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# The Feminization of Baking and Pastry Work: Dissecting Gender Roles in the Foodservice Industry

Alexis Szmodis

Johnson & Wales University - Providence, ASzmodis01@wildcats.jwu.edu

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# The Feminization of Baking and Pastry Work: Dissecting Gender Roles in the Foodservice Industry

Alexis Szmodis

Advisor: Dr. Jessica Sherwood

March 21<sup>st</sup>, 2018

## Abstract

Although the foodservice industry creates livelihood for Americans of all genders, races, age, and backgrounds, conflict arises as language, media, and the established masculine kitchen culture continue to reinforce traditional gender roles. Aside from the common difficulties in kitchen workplaces, women chefs surveyed emphasize the discrimination felt in regard to their recognition, compensation, and support. Many writers and chefs discuss how the foodservice industry claims gender no longer impacts one's success, but fail to recognize the subliminal ways gender roles impact the workplace. Research shows women remain in all areas of the food industry despite the challenges of the environment, although they commonly make sacrifices to become "one of the guys" or find alternate career paths in order to succeed. Baking and pastry work appears as one of these additional workplaces where women dominate, although the *2010 StarChefs Salary Report* states that male pastry chefs still receive 27% more pay than their female equivalents. How the baking and pastry industry has become a positive environment for many women chefs despite the historical marginalization of women who cultivate these positions has yet to be established. This thesis examines the genderization of food and the workplace by analyzing professional cooking interests, work ethics, management styles, and conflicts of work/life balance, sexual harassment, and discrimination. It also provides careful analysis of the experiences and observations from women and men currently working in various positions within the baking and pastry industry. These interviews present defined thoughts and understandings of gender held by pastry chefs and bakers as compared to the highly researched culinary workplace and restaurant cultures. Identifying reasons women may feel more comfortable within pastry work provides insight for how the industry is changing to become more inclusive and supportive for all culinary professionals.

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## Introduction

As women continue to seek recognition and equal opportunities in the workplace, journalists, scholars, and food industry professionals regularly ask why women have been excluded or overlooked by men in professional kitchens. Statistics from the *2010 StarChefs Salary Report* verify the prevalence of a gender gap in kitchens concluding women hold only 10% of executive chef positions, earning 22% less than their male equivalents (Villeneuve, 2011). However, when asking chefs to discuss this data, researchers revealed that plenty of women work throughout the foodservice industry, and most chefs no longer want to discuss how gender impacts their work as it could be dismissive of their personal ambition and work ethic. With the goal of affirming the need for change to further support and recognize women chefs, *Eater Magazine's* "28 Pie Charts That Show Female Representation in Food" provides numerical data comparing the number of women chefs given awards and acknowledgement in 2013 media with their progress made in 2017 (Kludt, 2017). While these pie charts do show a slight increase in representation, women chefs are still an obvious minority in 16 different categories meant to provide recognition to chefs and restaurateurs (Kludt, 2017). Therefore, even though women work in all areas of the foodservice industry, there appears to be a lack of women in positions most highly recognized either by the industry itself or by the media. Further studies and articles investigate the workplace environment and recognition of women chefs throughout the foodservice industry and in the media, in regards to interests and ambitions, food preferences, work ethics, management styles, work/life balance, and challenges regarding sexual harassment and discrimination. My research aims to expand this discussion by including the specific observations of pastry chefs and bakers on these topics and how individuals in the field and the structure of foodservice establishments as a whole may perpetuate or suppress gender roles.

Analyzing workplace behaviors and patterns throughout the industry through quantitative data has drawbacks as gender is commonly discussed with a binary viewpoint. Therefore, qualitative methods, such as primary accounts, are necessary to gather more conclusive feedback to determine how gender truly impacts the foodservice industry. Most scholarly articles attribute this gender division to the perpetuation of male and female domestic roles, primarily analyzing kitchen workplace cultures through such previously mentioned data or through interviews with women chefs. This research reveals an incomplete investigation, as male chefs' perspectives are not included much in the discussion on gender in the foodservice industry, despite writers' positive intentions behind highlighting women chefs' opinions. Furthermore, *StarChefs 2005 Salary Report* confirms that women make up 80 percent of bakers, 77 percent of pastry chefs, and 84% of pastry cook positions (Marcus, 2005). While women hold a majority of positions in baking and pastry, the *2010 StarChefs Salary Report* reveals they are still paid 27% less than male pastry chefs (Villeneuve, 2011). This data shows an even larger gender gap in pastry careers than the culinary industry. However, the differences in culinary and pastry positions and workplaces fails to be adequately acknowledged through research on women chefs. Ultimately, many scholars and journalists discuss how the stereotypical male-dominated kitchen culture leads to women pursuing alternate career paths; instead, I emphasize both male and female experiences in various positions within the pastry industry in order to help explain how the foodservice industry continues to perpetuate gender roles as they impact workplaces both positively and negatively.

### **Literature Review**

A majority of the research on women chefs begins by addressing the irony in the association of women with domestic cooking leading to the perceived separation of women from

professional kitchens. Chef Ann Cooper's work "A Woman's Place is in the Kitchen" (1998) uses historical analysis combined with extensive surveys of women chefs in order to share both their frustrations and achievements. Chef Educator Dr. Pat Bartholomew discusses society's inability to detach women chefs from their traditional domestic roles making women's cooking seem unimportant while men's labor in the kitchen is considered professional (Cooper, 1998). Sociologists Deborah A. Harris and Patti Giuffre, also write extensively on the devaluation of women's labor in *Taking the Heat: Women Chefs and Gender Inequality in the Professional Kitchen*, by analyzing women chefs' experiences, the history of professional cooking, and the influence of media on the success of women in kitchen workplaces. These gendered roles continue to enforce harmful ideologies impacting chefs' workplace environment, ambitions, skills, management styles, abilities balancing work and family, and the likelihood of being promoted and recognized as a successful industry professional.

### 1. Gendered Workplaces

In order to answer why women seem excluded or unrecognized in culinary positions, researchers must first analyze how male-dominated kitchens operate. Both Pastry Chef Melissa DeMayo and Chef Ann Cooper compare the hierarchy in professional kitchens to traditional military systems (Burros, 1992; Cooper, 1998). Many researchers credit French Chef Auguste Escoffier's introduction of the brigade system into professional kitchens in 1898 London for reinforcing the masculine kitchen culture we still see today (Cooper, 1998). Harris and Giuffre (2015) further explain how French high-status cuisine becomes associated with masculinity as professional chefs (all men in Escoffier's time) fear their cooking will be compared to home cooking and consequently appearing feminine. Ina Lipkowitz (2011) writes on the semantics surrounding food consumption and production throughout history in "Words to Eat By: Five



