and requirements and the meaning of service in society. Therefore, expertise is becoming increasingly complex; the understanding and acquisition of professional knowledge have changed as well.

The ideological approach to professionalism emphasises high status, occupational control over the content of work, prerequisites for occupation, long and high-level educational preparation involving theoretical knowledge, privileges of the occupation and specific ideologies of those occupations considered as professions (Abbott, 1988; Freidson, 2001).

The extensive changes have raised the following questions: How can professionalism be understood and described in such a dynamic occupational field, in which chefs' status and position in society have risen and the representatives of this occupational group have acquired several new roles? What kinds of beliefs and opinions do chefs have about their profession and how do these notions match the theories of professionalism, especially hybrid professionalism?

We need to explore and understand the substance (ideology, control and learning patterns of the occupation) to know what kind of professionalism characterises the chef's occupation and whether we can consider its transformation "from vocation to profession".

Theoretical framework: Understanding professionalisation

Many scholars (e.g., Evetts, 2003, 2012; Noordegraaf, 2007; Van Ruler, 2005) have pointed out the ambiguous meaning of professionalism; in the context of multiple changes, different interpretations are needed to understand the links connecting occupational changes, the concept of professionalism and the power of the concept to promote occupational change. The lack of consensus on the meanings and approaches to conceptualisations in the debate on professionalism has been suggested by several authors (e.g., Evans, 2008; Freidson, 1994; Gewirtz, Manony, Hextall, & Cribb, 2009; Urban & Dalli, 2012). Both cultural and historical factors, as well as contemporary trends—particularly changing patterns of state regulation, including standardisation tendencies, and the growing internationalisation of markets, managerialism and consumerism (Evetts, 2012)—have influenced the substance and understanding of professionalism.

The traditional or ideological interpretation of professionalism articulated by Freidson (2001) stresses strong institutionalisation of an occupational group, exercise of control over entry to the profession, autonomy, self-control over the work, commonly accepted professional codes of ethics, long educational preparation and a specific, theory-related, professional knowledge base. The approach suggests the complexity of the work in an occupation considered as a profession; it is not possible to standardise it, thus demanding a high degree of self-regulation of the members of the occupational group and autonomy in their professional activities. Likewise, professionalism is strongly related to confidence in abstract systems and institutions, as well as trust in individual professional practitioners (Svensson, 2006).

However, the capacity of the ideological approach to professionalism (see e.g., Antikainen, Rinne, & Koski, 2009; Freidson, 2001; Johnson, 1984; Van Ruler, 2005) can no longer fully explain the developments in the system of occupations and professions and in the substance of professionalism. Furthermore, the boundaries between professions, especially in the case of developing professions, are no longer clear-cut (Eraut, 1999). Therefore, in the context of contemporary neoliberal societies that are trying to standardise occupational fields and at the same time, favouring flexible specialisation and emphasising consumers, cost control and per-

formance management, professionalism is under pressure and needs re-conceptualising.

Professionalism as a sociological construct also refers to the concept of “professionalisation”, defined as the process in which occupations have become or seek to become recognised as professions (Hoyle, 2001) or as a collective desire of an occupational group to achieve better position, status and advantages in society (Van Ruler, 2005). In the background discussions of occupational and societal changes in professionalisation, two approaches can be discerned: de-professionalisation and re-professionalisation.

De-professionalisation has mainly been noted in cases where practitioners of some occupations think their professionalism has been devalued, faced with strong pressure from external control (standards, assessment and accountability) and evaluation involved with reform processes, such as in the case of teachers (e.g., Evetts, 2003; Ozga, 1995; Webb, 2004, as cited in Lai, 2010), thus diminishing their social position and leading to de-professionalisation (Hoyle, 2001).

Re-professionalisation has been identified in cases where changes have forced occupational groups to redefine their working roles to include their professional and moral values as well as their identities, reflecting the core concerns of their work (e.g., Helsby, 1999; Troman, 1996). Since a growing number of professionals are employed by organisations, in effect becoming “salaried professionals” (Murphy, 1990), their traditional autonomy has decreased as occupational control over the professional work has been (at least partly) replaced by managerial control (e.g., Evetts, 2012). Furthermore, the professionals have been pressured to take over administrative and managerial roles in organisations. The field of management itself has been marked by a conflict between two competing views of professional knowledge. First, the manager is a technician whose practice consists of applying the principles and methods derived from management science to the everyday problems of his or her organisation. Second, the manager is a craftsperson, a practitioner of an art of managing that cannot be reduced to explicit rules and theories (Schön, 1983). Thus, professionals in organisations can face the “boundary work” (van der Scheer, Stoopendaal, & Putters, 2008), guided by different sets of objectives and principles (professional and managerial) simultaneously.

