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# Preface

This thesis marks the end of my studies at the University of Aalborg as a master student at Culture, Communication & Globalisation within my specialization Marked & Consumption.

In my thesis, I have been able to combine my interest for the service trade, restaurants, and food with my professional interest in communication, marketing and the relationship between consumers’ expectations and the suppliers’ product.

Gratitude goes out in regards to DRC and HORESTA for supplying their knowledge on the trade in general and for participating in interviews. Likewise, Restaurationen owned by Bo & Lisbet Jakobsen and Anonymous Restaurant and the owner, thank you for letting me observe, interview and for providing me with an invaluable insight to the daily life of a restaurant. Thanks to the respondents Rene, Henrik, Per and Pia, who have participated in interviews and given me knowledge of their interpretation of the subjects.

And lastly a thank you to my supervisor Karina Madsen Smed, who I have had great discussion with, received crucial feedback from and who has supplied me with answers to the many questions, that occur during the process of writing a thesis.

Emma Bernt Mogensen

# Introduction

The last years, there has been a rise in focus on food, cooking and restaurants in the Nordic countries. Contributing factors to this may be Noma winning the best restaurant in the world for the third time[[1]](#footnote-1), Rene Redzepi winning Bocuse D’or in 2011 or the increase in TV shows with cooking as the main theme, such as those by Gordon Ramsey or the Danish show AnneMad.

However, food and how it is prepared has always been a favourite topic. A simple example of this can be a friend asking which restaurants are good in Aalborg. Depending on the person being asked, the answer will vary – but one thing is for sure: They have an opinion on the matter. At the same time, the financial crisis has become a central part of the business with bankruptcies higher than normal, although the trade is always represented in the top 3 of the bankruptcies statistics in Denmark.

The trade is in these years, as any other industry, inflicted by the global financial crisis. Even though there has always been many change of ownerships or even bankruptcies, it is particularly high these years. Statistics from Experian shows that the restaurant trade in 2008 had a percentage of bankruptcies on 1,20, compared to 2,06 % in 2011. If you compare it to the percentage of bankruptcies within all trades in Denmark, which is 0,97%, the restaurant trade lies fairly high in the statistics according to Experian[[2]](#footnote-2).

Food itself has increasingly become an experience in some restaurants, not only stimulating the need for good food but also giving the guest an experience. Examples of these experiences can be dining in the dark at Dark Waiter in Copenhagen, where customers eat in total darkness or a French bistro who only serves French food and wine, supplying the guest with a little piece of France for an evening. The common denominator for the two examples is, that they both offer something more than just food. It is interesting that consumers are willing to pay more for food, when they at the same time receive something more.

If a gourmet restaurant is successful in giving the guest a pleasing experience, the customer may want to return in spite of high prices. However, there is a difference between an experience that is ‘trendy’ or modern, and the experience that translates into a timeless design, that appeals to a target group over a long period of time.

In this thesis I am searching to define the gourmet restaurants and mechanisms that offer or contribute to a positive experience, which creates returing customers and eventually long-term success – in other terms a ‘classic’ within the trade.

In spite of the close contact with the customers in their business, which gives the restaurateurs a possibility for instant feedback, no theory on how to create a successful restaurant has been made. Nor have there been identified what constitutes a successful experience within the trade, in other words what elements constitute the long-term success and how they are applied by restauranteurs and consumed by the guest.

My inspiration for this thesis comes from the fact that I find it problematic, that a trade as big as restaurants lack insight into what constitutes long-term success that will keep appealing to generations of the target group. My aim is therefore to identify what discourses describe the successful restaurant, how restauranteurs employ these discourses and how the consumers perceive them. By doing so, I am aiming to create insight to the process it is to eat at a restaurant and how the experience is reflected upon by the consumer according to their expectations and how this corresponds with the restaurants and what they supply in terms of experience.

# Problem Field

In my thesis, it is my aim to research what experience is given at gourmet restaurants and how the customers according to their expectations perceive the experience. If done successfully, the restaurant can potentially provide a successful experience and create a returning customer, which might eventually leads to success for the gourmet restaurant on the long term. I am in this thesis not researching economic contributors to a successful gourmet restaurant, such as salary, rent, cost, profit ect. I am instead assuming that these factors are in order, as it would otherwise not be able to keep a restaurant open for several years.

The central theme here is instead the experience given and the experience received. Another factor that can influence the reputation and success of the gourmet restaurants, I am researching is marketing and branding. However, if the restaurant did not deliver a successful experience to the customer, there would not be any cause for branding or marketing the product. Based on this, I believe it essential to identify the process of creating a successful experience in a gourmet restaurant, before being able to research branding or marketing related aspects of the problem although I am aware, that they influence the perception of the restaurants in question. Therefore I have also not included other communicative materials, such as the webpage, fan page on Facebook or restaurant reviews in this thesis, as I find it central to identify the experience at hand before analysing on the external communication. Instead I will focus on the local communication with the customer in the restaurant and what the restauranteurs’ wish to deliver to the guests. I will also focus on what the guest experiences and how this corresponds with their expectations of the gourmet restaurants in question.

As mentioned above, my main focus is on successful gourmet restaurants. In this thesis, a gourmet restaurant is defined by the restaurants own utterance, as both cases label themselves as such. However, an analysis could generate factors such as price, to be the main defining factor in deciding whether it is a gourmet restaurant or not. This is however not my main focus, and I have therefore chosen to rely on the restaurants’ and trade organisations own definition of the restaurants, due to their expertise on the field. The term successful covers the fact that both restaurants, which will be analysed in this thesis have managed to stay open for more than 12 years, in an industry where there is a high rate of bankruptcies as presented via statistics in the introduction. This makes these two particular restaurants interesting, as they have managed to stay open for several years. As their long-term success on the market differentiates them from the trade in general, this is my main denominator for labelling them a success, compared to the industry in general. As I have mentioned before, I will not focus on the economic aspects of running a gourmet restaurant. This does however not mean that I do not acknowledge the importance of a good financial foundation.

I am in this thesis also not aiming to research the location of the restaurants, although I acknowledge that each of the two gourmet restaurants I wil analyse have a different location, which may influence the selection of concept, the target group and how they apply branding and marketing. However, I have selected not to include it in my main focus as the experience can be identified and analysed upon without including the location.

As I have now outlined my problem field and specified what is included in this thesis, this brings me to present my research question and my hypotheses:

## Research Question

**How do the gourmet restaurants ‘Restaurationen’ and ‘Anonymous Restaurant’ manage to give a successful experience to their customers and achieve long-term success, so that there is a unity between the customers’ expectations and the actual experience, when the business in general does not manage to generate long-term success of gourmet restaurants?**

As presented above, this problem field only takes the specific experience given and received into consideration, as well as the expectations that a customer has to the experience given in these two specific gourmet restaurants. The problem lies within the trade in general, not being able to achieve success on a long-term, as there is a high number of bankruptcies. The aim of the thesis is to identify the common denominators between the restaurants and the customers and which elements are important to consider, when opening a gourmet restaurant in Denmark. This means, that at the end of my thesis I will be able to describe the factors that contribute to a successful experience at these particular restaurants, which essentially makes them a long-term success, when you expect that they have a good financial basis, as it is key to deliver a good experience in order to generate returning customers.

In order to obtain knowledge on the trade in general, and what can potentially create a successful restaurant by the means of delivering a good experience, I have conducted two interviews with the two largest trade unions for restaurants, hotels and cafés in Denmark, being DRC and HORESTA. The purpose of gaining this insight and conducting these interviews has been to formulate a set of hypotheses that I aim to either falsify or verify during my answering of the research question. As there is little knowledge on how to create a successful restaurant experience at a gourmet restaurant, I have chosen to use their expert knowledge on the field as a starting point in my research, by creating a condensation of meaning[[3]](#footnote-3) from the two expert interviews and on the basis of those themes, to create the following hypotheses;

## Hypotheses

* *A customer has expectations when entering a gourmet restaurant and it is important that the restaurants meets these, in order to appeal to the customers and deliver a positive experience.*
* *A successful gourmet restaurant has a timeless and whole concept, which the restauranteur knows how to develop.*
* *The experience of the restaurant will depend upon how true the restaurant is to its concept.*
* *The staff at a successful gourmet restaurant is service-minded and adapt the service to the particular guest.*
* *An experience in a successful restaurant is timeless and entails everything beyond the basic need of eating and is a whole concept, which can be remembered and enjoyed afterwards.*
* *A guest has expectations to the experience at a gourmet restaurant and if they are not met, the experience will be considered bad.*

The purpose of these hypotheses has been to create a starting point for my research. By conducting my research from these hypotheses, I can apply them as a selection of my theory and as a foundation for answering my research question, by either falsifying or verifying them by comparing them to the discourses uttered and analysed upon in my analysis as there otherwise would be too many unknown factors to research.

I will elaborate on the method for the creation of these hypotheses during the chapter on Methodology as I will also elaborate on the implications this choice can have for the research I am conducting in this thesis. Based on the hypotheses, I will select theory that can help me either verify or falsify them during the analysis of the restaurants, restauranteurs and customers and their expectations. During the chapter on Theory, I will elaborate on which theory supports which hypotheses/hypothesis and why I have selected the theory in question.

# Methodology

In this chapter I will present my stance within philosophy of science and how this choice affects my thesis. I will also present my research design for gathering empirical data, analysing them and how my selections within these matters can affect my results. Furthermore, I will present how the theory will be used to analyse the collected data.

I will during the chapter also reflect upon validity and reliability of the methodology in order to ensure a research design that is academically responsible. During the entire chapter I will also reflect upon how my choices within methods, philosophy of science, application and selection of theories will affect my research.

## Ontology & epistemology

My thesis evolves around the experiences of humans and the phenomenon ‘successful gourmet restaurant’. I have selected to create a constructivist thesis that entails the effect humans have on constituting the world around them, due to the fact that I am researching a subject that require interpretation of the phenomenon in order for me to experience it either personally or through interviews with respondents. As constructivism points out, it is only through their subjective interpretations, that I may answer my research question, as it can only be studied in relation to their contribution to the phenomenon [Bryman, 2008: 19].

A different exit point would disregard the effect humans have on e.g. language or other phenomena [Bryman, 2008: 19] and would not allow me to interpret on the empirical data or the phenomenon itself. Had I selected objectivism it would affect my thesis in a different matter as the researcher is considered to be able to be objective. This is however not my aim, as I believe my own and the respondents’ subjectivity is important to consider, when researching their understanding and experience of this particular phenomenon. If I disregarded their understanding of the world, I would disregard all previous discourses upon which their current discourses have been formed.

As I will also affect my thesis through my own subjectivity, both through conscious and unconscious choices, I regard the study of knowledge as interpretivistic. I acknowledge that I as a researcher have a heritage from culture, history, my social network and more. Had I eliminated my own and my respondents’ heritage, I would also eliminate their specific interpretation of the phenomenon and thereby their contribution to answering my research question [Bryman, 2008:19]. I do not believe it beneficial to eliminate my own cultural, social heritage, as it may create an advantage when I encounter the field during my thesis in terms of understanding the field and the respondents’ utterances. By this, I believe that the common understanding I share with my respondents may work as an advantage, when understanding their discourses.

## Social constructivism

In my thesis I will work based on a social constructivist point of view. Social constructivist research is interested in how knowledge and identities are socially constituted and constituting. The interaction between humans is seen as the place where shared versions of knowledge are created [Burr, 2003: 4]. As a restaurant may not be a social phenomenon, the discourses, that have created a need for the restaurant, is. Therefore I will base my research on a social constructivist approach that will be reflected during the entire thesis in my selection of methods and in my method for analysis analysis.

I am interested in how their knowledge and identities are displayed through discourses regarding the experience given and perceived during my thesis.

Collin presents the basic idea within social constructivism;

*“A social constructivist standpoint regarding a given phenomenon minimally claims that the phenomenon in question, that is normally considered “natural” and independently existing, is in fact human made and carries imprints by its human origin. It is shaped and affected by human interests.[[4]](#footnote-4)”*[Collin, 2007: 248]

Reality and knowledge are regarded as a societal process within social constructivism, which creates the foundation where new phenomena can be constructed upon [Collin, 2007: 250]. As a foundation upon this belief, social constructivism regards what is normally thought of as ‘natural’ or ‘given’ are in fact phenomena constructed and upheld by societal processes [Køppe *in* Hviid et.al, 2010: 230]. As an example of this, a person receives a recommendation of a new restaurant from a friend, where the friend has had a good experience. He goes to the restaurant to try it and afterwards either agrees with the friend and contributes to the social construction, that the restaurant is good or even successful – or he disagrees and forms a new discourse based on his own experience and reflections hereof. In order to reflect on the experience, the friend relies on his interpretation of reality, which consists of previously formed discourses that is now regarded as ‘natural’ or true in the society. In relation to my thesis, a successful gourmet restaurant can be considered as a social construction, because the guests at the restaurant have to either agree or disagree with the statement regarding the restaurant being a long-term success. If they agree on the proposed discourse, it becomes reality and the restaurant can over time be considered as a long-term success. That is why I in this thesis am looking to answer what discourses constitute a successful restaurant, how and why these discourses are expressed in the restaurant and what the customer expects from the experience and if they are fulfilled. By doing so, my aim is to conclude upon the discourses the respondents agree on, as these will be what constitute a successful restaurant. During my analysis I will apply the hypotheses based on the interviews with the trade union, as a mean to either falsify or verify the presence of discourses regarding the particular hypothesis. If the respondents all have a discourse regarding the presented hypothesis, then it can be considered verified. If not, it can be considered falsified, although it may be present in some interviews and will therefore only be labelled a tendency.

[Figure 1 – how reality and knowledge affect each other]

As such, reality and knowledge affect each other constantly, letting knowledge create its own object. An example of this could be a society, where it becomes knowledge that eating at a restaurant is a bad experience. Because of this spoken discourse, the customers stop coming to eat and the restaurant might eventually close or change the e.g. menu or price as a direct result of the discourses. By this example, the discourse has become reality.

### Ontological social constructivism

Collin states, that there are different approaches to working with social constructivism. In the following I will address the differences between ontological social constructivism and social constructionism, as I will work based on Gergen & Gergen, who define themselves as social constructionists. As I aim to apply Gergen & Gergen as social constructivists in this thesis, I will go on to explain why I believe this comparison is possible.

A key point within ontological social constructivism is that there is both a social heritage as well as a biological. As an example of this, the food consumed at restaurants both fill a basic need by providing nourishment and at the same time may also stimulate emotions, if the selected dish e.g. brings memories from their mother’s own cooking to mind.

### Gergen & Gergen

In the following I will present theory by Kenneth & Mary Gergen, who define themself as social constructionists. As mentioned before, I will now explain why I think it possible to compare the theoreticians Gergen & Gergen to Collin, in spite of their different theoretical definitions and themselves.

Collin remarks the following on the subject;

*“A purely terminological remark must be made before we begin: Gergen uses the term ‘constructionism’ for his position, which he puts in contrast to what he defines as ‘constructivism’. However Gergen’s constructionism lies very close to the position we here have defined as ‘ontological social constructivism’.“*

[Collin *in* Hviid, 2007: 266]

Collin continues to present similarities e.g. within the importance of the part played by the social community’s way of thinking in contrast to the more traditional psychological constructivism, where the individual has been the focus. Another similarity is the importance the language has when shaping the collective thinking and thereby the reality [Collin *in* Hviid, 2007: 266].

Based on this argument, I will interpret Gergen & Gergen as ontological social constructivists in this thesis, although I acknowledge, that they have selected a different term for their theoretical standpoint.

Within social constructivism, a question regarding reality is relevant according to Gergen & Gergen: If nothing is real before we say it is, when can we ever really know what reality is? If anything can be disregarded and deconstructed, when do we ever really encounter truth and knowledge in research from a social constructivist point of view? Gergen & Gergen offer an interpretation of the matter:

*”The basic idea within social construction seems simple but is also deep. Everything we regard as real is socially constructed. Or put more dramatically, nothing is real until people agree that it is.[[5]](#footnote-5)”*

 [2008: 9]

### Reliability and validity

As nothing can be regarded as real until we agree upon it, the issue of reliability and validity is important to address in this thesis. By conducting a thesis that is already outdated before it is even handed in, the reliability is low. There is a chance that the respondents may view my results differently, than when they uttered their opinions. However, I still believe that my research is valuable for the restaurant industry as social constructivism also claims that discourses are formed on previously accepted discourses. Thereby, the results I will describe in this thesis may already be affecting new discourses. By understanding these results, restaurant owners in Denmark may be able to use them as a foundation for understanding their customers as the results may supply an opportunity for the trade organisations to counsel restaurants upon the matter. This results in a thesis, which has a low reliability, as the results may possibly vary from restaurant to restaurant and consumer to consumer – or even for the same consumer over time.