Foods and the Culinary History of the English Language.” Lipkowitz (2011) determines the language used to discuss food throughout literature, cookbooks, and the media portrays certain attitudes and beliefs, such as the sophistication of haute cuisine. Providing a brief history of *Gourmet* magazine, Lipkowitz (2011) explains how traditional ways of cooking deemed important were established for the wealthy and privileged creating the industry’s “prejudice in favor of all things French and Italian [which] is neither natural or inevitable, but instead historically determined.” Harris and Giuffre (2015) also reveal these attitudes towards classical French cooking by analyzing the rhetoric used by critics separating home cooking from the technical, scientific, and artistic skills associated with “elite chefs” or professionals. Centuries later, the association of cooking with women’s domestic roles creates a “feminization threat” that male chefs may still experience, leading to the exclusion of women in kitchens (Harris and Giuffre, 2015). Examples of other male-dominated occupations becoming female-dominated, such as elementary school teaching, actually show a decrease in pay, which explains male chefs’ concern, as jobs associated with femininity are often devalued by society (Harris and Giuffre, 2015). Food Columnist Marian Burros’ (1992) research admits that women not only have difficulty climbing up the ranks in a kitchen, but may be less willing to conform to the system created and upheld by sexist attitudes. Examples of these behaviors are specified in Harris and Giuffre’s (2010) interviews with women chefs explaining their male coworkers or supervisors’ expectations for them to go above and beyond to fit into the masculine culture. These struggles could include harassment, criticism for focusing on personal family life, or simply working longer hours to prove commitment, which men may not experience due to gender biases labeling them as “ideal workers” (Acker, 1990). Some women may use their feminine traits, such as patience or support for others, as assets for success, refusing to conform to the typical masculine

culture. Meanwhile many women discussed in *Restaurant Business*' "Girl Scouts: You'll Find Women Working all Kinds of Restaurant Jobs" (2003) felt inclined to adapt in order to be accepted as "one of the guys" as Cooper (1998) articulates. However, most of the women noted as successful within the industry occupy managerial positions, which seem more common for women to obtain as opposed to executive chef positions (Girl Scouts, 2003). Managerial roles in corporate companies have a vastly different atmosphere and obligations. Although many women worked through the kitchen to gain their authority, that distinct workplace may appeal to more women; especially those who wish to balance their domestic lives with professional work. If management and ownership positions within the food industry provide a unique environment for women to be recognized, then they need to be analyzed separately from kitchen work. Likewise, if more women feel comfortable doing pastry work, then the pastry industry should be analyzed separately from culinary work as well in order to assist in defining a more beneficial workplace for women.

## **2. Gendered Foods**

Not only are kitchen workplaces gendered, but society also correlates gender with food itself. Examining feminine and masculine food associations reveals similarities with the types of culinary work women and men are expected to perform. Brian Wansink (2003), Professor of Cornell University, conducted a study on how comfort food preferences vary according to age and gender. The results showed that women prefer snacks such as candy or chocolate, while men prefer meals as comfort food, such as pasta and meats (Wansink, 2003). In addition to gender and age affecting food preferences, Wansink (2003) concludes that social contexts and personal identification with foods also create gendered food preferences. Although this study does not demonstrate that men or women are more likely to cook professionally according to

these preferences, it does suggest society's gendering of food. Still, Harris and Giuffre (2015) make similar connections of femininity with salad and desserts and masculinity with meats, stemming from the male chef's exclusion of women from the hot cooking line. However these associations have been created, the professional industry may reinforce them, specifically through the language used to discuss food and cooking. Caitlin Hines (1999) provides further evidence while investigating the "woman as dessert" metaphor within the text *Reinventing Identities: The Gendered Self in Discourse*. Hines (1999) analyzes language and connotations that equate women with desserts, primarily as sex objects. The evolution of this metaphor impacts our perception of women as "sweet" and desserts as feminine, which may explain why more women are showing interest in the baking and pastry field. Ultimately, the association of breads or pastries with femininity and meals or meats with masculinity contributes to personal food preferences, which research shows may align with professional cooking interests.

### **3. Interest & Ambitions**

Despite the general association of women with domestic cooking throughout history, women's interest in cooking professionally has been questioned by journalists and industry professionals in order to explain why there are fewer female executive chefs. In her 1998 research, Chef Ann Cooper worries that the lack of women chefs recognized in the media would discourage future generations and decrease diversity in the industry. However, Kerri Conan's 1994 article from *Restaurant Business* uses statistics from Johnson & Wales University and the Culinary Institute of America to prove the influx of women entering culinary schools with an interest in joining the kitchen professionally. Meanwhile, DataUSA shows female involvement in culinary programs continues decades later with 2015 data revealing that 57.7% of culinary arts graduates and 82.9% of baking and pastry students are female among 5 different programs. This

data confirms that the gender divide does not stem from a lack of involvement and interest in the foodservice industry. Many authors like Cooper, Conan, Harris and Giuffre use a significant number of primary sources to support their understanding that women have plenty of ambition for cooking professionally, but also find challenges gaining recognition or promotions despite their passion, skills, and education in the culinary field. As this data reveals a greater number of women pursuing a career in baking and pastry, my research questions why women may have greater interest in pastry as an alternative workplace to culinary kitchens.

#### **4. Work Ethics**

Over the past few decades, studies of women chefs reveal similar findings as those interviewed attribute the gender divide to differences in work ethic according to gender. Harris and Guiffre (2015) explain how these differences may appear, as women are associated with cooking as a form of domestic care, while men's cooking is accepted as professional. Research shows that women chefs often take on masculine character traits, displaying anger and aggressiveness, which have been commonly displayed by male chefs in order to appear less nurturing and more professional (Harris, 2015). On the other hand, interviewees in Cooper's (1998) survey believe many women are drawn to the back of the house work due to their shyness, a specifically feminine trait, which may make it difficult to work in the stereotypically loud, temperamental, masculine environment of kitchens. Over a decade after Cooper's study, journalists Tamar Adler (2017) and Julia Moskin (2014) write about shifts in high-end kitchen cultures under the influence of women. Many of the chefs interviewed claim that gender does not influence their work, emphasizing all the hard work women chefs have done to prove their capabilities in the kitchen. However, some reviews go further to claim that women chef owners' dishes actually appear or taste more feminine, as established by the association of gender with

food. A recent experiment at New York's Astor Center, "Gender Confusion: Unraveling the Myths of Gender in the Restaurant Kitchen," proves that men and women's cooking does not inherently differ, while judges still perceived certain foods, presentations, and garnishes as feminine (Druckman, 2010). While these stereotypically gendered character traits may not apply to all men and women's work and management styles, a majority of women chefs have recognized the impact their gender has had in the workplace, with the expectation for them to constantly prove their passion and abilities in order to either fit into the male-dominated environment or create a new culture of their own.

## **5. Management Styles**

While individuals typically avoid categorizing ambition and work ethic according to gender, many articles discuss how women chefs and owners are making changes to the high end restaurant industry, which has a known history of being male-dominated. An article for *Restaurant Business*, "Girl Scouts: You'll Find Women Working all Kinds of Restaurant Jobs" (2003), commends women for using traditionally feminine characteristics in order to go further than their male competitors. The article provides examples of women chefs in management roles such as Sally Smith, CEO of Buffalo Wild Wings, and Marian Dozier, Chair of Austaco Ltd., who claim that their organization and compassion for employees stems from their motherly roles, allowing them to supervise in ways that male executives traditionally fail (Girl Scouts, 2003). Articles like Moskin's (2014) "A Change in the Kitchen" published by *The New York Times* comments on how companies providing benefits, increased pay, and job security allow more women chefs to rise into higher positions. Adler's (2017) "How Female Chefs Are Changing Restaurant Kitchen Culture" gives examples of women chefs such as Sara Kramer and Sarah Hymanson, owners of a new Los Angeles restaurant, Kismet, who manage their kitchen with

understanding and respect for their employees first and foremost. These women chefs' showcasing a strong work ethic and innovative perspectives seem to provide guidance to industry professionals as they aim to make their workplaces more comfortable and supportive of all employees. With data proving pastry's appeal to women, it could be deduced that pastry kitchens and bakeshops follow these models of compassionate, inclusive workplaces unfolding throughout the foodservice industry.