Proceeding from Wilensky’s famous question: “Do we experience a ‘professionalization of everyone?’” (1964, as cited in Noordegraaf, 2007, p. 761), Noordegraaf (2007) distinguished amongst three conceptualisations of professionalism: “pure”, “situative” and “hybrid”. Pure professionalism refers to its traditional, ideological understanding (e.g., Freidson, 2001). Situative professionalism tries to expand the traditional concept by indicating how external/organisational control limits professional control and autonomy (e.g., Evetts, 2012; Larson, 1977; Whitley, 1989).

Representatives of hybrid professionalism point out that compared to traditional professionals (advocates, doctors), the variety of new occupations (such as managers, administrators, salespersons, etc.), “open” professionals and practical experts—who do not have a strong institutional background and who have acquired professional knowledge in an informal and experiential way (Saaristo, 2001)—have emerged and are pursuing legitimate professions (Noordegraaf, 2007). Mieg (2001) claimed that with some reservations, we can consider management a type of professional expertise, too. For instance, managerial decision making can be viewed as a professional task (Mieg, 2001). Noordegraaf’s model (2007, p. 779) reinterpreted and introduced the concept of hybrid professionalism by calling attention to the following characteristics:

First, as professionals have to take managerial and market-oriented roles (Noordegraaf, 2007, p. 776) and managers, in turn, assume professional roles, there is a need to negotiate the ways in which professional and managerial control can be

mixed and balanced in specific organisational and professional circumstances. Instead of “pure” professional control, new, combined strategies of controlling practices with subtler selective standards are proposed.

Second, novel mechanisms of legitimising work in (new) occupations under various domains emphasise professionalism as a symbolic term, used in the discourses to legitimise the recent types of professionalism.

Third, the search for new identities is related to the “boundary work” (van der Scheer et al., 2008), where compromises should be made between different identities and norms to align various standards meaningfully and create communal identity (Noordegraaf, 2007, p. 779).

Additionally, Saaristo (2001) perceived openness as the most distinguishing feature of hybrid professionalism. He presented its three pillars: 1) exposure of professional activities, communication and interaction on a professional basis; 2) reliability and acceptance as a professional by colleagues and the general public; and 3) control over professional activity/content that can be accomplished by ideological, societal and technological direction or their combinations. Overall, the features of hybrid professionalism include:

1) no strong institutionalisation in terms of professional organisations and professional education—primarily or partly nonformal and experiential training (knowledge can be acquired from books, magazines, conferences, meetings, daily practices and so on); 2) service delivery and high service standards; 3) reflexive control—different controls (managerial, professional and customer) can be mixed in daily practices to establish meaningful connections amongst customers, work and action; 4) ethical code; and 5) communication with the public and public relations.

Changes in the work of Estonian chefs

Nowadays, chefs’ roles are related to management work and organisation, marketing and service, culture, food making, theory-based research and organisational ethics (Roosipõld, 2011).

Several researchers have pointed out the open-context expertise necessary for a chef, including communication skills (Surlemont, Chantrain, Nlemvo, & Johnson, 2005, Heikkinen, 2004), language and public speaking skills, creativity (Ottenbacher & Harrington, 2007; Sandwith, 1993), innovation (Hegarty & O’Mahony, 2001, Zopiatis, 2010, ; Bissett, Cheng, Brannan, 2010), creativity (Robinson & Beesley, 2010) creating a “good spirit” (Balazs, 2002; Kang, Twigg and Hertzman, 2010) and putting them all into practice (Turpeinen, 2006; Turpeinen, 2009), as well as flexibility, collaboration skills, readiness to change (Koponen, 2006), ability to help others and to keep one’s ego and emotions under control (Birdir & Pearson, 2000) and entrepreneurial ability (Johnson, Surlemont, Nicod & Revaz, 2005; Svejenova, Planellas & Vive, 2010). In managerial terms, the chef, *sous-chef*, *maitre d’hotel* and *chef-sommelier* constitute the “top management team” of the restaurant. The *sous-chef*, the second in command, is in many ways the chef’s polar opposite. He or she is often calm, introvert and stable, while the chef is quirky and can be upset and throw tantrums if things do not go well (Balazs, 2002). It explains why the chef differs from other managerial staff as a *charismatic* person.