Another reason, that this thesis is still valuable to the industry, is the general lack of knowledge on this particular subject. In the beginning phase of my thesis, I have researched the field and found theories and articles on dining experiences, food experiences, hospitality, hosting and more – but none on how a gourmet restaurant – or for that matter, any other restaurant – can achieve long term success. A reason for this can be the competition between restaurants over customers, as some restaurants may hesitate to share their ‘recipe for success’. Another might concern that even if such a recipe was found, it may not appeal to all cities or countries as cultural preferences varies according to which city or country the restaurant is situated in.

Thus my research will be outdated even while I am producing it, but my belief is that it will contribute to a field, there is no knowledge on. The reliability of my research is therefore low, because another researcher in the same restaurant may not find the same results with the same guests, as there may be variations in service, food or another element in the evening. The implications of this may be that my own subjectivity can affect the interpretations and results in a specific manner. However, in order to understand the field in general without having a base in theory, I believe it is important to implicate my own understanding in order to represent my results.

In terms of validity, I will take measures throughout my thesis in order to ensure a high degree of validity. Validity entails ensuring that you are researching what you want to research, in this case how a restaurant can become a success. In order to ensure a high degree of validity, I will during my interviews ask confirming questions in order to ensure, that the respondent has understood the question correctly, answers it based on the question and above all, to ensure that I understand the presented discourses correctly. By doing so, I will get confirmation of my immediate interpretation of the text. Another measure I will take is to research the problem from different angles with different methods. This will increase the validity of my results, due to the fact that different people in different contexts will have confirmed them at different times in the process, ensuring that I research what is selected as the problem field. At the same time they are also gathered separately, ensuring that the respondents have not affected each other in the process. This will create an understanding and insight to the field from 2 different groups of respondents, which gives me a more nuanced picture of how different fields in the society in different roles understand the phenomenon.

### Discourse fields

When entering a field of discourse in the world, it is important to take the specific values into account.

*”Every way of constructing the world entails certain traditions – loaded with specific values – and at the same time leaves out everything that is not part of the tradition.[[6]](#footnote-6)”*

[Gergen, 2005: 19]

During my thesis, I will come across different ways of constructing the world. The trade organizations will view the matter with their specific values through the hypotheses I have created, where the restaurants will have a different exit point for the interviews, as will the consumers. I have chosen to collect empirical data from all of the above, in order to achieve a more complete understanding of the results on my research question.

As a result of this, I must consider the fact that even though the respondents agree upon a presented hypothesis, they may choose to utter it through different discourses. However, I will in this thesis select whether the hypothesis is verified or falsified based on the presence of a discourse regarding the hypothesis and by analyzing whether they support the hypothesis or not.

## Gathering the empirical data

As mentioned above, I have gathered empirical data from 3 different groups of respondents; the trade organisations, the restaurants and consumers, who have visited the restaurants. Each group of respondents have a different discourse field that affects their utterances. Thus it has been important to consider which method to apply to each of them and to adapt the selected method to fit the respondent group in question in terms of topic and use of language as there is differences between the discourse fields.

In this thesis I am researching a topic that is not only a social construction, but is also socially constructed in the society. Therefore it has been important for me to select a method that will allow me to research how the respondents view this particular phenomenon through their own discourse field, be it as a restaurant owner, a consumer or an employee at a trade organisation. As such, I have selected to do semi-structured, qualitative research interviews with all of the above and apply participating observation for researching the actual situation at the restaurants. This creates a thesis that only uses qualitative research methods as opposed to applying quantitative methods. The reason for not applying a questionnaire, is that I am in this thesis focused on researching the experience at hand through my selected hypotheses. Although a quantitative method could have supplied my thesis with statistic knowledge on the field, it does not offer the in-depth discourses that can be reached during an interview. As my research question does not concern a generalist approach to the problem selected, I believe that selecting a qualitative approach to gathering empirical data will supply me with a possibility to reach a depth in my analysis, not possible by using only qualitative methods. As I am also not aiming to research a general tendency, a questionnaire might not supply me with specific knowledge on the two restaurants I have selected as cases to test the hypotheses on.

Within the qualitative research interview, there are 3 different types; the un-structured, the semi-structured and the structured interview. I have selected to do semi-structured interviews with all of my respondents in this thesis.

The semi-structured qualitative research interview has several differences to the structured and un-structured interview, and in the following section I will elaborate on why I have selected this type of interview and how I have applied it.

### The semi-structured interview

Before conducting my interviews with the respondents from a specific group, I have created an interview guide according to which group I am interviewing. Each of the 3 interview guides can be seen as appendixes to this thesis.

As stated by Bryman:

*“The researcher has a list of questions or fairly specific topics to be covered, often referred to as an interview guide, but the interviewee has a great deal of leeway in how to reply.”*

[2008: 430]

The semi-structured interview offers a somehow limited freedom for the respondent to answer within the topic chosen by the interviewer as stated by Bryman in the above quotation. As each interview will vary according to the respondent within the group, the interview guide ensures that the same topics are covered and that there is a similar use of wording, which will ensure that the interviews are comparable and all evolve around the selected problem for my thesis and ensures that the specific issues in question are addressed in order to further analyse upon them and ultimately answer my research question [Bryman, 2008: 438 - 439]. Had I selected an unstructured interview, I may not be able to ensure a consistency in the interviews as oppose to what topics would be treated and might lack empirical data to carry out my analysis in relation to the selected research question and be able to test the hypotheses during the analysis. Had I however not had a specific topic and instead an interest in researching a more general notion, an unstructured interview could have been selected [Bryman, 2008: 439]. As this is however not the case, I believe the semi-structured interview fits my research design and my problem field in general as it allows me to present topics and questions relevant to my research and at the same time, leaving room for the interviewee to answer according to their relation to the topic and for me as an interviewer to follow up on these and ultimately for the respondents to either falsify or verify the hypotheses without being affected by subjective questions [Bryman, 2008: 438].

As stated above, it has been important for me to create 3 different interview guides as I am interviewing 3 different types of respondents. Each interview guide has been outlined with the purpose of this master thesis in mind, which is shown in the reflection of both the research question and the hypotheses for the specific interview questions. This choice is affected by the selection of a social constructivist approach to research in general and by the fact that each group of interviewees play a different role in my thesis. The trade organisations’ main purpose have been for me to obtain a general knowledge on the field, creating a starting point as there are very little literature and research on the topic I have selected. As such, the interview guide reflects upon the purpose of this particular group of respondents, being more general and explorative than the interview guides for the restaurants and consumers. As for the interviews with the restauranteurs and the consumers, who have visited Restaurationen and Anonymous Restaurant, each interview guide has been formed on the basis of the hypotheses. The reason for doing so, is to ensure that I through my analysis will be able to either verify or falsify them, according to the uttered discourses. To ensure a transparency for the readers of this thesis and to ensure that the interviews regard the selected problem field and hypotheses, I have under each question in the interview guides, described the purpose of the particular question and its relation to the hypotheses.

In all interview guides created for this thesis, it has been important to consider the structure of the interview and the formulation of the questions. To ensure, that I gather general information of the respondent, I have asked questions regarding their name, age and occupation (number of years and position), as an insight to these may serve as a foundation for understanding their specific utterances and context in the further analysis [Bryman, 2008: 442]. I have also selected to use a language that is comprehensible and relevant to the interviewees specific context in order to avoid misunderstandings or even a lack of understanding to the question, as I have also not used leading questions in my interview guide, because they can set a specific discourse for the interviewee, that they may not agree upon or would not have used themselves, as this would affect the situation in a manner, where the interview might focus more on my own discourses and not the life world of the interviewee [Bryman, 2008: 442]. But as stated in the chapther on epistemology and ontology, I am aware of my own subjectivity and that it will to some extent affect the empirical data. However, I have through the above mentioned taken measures of precaution to ensure that they affect as little as possible when conducting interviews, as my own subjectivity might affect in a negative manner as respondents may feel complied to answer in a certain manner.

As another part of the purpose for the interviews with the trade organisations have been to create the hypotheses I will test on the two selected case studies, I have chosen to apply a different method for analysing the trade organisation interviews, than for the interviews in my analysis. In order to create the hypotheses, I have conducted a condensation of meaning with both interviews. The method was traditionally applied within phenomenological research, but has later been adapted to other types of research [Kvale, 2007: 192].

A condensation of meaning requires several listenings to the empirical data, in order to determine a theme or re-occurring tendency in the interviews [Kvale, 2007: 192]. Afterwards, each natural entity is set into a schedule, where the meaning is condensed into a shorter notion on the matter [Kvale, 2007: 192]. After doing so, I have sorted the utterances according to theme from both interviews into different categories, in order to formulate hypotheses, that summarize the condensed meanings [Kvale, 2007: 192]. I have only selected to form hypotheses where both respondents utter on the theme. This choice is reflected in my social constructivism point of view, as nothing is real, until we agree it is, according to Gergen & Gergen as argued in the chapter on methodology.

As such, the method is very subjective because I as a researcher am determining, what the re-occurring tendencies and themes are and how to formulate the presented hypotheses. Even so, I still find the method necessary, due to the fact that there is a lack of research and knowledge on the area, and the hypotheses serve as a starting point in a very unknown field of research. As it is with all qualitative methods, they are subjective and I have chosen to use the two interviews with the trade organisations, as they offer an expert opinion on the matter, due to their insight to the trade in general and the length of time, both respondents have been employed in the trade[[7]](#footnote-7). Another contributing factor for my selection of their subjective opinion for the basis of the hypotheses is due to the fact that they are not in particular representing a specific restaurant, but rather the trade in general. Due to their knowledge on the trade and the fact that they represent the business as trade organisations, I see their utterances as the most nuanced and insightful selection for creating the hypotheses, when there are little to no literature regarding the problem field. Thus, I am aware of the hypotheses being representative to the interviewees’ subjective opinions on the matter, but do not necessarily see this as a fault as their insight can offer a valuable starting point for my research.

I have selected to partly transcribe all interviews and in the analysis shortly present the context. To ensure that the context of the utterance is interpreted correctly, I have conducted several listenings of each interview in order to identify relevant passages, where I will analyse the discourses. However a fully transcribed interview is available as appendix 4 as an example of the transcription.

In relation to the interviews, there is an important issue I will address regarding interpretation and translation of the quotations I will use in the analysis. All interviews have been conducted in Danish, as all respondents and I speak Danish as our native language. The selection to perform interviews in Danish is due to it being easier to express yourself in your native tongue, compared to a second language as English. As this thesis is written in English, this creates a situation, where I must translate all quotations used for analysis in order to present a thesis that can be read entirely in English. This creates an issue with the subjectivity, as my translation may be affected by my own discourses and knowledge, compared to presenting raw empirical data directly from the interviews. This subjectivity can ultimately affect the analysis of the discourses the respondents present during the interviews, which is a problem I am aware of in this thesis. Had I however conducted the interviews in English, the possible language barrier may have affected the discourses in a similar manner, as any translation or utterance in another language will affect the original meaning of the utterance. As a result of this, I will in my interpretation be cautious to preserve the nature of the original utterance, as it highly affects the discourse and ultimately the results of the analysis. I have also through the several listenings of the interviews, ensured that I have interpreted the context correctly and therefore have created a basic understanding of the utterances I will analyse.

In this thesis I have a total of 8 respondents from the following groups; trade organisations, restauranteurs and consumers, which will each be presented in the chapter on respondents.

### Participating observation

As a method for gaining insight to the actual situation and interaction in the restaurants between the staff and the customers, in other words the different interactions and social actions, I have selected to apply participating observation as described by Kristiansen & Krogstrup [1999]. As my hypotheses also evolve around subjects such as concept and service, the participating observation will serve as a manner for myself to observe how the service is given and what the reaction is from the guest in the situation, and will in the analysis, combined with the interviews provide a more nuanced view. I have selected to be observatory as participator during the observations at the restaurants, as I may interact with the staff in relative short conversations, and because my contact with the staff will regard the observation [Kristiansen & Krogstrup, 1999: 125]. However, my aim is not to interact with the guests, as this may affect their experience at the restaurant. Even though I am not interacting with the guests, my presence in the restaurant will affect the situation, by the fact that I create a different environment just by being present in a different manner than the guests. As I am not eating while doing the observation and will have a laptop with me to take notes, I will create a situation, where I assume the part as ‘the stranger’. As described by Simmel [1972] it is possible to participate in the field without belonging:

 *“…but his position is affected by the fact that he from the beginning does not belong in it and that this will add qualities that is not and cannot be originally characterizing for this sphere.”*

[Simmel *in* Kristiansen & Krogstrup, 1999: 73]

Even though I am affecting the atmosphere of the restaurant, just by being present in a different manner than the guests, there are also advantages to being the stranger. As Simmel describes, I can as a stranger in the field, enter into random contact with all elements, without being occupied by e.g. friendships or individuals. The stranger is also not bound by special rules and meets the situation with a distinct and objective manner that at the same time contains presence and distance, participation and indifference. I am also not bound by a certain perception, understanding and evaluation that may create a biased evaluation of the data [Simmel *in* Kristiansen & Krogstrup, 1999: 74].

Steffen [1995] points out an issue with both being participant and ‘a stranger’ at the same time, even calling it contradictory. However, she concludes that it is possible to participate in a process without loosing the professional identity [Kristiansen & Krogstrup, 1999: 76].

Even though I am affecting the field, the observation is still valuable to this thesis, as the insight I gain as ‘the stranger’ in the field, can provide me with insight from a semi-objective point of view that a respondent, reflecting over the experience might not utter, as they can be natural to him/her.

As an observer it is important to consider if your observation will be conducted in natural surroundings or in a laboratory. As I have stated earlier in this chapter, I consider a successful gourmet restaurant as a social construction in society and can therefore only observe the phenomenon in natural surroundings. Had I selected to create an observation in a controlled laboratory, the context for the experience I am researching would disappear for the guests and the experience would be altered. Therefore I have selected to observe in a natural environment, where I have no control over who walks in to the restaurants and how the interactions and actions occur.

Within observation, Kristiansen & Krogstrup describe both structured, unstructured and a mix of the 2 to observe from. I have for this thesis selected to combine the structured and unstructured method, and will in the following elaborate upon why.

The structured observation requires a detailed guide for observation and a detailed plan for the subjects being observed upon. However, these choices will also limit the researcher in observing anything that lies beyond the selected themes [Kristiansen & Krogstrup, 1999: 66]. At the same time, the unstructured observation in natural surroundings offer the exact opposite issues; because of the absence of focus in the observation, the process of gathering data can become slow and even chaotic, due to the fact that the researcher is not looking for anything in particular [Kristiansen & Krogstrup, 1999: 58]. However, Kristiansen & Krogstrup states that there is no ‘one best way of observation’ and that the choice of method for observing relies entirely on the problem field that the data is to be used for and the type of knowledge, which is desired to produce [Kristiansen & Krogstrup, 1999: 67]. In their critique of the semi-structured intermediates, Kristiansen & Krogstrup highlights that a semi-structured observation will entail critique from both the structured and unstructured method, in this case a mix of what I have described above. As I have selected an intermediate between the structured and unstructured, I will first describe how I will observe and why I have chosen so. Afterwards I will elaborate on the possible points of critique.

As pointed out by the critique of the unstructured observation, the method can easily become chaotic and slow, because the researcher is not looking for anything specific. However, as I am looking for something more or less specific, it seems fitting to select a method that combines the two for two reasons; the semi-structure of my observation guide, where I will focus not on specific interactions, but on the topics represented in the hypotheses regarding service and concept, this will create a frame for conducting the observation. At the same time I wish to keep an open mind towards the observation, as I would otherwise only look for interactions or actions, that could verify my hypotheses. This would create a conclusion that would be highly subjective and is therefore not desirable, as it would not provide a realistic insight to the actual situation. In order to reflect this choice in my observation, I have created an observation guide, which is created on the basis of my hypotheses and therefore on what I have chosen to focus on in my selection of the problem field. At the same time, I have left room in the guide to note on other things interesting to the interaction and action in the restaurants that may lie outside of what I have selected to focus on. In this way, I will structure my observation, but at the same time leave room for the unknown in the field. In the analysis the observation will be applied mainly when researching the interaction e.g. the service. The observation guide can be seen as appendix 5.

## Research design

As presented in the introduction and methodology so far, I have selected to conduct a social constructivist, hypothetical deductive case study of two successful gourmet restaurants in Denmark.

In order to answer my research question and either verify or falsify the hypotheses created from the interviews with the trade unions, I will now present the process for my thesis and reflect upon how this will affect my thesis and eventually my results.