## **6. Sexual Harassment & Discrimination**

With the increasing number of media studies highlighting the challenges and successes of chefs and restaurateurs, sexual harassment and gender discrimination has become a focal point to indicate the necessity for change in foodservice workplaces. The Restaurant Opportunities Centers United Forward Together conducted surveys across 39 states in the U.S. concluding that unwanted sexual behavior and harassment was experienced by 60% of women and transgender workers and 46% of men, with inappropriate touching being a major factor ("The Glass Floor," 2014). Workers of all genders report sexual harassment from coworkers, customers, and restaurant management, revealing how these behaviors have been accepted throughout historically male-dominated kitchens ("The Glass Floor," 2014). As the industry continues to allow the sexual objectification of individuals, specifically those in tipped positions, women, and trans people remain in positions of lesser power and are less likely to report harassment due to its normalization. Harris and Giuffre's (2015) research cites sexual harassment as a form of "team building among men chefs" in which chefs are expected to tolerate sexual joking and teasing in order to fit into the culture and prove themselves as professionals. As the media draws more attention to these unprofessional behaviors, sexual misconduct allegations have been made by female foodservice employees against male celebrity chefs like Mario Batali, Ken Friedman,

Johnny Iuzzini, and John Besh (*Bon Appetit*, 2017). These examples stand out as male chefs with higher positions of power using the normalized sexual culture of kitchens to condone their wrongful treatment of women in particular. Because women are often targets for inappropriate behaviors in kitchen workplaces, I wonder how these trends carry over to female-dominated pastry kitchens where the food produced has a history of sexual connotations. Some perceive the growth of women in pastry as a result of traditional gender roles and the pressure for women to work harder in professional environments, while others may simply claim that gender no longer impacts the work of individuals and the industry as a whole.

## **7. Work/Life Balance**

In addition to the workplace discrimination, many women chefs emphasize the difficulties of balancing work and family as the main reason for choosing a career path outside of an executive chef. Chef Ann Cooper (1998) focuses her work on the sacrifices and challenges women experience in the food industry, using statistics from the National Restaurant Association (NRA) to show how women chefs surveyed balance their personal relationships and family life. In Harris and Giuffre's (2010) research, they seek ideas to create a more equal workplace, noticing that women chefs have a more difficult time with maintaining their domestic duties while working in the culinary industry. The study included in-depth interviews with 33 women, currently or previously working as professional chefs who commented on what forced them away from the industry or allowed them to succeed in managing both roles. Research concluded that the women adhered to three different strategies: delaying/foregoing motherhood for work, finding another job in the food industry to escape the kitchen environment, or modifying work or domestic roles to be more compatible (Harris, 2010). Despite integrating a diverse group of women, by focusing solely on the balance of childcare and work, Harris and Giuffre's (2010)

study fails to direct attention to women who do not consider their lack of maternal or family responsibility as a sacrifice for their career. They also acknowledge the absence of men's experiences in their approach, which if included, would assist in clarifying the gendered nature of the environment and conflict (Harris, 2010). However, while considering how women's personal expectations remain different from men's, Cooper (1998) determines all chef careers contain challenges despite one's gender, while women typically have fewer choices when it comes to work/family conflict. The cultural expectations that women should focus on having a successful career while maintaining their traditional domestic role provides women with fewer options for recognition and advancement in kitchen professions, ultimately forcing them to consider altering their career path more so than men. However, with increasing numbers of women joining the pastry industry specifically, it may provide more options for work/life balance attracting those who can not commit to the culinary environment, while still wanting to work in a professional kitchen setting.

## **8. Media Recognition**

As women chefs find ways to balance work and family and create a positive workplace unaccepting of harassment, the media plays an important role in showing others the value of such work. Another main concern of Chef Ann Cooper (1998) was how representation of women chefs would impact future generations ability to move up in the industry. Cooper (1998) demands the industry become more family friendly and make changes to better support women employees. The women interviewed in Cooper's (1998) study explained the importance of having women mentors in such a demanding occupation. Nearly twenty years later, research (Harris and Giuffre, 2015) shows some progress as there's no lack of women working in the foodservice industry; however, many argue there remains an insufficient amount of women chefs



represented in the media. Jessica Valenti's 2015 article for *The Guardian* demonstrates how women chefs support one another through word of mouth, joining organizations like Women Chef & Restaurateurs (WCR) and developing more inclusive kitchen cultures. Despite these positive industry changes, articles such as Kludt's (2017) aforementioned "28 Pie Charts..." show the disconnect between the reality of the industry and what the media shows. Harris and Giuffre (2015) give examples of how food critics and other media outlets discuss women and men chefs differently. The success of a chef or their establishment is often determined by how food critics and other media outlets discuss their careers. Food critics have an important role in legitimizing women's work and ensuring chefs' work is not devalued whether it supports the traditionally feminine or masculine styles and presentations (Harris, 2015). An article published in *Esquire* questions how women chefs are misrepresented in the media when the majority of journalists are women themselves. Journalist Sarah Zorn (2017) explains the controversy of the concept of women being pigeonholed by the media, despite the positive intentions behind providing more equal representation. This occurs as women chefs are purposely recognized for their work according to their gender, regardless of their capabilities as a chef or restaurateur. Likewise, women chefs themselves, such as Michelin Star Chef Dominique Crenn call out the media, not only for their lack of women recognition, but for categorizing awards according to gender as seen with "Best Female Chef" lists (Pershan, 2017). Meanwhile, the use of social media, with sites like Instagram, give chefs like Crenn a platform to share their work and communicate such ideas and personal observations. Language used often has gendered connotations, which send a more subliminal message about how we judge women chefs, even if they are seen in equal numbers on television, magazines, or social media. Through my research,

particularly in the media, women chefs seem to be described with stereotypical feminine traits and foods that generally align with the perception of baking and pastry work.

## **9. Discussion**

Previously mentioned sociologists, scholars, and food journalists all determined that the perceived lack of women chefs does not derive from lack of interest, work ethic, or management skill, but rather from the gendered environment and routines restricting women from advancing into positions in which chefs are most highly recognized. Because there is still a great number of women working throughout the culinary and food industry, the positions which they are most commonly found must be examined instead of focusing on the minority being recognized as successful executive chefs. Harris and Giuffre (2010) believe that positions outside of the kitchen may provide more financial security and fewer or simply more regular working hours. Meanwhile the CEO's and business owners highlighted in "Girl Scouts: You'll Find Women Working all Kinds of Restaurant Jobs" (2003) most likely left behind chef positions to receive aforementioned benefits. Meanwhile Cooper (1998) noticed the issue with women placed in "support roles" despite their capabilities as a cook or chef; this employee could be simply stuck in a sous chef position or pressured to join the pastry team instead of working the line. The women reviewed in Burros' (1992) *The New York Times* article actually choose pastry as an alternative workplace where the less masculine environment and precise, organized nature of the work allows them to excel. This knowledge can not only explain why there are few female executive chefs being recognized, but can also enhance understanding of the creation and duration of a gender gap within the pastry field itself.

## Research Methods

Given this background on women chefs entering male-dominated kitchen workplaces, my research investigates how gender roles and stereotypes continue to impact an industry that claims gender no longer matters. To further the previously mentioned qualitative research on women chefs, I interviewed 12 professionals working in various positions within the baking and pastry industry in the United States, who were given pseudonyms in the discussion (See Appendix A). Because my sample is narrowed to bakers and pastry chefs, I feel it is important to be able to compare and contrast both male and female perspectives. Similarly, I aimed to gather data from individuals with experiences working in different kitchen environments, such as bakeries, hotels, or restaurants, and with different positions, such as pastry cooks, chefs, bakers, instructors, and owners. With this data, I can better understand how workplaces differ according to the foodservice establishment, type of culinary or pastry work, and how gender may relate to the success or challenges of each individual. Many sociologists claim that in-person interviews allow the best form of communication through the ability to read and react to one another's facial expressions and body language. However, solely conducting in-person interviews would limit my sample to a specific geographic region, which would not best reflect the very globalized foodservice industry. In order to obtain a more well rounded sample, I conducted interviews in person, over the phone, and through live video chat, recording the conversation when possible and taking notes accordingly.