During the Soviet period in Estonia, the profession of chef was unknown and its forerunner was the production manager, whose social status was relatively low. After the country regained independence, the first role models for Estonian chefs were Finnish chefs, who began to teach their profession to Estonian cooks. This development was facilitated by the heavier ship traffic between Tallinn and Helsinki, where Finnish chefs shared their wisdom with the young Estonian cooks. In

the mid-1990s, those trained Estonian cooks moved to Estonia for self-actualisation. In 2000, the Estonian Chefs Association (ECA) was created. The ECA helps develop the curriculum for cooks in vocational education and the society's members participate in vocational school councils. Since 2006, the ECA has been a part of the World Association of Chefs Societies. Current statistics show that the cooking profession is extremely popular in Estonia. (Järveots- Lumiste, 2014)

Cooks obtain their profession but no special education is provided for chefs. However, there is a vocational standard developed for cooks and level V (European Qualifications Framework, 2014) describes the requirements for chefs. In Schön's (1983) words, chefs can be depicted as "the reflective practitioners" who are not dependent on the categories of established theory and technique but construct a new theory of their unique case.

Methodology

The qualitative method was implemented to ascertain how Estonian chefs understand and interpret the changes to their occupation, as well as what meaning they ascribe to those changes from the perspective of professionalisation.

The semi-structured interview was applied as the tool for data collection. The interviews were conducted with nine of the most outstanding chefs in Estonia, of whom seven were male and two female, and with two experts in the field of food science, both of whom represented formal education, one in higher and the other in vocational education. At the first stage of data collection, the chefs were interviewed. At the second stage, it was the experts' turn in order to determine the factors related to cooperation between higher educational institutions and chefs as well as tendencies towards institutionalisation of the chefs' occupation.

In preparing the interview guidelines, we proceeded from the concept of "ideological professionalism". For every topic, one open question was asked, with leading questions on the assumption of the theory. With such questions, we tried to change the implicit comprehension of the interviewee into an explicit understanding. These questions proposed the positions with which the interviewee could agree or not, whether they were in accordance with his or her subjective theories.

Each interview lasted for 45 minutes on average. The interviews were tape recorded and transcribed verbatim.

In the data analysis, first, the text was examined with an open categorisation of the primary data. Second, under each broad category, the repertory of answers/meanings was brought out. Third, on the basis of the emerging information, the substance/contents of the broader categories were generalised and interpreted as the characteristics of the chefs' professionalism. The opinions of chefs and experts were analysed altogether. In cases where the experts' opinions were totally different and new, these were pointed out separately.

As the next step of the analysis, the theoretical and empirical aspects were compared. Its aim was to evaluate the characteristics presented by the chefs against those of theoretical models of professionalism.

The life cycle of knowledge in this occupation is perceived as a short-term process; therefore, a broad education and lifelong learning are more important than a certain educational background. Consequently, the learning patterns of chefs have been analysed more broadly (theory-based knowledge, professional knowledge and lifelong learning).

Results: Topics discussed by chefs and experts

Occupational roles of chefs

The chefs pointed out several new roles that were not part of their work in earlier times. First, we considered the roles associated with managerial and leadership activities. The chefs compared themselves with top managers, having a higher position (“the chef’s hat is higher than those of the other cooks for the reason of being visible”) and multiple tasks to make the kitchen effective, including choosing the right members of the staff, being a leader and setting an example to others. A female expert said:

All kinds of catering managers and directors are of very little importance, compared to the chef.

At the same time, the chefs should be able to work as team members. A male chef said:

There is a person, the one who talks and who is the chef, the brand image, but actually it is teamwork. I must deal with [the] bookkeeper, catering, conference and housing manager and cooperate with them. It means that I may be competent in many areas but I never complete these alone.