As presented in my problem field, I have chosen to research how the two selected restaurants manage to deliver a successful experience to their customers that correspond with their expectations. In order to maintain a starting point in the field, I have created 6 hypotheses regarding the research question, which I aim to either verify or falsify during an analysis and eventually use in answering my research question. However, there is a process in between, which I will now describe and reflect upon. As I have hypothesised regarding the research question, I have chosen to select my theory based on these hypotheses, as it is those I wish to test through the analysis of the two restaurants. There are several theoretical themes present in my hypotheses, where I have selected theory to represent each of these. I have thus selected theory by Pine & Gilmore, Jantzen & Vetner, Jantzen & Rasmussen, Mossberg, Iverson, Lund et.al., Giddens and Bourdieu. I will present each theory in the next chapter, as I will also explain their relation to the hypotheses. As I have also mentioned regarding the selection of hypotheses, my selection of theory is subjective and is very much affected by the hypotheses I have selected as a starting point for my research. As this subjectivity is present no matter what theory you choose, I will accommodate it by reflecting upon the differences and critique points both for the individual theory and for the theories in relation to one another. By doing so, I will reflect upon the consequences my choices have for my research and also the limitations of it.

In order to analyse my data in a manner, that will make me able to identify and interpret on the presented discourses in the empirical data, I have selected to apply Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as presented by Fairclough [1992]. In my analysis I will use Fairclough’s method for conducting CDA, which consists of the model shown here:



[Fairclough’s 3-dimentional model for CDA, 1992: 73]

The model consists of 3 layers, which are all applied in analysing a quotation from the empirical data. I am aware that my selection of the quotations to analyse upon affects the objectivity in this thesis and that it is based on my own subjective actions. However, a selection of quotations can in this case be beneficial, as my knowledge on the field gained through the interviews and observation can serve as an insight to where relevant quotations is present. Furthermore, as I have not formed the hypotheses based on my own values and beliefs, my interest in either verifying or falsifying the hypotheses is not dominated by my own subjectivity.

In the analysis I will select a quotation from the empirical data, regarding the specific hypothesis I will analyse upon, applying this method until all hypotheses have been analysed upon. On the textual level in the model, I will apply tools from CDA in order to identify which elements are present in the utterance. I have selected to apply the tools ethos (including grammar, transitivity and theme), modality, wording, metaphors and deixis. The mentioned tools will be presented in the following chapter on CDA. The purpose of the textual level is to lay a foundation for interpreting which discourse is presented by the interviewee and to create an argumentative basis for the context and meaning of the discourse. On the level for discursive practice, the aim is to identify the discourse and here I will apply theories from Lund, Pine & Gilmore, Mossberg, Jantzen & Rasmussen, depending on the discourse in question, alongside with tools from CDA, being interdiscursivity, manifest intertextuality, discourse representation and presupposition.

On the third and final layer, the purpose is to specify the nature of the social practice, which the discourse practice and textual level is a part of and is a basis for explaining why the discourse practice appears as it does, and lastly to specify the effect of the discourse practice on the social practice. I will here apply societal theory, as Giddens and Bourdieu offer a broader interpretation on society compared to the other theory I have selected to apply on the level of discoursive practice. The process I have described above, can be seen in the following model:



The analysis will be structured by the presented hypotheses, as my aim is to either verify or falsify these. In the analysis, I will begin by presenting the hypothesis I will base my analysis on, and afterwards present quotations regarding the hypothesis. As I have described above, I will apply Fairclough’s model for CDA to each quotation in order to create structure in the analysis and as a means to identifying the presented discourses and interpret on these.

After the analysis of Restaurationen and Anonymous Restaurant, I will create a comparison and discussion, where I will summarize which discourses are present in the analysis and how they correspond with the hypotheses, in order to reflect and discuss each of these and lastly to either verify or falsify the hypotheses.

After concluding upon the hypotheses according to the two case studies, I will conclude upon my research question according to my findings.

In the following chapter I will present the theory mentioned in this chapter and reflect upon their compatibility to each other and the implications my selections have for this thesis.

# Theory

In the following chapter I will present theory that I will apply during my analysis of the empirical data. As presented in the methodology, the theory will be applied to all layers of the CDA model. During this chapter, I will present on which level of the CDA model the theories or tools will be applied. I will also present which hypothesis I aim to analyse with it, as my analysis will be structured based on these.

## Critical discourse analysis (CDA)

Within the field of discourse analysis, there are numerous theories and theoreticians to select from, thus it has been important for me to find a method that allows me to include other theories if needed in the analysis. I have selected Fairclough’s CDA as presented in *Discourse and Social Change* (1992) in combination with Jørgensen & Philips’ presentation of his theory in *Diskursanalyse som teori og metode* (1999), because he offers a structured method for analysis, that at the same time gives the researcher the possibility to add other tools for analysis, such as I have added Deixis to the method for analysis, as described in the chapter on Methodology. As discourse analysis in general has a strong connection to social constructivism, I have also based my choice of this method on my philosophical outlook on science in this thesis. As CDA is a method for analysis, this theory will not be applied as a tool for interpretation but as a means to identify relevant elements in the text and discourses, which I will base my interpretation on.

According to Fairclough, discourse is both constituent and constituted. This means that the use of language affects the world as well as the world affects the use of language, which is also described under the section regarding social constructivism. When speaking in general terms on what a discourse is – and not what it does as mentioned before – Fairclough defines it as *‘a way of speaking, which gives meaning to experiences from a certain perspective’* [Jørgensen & Phillips, 1999: 79]. Discourse contributes to construct social identities, social relationships and systems of knowledge and meaning, much as illustrated above with Gergen & Gergen’s model on how reality and knowledge affect each other.

When using CDA as a method for analysis, there are, according to Fairclough, 2 dimensions that acquire attention; The communicative event, such as the interviews and observation I will conduct, and the order of discourse, which refers to the sum of discourse’s used within the restaurant/trade union/consumer field [Jørgensen & Phillips, 1999: 79-80]. In every discursive praxis – where production and consumption of speech and text occurs – different types of discourse are used in specific manners. An example of this is the restaurant trade, where an expression such as ‘front of house’ is common, as it may not exist in other trades.

According to Jørgensen and Phillips, use of language is a communicative occurrence that has 3 dimensions. It is a text[[8]](#footnote-8), a discursive praxis and a social praxis [1999: 80]. As an example of this, text can be seen as an interview, the discursive praxis is the context it is produced in (e.g. a waiter at a gourmet restaurant) and the social praxis is the society, such as Aalborg, Denmark or even Scandinavia. Each field in the model below is affected by each other as well as they affect each other too. For example, the text is produced in a certain discursive praxis, which will affect the e.g. selection of words to use. In every analysis using CDA, it is important to look at the capacity of the text, the processes of production and consumption of the text and the larger, social praxis that the communicative event is a part of. Below I have illustrated a model of the critical discourse analysis and it’s different phases:



[Fairclough’s model for CDA, 1992: 73]

According to Fairclough, text and discursive praxis are to be analysed separately, because discursive praxis concerns which discourses the authors and receivers of the text uses already existing discourses to respectively create, consume and interpret the text. The analysis of the text concerns more formal measures, such as vocabulary and coherence between sentences [Jørgensen & Phillips, 1999: 81]. The relation between the text and social praxis is mediated by the discursive praxis, due to the fact that it is only through the discursive praxis that text can be shaped by reality and vice versa [Jørgensen & Phillips, 1999: 81]. Thus, in my analysis every quote from interviews and observations will be analysed through a process consisting of 3 parts; The text, where I will apply different tools for textual analysis. The discursive praxis, where I will focus on which discourses that are being articulated and how they are consumed and the social praxis, where I will consider if the presented discourse alters or confirms the existing order of discourse, presented through the hypotheses.

### Tools for analysis

In the following, I will describe which tools I will use when applying CDA in my analysis. There is no strict procedure for collecting empirical data and analysing it with CDA. Instead each analysis can be individually designed to respect the unique aspects of the data in question [Jørgensen & Phillips, 1999: 72]. Fairclough has in his book *Discourse and Social Change* created a list of tools to apply, where I have selected the relevant tools for my analysis below. I am aware, that my selection will affect the outcome of the analysis due to my specific selection of tools [Fairclough, 1992: 232]. Had I included all tools suggested by Fairclough for analysis, the results might have been an analysis, where all of the findings may not be relevant to my specific study. Where the selection of tools is partial, the option to include methods for analysing each part is not. The analysis must include tools to study each element in the data; text, discursive practice and social practice [Fairclough, 1992: 233].

#### Interdiscursivity

Analysing on interdiscursivity concerns the production part of the discourse practice along with manifest intertextuality, which will be described below. Fairclough defines interdiscursivity as follows:

*“The objective is to specify what discourse types are drawn upon in the discourse sample under analysis, and how”*

[Fairclough, 1992: 232]

As Fairclough describes, the aim is to identify which genre(s), activity type(s), style(s) and discourse(s) are being drawn upon in the specific situation, and what this means for the production, distribution and consumption. In order to determine these factors, I will during the analysis show through text analysis that the interpretation suggested is the most likely [Fairclough, 1992: 232]. Here it is important to look at my interpretation both during the interviews and observation as well as afterwards. I will apply interdiscursivity on the textual level in the analysis.

#### Manifest intertextuality

With this tool, the aim is to specify which other text(s) the respondent draws upon while creating the interview and how they are represented during the conversation. The representation differs according to the different modes of manifest intertextuality, which can be explored by analysing upon the discourse representation and presupposition [Fairclough, 1992: 233].

Discourse representation can be direct or indirect and can include aspects of context, style or ideational meaning. It can be clearly demarcated or even translated into the voice of the representing discourse. A presupposition is cued in a certain manner in the text and they can refer to previous texts of others or the respondents own [Fairclough, 1992: 234]. Manifest intertextuality is described as functional on both textual level and level of discourse practice and will as such be applied as a link between the two.

#### Cohesion

The manner a text is built in terms of clauses and sentences can be significant to the meaning and interpretation of the text. Cohesion is an important tool, when researching the consumption of the text and how it is interpreted, and will be applied on the textual level. Cohesion is here used to research how statements and/or arguments are built in the interviews and the effect this has on the discourse(s) [Fairclough, 1992: 233]. I will apply cohesion on the textual level of the analysis.

#### Grammar

Within Fairclough’s CDA, an analysis of grammar has 3 dimensions; transitivity, theme and modality, which is corresponding to the ideational, textual and interpersonal functions of the language. Transitivity concerns the choices favoured by respondents in the text in regards to process types and participant and whether the agency attributed in sentences is active or passive [Fairclough, 1992: 235]. I will use transitivity as a manner of determining the personal relationship a respondent may have to a statement.

The theme concerns whether there is a discernible pattern in the text’s thematic structure, which can be seen when analysing the choices of themes for clauses. When determining which discourses are dominant in the interview, analysing on themes can show regularity in the statements and what is drawn upon [Fairclough, 1992: 236]. In my analysis it may show reoccurring themes and what motivations lie behind these.

Modality regards the degree of affinity, expressed through propositions. It concerns the respondent’s linguistic evaluation of the truth in a sentence or his/hers own personal commitment to the statement expressed. It can be expressed through the modal verbs (can, will, must, would, may and should) or through applying adverbs such as ‘probably’, ‘certainly’ or ‘definitely’ to a statement or the mental process clause ‘I think’ [Fairclough, 2003: 168]. This tool will serve as an insight to the discourse being produced and how the respondent establishes it on the textual level.

#### Wording

Within the textual level, I will also apply the tool ‘wording’, which Fairclough describes as the following;

*‘The objective is to contrast the ways meanings are worded with the ways they are worded in other (types of) text, and to identify the interpretative perspective that underlies the wording.’*

[Fairclough, 1992: 236]

The aim is thus to look at new lexical items and what theoretical, cultural or ideological significance they may have. Furthermore the purpose can also be to analyse upon the intertextual relations and if the text contain overwording or rewording [Fairclough, 1992: 237].

#### Metaphor

When applying the tool ‘metaphor’ on the textual level, the aim is to characterize a metaphor used in the quotation, in contrast to metaphors used for similar meanings elsewhere and to determine what factors have helped to determine the choice of metaphor, such as culture and ideology [Fairclough, 1992: 237].

#### Deixis

Deixis is a rather simple tool from linguistics that concerns the communicated content of a situation. Deixis differentiates between time, place and person deixis. I will only apply person deixis that regards the use of pronouns (I, you and we), which are interpreted based on who is speaking and who is listening in the communicative situation. By analysing the pronouns on the textual level, I will be able to e.g. conclude upon if the respondent regards him/herself as a part of the given statement, or if they speak in an excluding manner in the sentence [Drotner et.al., 2006: 169]. I will use deixis on the textual level of the analysis.

#### Coherence

As part of the analysis on the level of discourse practice, I will use coherence as defined by Fairclough;

*‘The aim here is to look into the interpretative implications of the intertextual and interdiscursive properties of the discourse sample.’*

[Fairclough, 1992: 233]

In order to analyse upon the coherence, Fairclough suggests looking at how heterogeneous and how ambivalent the text is for interpreters [Fairclough, 1992: 233].

## The experience economy

The following theory on experience economy, service, concepts of restaurants, the build of an experience and expectations will all be applied on the level of discourse practice as presented in the chapter on methodology. Each theory relates to one or more hypothesis, which I will shortly outline before beginning the presentation of the mentioned theories.

The general theory on experience economy serves both as a general insight to the field, but will also be applied when researching the expectations of the consumers. The theory regarding service will be applied during analysis of the hypothesis regarding the service at gourmet restaurants. The theory regarding concepts of restaurants will likewise be applied during the analysis of the hypothesis concerning concepts and their effect on the experience. The theory on the build of an experience in the mind of consumers, will be used both for the expectations customers may have towards a gourmet restaurant, but also when analysing the hypothesis regarding the experience being something you can enjoy after the visit. When analysing the expectations in relation to the hypothesis, that concern such, I will also apply Mossberg’s theory on what creates expectations in the mind of the consumer.

There are many takes on what experience economy is and many different theories on how this can be applied to a product. In my thesis, I have chosen to apply theory from Pine & Gilmore, as they offer a general insight to the field and relevant models to support these, based on fieldwork. However, Pine & Gilmore do not recognize that the ‘guest’ can have other motives for seeking out experiences than a lack of experience [Jantzen & Rasmussen, 2007: 184]. Another criticism of Pine & Gilmore concerns the fact that they do not view the guest as a main participant in the experience, but the company as the stage and the employees as the actors [Jantzen & Rasmussen, 2007: 33]. This view is contradictory to e.g. Giddens theory on the modern humans increased focus on individualization in the society. As I will argue during this chapter, the guest is to be seen as a co-producer in the experience, as suggested by Lund et.al. [2005: 59] and Jantzen & Rasmussen [2007: 33]. In order to analyse upon the effect of the experience, it is important to consider the guest as a co-creator for the experience as their interpretation and reaction during the experience, will affect the further process. As an example of this, a guest at a restaurant can receive a pleasing appetizer and expresses this to the waiter. As the experience is going as intended, the evening will continue as planned. However, if the appetizer is cold or bland, the guest might express a disappointment and this will affect the further experience. Thus the theory presented by Pine & Gilmore will have a generalist function and focus more on the creation of an experience, where I will use different theories from Mossberg and Jantzen & Vetner among others to relate to the role of the consumer in an experience.

### What is experience economy?

The experience economy is defined by Pine & Gilmore, by separating companies into 4 different categories according to what economic product they are producing; raw material, material, service or experience. In the quotation below, Pine & Gilmore describe the process of reaching the last stage through an example with coffee;

*“Companies, that reach the fourth level of value, creates a special experience that accompanies the purchase of coffee with which its value (and therefore also its price) increases to a hundred times more than the price for the original raw material.”*

[Pine & Gilmore: 1999: 16].

The argument here is that by adding an experience to the product, the product is altered and therefore has a bigger value to the consumer or guest.

However it is only through conscious use of service as a stage and products as props to engage a person that the experience manifests [Pine & Gilmore, 1999: 16]. As an example of this, eating at a restaurant would not be the same if e.g. there were no staff present or on the other side no food. It is in the collaboration of the two, that the experience is created. As Pine & Gilmore argues, an experience is memorable to the guest, as the guest appreciates to be engaged by what the company – or in this case restaurant – reveals over time [1999: 29]. But even though the work that the dramatist of the experience does will disappear after the experience has taken place, the value of the experience persists in the memory of the individual. The main idea is therefore not only to entertain but also to be memorable [Pine & Gilmore, 1999: 30].

One suggestion on how to create a memorable experience is given by Lund et.al., where the main purpose of the experience economy is to evoke emotions in the consumer such as drama, surprise, renewal, identification and more [2005: 59].

When creating an experience, it is important to consider the individual guest. As an example of this, a bad memory of a service during an experience is easy to remember, while we often forget good service.

*“The surest way to provide bad service is to put every client through the same memorized, impersonal routine that never varies regardless of how the individual client is or what he actually wants”*

[Pine & Gilmore, 1999: 99]

By doing so, the company applies the same methods as for mass-producing a product and thus creating a product that focuses on cost at the expense of what the client wishes. [Pine & Gilmore, 1999: 99]

However, the opposite of the situation described above is also true. The adaptation of a service to a particular customers individual needs can ensure the creation of a positive experience.