My primary goal for conducting interviews was to examine individuals' experiences within various baking and pastry positions and workplaces in order establish how gender roles continue to affect the foodservice industry. My research questions began by establishing the interviewees' work experience, training, and interests in the industry, then shifted to analyze how

pastry functions separately from the gendered culinary workplace and how gender impacts the perception of the two cultures (See Appendix B). While this research focuses on the baking and pastry industry, comparisons are made to culinary environments in order to reinforce the characteristics of masculine versus feminine workplaces. The dialog prompted discussion of personal situations and observations, which can be compared to gain an understanding of the industry as a whole; however, it is acknowledged that the stereotypes brought up do not apply to all situations, specifically when examining gender as a binary construct.

My research will begin by comparing pastry kitchens to the traditionally male-dominated environment of savory kitchens. Analyzing the specific workplace culture through necessary interests, skills, and management traits of baking and pastry work will establish how it has developed as a feminized industry with unique challenges and conflicts. In many ways, the baking and pastry industry acts as a female-dominated workplace providing guidance for how the industry can be more inclusive of all genders. The discussion essentially dissects how gender is perceived to no longer matter in a professional workplace despite the foodservice industries history of gender segregation.

### **Experience & Training**

This research includes the personal experiences of baking and pastry professionals with a mix of positions, employers, locations, lengths of industry experience, and gender identities, which capture a general perspective of the pastry industry. Three out of the twelve interviewees identify as men while the remaining nine are women. Length of time working in the industry ranged from only a few years to over twenty-five years among participants. About half of the interviewees had travelled for school or work opportunities; therefore, these findings show an overview of experiences from across the United States. Interviewees have an array of culinary

school training; while the majority have ties to Johnson & Wales University, others have degrees from the Culinary Institute of America, New England Culinary Institute, or other community colleges and vocational technical schools. It should be noted that all interviewees have some form of higher education in culinary school. While arguments have been made that culinary degrees and certificates are unnecessary to rise to successful chef positions, some form of higher education appear to be a common route within today's industry. All participants commented on the gender division in their various work experiences, specifically in baking and pastry programs, where data confirms that the majority of students are female.

In regards to employment history, a majority of interviewees have background in Providence, RI; however, others have worked in New York City, Boston, Chicago, and various cities across the Eastern Coast and California. The similarities in findings, despite the variety in locations, reveal how globalized the industry has become and how these personal observations may relate to bakers and pastry chefs everywhere.

In addition to location, employers, and previous training positions held by participants ranged from certified executive pastry chefs to pastry cooks, supervisors, owners, and instructors. Each position has unique responsibilities and therefore may experience different cultures between restaurants, hotels, bakeshops, cafeterias, and classrooms. While commenting on these environments, reflections on the differences between pastry and culinary were also provided; therefore, it is important to note that some participants have experience working the hot line in restaurants, doing culinary prep work, or simply observe and work alongside culinary or savory chefs and cooks.

In a majority of cases, these baking and pastry workplaces have been defined as female-dominated, accompanying the data of the gender divide in culinary schools. However

interviewees still confirm the presence of men in pastry and bake shops: a male baker, David, claims that the few men he saw in pastry were typically executive pastry chefs or owners. Others have worked in more equally divided kitchens, while culinary schools discussed showed a balance of male and female baking and pastry instructors as well. While it is difficult to show the exact division of gender and position within the industry, it is clear that majority of baking and pastry positions are held by women, despite the restaurant or culinary industries still being labeled as male-dominated.

For the purposes of this study, I use the term pastry chef loosely to include all levels bakers, pastry cooks, executive pastry chefs, and instructors. Likewise, I use culinary to describe any kind of savory cooking or preparation and culinary chef in reference to any cook or level of chef working in any type of food service establishment. However I understand the differences between these positions and prestige attached to the term “Chef,” and therefore will specify their position when necessary for analysis. Just as individuals show hesitancy to categorize individuals by gender, language was used carefully to describe those with experience and prestige in the industry as a “Chef;” however, all interviewees felt comfortable separating their perception of culinary with their work in baking and pastry.

### **Pastry Workplaces**

Other research on gender in the foodservice industry has established how the male-dominated culture continues to influence culinary and restaurant workplaces. Although none of my interviewees currently work in culinary positions, their observations over their years in the industry showed important contrasts between culinary and pastry work. While the gender breakdown in kitchens depends on the establishment, most participants saw an even mix of male and female employees in culinary kitchens. However, all participants claimed culinary kitchens

operate in a loud, chaotic, intense environment, which researchers and journalists have linked to the industry's male-dominated roots. This stereotype can be summed up by current bakery owner Kate's reference of Anthony Bourdain's book "Kitchen Confidential" when explaining her work experience in a high standard restaurant kitchen, run by a tough, loud, male chef. Pastry Chef Karen furthers this connection by relating her culinary training to military systems, in the sense that they are both strict, demanding, and follow a specific hierarchy of command. Interviewees explained how the rush of service, long hours, and physical nature of the job makes culinary work appear less organized or time-managed. Pastry Instructor Catherine comments on some other negative aspects of culinary kitchens including the normalization of swearing, drinking, smoking, and drug use. However, despite the chaotic and sometimes hot-tempered environments of culinary kitchens, the rush of service can also encourage the development of a strong work ethic and learning how to put your head down and focus on working cleanly and efficiently. The nature of cooking for service create an environment which is then associated with masculinity, as male-dominated workplaces continue to pass down this kitchen culture.

In the same way that cooking for service contributes to the typical culinary environment, the methods of preparing desserts and baked goods help create a unique atmosphere within the pastry industry. While many would not think of kitchen work as a quiet, calm, and clean job description, the majority of participants used these terms to describe a typical pastry or bake shop. The idea of pastry as more relaxed than culinary comes from the typical lack of rush of service as desserts are planned and prepared in advance and only sometimes plated a la minute by pastry chefs themselves. Executive Pastry Chef Shannon explains how culinary cooks and other hotel employees would come to the pastry shop in order to socialize and relax when they had time before service begins.

Despite this feedback making pastry seem more laid-back, participants emphasized that baking is intense and stressful in different ways. Pastry chefs included the importance of methodology and to-do lists, because breads and desserts need to be prepared ahead of time and often completed in various stages. With more steps to the baking process, time management and working slow and steady were indicated as essential by interviewees. While culinary chefs may be able to fix product as it is cooked, pastry chefs interviewed commented on the scientific nature of baking leaving less room for error. This contributes to the stress of achieving both scientific and visual perfection among baking and pastry professionals, who appear to have the tendency to work in a more organized, quiet, and focused environment than culinary chefs.