The chefs also mentioned that some of them have an authoritarian leadership or military style that constrains potential teamwork.

The roles related to the managerial tasks comprise logistics manager, mechanic, administrator and legal expert, competent in labour law and legislation. The chefs also have to be creative and innovative, with an entrepreneurial and economic mindset.

Second, the chefs’ acknowledged roles involving service and product development (designing a menu), marketing and communication were considered.

You have to understand different people and their body language ... so you must sense the atmosphere and how to deal with different clients (male chef).

Third, the chefs recognised their broader societal role, trying to understand what their occupation and cooking profession mean to society and what they represent. The repertoire varied, from shaping the national cuisine to creating the image of Estonia as a tourist country.

We represent our country. We draw the picture of [the] Estonian kitchen. It is a role as well (male chef).

One male chef mentioned that chefs should be similar to politicians:

If you want to be noticed, you should belong somewhere, to some political party.

Fourth, roles related to food making were discussed. Although the chefs play a variety of roles, cooking is still the most important part of their work.

It is not realistic that [the] chef has to manage everything. It means that he/she loses his/her function in [the] cooking process and the restaurant becomes senseless (female chef).

Fifth, the chefs also talked about other duties they perform in the organisation, such as teaching customers and training other cooks.

Generally, the chef's occupation has become very complex and he or she has to be a leading character in the restaurant. The chefs take on managerial tasks in addition to food making. On one hand, they think that they have to fulfil many roles (managerial tasks, public roles, food making and others); on the other hand, they realise that food preparation should still be the main aspect of their work and that combining the different duties and roles can be challenging.

The profession of a chef is interesting because you do not have to be in the kitchen all the time or in the office; you have to do everything (male chef).

Future and career prospects

Some chefs talked about their future and career prospects. One common feature was the desire to start or operate their own business in order to realise their own vision. Some chefs have already managed their own business and they considered this experience a significant one.

Your own business gives you the freedom to be a boss. You must not be afraid of failure! You only get valuable experience this way (male chef).

As a future prospect, some chefs would also consider becoming a trainer or even pursuing an academic career to pass on their experience to younger generations of cooks.

I would like to attain an academic position because I have so much to give, to teach. Some chefs founded their own schools to fulfil their mission (male chef).

Additionally, some chefs would like to engage themselves more in selling their ideas and developing their own food and kitchenware brands in the future. Working in one restaurant for a long time decreases creativeness.

Knowledge base and competencies of chefs

In talking about theory-based knowledge in the cooking vocation, the interviewees expressed different opinions.

Some chefs stressed the necessity of theory-based knowledge; because of the additional managerial tasks and responsibilities related to people's health, chefs need a higher/theory-based background. Professional educators noted that it is related to the quality of work and professional pride. However, the experts interviewed did not think that the chefs should have theory-based education.

The chefs also brought up the idea that a professional education is needed if an employer demands it.

If your employer starts to evaluate your theoretical background in addition to the abilities, the theory becomes more important (male chef).

There was also a rather optimistic view that vocational education is becoming better and the reason for poor quality is also related to the low level of practical training in enterprises.

We have very few places where a beginner could practise and realise his or her potential. There are many indifferent business owners of a who spoil the young cook's career right at the beginning (male chef).

Rather negative attitudes became obvious when the chefs talked about young cooks leaving schools and missing the competencies required in their work. Some chefs referred to examples of the world's top chefs who do not have any special education and yet have become popular. Furthermore, the scepticism can be related to the prejudice that education can stifle creativity and that a major aspect of the work is related to tacit knowledge, which comes with practice.

Let's take a cook or chef—he/she is not a lawyer but like an artist who has never studied anything but creates fantastic pieces of art. The education based only on theory is nonsense. They are strong in theory but their hands have no soul; they just do the job but without love. I would rather prefer this job without special education (male chef).

I got a job in a five-star hotel. I learned more within one and a half months than during two years at school. I got no education from the school, 95% of my knowledge I acquired doing practical work side by side with the chefs (male chef).

Everything is up to a person. Classical example: Heston Blumenthal. Repeatedly nominated as the best cook in the world by the top judges. But he is not a cook really, has never been because he has not learned to be one (female expert).