## Service

Iverson also defines the importance of good service in relation to restaurants. Many factors can contribute to the experience in a negative manner and Iverson points out the following;

*“Many factors can contribute to this problem, including a lack of training, unmotivated employees, poor selection techniques, or the failure to develop a standard procedure”*

[Iverson, 1989: 56]

One of the things that make a gourmet restaurant stand out is impeccable service. Successful restaurants make their customers feel important, by offering special attention that tells the client that their visit is appreciated. As a result of this, these restaurants rely more on word-of-mouth and less on advertising when communicating their concept to potential customers [Iverson, 1989: 57]. Another part of good service is consistency, as it is important to fulfil the customers’ expectations of good service. If the service at the first visit is impeccable and then horrible at the next visit, the experience will be affected in a negative manner as they expected something more or something different. It is especially important for gourmet restaurants, as they sell a product at a high price, where not only the product is part of the experience, but the whole concept [Iverson, 1989: 36]. It is the value added through the experience that the customers pay extra for, as suggested by Pine & Gilmore above. If the restaurants fail at delivering consistent service of a high quality, in coherence with the expectations of the customers, they will be unable to generate repeat business[[9]](#footnote-9) [Iverson, 1989: 58].

But as described above the service must - meanwhile being consistent - also be unique according to each guest. This creates a certain contrast between the two terms; how can service be consistent and unique at the same time?

## Expectations

As an example on how consistent service can co-exist with unique service according to the specific individual, expectations play a central part. When a customer expects a high standard in service, the interpretation of service can vary. One customer might expect conversation with the waiter while another wishes not to be interacted with more than necessary. It all depends on what the customer wants, compared to what the customer gets [Pine & Gilmore, 1999: 111].

*“…individual customers are different from each other through the precise combination of features or benefits they wish. They must constantly weight and compromise, while deciding if there are a sufficient amount of positive elements present, for them to accept the subordinate and outweigh the harmful.“*

[Pine & Gilmore, 1999: 112]

As Pine and Gilmore suggest above, whether the expectations are met depends on the total experience and the success of it. If the service at a restaurant is poor, the quality of the food, the ambience of the restaurant or the host might make up for it, creating an overall successful experience for the guest in spite of some expectations not being met.

According to Mossberg (2003), it is common that consumers before purchasing try to simplify, reduce risks and build up a routine in relation to other situations of consumption [Mossberg, 2003: 59]. This evaluation is done on the basis of previous experience, loyalty and the product’s characteristics, such as price, trade mark or where the product origins from. By doing so, a consumer is also considering what consequences this purchase will have for him/her. If the consequences are evaluated to be positive, the consumer can experience involvement, which Mossberg defines as ‘*the degree of the perceived personal impact and/or the interest that has arisen through stimuli in a specific situation*’ [Mossberg, 2003: 69]. Involvement is often described, as a function of person, object and situation and the basis for this is always the consumer’s latent motives such as needs and values. The motivation is activated when the object is perceived to meet important needs and values to the consumer [Mossberg, 2003: 60].

If a consumer has no needs or no desire, the customer will not experience involvement, because involvement is a reflection of a strong motivation where the consumer has perceived a high personal relevance in a product in a specific context [Mossberg, 2003: 61]. Needs can be divided into to larger groups; utilitarian needs, which is fulfilled by functional products, e.g. if a hungry consumer buys a hamburger, and experience oriented needs, which is filled by emotional products such as theatre. In many consumer situations, it is usual for the two types of needs to function at the same time [Mossberg, 2003: 61]. An example of this can be a dinner in a gourmet restaurant, where the food can stimulate a basic need for food, while the décor, music and ambience stimulates the need for an experience.

One of the basic assumptions on human behaviour concerns that humans behave in a predictable manner, which entails that needs and motivation are integrated in a meaningful set. Post-modernist researchers have according to Mossberg identified 4 ways that the ‘ego-concept’ function in a person’s daily life;

To outshine, which entails the things we possess, because they can entail more that just covering a basic needs. They can also hold sentimental value or even strong emotions [Mossberg, 2003: 62]. Mossberg gives an example of how a pair of ski pants for 400 kroners can provide the same basic need as a pair of ski pants costing 5000 kroners. But as Mossberg states, *‘To outshine on the slope and at after ski can be worth a lot’* [Mossberg, 2003: 62], which transforms the value of the expensive pants to also concern the ego and social status in the society.

To achieve self-control, because consumers often are aware of what is expected of them in different social groups and thus change their behaviour accordingly [Mossberg, 2003: 62].

To fantasise, because comparing your actual self to what you interpret as the ideal self is often done through day dreaming and fantasising [Mossberg, 2003: 62].

To give yourself presents, as it is often used in advertising because giving yourself a present is often associated with a high degree of involvement [Mossberg, 2003: 62].

As mentioned above, part of the customers evaluation prior to purchasing a product entails whether it is relevant to the consumers e.g. values. This evaluation relies on previous experiences, because when a product is consumed, the consumer can achieve knowledge on how different product factors have different consequences that help achieve the goals and values of the consumer [Mossberg, 2003: 64]. As an example of this, Mossberg describes a situation at a restaurant:

*“A customer can for example learn that different attributes in a restaurant (e.g. location, quality of the food, crowding) have benifitial and non-benifitial consequences (impress friends, feel comfort, too crowded and loud).“*

[Mossberg, 2003: 64]

This statement supports what Pine & Gilmore expressed above, as a consumer can evaluate the experience to be positive even though not all elements was experienced as positive, due to the fact that different attributes can have beneficial and non-beneficial consequences as stated by Mossberg above.

## Setting the concept for the experience

Pine & Gilmore also underlines the importance of selecting a theme for the experience, which creates a crucial step towards staging an experience.

*“On the contrary a poorly defined theme does not provide something about which the customers can organize their impressions and the experience does not generate a permanent memory”*

[Pine & Gilmore, 1999: 68]

As an example of this, a new French bistro is opening. The waiters know the language, the wine is French, the décor and music lead the thoughts towards Parisian fashion and architecture – but the menu entails pizza, moussaka and burgers. As a result of the confusingly defined theme, the guest – who was possibly expecting French food – will be confused over the theme and will loose the ability to organize the impressions into a whole experience or concept. This will ultimately define the experience [Pine & Gilmore, 1999: 69].

Iverson, who also clearly states the importance of outlining a clear and defined restaurant concept when entering the trade, supports this theory;

*“Successful restauranteurs today must be flexible and willing to look beyond old standbys. They must be in tune with the current fast-paced lifestyle and must have a feel for their potential customers, informally survey them, and develop a restaurant concept that they will find appealing.”*

[Iverson, 1989: 48]

But what does a concept or theme within the restaurant trade include? Iverson suggests focusing on the name of the restaurant, the intended ambience, the menu, the service style, number of seats, potential customers, type of entertainment and price range in order to design a restaurant, whose concept is clear to the guest.

An effective theme must be precise and captivating in order to function as an organising principal for the experience, and is not to be confused with the basic idea for the restaurant.

*“The theme must control all design elements and staged events in connection to the experience towards a uniting plot, that completely captivates the customer. That is the essence of a theme – everything else simply supports this.”*

[Pine & Gilmore, 1999: 78]

Thus a theme must be present throughout the entire experience in order to guide the customer in the perception of it. Otherwise it may just confuse or disturb the experience, creating a surplus of elements, which affect in a negative manner.

## The perception of experiences

When setting the stage for an experience, it is important to remember that customers’ needs are different and that they do not necessarily seek the same experience. Their needs may vary according to their life style, identity and more. Therefore it is essential to differentiate between different types of experiences by selecting a different concept, in order to ensure an optimal and precise supply of experiences. Customers may seek relaxing, exiting or pleasant experiences, but the most important is that the experience promotes relevant, interesting and enriching experiences [Jantzen & Vetner, 2007: 203].

*“The experience occurs in the interaction between excitation from external object, the organism’s physical response to these objects and mental processing of both excitation and response.”*

[Jantzen & Vetner, 2007: 203]

The process consists of a model that entails the entire body and mind in order to perceive and respond to stimuli from the experience as can be seen below. On the biological level, the structure consists of the neurophysiological level, the evaluating level and the habit based level. After having consumed the experience in the biological level, the experience will be perceived at the reflecting level. The process can be viewed in the following model:



[The build of an experience, Jantzen & Vetner, 2007: 206]

On the neurophysiological level, the body senses the experience based on excitation and evaluates it based on the level of enjoyment. It can either lower the level of excitation or heighten it. The faster the level of change is according to the level of stress, the bigger the enjoyment becomes [Jantzen & Vetner, 2007: 207].

On the evaluating level, the individual assesses and evaluates the bodily response, in terms of whether this stimuli is good or bad for the consumer. On this level, emotions play a central role as a behavioural regulating mechanism for the individual, in relation to evaluating the situation that the excitation is related to. The habit based level builds upon and affects the two previous levels and concerns habits and experiences, that enables the consumer to effortlessly and quickly to create an impression regarding the experience being positive or negative in relation to the specific consumer. The experience is subconsciously placed into cognitive schemes and patterns of recognitions that affect the evaluation of the experience, which are individual and affected by culture. On the contrary, the forming of an experience is also social, as this mostly occurs in social settings, where the experience is tested, adjusted and aligned with others [Jantzen & Vetner, 2007: 209].

*“As a principal, the 3 levels constitute where the organism receives, processes and seeks impulses without necessarily involving the consciousness.”*

[Jantzen & Vetner, 2007: 210]

On the reflexive level, the experience is transformed from bodily and emotional experiences into communicative utterances. The experience is no longer excitations to the body, but instead something that is stored in the individual’s identity and social community. It is important to note that the reflexive level is very individual due to differences in cultural and social heritage [Jantzen & Vetner, 2007: 212].

## Why seek experiences?

As mentioned above, the consumer’s identity and social community affect the evaluation of an experience. An explanation for this can be found with sociologists Giddens and Bourdieu. The main purpose for including Giddens in this thesis concerns his broad and applicable theory that in relation to my topic is important for understanding the motivation for seeking out experiences in the society in relation to the self. When selecting Bourdieu’s theory, the central reason is still to understand the reason for seeking experiences, but in relation to others in the society.

The following theories from Giddens and Bourdieu will during the analysis be applied on the level of social practice and thus relate to all of the presented hypotheses. Even though none of the hypotheses mention identity or groups, it is relevant to consider the societal processes that affect the expectations and result in a specific perception of the experience and a following reflection, and for this I have selected the theories by Giddens and Bourdieu, as they, from a macro sociologist point of view, can supply a more general notion of the society today and what may have facilitated the discourses I aim to identify in my analysis.

### The modern society and the reflexive identity

Giddens theory on identity and the modern society show a development towards a society that is affected by 3 major mechanisms; separation of time and space, the disembedding mechanisms and the modernity’s reflexive character [Kaspersen, 2001: 121].

The separation of time and space is daily shown by how humans meet and interact in rooms separated by time, such as Facebook or Skype [Kaspersen, 2001: 121]. The disembedding mechanisms entails how our societies are no longer local but global, such as how the Denmark is affected by the European Union or how a hospital in Aalborg is affected by the government in Copenhagen. In general terms, the disembedding mechanisms can be seen as the official institutions interest towards other regions and the rest of the world. This creates a globalized environment, where we are affected by global discourses in our daily life [Kaspersen, 2001: 122]. The last mechanism that is characteristic to Giddens’ modern society is the modernity’s reflexive character. Giddens emphasises the importance of particularly this mechanism in relation to the modern human’s identity;

*“The modern society is a post-traditional order where the question ‘how shall I live?’ must be answered through day to day decisions regarding how to behave, what clothes to wear, what to eat – a question that also must be interpreted in the light of the time-specific expression of the self-identity.”*

[Giddens, 1996: 26]

The significance of our daily choices becomes relevant for our identity, due to its constant development and re-creation. The cause for this can be found in the lack of an ontological security in genus, gender or societal status, which no longer determine your role in the society – instead, choices within lifestyle and materialism is now a defining factor in our identities.

*“In the pre-modern society kinship, gender and social status meant that the identity was determined by birth. (…) This changes with the high modern society, where self-identity is exclusively a reflexive project that the individual is responsible for. We are not, what we are, but what we create. Therefore the entire being becomes a question of choosing and making decisions so that we can uphold a ‘story of the self’.”*

[Kaspersen, 2001: 149]

An important note concerning self-identity in the modern society is that the story we create about ourselves cannot be fiction [Kaspersen, 2001: 150]. It must constantly entail experiences and events from the society in order for an individual to uphold the story. These choices can regard anything from relationships with friends and family, to clothes and cultural experiences [Kaspersen, 2001: 148]. As an example of this a person might seek out a gourmet restaurant, because he is interested in fine dining and the culinary world. If the experience has the right amount of excitation, the experience will be evaluated as a success and eventually be reflected upon as a pleasant experience that fits into his identity. As described by Mossberg, the previous reflections over experiences might guide the individual in creating expectations towards if a new experience will be good or bad and as such, the theories can be seen as similar in this matter. The same can be said regarding Jantzen & Vetner’s model, as they also describe a cognitive scheme, where we reflect and turn the experience into communicative utterances, which corresponds with Giddens notion on creating a story of the self, that we daily share.

### A desire to belong

Another reason for seeking experiences might be found in the interaction with others and the desire to belong in a group:

*“If the consumer is viewed from a cultural or social perspective, the consumption reaches beyond the emotional and self-centred life project – to create a purpose with life. The consumer is also motivated by a desire to belong in a group. The individual’s consumption of items and experiences can show a relation to one or more groups, because the consumption serves as a symbol. Symbols are here an important factor in order to create a universe for a group.”*

[Jantzen & Rasmussen, 2007: 195]

As every human desires to belong in a group, it is in this thesis relevant to look at how an experience in a restaurant can contribute to the person’s identity and ultimately to a person’s chosen life style and more or less conscious choice of societal group.

According to Pierre Bourdieu, the society consists of a number of social rooms, where we are placed according to our group;

*“The social room is constructed in the following manner: All the social agents holds a relational position in relation to each other in a room – the social room. These agents’ or groups’ position in the social room have been made on the basis on the statistic distribution of the two differentiating principles, that in the highly developed countries, such as japan, USA or France, without doubt is the most efficient, namely economic capital and cultural capital.”*

[Bourdieu, 1997: 21]

The two main factors for a placement of an agent – in other terms an individual – within a social room and a group is the economic (determined by money) and cultural (determined by cultural interests) capital that a person possesses. The closer two persons are placed to each other in Bourdieu’s model over social positions and lifestyles, the more they will have in common [Bourdieu, 1997: 21]. As an example of this, two persons meet for a date in a gourmet restaurant. The woman, who has chosen the restaurant, is a CEO at a global company and the man is a carpenter at a local contractor. Due to their educations and positions in the social space, they may not share opinions on the experience at the restaurant, because of the difference in their positions. The man might see the restaurant as pretentious, whereas the woman will experience the interaction as pleasant. The reason for this can be found in the agents’ habitus. Habitus differentiates between the good and the bad, the right and the wrong, the nice and the vulgar, and is therefore the main force behind the choices an agent makes [Bourdieu, 1997: 24]. As shown with the example above, we do not differentiate in the same manner. This difference is according to Bourdieu caused by the education we possess and how we are raised, as the social structure has a tendency to reproduce [Bourdieu, 1997: 37]. At the same time, those who do share a view on cultural and economic capital have a tendency to gather. Their common opinion on what is ‘right and wrong’ is termed doxa by Bourdieu and entails the set of values that is agreed upon in a specific group or field in the society. As a person can only ‘fit into’ the field if the habitus of the individual is correspondent to the doxa, the two terms are closely related. According to the certain amount the cultural and economic capital counts in a field, each field constitutes a third capital: Social capital. The social capital is the sum of the cultural and economic capital, which is an expression for what is ‘right or wrong’ within the field. If a person from a certain field, where cultural capital is considered important, seeks out a dining experience from e.g. a Chinese gourmet restaurant, the experience can be considered as giving social status, but only if the field agrees on it, much like how discourse and reality affect each other as explained in the chapter on methodology. And as described above in the section on Giddens, it is only through utterances, that we uphold our identity, the utterance of an experience with a high amount of social capital can give social status in the field. Thus, a reason for seeking out experiences can also be to ‘fit in’, gain social capital and achieve a high status in the field, as well as it is part of creating our own reflexive identities in the modern society.

As we retell the story of our experience and identity, others in the field might seek out the same in order to achieve the same amount of social capital. This can create a repeat business for the restaurant, if they have adapted their concept to fit the intended customer, and eventually a success if they manage to uphold the balance between expectations and experience.

# Presentation of respondents

As I have mentioned earlier, I have chosen 2 different groups of respondents to analyse upon, being restauranteurs and consumers, who have visited the restaurants, I will analyse. In addition to that, I have conducted interviews with the trade organisations HORESTA and DRC.

In the following I will present each of them, according to the information I have received during interviews. The aim is to provide insight into the respondents and to give the reader a general idea of the trade organisations, the owners and their restaurants and consumers that have participated in my thesis.