Interviewees also commented on the differences in supervision between pastry and culinary. While culinary kitchens typically have a hierarchy of chef positions and stations as Escoffier designed, most pastry shops are managed by just one pastry chef or supervisor. While the division of labor entirely depends on the size of the establishment, Julia, a pastry chef instructor with background in restaurant work, explains how she had to do all of the jobs herself, from prep work to ordering ingredients, menu design, and actually plating for service. Another baking instructor, Mary, added that pastry chefs are often the first ones working and the last ones to leave. Other challenges of pastry work come from a lack of space, tools, and employees to get the work done, especially in restaurants where dessert sales do not compare to the value of the dinner menu. In addition, Hotel Pastry Chef Shannon, claims pastry chefs could be a “dying breed” as employers cut budgets and positions for executive pastry chefs. The challenge of baking and pastry product not being valued as much as culinary food may contribute to the added pressure for perfection and professionalism in baking and pastry kitchens. Interviewees concluded that bakers require specific skills in order to feel comfortable in the methodical



workplace of bake shops and pastry kitchens, which are overlooked by the loud, rushed service of culinary professionals. These clear differences in description of environment become more interesting when considering that majority of interviewees felt that the pastry industry is female-dominated, while culinary kitchens are still influenced by male-dominated systems.

### **Pastry Chefs & Bakers**

After illustrating the general culture of pastry workplaces, I asked participants to describe common character or personality traits of pastry chefs and bakers, which revealed a strong link between the culture of the workplace and an individual's work ethic or mind set. This conversation revealed patterns for how gender identity plays a role in the workplace as well. Pastry chefs were commonly described as patient, relaxed, and personable with a high attention to detail. Karen labels these traits as the “baker personality,” which interviewees all commented on, to establish a cohesive view of the scientific yet artistic mindset and standards for pastry work. Kate states that it takes certain types of people to be patient enough to develop skills and senses needed to produce baked goods. The patience needed to deal with pastry products translated into the likelihood that one would be patient with people as well. Catherine further explains that the time in both preparing the product and developing such skills makes pastry chefs and bakers respect, nurture, and care for their product much more.

Again, these descriptions were opposite from the generalizations of culinary chefs being less concerned about patience or precision and more likely to be temperamental or *laissez faire*. Although some participants showed interest in both culinary and pastry at one point in their career, Pastry Chef Karen, determined it to be rare for an individual to have the particular mindset or ambition to succeed in both lines of work. Management styles also seemed to differ between culinary and pastry chefs. While these styles are personal to the individual and their

staff, interviewees found connections between the type of work and ways of supervising. Many interviewees are instructors and claimed to teach how they learn best, which appears to be a very hands-on style of managing for most pastry chefs. This makes sense considering how scientific methods need to be taught to employees in order to help them develop senses and knowledge necessary for efficient pastry production. While this style of teaching seems important to culinarians as well, interviewees had more experiences with culinary chefs using a *laissez faire* and hands-off approach to directing students and employees. This contributes to the sometime strict, less personable perception of culinary chefs and separation of positions in savory kitchens compared to the tight-knit, supportive atmosphere of pastry shops. These personality differences lead to individuals pursuing specific lines of culinary or pastry work, reinforcing the unique workplace culture of each area. Although culinary and pastry work is often discussed together, interviewees emphasize the differences in the work, which can lead to conflicts of communication and challenges for individuals to fit into the separated work cultures.

### **Interests & Ambitions**

With the differences in workplaces and positions comes an array of interests drawing participants to the baking and pastry field. Through conversations with interviewees I looked for areas where gender may be associated with specific interest in a certain type of work, whether it be the food itself, skill set needed for the production, or workplace environment. While it is not unheard of for women to be pressured or forced into pastry work as an alternative to culinary, all my interviewees had personal ambitions to work in baking and pastry for numerous reasons. Some specifically expressed passion for plated desserts, chocolate or showpiece work, cake decorating, breads, or high-end pastry buffets. Despite the many types of pastry work specified, the majority of interviewees claimed the artistic, creative details of the work inspired them to

pursue baking and pastry as a profession. Two women admitted their sweet tooth first sparked their interest in baking, supporting the idea that personal food preferences may impact professional passions, especially knowing that these individuals had degrees and opportunities in culinary arts as well. While savory foods seem to have a relation to sustenance and nutrition, pastry is often associated with comfort and pleasure. In the same way that culinary foods such as meat have been gendered, breads have associations with masculinity, as Baking Instructor Mary states very matter of factly: “bakers are mainly men, pastry chefs are women.” Meanwhile these ideas did not translate into the interests and ambitions of my interviewees, as both women and men were likely to show passion for both artisan breads and other areas such as chocolates. It appears to be a common industry concept to separate areas of interest by gender, despite individuals’ assessment that their gender should not impact their personal work or environment.

When asked to give potential reasons for the increase of women seeking degrees and careers in baking and pastry, many commented on the visual and artistic appeal attracting more women. Some further defined the work of pastry chefs as delicate and associated with beauty or refinement. Others saw baking as a method of scientific innovation in developing flavors, textures, and improving quality of product. Meanwhile, comments were also made on the physical nature of kitchen jobs, as interviewees enjoy working with their hands, being on their feet, and developing tangible products. Journalists typically comment on the physical, laborious nature of kitchen work when discussing the exclusion of women from foodservice professions; however, the female-dominated pastry industry appears just as labor intensive. Despite these associations, they revealed no clear separation in interests according to the gender of the interviewee. When discussing her interest in the beauty of pastry, Pastry Cook Megan states: “I feel like women are more detail oriented people, not that savory production can’t be the same

way.” Both men and women were attracted to the creative, scientific, and physical labor of baking and pastry work, and no one conclusively stated any pressure to pursue pastry as an alternative workplace. However, there appeared to be clear associations of femininity or masculinity with the professional interests of the bakers and pastry chefs.

Interviewees also provided detailed descriptions of mentors who ranged across gender, profession, and relationship. Author Chef Ann Cooper (1998) claims women chefs have an important role as models for other women wishing to enter the industry. However, when describing mentors, gender rarely played a role in interviewees’ descriptions as research suggested. Pastry Instructor Sarah gives examples of male family members, instructors, and supervisors who have given support in different ways. Meanwhile, she does acknowledge the lack of women in her list, confirming it is not due to a lack of strong women working in the industry as well. Pastry Cook Megan discusses her previous female pastry supervisor as a friend and inspiring manager. Many interviewees valued managers with experience and skill who were critical yet supportive, making the workplace more comfortable. Teachers who encouraged participants to pursue specific interests or were very approachable with questions were also cited as great mentors. Whether mentored by a family member, pastry professional, or teacher, participants were able to value certain personable, empowering, and accomplished mentors regardless of despite the gender they identify with. Representation can be an important tool to ensure younger generations can identify with certain roles and positions; however, there does not seem to be an issue with pastry professionals being supported and inspired by both men and women throughout their career.

## **Masculinity in the Workplace**

Throughout the interview process, it became clear how masculine traits were strongly associated with culinary, though they are shown more subtly throughout the pastry industry as well. With the foodservice industries' necessity for physically capable workers with a strong work ethic and flexibility of hours, Acker's theory of "ideal workers" shows how masculinity has been associated with professional cooking. However, these traits are just as important for bakers and pastry chefs. In fact, some of the more experienced interviewees explain how the baking and pastry industry has shifted over the past two decades, including how professional baking was mostly male-dominated. Karen gives examples of being the only women in professional kitchens and observed how previous generations of bakers were typically male and focused heavily on the production aspect of baking. Even those with only a few years of industry experience saw the perception of baking change from a basic service job to a more educated, skillful, artistic career. Bakery Owner Kate provides insight to the world of production bread baking, which focuses more on repetition and physical labor to produce high quantities of product. She compared her smaller scale bakery to factory-like facilities, which are more likely to be staffed by men, who may be uneducated or immigrants to the United States, reinforcing the idea of physical nature of baking as a masculine job. While cooks had to establish their profession as masculine in order to separate their work from domestic cooking, pastry chefs may do the same to separate themselves from home bakers. Harris and Giuffre (2015) use the term "precarious masculinity" to describe the emphasis of masculine behaviors in workplaces where men must complete "female-coded tasks." Recent Johnson & Wales University Alumni Nathan claims the other male pastry students may take more of an interest in bread production as a scientific, labor intensive, and therefore masculine skill. Male pastry chefs and students may

also feel the need to develop a better work ethic in order to stand out and prove themselves within a female-dominated class. Because of the physical labor and less refined visual appeal, the artisan bread movement may act as a more masculine environment within the larger feminine roles of baking and pastry work.