Although the interviewees had rather positive attitudes towards professional/higher level education, they still emphasised that professionalism depends on personality rather than on education and that one can also learn from different sources other than higher education.

In discussing the professional knowledge, competencies and abilities needed by chefs at work, the respondents identified the most important ones as knowledge in andragogy, pedagogy, management, entrepreneurship, psychology, history of food and healthy food.

Lifelong learning

The importance of lifelong learning was stressed by all the chefs, not only academic studies but also learning in different ways: from the newest magazines and books, from the Internet, in competitions and trade fairs, training arranged by suppliers, visiting other restaurants, learning from customers, learning while working in the kitchen and communicating with other people via social media. One can learn even from bloggers.

There are many bloggers today and though they cook homely and simple meals, sometimes you can find surprisingly clever tricks. And then you think: how could I miss it? (female chef).

I learn quite a lot from my customers! Not cooking but behaviour and communication. The more present-day and opinionated the customers are, the more present-day the chef becomes (male chef).

However, it is remarkable that learning from Estonian colleagues is rare, if it happens at all. Two male chefs made similar statements:

I have asked some things from our cooks but generally, chefs do not communicate with each other.

Two different opinions were expressed about universities as places to continue one's education. Six chefs found the current teaching methods unfriendly to students.

I went to study in university. It does not suit the chefs. It is OK for the people with shift work. It leaves too little time for studying at home because working days are long (male chef).

However, three other chefs reported the usefulness of continuing with university studies.

Higher education is good because when a person becomes a manager and starts to lead people and processes, it is not enough to be a good specialist and cook well (female chef).

In conclusion, all the chefs found lifelong learning very important; learning from the Internet and magazines and in the workplace were pointed out as effective in various ways, but learning from other Estonian chefs was minimal. They also realised that higher-level education is necessary due to new roles, especially managerial types.

Connection with vocational and higher educational institutions

The respondents noticed that relationships with higher educational institutions are unnecessary because the level of production development in restaurants generally does not require high-technology input (such as molecular biology).

Well, I think that the real need is missing because the menu in restaurants is kind of simple; every chef and cook can manage (male chef).

Some of the chefs mentioned that cooperation would be good; it should work so that universities could invite them to give some lectures and training for students. However, they could not say how the universities could be useful for their own learning and development. They also considered that universities need to inform them about their activities in the specific field, in other words, the initiative should come from universities.

I was surprised when I learned that there is a laboratory in the basement of Tallinn University of Technology where the production of all the manufacturers is tested before rollout. Restaurants practically do not use this service. Maybe the universities do not inform us what possibilities the restaurants can have (male chef).

Just one respondent believed that the initiative should come from the professional association and that actually, both sides have been passive in working together.

This connection is missing because of the undone work of the ECA. There is no need for the institute to cooperate with some chef or cook. They have their own work to do there (male chef).

A university expert also admitted passivity from their side in relation to collaboration.

If we had been more active and would have been told about the possibilities we have to offer, then ... it means that we have to find time to sit down and discuss

the matters that would be sufficient (male expert).

One of the respondents was critical about chefs, arguing that one can find superficial attitudes towards the work everywhere, that no one wants to gain deeper knowledge and still, the mediator between chefs and universities is missing.

The connection with vocational school was through teaching. Some chefs commented that teaching in school is the only way to improve the quality of the vocational education.

I think that we ourselves have to give lessons at vocational schools. It is not possible to learn there; the schooling level is too low (male chef).

It can be argued that higher educational institutions have a rather marginal role in the formation of the knowledge base in the field of cooking and also in the professional development of chefs.

Control over the chefs' profession

How control over the chefs' work comes about and who decides on the knowledge base, methods and other aspects of their work were perceived differently. One of the chefs interviewed supported stronger institutionalisation in contrast to another standpoint that argued for customers' and reflective control.

The first view defended the idea that chefs should be certified in order to provide value in this profession and protect the market; otherwise, anyone could start working as a chef and the service quality would worsen.

Both cooks and doctors are engaged in people's health. If you are good at cooking, you could finish school and get a cook's licence. People working at a restaurant should be certified (female chef).

Many chefs pointed out that they themselves evaluate their work. On the other hand, the experts and some chefs interviewed thought that a certificate of qualification was unnecessary; ultimately, customers decide whether the food and service are good or not and this kind of standardisation limits creativity and innovation amongst chefs.