## Trade Organisations

HORESTA is the trade union for hotels, restaurants and the tourism trade with about 2000 members[[10]](#footnote-10). Tine Skriver, the chief of food, was selected for my interview by HORESTA. She has been employed within environment and food by the trade union for 12 years and has a degree in nutrition and domestic science[[11]](#footnote-11).

DRC stands for Denmark’s restaurants and cafés. The trade union has about 1500 members in the trade and includes restaurants, cafés, nightclubs, overnight accommodations and more[[12]](#footnote-12). When contacting DRC, it was agreed that my respondent would be Jørgen Kønigshøfer, a lawyer, who is employed as a trade counsellor at DRC since 2006. The hotel and restaurant trade has employed him for 40 years, among other things employed for 20 years at HORESTA and as a self-employed salesman of hotels and restaurants[[13]](#footnote-13).

## Restaurants

Bo and Lisbet Jakobsen, who are both trained chefs, own Restaurationen. The restaurant is located in central Copenhagen at Møntergade and has existed in the same location for the past 21 years. For 20 of those years, they have used a concept consisting of only one menu to choose from, chancing it once a week and no a la carte. Bo Jakobsen (in the analysis referred to as Bo), who has been in the trade for over 35 years, gave the interview.

As Anonymous Restaurant has chosen to be anonymous in my thesis, I will only mention what I have been allowed by the owner. The restaurant is situated in Denmark, and has existed for 15 years in two different locations. The owner (in analysis, referred to as Michael[[14]](#footnote-14)) is a trained chef and has been in the trade for 23 years.

## The consumers

The following respondents have all visited one of the two restaurants I will analyse in my thesis. The following presentation is to give clarity of who have visited which and to give basic information on the respondents.

Rene Toxvig (in analysis, referred to as Rene) is 35 and is employed as a financial director. He has visited Anonymous Restaurant with 3 other colleagues about 4 months ago.

Henrik Mortensen (in analysis referred to as Henrik) is 46 years old and is employed as Site Lead[[15]](#footnote-15). He has visited Anonymous Restaurant on one occasion in a work related situation.

Pia Tønder (in the analysis, referred to as Pia) is a 55-year-old translator. She has visited Restaurationen in Copenhagen several times.

Per Lindegaard Hjorth (in the analysis referred to as Per) is 55 and employed as a federal chairman at a Danish union. He has visited Restaurationen on several occasions.

# Analysis

In the following analysis, I will apply the method described in the methodology as well as the presented theory, thus beginning at the textual level in order to identify relevant objects in the text in order to identify the discourses represented and apply an interpretation of the discourse by using the presented theory on both the level of discourse practice and social practice. When relevant, I will present extracts from the participating observation conducted at each restaurant.

After having analyzed the restaurants, I will compare the discourses found to the selected hypotheses and thereby verify or falsify the hypotheses by comparing them to the discourses found in the empirical data through the analysis.

I have selected to structure my analysis according to the hypotheses and am as such creating a thematic analysis of the data. The aim of doing so is to create structure and overview in the analysis and to compare the hypotheses to the presented quotations. As such, I will have 6 chapters in the analysis.

The selection of the quotes to use in my analysis has been based on general theme of the hypotheses and on my interview guides for each group of respondents.

## Meeting the expectations

I will begin my analysis by focusing on the following hypothesis as presented in the problem field;

* *A customer has expectations when entering a gourmet restaurant and it is important that the restaurants meets these, in order to appeal to the customers and deliver a positive experience.*

Before this quotation, the conversation with Michael, the owner of Anonymous Restaurant, has regarded expectations and service in the restaurant, where Michael brings up the word ‘concept’. The quotations begins, after I have asked Michael to elaborate on the term and when he brings up the topic of expectations:

*Michael: But it is for sure, that you have to be true to your concept and true to your own beliefs. And then you need to be very direct you can say, and make sure that what you signal externally to the guest is what they get. I believe that it is extremely important that people know ‘what type is this business’ and I will say, I have learned it myself the hard way. I have been so silly to call my restaurant ‘Anonymous Inn’, it sounds completely wrong and in the beginning many imagined something like lemon mousse or roast pork, and then enter and look in the menu card ‘arh, this is not at all what we want’ and then leave again. And that is not smart. That is extremely not smart.*

[Interview, Anonymous Restaurant, 34.55: appendix A]

Michael begins the quotation by stating without modality, that it is important to be true to your concept and your own beliefs. Here Michael uses two ‘yours’, which refers to another person than himself. He continues to apply 2. person deixis in the next sentence, where he utters, that ‘you need to be very direct’, also using a modal adverb to the word direct, being ‘very’. Hereafter, he shifts into using the personal ‘I’, when he explains, that it is ‘extremely important that people know “what type is this business”’, also using modality in ‘extremely’ which refers to important. Within the wording in this quotation, Michael exemplifies how he has called his restaurant ‘Anonymous Inn’ and continues to explain, that the word Inn usually refers to another image of different food, than what he sells. He applies modal adverbs, such as completely in relation to ‘wrong’, and extremely in relation to ‘not smart’.

In the text, interdiscursivity is also present, as Michael in the second half of the quotation goes from speaking with 2. person deixis to using 1. Person deixis and explains his own experience with the subject. Here he draws upon a discourse type being ‘restaurant owner’, where as he in the first half of the quotation speaks from perhaps a more general discourse type, being ‘restaurants’. In the last half of the quotation, where Michael exemplifies what he have mentioned before, by mentioning his own restaurant and how it was conflicting for the guests, that he had called the restaurant an ‘Inn’, there is also manifest intertextuality present, as there are both a switch in deixis from 1. person to 2. person and the fact that he embodies the words of customers, by quoting them.

I will summarize the presented discourse in the following:

*It is important to be direct and signal to the customer, what you aim to deliver. Otherwise, customers might expect something else and leave again.*

According to Mossberg, the purchase of a product relies on the consequences related to buying and consuming the product. As seen in the quotation above, the term ‘Inn’ can for some people have different consequences than a gourmet restaurant, according to Michael. He describes a situation, where some customers have selected not to purchase the experience, when they see that the food is not, what they related to the term ‘Inn’. The knowledge of the products is according to Mossberg achieved from past experiences, in this case with the term ‘Inn’. In the consumption of the product, different aspects of the product contribute to obtain important goals and values according to Mossberg. As Michael states, the consumers may have expected lemon mousse and roast pork, and instead see a menu with an entirely different selection of dishes. As such, the expectations and experiences did not match, and the customer chose not to consume the product.

In relation to the society, the desire to consume products that align with certain goals and values may refer to what Giddens determines as the lack of ontological security. As such, the consumption in a restaurant may support the story of the self. And if the story is a different one, than expected, the customer may choose not to buy, as it does not support the identity of the specific consumer. However, it might also just be the case that the customers in this specific situation were looking for a different experience in the given context. In that case, the customers – who might normally like gourmet food and frequent other gourmet restaurants – simply were not in the mood for gourmet food this particular evening. However, the fact that Michael uses the term ‘many’ to define the number of customers, who chose to leave again, supports the interpretation of the expectations not matching ‘Anonymous Restaurant’ and therefore has not succeeded in appealing to these particular customers and their identity, goals and values.

The following quotation begins right after I have asked Rene, a guest at Anonymous Restaurant, why he chose to dine at Anonymous Restaurant. To this he answers it is because he has been there before. The quotation begins as I ask Rene, if he expected something from his visit to Anonymous Restaurant:

*I: Did you expect something from your visit?*

*Rene: Yes, I had a high expectation that it would be good food and good vine we would get and a good service.*

*I: What do you mean by ‘good food’?*

*Rene: that it is exciting food, something where you think this was really exciting, it is something you can’t make yourself. And when you feel this was really exciting, and tell somebody that they must try this.*

*I: you also mentioned good service?*

*Rene: Yes, it can be anything from guidance and counselling in what wines to have and also generally during the evening, if the waiter is attentive towards if you are lacking anything and that they are reachable. […]*

*6.50 – I: Why did you expect these things?*

*Rene: Well, it’s because I have been there before I would say and generally because that is the expectations I have to a restaurant of this class.*

[Interview, Rene Toxvig, 5.12: appendix B]

In the quotation, Rene applies a modal adverb, being ‘high’ in relation to ‘expectations’. He also applies a first person deixis with ‘I’, referring to him. When describing food, wine and service, he uses the adverb ‘good’ in relation to all three words. When asked to elaborate on ‘good food’, Rene uses ‘you’ to describe food ‘you can’t make yourself’ and later ‘they’ when referring to other people, that ‘must try this’. He also applies the adverb ‘really’ in relation to exciting, when he describes what good food means to him. Later, when asked to elaborate on ‘good service’, Rene uses ‘it’, which refers to the term ‘good service’ and continues to use third person deixis with the use of ‘you’ when describing that the waiter is to be attentive and reachable during the evening. When asked why he expects these things, Rene uses first person deixis ‘I’ when answering that it is ‘because I have been there before’. He continues to elaborate, still using first person deixis and explains that these are the expectations he would have to ‘a restaurant of this class’. ‘Class’ here refers to Anonymous Restaurant and other similar restaurants and can be seen as a wording, because it draws upon the intertextual relation between gourmet restaurants and class.

When Rene utters ‘generally because that is the expectations I have to a restaurant of this class’, it may be because he is no longer only expecting these things because he has visited the restaurant before, but also draws upon a general discourse concerning gourmet restaurants, creating a manifest intertextuality, because he utters the word ‘generally’, when uttering his expectations as opposed to previously, where he spoke in relation to his previous visit, thus using 2 different discourse types to describe his expectations.

Based on these findings in the text, I interpret the following discourse to be represented:

*High expectations are towards the food, wine and service which must all be good, which is based on previous experiences at this restaurant and in general because of the class of the restaurant.*

According to Mossberg, the customer will evaluate the process of the purchase, by simplifying, reducing risks and building routines in order to be able to compare it to other situations of purchase. As seen in the quotation above, Rene describes that his expectations are both based on his previous visit to Anonymous Restaurant, but also generally towards a ‘restaurant of this class’, as he utters. As with the quotation analysed above from Michael, the situation of purchase has here before entering the restaurant, been evaluated and based on previous knowledge been found to be beneficial to Rene, as he chose to enter the restaurant both based on his previous experience and his expectations in general to gourmet restaurant.

As Giddens defines the story of the self, Rene might have considered if the experience he was expecting was similar to his own identity, because he chooses to utter a general set of expectations towards it, and therefore might see that this experience would support his choice of life style. As such, it can be important to Rene to be able to articulate the experience to others in his field, in order to obtain cultural and economic capital and thereby social capital.

Prior to this quotation, Per (guest at Restaurationen) and I have just talked about service and how Per experiences his expectations towards the waiters. Afterwards I ask the following question about expectations:

*I: When you visit a gourmet restaurant in Denmark, do you then have some general expectations to them as we maybe talked a bit about*

*Per: well it depends yes well I always have some expectation to well again good food and a good experience with food and the entire set up but the expectations are also different depending on the type of restaurant you enter meaning if you know it in advance or not well the expectations to a restaurant you do not know are bigger than to a restaurant you do not know no gibberish it is bigger to a restaurant you do not know than to one you do know*

*I: Why is that so*

*Per: Well I think it concerns something with for instance Restaurationen there my expectations are not bigger because I know well I am convinced that every time I come there then the things I appreciate will be met but I cannot know that at a new restaurant and that is why it is a bit embarrassing that I say I would not dream of visiting Noma because I cannot know that (…) Because it could easily be that I could get a fantastic experience but it is then because I have some prejudices about Noma’s concept*

[Interview, Per, 19.00: appendix D]

At the beginning of Per’s sentence he uses 1. Person deixis when describing what expectations he has to a gourmet restaurant. Per uses the term ‘but’ between the first statement using ‘I’ to describe his expectations and later in the sentence, where Per uses ‘you’ – a 3. Person deixis – in relation to ‘different restaurants’, ‘know it in advance’ and lastly when he states that if ‘you do know’ the restaurants, the expectations are not as high, than if ‘you do not know’ it. This creates cohesion between the two utterances in his argument. At the end of the first sentence Per makes an error in his expression, but corrects it by saying ‘no gibberish’.

After I ask Per to elaborate on his statement, he begins the sentence by using 1. Person deixis in relation to ‘think’ and goes on to give an example of his argument in the first sentence, as he uses ‘it’ which I interpret refers back to the first sentence concerning expectations and the use of ‘that’ in my sentence, which also refers back to the first statement made by Per. Later in the sentence, Per corrects himself by first stating ‘I know’ in relation to ‘every time I come there’ by correcting it to ‘I am convinced’, which I interpret to create a stronger modality for the statement. Throughout the entire sentence, Per uses 1. Person deixis when talking. When describing the term ‘embarrassing’, Per uses modality in the form of ‘a bit’ and when describing ‘experience’ he uses ‘fantastic’ in relation to it. He brings in a new lexical item in the end of the sentence being ‘prejudices’, which is used in relation to ‘Noma’s conecpt’.

The use of deixis in this quote points to an interpretation where Per mostly speaks from a personal point of view, as he only uses ‘you’ when describing the general expectations to restaurants depending on the type. This leads to my interpretation that the discourse Per presents here is both based on his discourse field but also on a more general notion.

As Per uses the term ‘again’ in relation to ‘good food and a good experience with food and the entire set up’ it may refer to a previously formed discourse in the interview, thus creating a manifest intertextuality. However, I as the interviewer can have affected this, because I state ‘as we may have talked a bit about earlier’.

When Per corrects himself by changing ‘know’ to ‘convinced’ this can be interpreted as a stronger modality for the following statement, which emphasises his following statements about ‘the things I appreciate will be met’. Based on the following, I interpret that Per has expectations to gourmet restaurants, but they differ in relation to whether he knows the restaurant or not. He also expresses through the use of ‘I’ and the use of modality, that he thinks Restaurationen fulfils his expectations every time.

I have summarized the discourse in the following:

*Per has expectations to gourmet restaurants, but the level of the expectation depends on if he knows the restaurant he is visiting. Restaurationen has fulfilled his expectations and needs ever time.*

As Mossberg describes, a product will be considered appealing, when the consumer perceives it as accommodating to the specific needs and values. As Per describes in the quotation, his needs are met at Restaurationen every time. The quotation above can also be interpreted as an example of an experience, that has been evaluated on the reflexive level in Jantzen & Vetner’s model for the build of an experience. As Per has found the stimuli he received at Restaurationen to be good, due to his specific needs being met, he has evaluated the experience and perhaps stored it as part of his identity, as he utters that the things he appreciates are present in the experience. This can result in an amplification of the values and beliefs Per has as the experience may awaken feelings of identification according to Lund et.al., which may ultimately strengthen Per’s own identity, as it helps him to uphold the story of the self according to Giddens.

## A timeless concept

The next hypotheses I will focus on is the following:

* *A successful gourmet restaurant has a timeless and whole concept, which the restauranteur knows how to develop.*

As with the previous hypothesis, I have selected quotations, which concern the same themes, in this case concepts and development of such.

When asked what a concept means for a restaurant during the interview, Michael – the owner of Anonymous Restaurant – expressed the following:

*Michael: Yes, well it is extremely important that you target what you want from the beginning and then try to move towards that goal. And uhm I don’t think you can create such a concept completely from the beginning. Because you learn something and you must also adapt according to your experience and you must also make it work in business term. You can say, if people think it is too expensive or something then it doesn’t help to continue ‘it’s my concept, that is what I believe in’ so you must also adapt to the possibilities that is and also according to where you are in geographical terms. There is a big difference to being in Aalborg and in Copenhagen. So you have to adapt to some extent. But it is for sure; you must be true to your concept and what you believe in.*

[Interview, Anonymous Restaurant, 34.20: appendix A]

In this quote Michael describes targeting what ‘you’ want as ‘extremely important’, thus using a modal adverb in ‘extremely’, and third person deixis in ‘it’. In the next sentence, he applies first person deixis, when he says ‘I’ in relation to not being able to create such a concept overnight ‘completely from the beginning’. He continues to exemplify this argument, linking the sentences with ‘because’ which creates cohesion in the argument as he lists reasons for this, being that ‘you learn something’, using a third person deixis – you – for all 3 examples in the sentence. He continues to apply third person deixis when he explains ‘you can say…’ as he sets up the example where the food is ‘too’ expensive, ‘too’ being a modal adverb in relation to expensive. He then assumes the voice of a fictive person, which can be seen by his shift to first person deixis mid sentence and. At the end of the quote, he underlines his statement with saying ‘but it is for sure’ using no modality and applying third person deixis during the whole utterance, as he states that ‘you must be true to your concept and what you believe in’.

In light of the textual analysis, I interpret that Michael finds it important to have a concept from the beginning, as he describes it with the word ‘extremely’. He continues to build an argument, based on the different examples he gives during the quote and expresses one of these through the voice of another restaurant owner, thus drawing on the discourse he represents himself, but with another voice, as the shifts to first person deixis, with the possible use of manifest intertextuality. The aim of the examples is to support his main argument, which is that it is important to adapt, but also to be true to your concept and what you believe in.