### **Femininity in the Workplace**

Pastry has been established as a feminine profession due to the association of sweets with femininity, baking with domestic roles, and the pastry industry developing as an artistic, educated career choice. Pastry Chef Julia compares one's interest in certain skills such as the delicacy of piping and making gum-paste flowers associated with femininity contrasted with the masculinity of breaking down animal products and showing off knife skills. As more women enter pastry with an eye for artistic detail, Julia assesses "maybe men just look at it as a foo-foo career and they don't see any manliness to pastry." Catherine related her dedication in providing happiness to others through baking as an example of her maternal instinct. This association of baking with nurturing refers back to women's domestic roles. One baker, David, also associated the increase in women becoming pastry chefs as an extension of their interest in domestic baking; however, the same comparison has been made for women becoming culinary chefs as well. In Catherine's case, her motherhood and domestic duties did spark her interest in baking as a profession, but the remaining women interviewees did not make this connection. In fact, David and James both male, added that seeing their mothers and women members of the family cooking inspired them to pursue a career in food service. Food's long history associated with domestic roles continues to impact society's perception of baking and pastry as feminine, even though culinary chefs have been able to separate themselves from amateur cooking as a women's

job. With more women entering the pastry industry with specific interests in the feminine nature of the work, pastry is at risk of being devalued.

### **Work Ethics**

Throughout the interviews, the subject of one's work ethic acted as a basis for interviewees to emphasize the importance of certain traits and values in the workplace regardless of the stereotypical gender roles attached to them. Most interviewees did not want to ascribe gender to certain, possibly stereotypical work ethics, knowing that work ethic can vary greatly from individual to individual based on personality traits and motivations. However, when prompted for examples, it was observed that women chefs were generally viewed as more open-minded, forgiving, precise, and organized. These traits strongly correspond to the description of pastry chefs in general being patient, detail oriented, and organized, although this is a common description of women chefs in the culinary field as well. Whether or not a majority of pastry chefs and other women chefs actually act according to these traits, the similarities reveal the association of feminine traits with pastry work. Interviewees determined that these traits of patience and creativity attract more women to the artistic "beauty" and delicate work of pastry. This association of gender identity with pastry allows women to feel more comfortable in a pastry environment. Chef Instructor Sarah states that working with all women can be a form of camaraderie, while Julia and Morgan also comment on the empowering nature of seeing other women succeed in pastry. Negative situations can also occur with having female-dominated workplaces in which interviewees have seen plenty of gossip, drama, and competition; however, it was established that this can occur with any mix of gender in the workplace. After determining that the male-dominated culinary field posed challenges for women defying their workplace norms, I wonder how these positive, yet feminine environments create issues for men

to join in on pastry work. Male Baker David gives interesting feedback, stating that while he's able to be friends with his all-female co-workers, he has noticed differences in the ways individuals work together and interact among groups of different genders. David provides a specific example of previous male bakers having left the bakeshop because they did not fit into the female-dominated culture. However, this could also be due to male bakers' resistance to taking direction from female supervisors and coworkers. Because of the feminized workplace, men joining pastry careers may need to show strong work ethic in order to prove they fit into the culture, similar to how women have had to do this in all kinds of workplaces, specifically those physical in nature. However, in the end, as long as individuals are willing to learn and work hard, interviewees maintain that, in general, gender does not impact one's success or comfort in pastry kitchens.

### **Management Styles**

Pastry chefs, whether supervisors or instructors, need to determine a management style that not only works best for their personality, but also motivates and inspires their team or students. Interviewees believed that women chefs may have certain styles of managing, whether being more strict, hands-on, or caring and sensitive to employees. Pastry Chef Instructor Sarah found that some older women chef instructors she had were more strict, feeling the need to put up a front and gain respect. Pastry Chef Shannon confirms she herself always aims never to show signs of weakness. Baking Instructor Mary also struggles with her style of management, as she can be very supportive and sensitive to students' needs, but also must assert herself, not only towards students but specifically while working with other male culinary chef instructors. Catherine also confirms Harris and Giuffre's conclusion that women chefs and managers are typically labeled a "bitch," which could be more of an issue for pastry chefs who must assert



themselves against culinary as well. This strictness and drive for professional perfection by women chefs may make them likely to micromanage. While micromanaging usually has a negative connotation, having a hands-on management style is preferred for pastry chefs who need to demonstrate the precise skills of their work.

A strict, unapproachable management style did not seem appropriate for Pastry Chefs interviewed who usually work in close quarters with employees, completing similar jobs, and emphasize the importance of teamwork. Many interviewees believe both pastry chefs and women in general are more thoughtful and forgiving of mistakes, taking on a nurturing role towards employees or students. It is unclear how much male pastry chefs may exhibit these traits and whether gender or the nature of the work contributes to these behaviors. In either case, women may experience challenges appearing too weak or unprofessional by being too close and emotionally invested in employees. This stems from the association of caring and nurturing with motherhood and femininity, ultimately being viewed as unprofessional, especially in an industry which values one's drive in the workplace over family and personal life.

### **Work/Life Balance**

With the prevalent, ongoing argument that foodservice industries need to provide better work/life balance for employees, only a few interviewees commented on these challenges. It has been established that women typically have fewer options for balancing domestic roles with professional work, making many believe the lack of benefits and long hours push women out of the kitchen and away from culinary chef positions. As the pastry industry employs so many women and mothers, the positions of baking and pastry could act as an alternate workplace where individuals have more control balancing work and family. As a mother, Pastry Chef Shannon emphasizes the importance of family when making decisions about her career, and sees

pastry as a workplace where she could best balance her professional and personal goals, specifically with the ability to make her own schedule as a manager. Pastry could be an easier option for those with more personal responsibilities to succeed because it typically has less of a hierarchy to climb to managing and supervising positions where one can make their own schedule. Similarly, with the production of pastries being exceptionally structured and time-managed, staff may have more flexibility with hours. When closer relationships develop between pastry chefs and their team, it may give pastry cooks and bakers more control over their schedule and less conflict if family emergencies would arise. Male Pastry Cook James confirms he has stayed in his position for over a decade due to the daily, consistent hours of the pastry shop allowing better work and family balance. Therefore the differences in workplace contribute to the perception of baking and pastry as a more flexible opportunity for both men and women seeking a career being in the kitchen without the stress of cooking for service in a more commanding culinary environment. Bakery Owner Kate shows another example of a woman in an alternate position where she finds herself doing more of the office work and managerial duties than her husband, who spends more time managing and contributing to production in the bakery. Whether or not women cite domestic responsibilities as a main factor in their decisions, the patterns of those found in food related positions outside the kitchen might be correlated to gender roles.

Pastry Chef Instructor Sarah confirms that society still puts more pressure on women to focus on their domestic roles as a priority, specifically when it comes to childcare. While she and her husband with a similar position balance these responsibilities, she recognized the societal pressure stemming from her role as a mother conflicting with her professional status. Pastry instructor positions often provide more benefits, consistency in schedule, and time-off during

holidays, giving women more opportunities to balance work and family obligations. However, there does not appear to be an unequal divide of gender among chef instructors as there are more women in other areas of pastry work. Sarah confirms that while her teaching position makes it easier, she had always had the ambition to teach, and leaving the industry did not act as a sacrifice for her to balance family. Overall pastry chefs still face similar challenges balancing work and family, but the variety of baking and pastry positions provide more choices than culinary positions with the higher pressures of cooking for service. The foodservice industry supplying more support for employees, specifically regarding benefits and maternity and paternity leave, can lessen the pressure for men and women to alter their career paths whether in culinary or pastry positions.