I do not ask an applicant who takes the test for a license. I decide myself if the person is capable of being a good cook. The papers mean nothing to me (male chef).

It can be stated that a cook's licence and vocational exam are unnecessary in valuing this profession. However, they give assurance to the young apprentices who are learning under a chef's supervision and they prevent compromising the market. Therefore, this issue must be the chef's choice; it cannot be enforced by somebody else or it may suppress creativity.

Institutionalisation of the chefs' profession

Conflicting attitudes were manifested towards the only voluntary organisation uniting the chefs' profession—the ECA. Six respondents definitely stated that the ECA's existence and its membership are necessary; three were sceptical about its work. An expert pointed out its need for restructuring.

The ECA's proponents cited the following useful functions: working together with young cooks, propagating local raw ingredients and developing Estonian cuisine, and improving people's quality of life by serving and promoting quality food.

The ECA's opponents justified their protests as follows: sponsors impose their products; young cooks can belong to the society as well, which lessens its prestige; there are too few social events and meetings, etc.

The societies of cooks all over the world are living through crisis right now. A face-to-face communication has been replaced by mobile phones and easy travelling. It is a challenge to [the] ECA (female expert).

Overall, according to the preceding remark, because of infighting and slander, the main purpose and sense of mission are gone. Inadequate cooperation is the result of competition and the lack of ability to work together and suppress one's ego. As for teaching, the society has lost its importance and a new alternative should be found.

Professional ethics

The term "professional ethics" was defined as follows: serving quality food, speaking honestly about the raw ingredients handling foodstuffs well, treating cooks respectfully, being honest with the customers and the owner, and taking credit by using someone else's recipe is wrong. The matter of professional ethics was also stressed by the experts.

Whilst in the food industry, almost everything can be controlled, for instance, the production of vodka, n catering it is not so easy. Therefore, the cook's ethics are very important (male expert).

Generally, it can be said that all chefs deem ethics essential because their work is not as controllable as those in other industries. Ethics are also connected with quality. The right technology must be used and food hygiene must be observed. In common with a doctor, the chef is responsible for the customers' health.

Communication and public relations

All the interviewees (chefs and experts) agreed that a chef's visibility and excellent public relations are crucial because a restaurant is known foremost for its chef.

We should be in sight; we reflect Estonia. We should express our opinions and help to develop Estonian cuisine and cuisine in general ... (female chef).

A pilot's life is easier, isn't it? He is a top professional who flies a plane and the passengers do not see him. But in a restaurant you have to be seen; you cannot be just a good cook, you must be a good communicator. The more visible you are, the more your restaurant thrives (male chef).

Cooking has been complemented by public roles, similar to those of an actor:

... if you want to be on the screen, you have to sacrifice a part of your privacy, to make some TV show or something (male chef).

All the chefs considered visibility important but it must not interfere with one's job. Being in the public eye helps chefs fulfil their social roles, such as promoting healthy food, developing Estonian cuisine, etc.

Discussion

In talking about their profession, the chefs set apart several topics that referred to the attributes of hybrid professionalism (Noordegraaf, 2007), highlighting their multiple roles in the organisation. Foremost, they emphasised that the chefs are specialists in their field/, but their role as a leader in the organisation is equally important.

The main point of the discussion of the results is to explain how the major features of the hybrid model of professionalism are manifested in the chefs' case. The six key aspects identified in the analysis of the interviews can be distinguished, which are relevant in determining how chefs' professionalism matches the pattern of hybrid professionalism.

First, the institutionalisation of the chefs' occupation is weak. It means that the roles of theoretical knowledge and higher educational institutions in building the occupation's knowledge base are weak; similarly, the professional associations' function in regulating and controlling the chefs' work is almost nonexistent. The chefs focused on nonformal learning. Theory-based knowledge and academic education were considered much less important (even irrelevant) than nonformal and experiential learning. Similar learning patterns had also been mentioned in the context of the chefs' work by several researchers (Balazs, 2002; Ottenbacher & Harrington, 2007; Pratten & O'Leary, 2007; Walter, Edvardsson, & Öström, 2010; Roosipõld, 2012). Most chefs have been trained by working in the best kitchens in the world. Some chefs around the world have taught themselves and advanced to achieve very high positions, for instance, Heston Marc Blumenthal, who now holds a Master of Science and enjoys fruitful cooperation with research institutions and universities (Barham, 2007). Another example is Ferran Adria, who travels internationally, gathering and developing ideas with the help of scientists, as well as creating techniques and concepts that generate many recipes (Carlin, 2011).