Based on the above, I will summarize the discourse into the following:

*It is important to have a concept that you are true to and believe in, but at the same time are willing to adapt according to the location and customers.*

According to Pine & Gilmore, a poorly defined theme can cause customers to loose what helps them organize their impressions and result in the experience not being memorable. As such, a concept that is not clearly defined may be the cause of the lack of success in a restaurant, as Michael exemplifies in the quotation. In the quote, Michael also mentions price as a part of the concept, which is supported by Iverson as an element in the concept, where I interpret, that if the price is too high according to your concept, it does not help having a concept, as it will not generate customers, according to Michael, as he states that ‘it does not help’.

Seeing the quote in terms of social practice according to Fairclough, the discourse represented in this quote may concern what Giddens labels the lack of ontological security in the society. As people may seek experiences as part of defining their identity, an unclear concept might not be perceived as part of the story and identity. This can ultimately result in the experience not being memorable for the consumer, as they do not incorporate it in the story of the self.

Before this quote, the interview has regarded if there is a link between price and quality, where Henrik, who has visited Anonymous Restaurant, utters the following regarding the concept of a gourmet restaurant:

*Henrik: With the price, there is also an expectation to that the things just work.*

*I: When you say that the things just work, what do you mean?*

*Henrik: Then the food must be connected to the wine and it must be connected with the way they have built the restaurant?*

*I: Do you mean their concept?*

*Henrik: Yes, their concept. It doesn’t work that they want to be minimalistic if we are sitting in heavy furniture.*

*I: So it must all be connected?*

*Henrik: Yes. So, if it is a Scandinavian kitchen, then I also expect that we are sitting in Scandinavian furniture.*

[Interview, Henrik, 12.50: appendix C]

In the quote, Henrik uses third person deixis when uttering, that there ‘is also an expectation’ according to the price. As I ask him to elaborate, he expresses a supporting argument for his expectations, being that there ‘must’ be a connection between the food, wine and restaurant, ‘must’ being a modal verb, still using third person deixis uttered by ‘it’. When asked if he refers to their concept, he replies with repeating ‘their concept’ and continues to give an example, using ‘we’ within deixis to describe the visitors at a restaurant. When asked if it must all be connected, he replies with ‘yes’ and continues to utter that ‘I’, being a first person deixis, expect to be sitting in Scandinavian furniture.

During the quote, Henrik applies a metaphor regarding the Scandinavian restaurant, to exemplify his point regarding his expectations towards the concept of a restaurant, which I base on the use of first person deixis and the use of heavy furniture as a contrast to a Scandinavian concept.

Based on the above, I will summarize the discourse in the following sentence:

*The price implies expectations such as the food, wine and restaurant to be connected in a concept.*

According to Pine & Gilmore, the theme must control all design elements, and must be present during the entire experience. As Henrik utters above, the elements must be connected for him, in order for his expectations according to the price and the things ‘just working’ are met, confirming the theory by Pine & Gilmore. According to Mossberg, the consumer evaluates whether the product is relevant to purchase or not, based on previous experiences with similar products. This evaluation, as Henrik also describes in the quote, can affect the experience because different factors in a restaurant contributes in different manners. As Henrik states it is no use that the concept is minimalistic if the furniture is heavy, thus describing that one of the factors that contributes to his experience is the coherence between the concept and food, wine and décor. If Henrik does not find the concept to match his identity, the story cannot uphold his identity by retelling it to others, as it is important to create your own identity by selecting stories of the self according to Giddens. If there is a mismatch between the identity and the experience you encounter, the experience might not become part of the identity.

Prior to this quote, the conversation has regarded the restaurant trade in general, where Bo – the owner of Restaurationen – has told me about the trade from his point of view. The topic leads to the following question, on what creates a successful restaurant:

*I: What characterizes a successful restaurant?*

*Bo: We are talking in the long run right?*

*I: Yes*

*Bo: Yes uhm consistent quality that the level does not vary that is simply what is important and that goes for the service wine and food level that is simply what it takes if you want something that really works for ever then you have to create a quality that does not fail*

*I: Mmm*

*Bo: then you have to create proper food quality and you must not stand still you do not become a classic by doing the same day after day unless you you are on a level that is completely untouchable then you can like Paul (last name of restaurant is unclear in sound file) and then still have three stars but that is largely put not for everybody*

*[Interview, Bo, 19.02: appendix E]*

In the quotation, Bo begins his statement by asking if ‘we’ are talking in the long run, referring to him and I in the interview situation. As I confirm his question, he begins to elaborate, only using ‘you’ to describe the statements throughout the quotation, which is a 3. person deixis.

He uses a modal adverb – simply – when describing what works and ‘really’ when he mentions ‘works for ever’. He selects the modal verb ‘have’ to describe ‘create proper food quality’. During the quote, Bo selects a different wording for ‘successful’ as originally stated by me and uses ‘classic’ instead.

As Bo only uses third person deixis, a possible interpretation is that Bo is referring to a more general discourse that can have been produced in collaboration with others in his trade, which creates interdiscursivity in the text. As the discourse in the quote is uttered generally through the use of third person deixis, which can be interpreted as Bo speaking in a general manner and not based on his own individual discourse, the discourse may represent an ideational meaning regarding what is important to creating a successful restaurant, being consistency in food, wine and service and not standing still.

Based on the above, I interpret the following summarization of the represented discourse by Bo:

*To create a success in the long run, you have to create consistency in the food, wine and service and to develop it continuously as you do not achieve long term success by standing still.*

According to Iverson it is important to make customers at gourmet restaurants feel important, by delivering impeccable and customised service to the individual guest, as Bo also presents as part of his discourse in the quote. As he also points out, it is also important to deliver consistency in the food and wine, which may concern the total experience that affects how the customer perceives the visit to a restaurant. If the overall experience is successful and the expectations of the customers are met, the experience will be considered a success. Another interpretation concerns the customers and their ability to organize the impressions of the experience, if being confused, will not generate a permanent memory in the mind of the consumer according to Pine & Gilmore. At the same time, as Bo also states, it is important to develop the concept of the restaurant according to Iverson.

The reason for creating consistency in the service is to help guide the perception of the restaurant according to Iverson and possibly help the consumer to decide based on previous experiences according to Mossberg, whether the experience will fit the story of the self and ultimately become an experience that is incorporated in the identity and therefore become memorable.

## The experience and the concept

The next hypothesis I will analyse upon is the following:

* *The experience of the restaurant will depend upon how true the restaurant is to its concept.*

Prior to this quote, the conversation with Michael, the owner of Anonymous Restaurant, has regarded concepts and why they are important to restaurants. Michael brings up the following statement in relation to the topic:

*Michael: Many times when I look at restaurants that did not make it even though they are ambitious enough and of a high quality, then it is usually when you hear about it and people talk about it afterwards, then it is because they could not figure out what they wanted. Meaning they wanted to be café and restaurant and a little bistro and gourmet but at the same time serving brunch well you know there were too many things so there was not a clear concept in what we are doing here and what is it I can expect here*

[Interview, Michael, 37.00: appendix A]

Michael begins the quotation by stating that ‘I look’, using first person deixis. He uses the modal adverb ‘usually’ in relation to ‘when you hear about it’, which can indicate that he does not want to generalize upon the matter. Cohesion between the first statement regarding ‘restaurants that did not make it’ and ‘could not figure out what they wanted’ is created by the use of ‘it’ referring back to the first sentence. As another example of cohesion, Michael uses the word ‘meaning’ to refer back to what he means in the first sentence and possibly as an indicator for an elaboration and further argumentation for his discourse. When Michael utters ‘you know’ in relation to ‘too many things’ this can create a thematic structure in the text, as he possibly assumes that I know what he is referring to, but continues to give an example. During the quotation, Michael uses a variation of person deixis, as he begins with ‘I’ in relation to ‘look’. He then applies ‘you’ in relation to ‘hear about it’ and later in the same sentence uses ‘they’ in relation to ‘could not figure out’. The ‘I’ may be interpreted as his own personal statement, where as the ‘you’ used later can refer to a more general notion. As he then later uses an excluding ‘they’, possibly referring to other restauranteurs or restaurants, I interpret that he speaks not of himself when stating what ‘they’ wanted. He lastly uses ‘I’ when describing ‘what it is I can expect here’.

As he switches a lot between including, general and excluding deixis, the conditions for discourse practice becomes interesting as he both utters from his own point of view and from a more generalizing ‘you’. This can indicate that Michael has formed the discourse both collectively and individually.

Based on the above interpretation of the quotation, I will summarize it in the following conclusion:

*In many cases, the success of a restaurant depends on a clear concept as the customers otherwise may not know what to expect.*

As Mossberg suggests, the customer will prior to a purchase or during a purchase interpret on the experience according to previous experiences. However, if the concept is poorly defined as Michael describes in the quote for restaurants that do not make it, the experience can become confusing and difficult to perceive and reflect upon according to Pine & Gilmore. If the experience becomes confusing to the customer, the process of receiving and perceiving the experience as presented by Jantzen & Vetner can become negative, as the stimuli may not be considered good and the experience ultimately will not become part of the identity. As Mossberg describes, a high involvement requires personal involvement, sparked by individual characteristics such as humour and personality. As Mossberg also states, if the consumer can interpret the product as a strengthening image of the identity, the involvement will increase and may stimulate one or more of the 4 factors that concern the ego-concept. The concept may serve as indicators for how to behave, as we change our behaviour according to the situation. If such indicators are not found, the desired experience may not be fulfilled and may not be part of the desired identity or be interesting to the field in the society, the individual comes from.

Prior to this quote, Bo – the owner of Restaurationen – and I have talked about what customers expect and that their expectations vary according to what is important to them. I ask the following question in relation to the topic at hand:

*I: What is important to you then*

*Bo: Price and quality must match I don’t care if you have that level that level or that level that is really not important to me because I will select what I want beforehand but I want that they fulfil the framework they set up which they signal through their service the food and the prices of course they must match (…)*

*[Interview, Bo, 23.03: appendix E]*

Bo begins the quote by stating that ‘Price and quality must match’, using a modal verb in ‘must’, which relates to the price and quality matching. As there is no use of deixis in the sentence, my interpretation is that Bo is speaking in general terms, as he does not apply any modal adverbs to his utterance, which could affect the degree of commitment to the sentence. He continues to use a modal adverb in ‘really’ in relation to ‘not important’. He expresses that ‘I’ do not care what level the restaurant has, as long as ‘they’ fulfil the framework ‘they’ set up. By his use of deixis he might refer to his own personal conviction, that the restaurant (expressed through ‘they’) sets the concept. He continues to refer back to the restaurants with the use of ‘they’ and elaborates on how the restaurants signal the framework. As such, the discourse Bo utters regarding what is important to him in terms of restaurant concepts concern the match of price and what the restaurant signals through service and food, as he will select what he wants beforehand.

Based on the above, I will summarize the expressed discourse to the following:

*The restaurant must fulfil the framework, which consists of service, food and prices and create a match between them, as Bo selects what he wants based on these elements.*

According to Mossberg, the expectations to a restaurant and an experience in general is affected by previous experiences and can be evaluated in relation to the products characteristics such as price, trademark and more. Pine & Gilmore also states, that the more productional factors that are added to a product, the higher price can be charged. As such, the discourse presented by Bo can also be interpreted as an indicator for that the concept he is paying for – suggested by the different levels he indicates – must live up to the expectations in order to be worth while and worth the price. As Bo utters in the quote above, the level is not important to him, as long as what the restaurants signal is present in the concept. Bo elaborates that he will select what he wants beforehand, which can be interpreted as a reflexive process, where he evaluates if the presented signals from the restaurant, will supply him with enough involvement to minimize risks and maximize the enjoyment, which is gained by purchasing. According to Mossberg, it is important to consider this if the experience is to deliver an enhancing image of the self and result in a high degree of involvement. The signals that the restaurants give through price, food and service might help Bo to evaluate whether this experience will cater to his specific needs. As such he might also be expressing the process that occurs prior to a purchase, regarding the evaluation of whether the experience is relevant and can create involvement.

According to Giddens, it is important to incorporate stories to the self to uphold an identity in the modern society. If Bo perhaps evaluates that the concept or framework is not coherent, the story might become irrelevant to his identity as it does not confirm his story or can contribute as a new story of the self.

Before this quote, Henrik, a guest at Anonymous Restaurant, has spoken about why he thinks Anonymous Restaurant is a success and in that context, he mentions their concept. The quotation begins right after I have asked him, why he thinks it is important:

*I: You just mentioned that they have been true to their concept. Why do you think that is important?*

*Henrik: […] If I have an experience, such as I had 3 months ago and return after 6 months and I cannot recognize neither the atmosphere, food or anything then I would feel cheated.*

*I: Yes. Why?*

*Henrik: because then I would feel like I have been mislead if nobody had told me that ‘you must be aware that Anonymous Inn is no longer Anonymous Inn, now it is a cafeteria. We just forgot to lower the prices’.*

*I: [Laughs] That would be some price, for a cafeteria then.*

[Interview, Henrik, 34.00: appendix C]

Henrik utters, using the first person deixis ‘I’, that he would feel cheated if he returned to the restaurant and did not receive the same experience 6 months later. By using ‘because’ he creates coherence between the first utterance regarding feeling cheated, he argues based on an example that if nobody told him, switching to ‘we’ within deixis, which is possibly excluding as he states ‘we just forgot to lower the prices’ as we may refer to the staff.

Based on the above, I summarize the discourse to the following:

*If a guest cannot recognize the experience and it has been altered to something less, but not changed the price accordingly, the consumer feels mislead.*

From this discourse, there is a link to the theory presented by Mossberg, as she defines that whether a product is considered relevant relies on knowledge of the consequences related to the purchase, which is based on previous experiences. As such, a consumer might feel mislead if the restaurant suddenly changes the concept and thus delivers a different experience. According to Pine & Gilmore, the product must match the price and vice versa. As such, the discourse uttered by Henrik points towards his expectations being determined by the price in this case as the main factor.

Giddens suggests that the self must uphold a story in the modern society, in order to define the identity. As such, a revisit to a restaurant may not renew it, but may confirm the selected story to include in the identity and likewise possibly disappoint, if the story no longer fits. According to Bourdieu, cultural capital is important in fields, and within Henrik’s field it may be the case that visits to gourmet restaurants provide cultural capital for him. However, if the experience does not live up to his standards within the field, the experience cannot be used as a means to supply him with cultural capital.

## The customized service

The fourth hypothesis I will analyse upon is the following:

* *The staff at a successful gourmet restaurant is service-minded and adapt the service to the particular guest.*

Prior to this quote, the interview with Michael – the owner of Anonymous Restaurant – has regarded what constitutes a successful restaurant, and as an element in this, Michael mentions service, which I ask him to elaborate on:

*I: You just mentioned service. What is good service for you?*

*Michael: Well, good service is that the service, waiter is courteous or empathic in relation to the guest and attentive and understanding and it is clear… usually in our daily routine we have educated people hired, meaning people that has an education as waiters […] But it is not enough just to know a lot about wines because it is not all people that wants to know a lot about the wine, they may just want some white wine that tastes good, that can be someone’s needs and that is what I mean with that you should be courteous and empathetic in relation to the guest.*

[Interview, Michael, 28.34: appendix A]

In the quote, Michael paraphrases and uses the adverb ‘good’ in relation to service, as mentioned by me in the question, which may affect the discourse in this case as the term ‘good’ is presented by me. He applies the adjectives ‘courteous’, ‘empathic’ and ‘attentive’ as he describes good service in relation to a waiter. He continues to describe, that it is not enough to ‘just’ have knowledge of the wine using ‘but’ to start his sentence, possibly to refer to his previous statement, regarding that they mostly use educated waiters. He uses third person deixis in his utterance regarding knowledge of the wine and at the end of the sentence uses ‘I’ in relation to ‘mean’ which can represent, that he utters from another discourse type, possibly as a restauranteur, than earlier in the sentence, due to the use of ‘it’ that can be interpreted as a more general discourse on the field, compared to the personal ‘I’ used at the end.

Based on the above, I will summarize the discourse in the following sentence:

*Good service is a waiter that is courteous, empathic in relation to the guest, attentive and understanding due to guests having different needs.*

As pointed out by Pine & Gilmore, putting a guest through an impersonal routine regardless of the individual is considered bad service. Iverson points out that a successful restaurant gives customers special attention, which makes the customers, feel valued and important. If not, the experience may be considered bad and will not have created a memory and possibly a returning customer.

As Bourdieu states, the consumption can serve as a symbol within a group. But as it is through stories according to Giddens, that we utter our identity, it is possibly uttered to a member of the group. If the experience did not live up to our expectations, it may be considered bad and may not give social capital within the field.