### **Sexual Harassment & Discrimination**

Many discussions have been had on how the male-dominated culture of kitchens creates more gender discrimination and cases of sexual harassment. Despite the media's focus on male-dominated culinary environments, the gender divide in the workplace may impact baking and pastry professionals differently. Celebrity Pastry Chef Johnny Iuzzini's acknowledgement of his inappropriate behaviors shows how male pastry chefs can certainly use their power to create uncomfortable, demeaning cultures for women in pastry kitchens. While a majority of my interviewees did not find this to be a major occurrence in their workplace, more subtle examples of discrimination still arise when analyzing how gender subliminally impacts one's decisions and actions in the workplace.

In cases where pastry chefs interviewed did not comment on specific examples of sexual assault or discrimination, harassment definitely appears in other forms. Pastry Instructor Sarah gives examples of being blamed for others mistakes and being singled out as a pastry chef, which

is normalized through the stressful environment of service jobs. Meanwhile, Pastry Instructor Julia gives other examples where pastry chefs put up with poor treatment, specifically through low rates of pay and benefits. While chefs' likelihood of receiving fair income and benefits may be slowly increasing, the Bureau of Labor Statistics cites restaurant workers as seven out of the ten lowest paid occupations, with women and tipped workers experiencing even more economic insecurity ("The Glass Floor," 2014). In an industry that condones the lack of support in payment and benefits for employees, expecting all chefs to deal with a certain amount of harassment and discrimination; the normalization of sexual harassment makes sense, despite the clear distressing and immoral implications. Julia provides imagery of the imperfect, tiny, high stress endurance of restaurant kitchens leading individuals to dismiss uncomfortable encounters, as "these are the spaces we have to work in." As pastry chefs and women chefs in general lack power and prestige in the industry, they may tolerate such behaviors even more in order to prove themselves as professionals with strong work ethics.

In workplaces with such a stark gender divide, it proves more difficult for those of the opposite gender to not only be hired, but also to fit in. As Kate reached out to bakeries in New York City for job opportunities, one employee steered her away, explaining how she would not fit into the masculine, immigrant culture of the production. While Kate went on to find other female-owned bread bakeries and eventually establish her own, her story of rejection by male-dominated production bakery was not necessarily a negative. Chef Instructor Sarah claims to have witnessed this "crude kitchen culture" but was never negatively impacted by it. However, she also acknowledges her positions in hotels, which typically have HR departments, which would put an end to more excessive matters of harassment and discrimination. My conversation with another Chef Instructor, Julia, reveals how her experience in high-end restaurants saw some

of this “crudeness” as a sign of camaraderie whereas other industries or individuals might see it as unprofessional. Many restaurant employees may experience apprehension and discomfort from the pressure from society and the media to change their workplace behaviors and habits. Ultimately kitchen workplaces must adapt to get rid of the behaviors, which lead to harassment and sexual assault without sacrificing the positive sense of accomplishment and camaraderie in working in a challenging environment.

### **Media Recognition**

The language used to discuss food and chefs throughout various forms of media could contribute to a false perception of the pastry workplace contributing to the devaluation of women’s labor. While interviewees felt pastry does get enough recognition in the media, it also creates an unrealistic image of pastry work due to the “glamorized” visuals of products and fake work environment shown on screen. Shows on the Food Network typically show over-the-top and trendy desserts, which pastry chefs confirm have positives and negatives. Pastry is getting more recognized for its advanced artistry and skill by the general public: due to the Food Network exposure, Sarah claims “it has made it an acceptable profession for everybody.” However, television shows and social media posts fail to show the amount of physical work and time spent learning and executing such products. Nevertheless, many interviewees commented on the Food Network’s impact in culinary school enrollment, specifically drawing more women into the pastry field. Chef Instructor Julia remembers being inspired by Gail Gand’s show on the Food Network before enrolling in culinary school herself. Furthermore, interviewees did not see a lack of recognition for women chefs in the media, but they were more likely to be discussed using certain language and categorized by feminine character traits. As Pastry Cook Morgan describes the general perception of women as inferior workers, she hypothesizes that “we are

seeing less and less of that, especially as pastry becomes more popular.” While recognition is certainly positive for women, it could also be damaging, as women chefs may be limited to certain types of work such as pastry or pressured to follow stereotypical models of femininity, which may not be comfortable for all individuals.

## **Conclusion**

Through my research on the foodservice industry and discussions with individuals working within baking and pastry positions, gender appears to play a subliminal yet influential role in the workplace. As gender is recognized as a more complex concept, it is obvious that not everyone behaves according to traditional gender roles, but these stereotypes continue to appear through interviewees’ interests, work ethic, management styles, and individual conflicts.

Overall, I found no distinct difference in the areas of interest, ambitions, work ethics, management styles or even personalities of the bakers and pastry chefs interviewed according to gender. However, when asked to discuss gender, interviewees seemed compelled to make generalized observations and categorize others according to masculine or feminine traits.

Consider my interviewees’ interest in bread baking for example: bread production is distinct from other pastry work, in which interviewees believed more men are drawn to the masculinity of the field. However, both men and women interviewed showed interest in a mix of the labor intensive, scientific nature of bread baking and the artistic, refined view of pastry making. These findings show the importance of language used by both individuals and the media, which uphold stereotypes and prejudices despite the common idea that gender has an irrelevant position in the workplace.

Previous researchers focused on the culinary and restaurant industry showed concern with how women’s professional cooking is associated with pleasure and comfort through

domestic roles, which may keep them from achieving the same amount of success as male chefs. In some ways, the pastry industry becomes an alternative workplace in which women can complete kitchen work in an environment less structured by the traditional male-dominated hierarchy. Although not unheard of, sexual harassment may be experienced less often by pastry chefs, particularly ones in separate environments from the high stress atmosphere of culinary service. Analyzing these different workplaces and positions is imperative to understanding how some individuals rise into positions of power and ensure equal treatment for employees in lower positions. Despite the feminine work of pastry inspiring and helping women find their place in kitchen environments it is not exactly an equivalent position to the highly recognized, executive culinary chef position. All male and female interviewees had specific interest in pursuing baking and pastry work for its unique skills and environment and not as a secondary option to culinary work. Unlike office and management jobs for food service companies, pastry chefs and bakers also face the challenges that come with kitchen work such as work/life balance, different forms of harassment, and a possible lack of fair income and benefits, depending on their position or employer. However, the pastry industry in general provides more options for women to advance into such positions where they can create their own schedules, balance work and family, and hire and manage their own team, faster than they might in culinary.

Some may even argue that the pastry industry still reinforces the traditional male-dominated culture despite the increase of women pastry chefs and bakers. With data showing that male pastry chefs are paid more and more likely to hold higher positions in baking and pastry, women still may not have as much control as men in the pastry industry (Villeneuve, 2011). Christine Williams (2013) introduces the term “glass escalator” to describe how men are more likely to rise to successful positions in women-dominated professions, such as nursing,

teaching, or social work. Pastry Chef Shannon's and Baking Instructor Mary's experiences not being taken seriously as women in leadership positions show the possibility that men have advantages due to their perception as "ideal workers" in the pastry industry as it becomes a feminine viewed profession (Acker, 1990).