Second, service orientation of chefs at work was considered vital. Chefs deliver services under rigorous standards of restaurants; the importance of service in chefs' work had also been mentioned by many authors (Balazs, 2002; Birdir & Pearson, 2000; Hu, 2010; Ottenbacher & Harrington, 2007).

Third, another critical issue cited in chefs' occupation was the code of ethics, manifested in terms of quality, honesty, responsibility for customers' health, and respect for employees, customers and owners. It coincides with the earlier findings of researchers (e.g., Fauchart & Hippel, 2008; Hollows & Jones, 2010) who highlighted the importance of professional ethics in the context of chefs' professionalism.

Fourth, reflexive control was covered in the interviews. There was an expressed understanding that a chef does not need a licence or certification. The work is rather controlled by owners and customers, meaning that organisational and societal influences are dominant. The latter had been emphasised by earlier research as well (e.g., Ottenbacher & Harrington, 2007). Finally, self-control is also important and works through ethical principles, the mission of the chef's occupation and as a basis for self-reflection. Occupational control is quite weak, although states establish occupational standards and some chefs are members of the working groups that formulate the occupational standards. However, occupational standards are not considered important by employers when recruiting and training staff, nor by chefs themselves in terms of willingness to follow the standards; in other words, the occupational standards do not apply in everyday practice.

Fifth, communication with the public and public relations were pointed out in the chefs' discourse as essential aspects of professionalism. This matter had also been mentioned previously by Balazs (2002), Henderson (2011) and Surlemont and colleagues (2005).

Sixth, although a professional organisation/association of chefs exists, its role is vague and rather weak. Membership is not essential for the chefs and the organisation does not support their professional development because it does not unite the

chefs effectively. Communication and teamwork are unsatisfactory within the organisation and it does not cooperate with higher educational institutions. It means that there is no information exchange, neither among these institutions nor among individual chefs. The weak institutionalisation of the chefs' occupation seems to support the openness of the profession; therefore, no closure strategies (licensing or certifying) have been implemented in this case. There are no institutional barriers to occupational entry and the pursuit of a chef's career.

In Kitchener's (2002) words, these results describe an idea of professionalism as a new approach to establish institutional legitimacy, accompanied by new social categories. In this regard, the professionalisation of Estonian chefs can be described not so much as *being* a professional as *becoming* a professional in modern times. More precisely, hybrid professionalism legitimises ways of becoming professional without ever really becoming so (Noordegraaf, 2007).

Conclusions

This study shows that in the case of chefs, hybrid professionalism is preferable to the traditional type, although with some reservations. The weak institutionalisation does not support professionalisation and a sense of collegiality due to the competition's failure to create prerequisites for consolidation on the basis of a vocational group.

The emergence of new roles in the course of working as a chef in an organisation/restaurant has not been accompanied by any reliance on theoretical knowledge and academic education. However, lifelong learning in several forms and experiential training are considered crucial for professional development.

New roles have transformed the occupation and raised the status of chefs, for example, roles related to communication—performer on TV shows, public figure, etc. The managerial roles (roles of leader and entrepreneur) add prestige, too; being an owner also allows greater freedom to be innovative, which in turn improves professionalism and enhances one's reputation. Chefs are also on a quest to find a compromise between managing and their professional job (cooking); the struggle continues between these two worlds as a conflict over occupational or professional identities. Chefs have mixed occupational identities, with the ability to speak both languages that might help bridge the gap between the different domains of managers and professionals. The managerial role can create the motive to acquire academic education, but such is not the case in the role of cook-expert.

Performing and supporting both roles require some flexibility in chefs' work schedules to accommodate their university training in andragogy, management, entrepreneurship, etc. These lessons could be matched with formal and informal studies in collaborative networks (reflection, working in different kitchens, etc). Future research should focus on a larger sampling of chefs (not only outstanding ones) to determine their beliefs and opinions about their work and the need for upgrading their competences

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