Before this quotation, the interview has concerned what contributes to building Henrik’s – who has visited Anonymous Restaurant – expectations to a gourmet restaurant and as part of this he mentions service, which I ask him an interpretive question regarding, as a means to ensure, that I have understood his utterance and a option for him to elaborate on the matter:

*I: you just mentioned the service and that they should not disturb all the time and ask if the food is good. Is that about the waiter maybe sensing your needs?*

*Henrik: Yes. Definitely.*

*I: Can you tell me a bit more about that?*

*Henrik: Yes, well you can expect from them that they read us as customers better and more precise than if you visit ‘Jensens Bøfhus’ where they… There it is ‘Jensens Bøfhus’ that sets the concept. […] You cannot get it any different than what it says on the menu. But in a gourmet restaurant I expect them to be able to read me and see I am not the type who wants long speaks about the wine where there, at another table, surely sits someone who really wants a long speak about the wine. So they must be able to read their customers on what needs they have.*

[Interview, Henrik, 11.20: appendix C]

Henrik utters that ‘you’, a third person deixis, can expect that ‘they’, possibly referring to the waiters, are able to read ‘us as customers’, referring to customers. He describes that they should be better and ‘more’ precise than at Jensen’s Bøfhus, thus creating an example, comparing the gourmet restaurant to a cheaper restaurant chain in Denmark, where he uses the deixis ‘you’ in relation to not getting it any different from what it says in the menu. In the next sentence, he utters ‘I’ as his choice of deixis, and uses ‘but’ at the beginning of the sentence, creating coherence between the argument, that he expects ‘them’, referring to the waiters’ to be able to read ‘me’, referring to himself, using an example regarding wine. He ends the sentence with ‘so’ possibly as a concluding utterance and to create coherence in the argument, also using ‘they’ as a deixis possibly referring to the waiters, when describing, that they must be able to read ‘their’ customers, referring to customers in relation to the waiters, and using ‘they’ again which this time possibly refers to the customers and their needs.

Based on the above, I will summarize the discourse in the following sentence:

*In a gourmet restaurant, waiters must be able to read their customers’ needs more precise than in cheaper restaurants.*

In relation to Iverson, the importance of offering special attention to customers in gourmet restaurants is important, because it makes the customer feel valued. If the customer feels, that the service is pleasant, the experience may be considered good, when evaluated according to Jantzen & Vetner’s model.

On the level of social practice, the importance of seeking and receiving a possibly good experience can be caused by the desire to seek and uphold stories of the self, according to Giddens.

Prior to this quotation, the interview with Bo – the owner of Restaurationen – has regarded the different roles of the staff, where I ask what the waiter’s role is:

*I: What is the waiter’s role when the guests enter*

*Bo: the waiters have a huge role and is a tremendously underrated profession in a non-service society as the Danish where people do not want to pay to receive service (…) But it is actually a respectable profession and you run into very few skilled waiters during a long life in the restaurant trade (…) Waiters must be able to read customers they must know what wine they serve they must be able to pair food and wine they must well every single guest that sits down is different from the next and every task is brand new and from the beginning you cannot create a set of standard rules for how to wait on a guest that does simply not exist so therefore the waiters assignment they sell the restaurant they are the face of the restaurant with me and Lisbet so it is insanely important that it functions well*

*I: So maybe it regards intuition for them*

*Bo: It is definitely about intuition simply regular knowledge of human nature and you only get that if you are in the trade for a long long time*

*[Interview, Bo, 13.35: appendix E]*

In the quote, Bo uses a modal adverb ‘huge’ in relation to role and waiter and continues to describe the profession as ‘tremendously underrated’. The term ‘but’ creates cohesion between the first statement and the statement regarding ‘a respectable profession’. Bo describes the waiter’s role with the modal verb ‘must’ in relation to ‘read customers’, ‘wine they serve’ – ‘they’ referring to waiters – and ‘pair food’. Regarding the theme, Bo presents a presumption regarding the practice of knowledge that the Danish people ‘do not want to pay for service’. Because of Bo’s statement regarding ‘run into few skilled waiters during a long life in the restaurant trade’ my interpretation is that Bo’s utterance comes from drawing upon an interdiscursivity being his experience in the trade, as he uses third person deixis (‘you’) in relation to the sentence, which can be interpreted as a generalising use of deixis.

Later in the sentence Bo describes the waiters using ‘they’ in relation to ‘sell the restaurant’ and ‘ are the face of the restaurant’. At the end of the quote, Bo confirms my interpretation of the first sentence, by stating that ‘it is definitely about intuition’ and continues to elaborate with words such as ‘human nature’ in relation to the role of the waiter. At the end if the sentence, ‘you’ is used twice in relation to ‘get that’, ‘that’ referring to possibly ‘intuition’ and ‘knowledge of human nature’. Based on the above observations, my interpretation is that Bo utters a discourse regarding the waiter’s role at a restaurant, which he utters to be ‘insanely important’ and applies terms such as ‘intuition’ and ‘knowledge of human nature’ on whether the waiter is skilled or not.

I will summarize the presented discourse in the following statement:

*The role of a waiter is very important, as they must have intuition and knowledge of human nature and regard customers as different from one another.*

As Iverson states, the surest way to provide bad service is to create a uniform routine for the service, which corresponds with Bo’s discourse regarding every guest being different. As successful restaurants make their customers feel special according to Iverson, failure to doing so can perhaps result in a negative perception of the experience. As previous experiences is used to evaluate whether to purchase a product, a bad experience can affect in a negative manner and make it difficult to generate involvement according to Mossberg. This can possibly result in not creating a repeat business for the restaurant, as the expectations to the experience are not fulfilled according to Iverson.

If the restaurant does not succeed in delivering a positive experience, the customer may not want to include it as a part of their identity, as they do not see a mirroring image of themselves and thus cannot re-create or develop their identity by incorporating it in the story of themselves. This might result in consumers not retelling the stories to others within their field and gain social capital according to Bourdieu – or even retelling a story, that focus on how bad the experience has been and thereby advise others to stay away.

During my participating observation at both Restaurationen and Anonymous Restaurant, where I mainly observed on the interaction between the customers and staff, my observations have shown that the quality of the service is high and adapted to the individual guest. In the following, I will present examples of my observation that confirm the above statement.

At Restaurationen I observed a similar routine performed towards each guest, as they were greeted in the door, asked if they would like to hang their coat and then shown to their table, where they were offered an aperitif. Shortly after, a waiter would return with a menu and serve food and wine during the meal. If the guest did not have questions or wanted to start a conversation with the waiter, the waiter would simply present the food or wine or just clear the table without conversation. If the guest did however start a conversation, the waiter would always respond and continue the conversation until the guest was satisfied [Appendix J: Participating observation at Restaurationen]. As seen in the above quotations, the adaptation of the service is important to the guests and is also experienced as important by restaruanteurs.

At Anonymous Restaurant, the observation I made during the evening are very similar to what I have observed at Restaurationen. Here the guest is met by a hostess instead of a waiter, but is as well offered to hang the coat, shown to their table and offered an aperitif. The same observation regarding the conversation and conduct of the waiters is valid at Anonymous Restaurant [Appendix I: Participating observation at Anonymous Restaurant].

## The experience, that keeps on giving

The fifth discourse I will examine through the empirical data, is as follows:

* *An experience in a successful gourmet restaurant is timeless and entails everything beyond the basic need of eating and is a whole concept, which can be remembered and enjoyed afterwards.*

Rene, a guest at Anonymous Restaurant, has prior to this quotation uttered that there is a context between several things and he continues to elaborate upon how he regards an experience in a gourmet restaurant:

*Rene: I regard an experience… As I said before, it is a correlation of food, wine but basically it is also, when you have been there and it has been a good visit then it is something you talk about afterwards maybe for several days when you want to tell your friends and acquaintances that ‘you really must try this place’ then I would say it has been an experience.*

 [Interview, Rene, 10.15: appendix B]

Rene uses ‘I’ in terms of deixis, which refers to him and may be an expression that the utterance is his personal opinion, in relation to how he regards an experience. He then continues by describing ‘visit’ with the modal adverb ‘good’, using ‘it’ which may refer to ‘visit’ when describing what makes ‘you’ talk about it for several days. He applies ‘really must’ as modal adverbs in relation to try, when he utters what he wants to tell friends and acquaintances. He concludes on the argument, by stating ‘then I would say’, using first person deixis when describing when it has been an experience.

When Rene utters ‘As I said before’ he may be referring to a discourse uttered previously in the interview, and that he is drawing upon this, creating manifest intertextuality.

Based on the above, I interpret the following discourse to be represented in the quote:

*A good experience involves wine and food, but it also involves wanting to share the experience with friends and acquaintances afterwards.*

According to Iverson, many things can affect the experience, but if a gourmet restaurant is consistent in delivering an experience, it relies mostly on word-of-mouth, as seen in the discourse above, which may imply a need for customers to share the experience with e.g. friends.

According to Jantzen & Vetner, the experience transforms from the body, to something that is stored in the individual’s identity. As Giddens points out, the identity is uttered through stories of the self and may therefor be uttered in relation to gaining social capital in the group the individual belongs to.

Prior to this quote, the interview with Pia – who has visited Restaurationen on several occasions – has evolved around if her expectations were fulfilled during her visits. After that, I ask the following question:

*I: Have you thought about the experience at Restaurationen afterwards*

*Pia: yes that is something you do I also walk by sometimes and think like well yes now it has been some years since we were in there maybe we should go there again soon*

*I: yes*

*Pia: So I do that yes I think I think there are such things you think about like you have been there to eat some times and you have never been disappointed and you have had good food and it is delicious and well prepared and super produce and things like that right that is what I think you think about*

[Interview, Pia, 37.25: Appendix F]

As I ask the question, I use second person deixis, referring to Pia. As she answers, she uses third person deixis when stating ‘something you do’, something possibly referring back to my interview question, which creates coherence between the question and answer. She continues to elaborate by stating that ‘I also walk by’, using first person deixis in relation to think, where she ends the sentence by giving an example of what she thinks. Here she uses ‘maybe’ in relation to ‘should go there again soon’, where she also applies ‘we’ within deixis, possibly referring to the persons, she has visited Restaurationen with. She continues by confirming my question with a ‘yes’ in relation to ‘So I do that’, also using first person deixis. She continues to describe ‘such things you think about’ switching to third person deixis when uttering ‘never been disappointed’, ‘have good food’. She ends the sentence by using ‘I’ when describing ‘think you think about’. She uses a modal adverb ‘super’ in relation to produce, ‘well’ in relation to prepared and ‘good’ in relation to food, which I interpret has a positive effect on the words they are in relation to.

As Pia in the quote uses both ‘I’ and ‘you’ to describe her opinions, there may be interdiscursivity present, as the ‘you’ may refer to a more general assumption on what a consumer thinks about after a visit to Restaurationen. In contrast to the general notion, Pia also uses ‘I’ several times, which can be interpreted as her own personal statement and as such there may be two discourse types that are being drawn upon in the quote. As Pia answers the question, my interpretation is that she does think about the visit to Restaurationen, and as an example of this you might reflect on the good food, super produce and well prepared food, which results in wanting to visit the restaurant again. I will summarize the discourse in the following conclusion:

*When Pia walks by or thinks about Restaurationen, she thinks about visiting again and in general you might think about the food, produce and preparation of such.*

According to Jantzen & Vetner, the customer evaluates the experience on 4 stages, where the reflections occurs on the last stage and is transformed into communicative utterances as can be seen above in Pia’s quote. The experience, if evaluated to be positive, will be stored in the individual’s identity and social community’. As Pia utters on the matter, the use of ‘we’ in the beginning of the sentence, can be interpreted as a reference to her social community and her desire to share the experience with others. As an experience at Restaurationen has been evaluated to be positive by Pia, her desire to re-visit may be due to a wish to re-confirm her experience and thus her story of the self, as it can be interpreted based on the quotation, that she has incorporated the experience in her identity. Another interpretation concerns her use of ‘we’, which may refer to other members of her social group, where the consumption of the experience at Restaurationen can be seen as a symbol that serves as part of creating a social group.

Before this quote, Michael and I have talked about what defines a successful restaurant and as part of his answer to that topic Michael answers the following:

*Michael: It is not enough just to get them inside they should preferably like being here too. Otherwise, they won’t return. And therefore it is clear that there must be a harmony between of course what they get and what they pay and the whole experience as in the environment, the service and such things are contributing to build it together and uhm so it it a whole package and not just good food.*

[Interview, Michael, 27.30: appendix A]

In the quotation, Michael states that ‘it is not enough just to get them inside’, ‘them’ possibly referring to the guests at the restaurant. Michael utters ‘of course’ in relation to a harmony between ‘what they get and what they pay and the whole experience’ perhaps creating a theme in terms of an underlying assumption uttered, regarding it being clear that there must be a harmony. When Michael says ‘it is clear’ in relation to the harmony, it can also be interpreted as an underlying assumption in terms of selecting the theme in the quotation.

Based on the above, I interpret that the following discourse is represented in the quotation:

*There must be a harmony between price, experience and concept as they all contribute to creating a whole experience.*

According to Mossberg, person, object and situation must be considered in the experience, because the individual has different expectations to the experience, and the experience must as such not only aim for one of these elements, but for a whole concept as described in the discourse above. The difference in expectations can according to Jantzen and Vetner be affected by differences in culture and social heritage, or as Bourdieu states, in differences according to which field or group, you wish to belong. As not all elements may give social capital in all fields, the expectations and reactions to the experiences can possibly vary according to which restaurant an individual chooses to visit.

## When an experience goes bad

The last hypothesis I will analyse upon in the analysis of Anonymous Restaurants is the following:

* *A guest has expectations to the experience at a gourmet restaurant and if they are not met, the experience will be considered bad*

Before this quote, the interview has just regarded the fact that Anonymous Restaurant moved location, where Rene, a guest at Anonymous Restaurant, utters about being excited to see if they had made it work in a new place, but says it did not affect the experience much. Afterwards I ask the following question, regarding what happens if the expectations are not met:

*I: What happens to your impression of a gourmet restaurant, if your expectations are not met?*

*Rene: Well, I become disappointed, what are you thinking about?*

*I: For instance if your experience is worse, than you had expected?*

*Rene: Yes. I would definitely mention it and point it out if I speak to anybody and they asked how the visit had been and tell it and underline it. And I will also be cautious about visiting again if it had been a negative experience.*

[Interview, Rene, 28.04: Appendix B]

Rene utters that ‘I’ become disappointed, using first person deixis. He continues to elaborate, that he would ‘definitely’, being a modal adverb, mention ‘it’ and point ‘it’ out, referring to the expectations not being met, if anybody asked to the visit, ‘it’ referring to the bad experience. He lastly states that ‘I’, referring to himself with a first person deixis, that he would ‘also’, which may refer back to the previous argument regarding him telling others, that he would be cautious about visiting again, if the experience was negative. ‘Also’ creates coherence between the sentences in the quote, as it refers to the previous argument. The use of deixis may indicate, that he is speaking based on his own discourse as a customer and not a general discourse type, as he does not use ‘you’ when describing the topic.

As based on the above, I interpret that the following discourse is presented in the quote.

*If a restaurant does not live up to the expectations, the experience will be considered bad and would because of that tell others about it.*

According to the theory, Iverson states that if the experience is not met, the restaurant will not generate a repeat business, as Rene also describes by being ‘cautious’ to return, in the quote.

Iverson states that many factors can contribute to the experience in a negative manner, which is supported by jantzen & Vetner, who say that both a cultural and social heritage contributes to both expectations to and reflections about an experience.

If the experience is considered bad, it may not deliver social status in a given field, as others within the same group might not find the experience good. As such, this may be the cause for Rene’s reaction towards telling others.

Prior to this quote, the conversation with Per who has visited Restaurationen in Copenhagen has regarded what a positive experience entails for him at a gourmet restaurant. After that, I ask a question regarding bad experiences in gourmet restaurants:

*I: We have talked a lot about the good experience and now we will try to flip the situation what if you were to have a bad experience in relation to a gourmet restaurant*

*Per: That is actually all the opposite*

*I: yes*

*Per: Well of the good it is if I do not feel that uhm if you do not feel special in the restaurant and if you do not feel if you do not get the feeling of the food being cooked just for you uhm*

*I: How do you get that feeling*

*Per: You get it if it comes to seem like an assembly line or factory like that there’s not personality well for instance personality and it is actually often the waiters that create that personality it is them who like try to create that it is them who make you feel special*

[Interview, Per, XX.XX: Appendix D]

At the beginning of the text, I refer directly to a previous text in the interview, by stating ‘we have talked a lot about the good experience’ and employ manifest intertextuality by referring to it. Per’s answer include the statement ‘all of the opposite’ which he elaborates on being ‘of the good’ where my interpretation is that he is also referring to the previous text as mentioned above. He then uses ‘I’ in relation to ‘do not feel’ but changes it to ‘you’ in relation to ‘do not feel’ afterwards. In relation to ‘feel’ Per uses the words ‘special’ and ‘food being cooked just for you’. As I ask him to elaborate, he expresses his answer using third person deixis ‘you’ and without modal verbs, which can indicate that he is convinced of his statement and do not need to enhance it by using adverbs. At the end of his sentence, ‘them’ may refer to the waiters as described by Per previously in the sentence, creating cohesion in his argument.