As the pastry chef and baker participants discussed their personal ambitions, work ethics, and observations of the industry, I found the challenges faced by pastry chefs often align or overlap with the experiences of women chefs. While this could stem from the female perspective dominating pastry work, interviewees focused on the nature of pastry production and perception of dessert by society as a whole to comment on such challenges. Just as women's work is often devalued, pastry has a history of being unrecognized and undermined by culinary, even when it is male-dominated. In fact, *The New York Times* posts an article on the lesser prestige of pastry chef positions, citing examples of establishments paying pastry chefs less, hiring less experienced employees, using line cooks to fill pastry positions, or even outsourcing desserts in order to decrease cost of pastry departments (Scheiber, 2016). Interviewees in my research pointed out that customers and food critics do not give as much attention to desserts as savory foods. Mary, a high school baking instructor, saw culinary students act as though they had more knowledge, skill, and authority than students in the baking program. She speculated that the lack of respect for pastry chefs and their work comes from desserts' nature of being paired with savory food. Morgan also gives an example of dessert menus being an afterthought in food journalism after reading articles announcing the opening of her employers' restaurant. While searching for announcements or reviews of the dessert menu she designed, Morgan found only praise for the savory dishes and bar options, which happen to be executed by the male culinary chefs of the establishment. Such conflict between culinary and pastry chefs may arise



because of the stark differences in their production, environments, personalities, and recognition by the media and public. Executive Pastry Chef Shannon explains how male executive chefs at the hotel often discuss the pastry menu and production schedule as if they have control over her and her pastry team. However, Shannon also suggests that her authority over the pastry shop may be overlooked as she is labeled as an inferior manager due to her gender. Baking Instructor Mary faces similar prejudices due to both her position in baking and identity as a women, when her students question her title of a “Chef.” While students had no problems crediting previous male pastry chef instructors and female culinary instructors for their expertise, the combination of femininity and baking skills devalued Mary’s position according to students. Mary also finds it difficult to work together with the male culinary chefs at the high school, who fail to listen and value her ideas even though she has expertise of more industry experience. Again and again, the experiences of interviewees showed overlap between the power and prestige of culinary over pastry and male chefs over female chefs. Chef Instructor Sarah thinks back to a previous position as a pastry chef, being held responsible for her pastry team and product, yet still making \$2 less an hour than the male line cooks. Whether these inequalities occurred due to the gender of the individual or simply the position as a pastry chef, these examples expose how certain types of labor are devalued while others gain praise and superiority.

These disregarded forms of inequality should be considered in order to determine how much gender does impact one’s success and recognition. My research is narrowed to the United States, but the gender breakdown of those in baking and pastry positions across the world should be examined as the industry becomes more connected on a global level. Additionally, instead of singling out women as an underrepresented or minority group, gender should be discussed as a complex system of roles and norms impacting all individuals. This would allow for other topics

such as race, masculinity, and sexuality to be included in the discussion on gender. Despite the gendered stereotypes still pervading the language and systems of the industry, interviewees emphasized the idea of inclusivity in the pastry workplaces, as gender, race, sexuality should not impact the success of people in any position. Many interviewees reflected on their own idea of gender and the workplace, hoping they did not treat students and employees of theirs differently according to such binary gender stereotypes. Pastry Chef Shannon even admits to her preference of hiring female externs, and realizing the partiality of such thoughts, decides that although fewer males apply for pastry positions, they should be considered just as equally as all the females working in the pastry shop. While participants ultimately valued the work ethic and personality traits of coworkers and employees, it was determined that people are socialized to adopt certain interests, work ethics, and management styles according to their gender roles, which creates the divide seen in the pastry industry.

Although single acts or ideas cannot address the larger imbalances of power in the pastry industry, interviewees hypothesized various ways in which the industry is already improving. For one, as food service employees receive better pay and benefits, they are shown that their work is valued and worthy enough not to have to tolerate any forms of harassment. Moreover, as society accepts the complexity of gender, and individuals are less likely to behave according to such binary roles, chefs can feel free to work and manage according to their personal preferences and receive praise as such. David, a baker, has hopes for pastry being sufficiently recognized by media and consumers: “People are recognizing that it takes a certain skill to do pastry, not everyone can do it, not everyone is good at it.” Conclusively, these discussions with bakers and pastry chefs did provide insight to how kitchens can be more inclusive by valuing both women’s work and the scientific and artistic skills of pastry professionals. The pastry industry has shown

how all kinds of kitchen work create high stress environments in which people of any gender can certainly thrive. With women chefs speaking out about such mistreatment and pastry jobs providing more recognition for women, the industry is changing to demand respect for all employees without diminishing the value of women's work. As the foodservice industry aspires to prove that gender no longer impacts one's work, success, or recognition, professionals must still recognize the ways in which gender roles impact the interests, thoughts, and behaviors of individuals and workplace culture as a whole.

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## Appendix A

### Participant Information

Pseudonym	Gender	Current Position	Current Location	Training
Kate	Female	Bakery Owner	Providence, RI	Culinary Institute of America
Catherine	Female	Baking Instructor	Bristol, RI	Johnson & Wales University
James	Male	Pastry Cook	Providence, RI	Johnson & Wales University
Mary	Female	Baking Instructor	Bethlehem, PA	New England Culinary Institute
Sarah	Female	Pastry Chef Instructor	Providence, RI	Johnson & Wales University
Morgan	Female	Pastry Cook	Williamsburg, VA	Culinary Institute of America
Nathan	Male	Baking Instructor	Dublin, CA	Johnson & Wales University
Shannon	Female	Pastry Chef	Skytop, PA	Culinary Institute of America
Julia	Female	Pastry Chef Instructor	Providence, RI	Johnson & Wales University
David	Male	Baker	Connecticut	Johnson & Wales University
Megan	Female	Pastry Cook	New York City, NY	Culinary Institute of America
Karen	Female	Pastry Chef	Providence, RI	Johnson & Wales University

## Appendix B

### Interview Questions

1. Could you describe any culinary schooling or training that you received?
  - a. What lead you to attend culinary school or training?
2. Can you give a brief overview of your previous work experience?
3. What interested or inspired you to pursue pastry as a profession?
4. Do you have an area of expertise or specific interest within the field?
5. Could you tell me about any mentors you have had at any point in your career?
6. Have you ever participated in any competitions or received any awards?
  - a. Would you be interested in competing in the future?
7. Could you describe a pastry work environment as it may differ from culinary?
8. What skills or character traits might pastry chefs need that culinary chefs may not?
9. Do you think pastry chefs or bakers get enough media representation?
  - a. How might this image differ from your personal work experience?
10. How has the general perception of pastry arts changed over the course of your career?
11. Have you noticed a gender divide within your experience in the industry?
  - a. How did it affect the workplace culture?
12. Do you think women chefs have a different work style or ethic from men?
  - a. Could you describe any of these qualities using an example?
13. What was the gender breakdown of your schooling or training?
14. Have you had more male or female supervisors and instructors?
  - a. Were there any ways their management styles differed?
15. Do you think gender ever has a role in the hiring or promotional process in the industry?



16. Could you describe any challenges in the workplace that may stem from your gender identity?
17. Have you ever experienced any discrimination or harassment specific to your gender identity in a pastry workplace?
18. Why do you think there are more women in the pastry industry compared to men?
  - a. In general, do you think this creates a more positive or negative work environment?
19. What do you think about how women chefs are portrayed in the media and news?
  - a. How does this differ from your experience in the industry?
20. In what ways do you think the industry could improve on being more gender inclusive?