In the quote, Per expresses that a bad experience is connected to the waiters and the experience they deliver. If the service becomes ‘like an assembly line’ he does not feel special, which creates a bad experience for him. Based on the above, I will summarize the discourse in the following:

*If Per does not feel special and the service becomes mundane he will have a bad experience. The experience depends on the waiters, who create the personality in the service.*

According to Iverson it is important for gourmet restaurants to make the customers feel special, as Per also expresses a need to feel, due to the price a gourmet restaurant are charging.

The need to feel special may cater to the ego-concept according to Mossberg, as giving yourself a present or spoiling yourself is often combined with a high degree of involvement. As Per expresses, he wants to feel special and ‘like the food is cooked just for me’, which may imply that he seeks pampering from a visit to a gourmet restaurant.

Consuming a product to pamper you can be interpreted as seeking out an experience, that Per knows he will like. At the same time, experiencing something opposite of what he seeks – in this case to feel special – might create a negative experience. As Mossberg describes, consumers evaluate prior to the purchase, whether the experience will be beneficial for the individual. If the experience does not fulfil the needs and values of the customer, the experience may be considered negative and ultimately not become part of the identity of the consumer or contribute to the social capital in the individuals field in the society, thus making it difficult to use the experience as a means to uphold the affiliation to the group.

# Comparison of hypotheses and discourses

In this chapter, I will compare the presented hypotheses and the discourses I have identified during the analysis. The aim is to either verify or falsify the hypotheses, by comparing them to the summarization of the presented discourses by both consumers and restauranteurs.

As such, I will list each hypothesis and the discourses I have identified in relation to it during the analysis and thereafter discuss whether there is a basis for verifying or falsifying it.

The first hypothesis, I will compare to the discourses is the following:

* *A customer has expectations when entering a gourmet restaurant and it is important that the restaurants meets these, in order to appeal to the customers and deliver a positive experience.*

Below I have listed the summary of the discourses, I found present in the empirical data regarding this hypothesis:

*Michael: It is important to be direct and signal to the customer, what you aim to deliver. Otherwise, customers might expect something else and leave again.*

*Rene: High expectations are towards the food, wine and service which must all be good, which is based on previous experiences at this restaurant and in general because of the class of the restaurant.*

*Per: Per has expectations to gourmet restaurants, but the level of the expectation depends on if he knows the restaurant he is visiting. Restaurationen has fulfilled his expectations and needs ever time.*

Both Per and Rene presents a discourse that concerns expectations, and both utter that they have expectations to gourmet restaurants. In addition to that, Per speaks of a difference in the expectations based on if he is familiar with the restaurant or not. He does not specify what his expectations are regarding, but presents a discourse that expresses that Restaurationen has fulfilled his expectations every time. Rene utters a more specific discourse, as he lists food, wine and service as the main focus of his expectations. He refers to previous experiences and the type of restaurant, as what creates these expectations. Michael, the owner of Anonymous Restaurant, expresses the importance of creating the right expectations in relation to what you aim to deliver, as they will prevent a customer from leaving.

In all of these discourses, it is expressed that a customer has expectations. However, it is only Michael, that actually articulates the importance of signalling what you will deliver as it will prevent customers from leaving and thus having a bad experience. Per articulates that Restaurationen has always lived up to his expectations, and as such he latently indicates the importance of his expectations being met. Based on the above argumentation and comparison of the discourse summarizations and hypothesis, I find the hypothesis verified, because all 3 respondents utter that expectations are present and that they must be fulfilled.

The second hypothesis, I will compare and discuss is the following:

* *A successful gourmet restaurant has a timeless and whole concept, which the restauranteur knows how to develop.*

Below I have listed the summarization of the discourses identified in the analysis:

*Michael: It is important to have a concept that you are true to and believe in, but at the same time are willing to adapt according to the location and customers.*

*Henrik: The price implies expectations such as the food, wine and restaurant to be connected in a concept.*

*Bo: To create a success in the long run, you have to create consistency in the food, wine and service and to develop it continuously as you do not achieve long term success by standing still.*

When comparing this hypothesis to Michael’s discourse he articulates that it is important to have a concept, but does not state that it must be timeless. In relation to whether it must be developed or not, he utters that it must be adapted to the customers and location.

Henrik, a customer at Anonymous Restaurant, articulates that he expects, based on the price, that there is a concept, which entails the food, wine and restaurant. As such, he only states the importance of a concept, but does not regard it important to be timeless or developed upon.

Bo, the owner of Restaurationen, articulates that a success in the long run requires a consistency in food, wine and service and at the same time a necessity to develop it continuously. He does not articulate the word concept, but still presents a discourse regarding consistency in food, wine and service, which can be interpreted as a concept. He does, as Michael and Henrik, not articulate the concept as being timeless.

Based on the above, I consider the hypothesis to be falsified, as none of the respondents mention the concept as being timeless. All respondents in this case, do articulate the need for a concept and both restauranteurs express the need to adapt and develop it. As such, there is a strong indicator that a concept is relevant to a successful restaurant, although it does not need to be timeless.

The third hypothesis, I will compare and discuss in relation to the discourses identified during the analysis, is the following:

* *The experience of the restaurant will depend upon how true the restaurant is to its concept.*

Below I have listed the discourse summarization, as presented in the analysis, for each respondent:

*Michael: In many cases, the success of a restaurant depends on a clear concept as the customers otherwise may not know what to expect.*

*Bo: The restaurant must fulfil the framework, which consists of service, food and prices and create a match between them, as Bo selects what he wants based on these elements.*

*Henrik: If a guest cannot recognize the experience and it has been altered to something less, but not changed the price accordingly, the consumer feels mislead.*

In relation to the hypothesis, Michael – the owner of Anonymous Restaurant – articulates that the success of a restaurant depends on how clear the concept is defined by the restaurant, as it affects the expectations of customers.

Bo, the owner of Restaurationen, also articulates a discourse that concerns the concept, as he states that the restaurant must fulfil the concept, because it will affect his selection of the restaurant.

Henrik utters a different discourse on the matter that concerns altering the concept to something less than expected. As such, it can be said, that Henrik’s experience also depends not only on the concept, but on maintaining the standard he has experienced during previous visits.

Based on the above, I consider the hypothesis verified, as all respondents articulate that a restaurant must be true to the presented concept, as it will otherwise affect the experience in a negative manner.

The fourth hypothesis I will compare and discuss in relation to the identified discourses in the analysis is the following:

* *The staff at a successful gourmet restaurant is service-minded and adapt the service to the particular guest.*

Below I have listed the discourse summaries I will discuss and compare to the hypothesis above:

*Michael: Good service is a waiter that is courteous, empathic in relation to the guest, attentive and understanding due to guests having different needs.*

*Henrik: In a gourmet restaurant, waiters must be able to read their customers’ needs more precise than in cheaper restaurants.*

*Bo: The role of a waiter is very important, as they must have intuition and knowledge of human nature and regard customers as different from one another.*

Michael presents a discourse, which contains what good service is due to guests having different needs. Bo presents a very similar discourse, where he articulates the importance of the waiter’s role and states that the guests have different needs that the waiter must consider. Henrik, a guest at Anonymous Restaurant presents a discourse regarding an expectation towards the waiter being able to read the customers needs in gourmet restaurants.

Based on the above observations, I regard the hypothesis as verified, due to the strong analytical evidence, that service in a gourmet restaurant must be adapted to the particular guest, which is in accordance with the presented hypothesis.

The fifth hypothesis, concerns the following, which I will compare to the identified discourses:

* *An experience in a successful restaurant is timeless and entails everything beyond the basic need of eating and is a whole concept, which can be remembered and enjoyed afterwards.*

Below I have listed the discourse summaries from the analysis regarding the hypothesis in question:

*Rene: A good experience involves wine and food, but it also involves wanting to share the experience with friends and acquaintances afterwards.*

*Pia: When Pia walks by or thinks about Restaurationen, she thinks about visiting again and in general you might think about the food, produce and preparation of such.*

*Michael: There must be a harmony between price, experience and concept as they all contribute to creating a whole experience.*

Both Rene (guest at Anonymous Restaurant) and Pia (guest at Restaurationen) articulate a reflection over a visit to a gourmet restaurant, and Rene articulates a desire to share it with friends and acquaintances. This corresponds to the part of the hypothesis, concerning an experience that can be remembered and enjoyed afterwards. Neither Pia nor Rene articulate the experience as timeless or that the experience is everything beyond the basic need of eating and a whole concept. Michael does however articulate the need for a whole concept, as his discourse concerns the correlation between price, experience and concept for creating a whole experience for the guest.

As none of the respondents utter all elements in the hypothesis in question, I consider it to be falsified. However, as both Rene and Pia articulate a reflection of the experience, there might be a tendency towards the experience being memorable in the minds of consumers as part of the experience. The same can be said regarding Michael’s discourse, because it concerns the whole concept, which is needed to create the whole experience. As such, there might also be a tendency here towards the hypothesis, but even so I will consider the hypothesis falsified, as it is not confirmed by all of the respondents.

The last hypothesis I will compare and discuss is the following:

* *A guest has expectations to the experience at a gourmet restaurant and if they are not met, the experience will be considered bad.*

Below I have listed the discourse summaries created from the discourses presented by respondents in my analysis:

*Rene: If a restaurant does not live up to the expectations, the experience will be considered bad and would because of that tell others about it.*

*Per: If Per does not feel special and the service becomes mundane he will have a bad experience. The experience depends on the waiters, who create the personality in the service.*

Rene articulates that the experience will be considered bad, if his expectations are not met during a visit to a gourmet restaurant, and does confirm the hypothesis by stating so. Likewise, Per utters a discourse, where he needs to feel special and have service with personality, as he otherwise will not feel special and have a bad experience. As both customers confirm the hypothesis, I consider it to be verified.

# Methodical reflection

In this chapter, I will reflect over the methodology applied in this thesis, but mainly focus on the issue I think is most pressing to address, being the hypotheses I have presented and structured my thesis on. During the chapter I will discuss and reflect upon what impact the application of these hypotheses have on my research and how they have affected my choices throughout the thesis.

I will also shortly address the replicability, reliability and validity in relation to the hypotheses and the fact, that I am working based on social constructivism.

## Working with hypotheses

As presented in the methodology, the hypotheses are created based on two interviews with respectively Jørgen Kønigshøfer from DRC and Tine Skriver from HORESTA, where I have created a condensation of meaning to form the hypotheses from. By selecting only two persons to represent the trade organisations and create the hypotheses based on these interviews, can create a very narrow insight to the field, which can result in a thesis, that only researches the discourses of two employees at trade unions in Denmark at a given time. As stated in the section on social constructivism, discourses are very fluent and change over time, which creates hypotheses that may already have been altered or out-dated even before I hand in this thesis. There is also a source of error in the fact that I have selected to apply a condensation of meaning in order to draw out the central meanings of the interviews. By doing so, I am undeniably using my own subjectivity to some degree to select which meanings to draw out and which to leave behind and by doing so affect which hypotheses are researched in this thesis. As a researcher, I may have missed central opinions and meanings in the interview or even misinterpreted what has been said during the interviews.

The hypotheses have also affected the interview guides I have created, as they have been structured by the different themes in the hypotheses. As the hypotheses are based on subjective opinions from two respondents, the fact that I have structured all my interview guides according to these can have caused a very limited view on the problem field, as I may have missed other discourses from the respondents that can have been central for the field.

Another reason the hypothesis can have limited my research is in the selection of theory, where I have selected representative theories for each hypothesis. As I have structured my analysis after the hypotheses and theory as well, I may have excluded the possibility of finding other relevant discourses regarding my research question and problem field. This can have resulted in the theory only being applied in order to support the statements and explain why the selected hypotheses are verified or falsified, not taking other possible theories into account, as different discourses could have appeared in the analysis, had I not structured it by the different hypotheses.

As such, the choice to apply hypothesis can have limited my research in terms of theory, empirical data, gathering of empirical data, during the analysis and ultimately when concluding on the research question.

Even in spite of the above-mentioned implications with the choice to work with hypotheses in my thesis, I still believe this thesis to be of relevance to the restaurant industry and trade organisations. As there are none or very little research on this area to be found, selecting to work with hypotheses has created a stance in a field, where there is not much theory or research to grasp on. Creating an inductive study based on empirical findings would have created a number of indefinable factors and therefore result in a thesis with a lack of focus. Even though there are implications in terms of validity in this thesis when looking at the creating and application of the hypotheses, the subjectivity has also served as a manner of understanding a field, where no knowledge in this specific field existed, thus providing a manner of gaining insight and relating to the respondents specific discourse field. I have throughout the thesis made precautions to ensure a thesis that reflects upon my own subjectivity and ensured as far as possible, that it has not affected the thesis in a negative manner, where my subjectivity force certain interpretations or certain results.

# Perspective

In this thesis, I have outlined a problem field that only includes the experience at the two restaurants I am analysing and eliminating research of other elements that may affect the problem field. One of the things, that have an effect on my problem field is branding, which I have selected to create my perspective upon. The reasons for choosing this topic is that I first of all have found several mentions of the impact of branding in my empirical data, where both consumers and restauranteurs have mentioned it to some degree (e.g. reviews from food critics, media or personality of the owners).

It is relevant to continue the research on this field in relation to branding in order to create a more holistic understanding of what constitutes a restaurant that has long-term success. One of the places to begin this research is by focusing on what branding can contribute to the understanding. Branding mainly involves setting one product aside from another by creating a focus on the differences of similar products, but as I will argue in this chapter based on Holt [2004], there is more to branding than just standing out compared to your competitors.

In the following, I will present theory from Holt on iconic brands and suggest how this can be applied for further study on the field. I have selected to apply Holt in this perspective, as there are several parallels to draw between the theory I have applied in this thesis and the theory he presents on iconic brands and cultural branding, as I will suggest how a research in relation to branding can contribute to this field.

Holt bases his model for cultural branding on iconic brands telling compelling identity myths, that rely on anxieties and desires in a nation. The purpose of telling such myths to the consumers is to create a relation between the myth and the consumer, as the consumer ideally identities with the presented myth:

*Customers use iconic brands as symbolic salves. They grab hold of the myth as they use the product as a means to lessen their identity burdens.*

[Holt, 2004: 8]

In relation to the theory I have applied in this thesis, the quote presented by Holt could be an interesting theory to apply to the empirical data as several of the respondents utter that the experience must match there expectations, which are – according to Bourdieu, Giddens and Mossberg – created from the field you belong to (or wish to belong to), the identity you have established through stories and the previous experiences a consumer has encountered. As my analysis have showed a similarity between the applied theory, an analysis of how branding have affected these factors can possibly supply insight to if and how these restaurants’ branding contributes to the long-term success, they have obtained and the effect it has on the consumers.

Another interesting notion, that Holt brings up is that identities are not personal but are in fact very similar, as they are built on and affected by the same historical changes in society. These changes in society can be used to create identity myths for companies, as the value of the myth is not the myth itself, but the alignment with the society’s incipient identity desires [Holt, 2004: 9].

Based on this statement, it could give insight to the branding to research the current identity myths in the society. Holt suggests looking at the three building blocks for myth markets; national ideology, cultural contradictions and populist worlds [Holt, 2004: 56]. The purpose of this research is to identify current myths in the society and select the one(s) most fitting for the company – in this case gourmet restaurants – as iconic brands rely on a few masterful performances, that linger in the minds of consumers by getting the myth just right [Holt, 2004: 57]. Here a research of the branding of the two restaurants I have analysed can have two dimensions. As these restaurants are already successful, they might be defined as an iconic brand, however an analysis of this may be necessary. Holt presents a model for defining the type of brand, separated into

If the restaurant is defined as an iconic brand, it can be interesting to research which identity myths they apply, how they select them in relation to the brand and how the consumers perceive them and if they affect the consumption of the product.

Eventually a research of the branding, using theory by Holt, can perhaps create a model for branding within the restaurant trade, in particular gourmet restaurants. This can be valuable for restauranteurs worldwide opening a gourmet restaurant.

# Conclusion

In this chapter I will answer my research question and present, which hypotheses are falsified and which are verified. The aim is to use the hypotheses as a means to answer the research question, but at the same time present the differences and nuances discovered in the analysis in order to give a precise and well-founded answer to the research question.

During my analysis I have researched what the respondents from Restaurationen and Anonymous Restaurant have uttered in relation to the different topics presented in each of the hypotheses in order to identify the discourses of the respondents and summarize them in a concluding sentence. In the comparison I discuss and compare the summarizations of the discourses identified in the analysis to the hypotheses presented in the problem field.

During this comparison, I found that 2 hypotheses were falsified, which are the following:

* *A successful gourmet restaurant has a timeless and whole concept, which the restauranteur knows how to develop.*
* *An experience in a successful restaurant is timeless and entails everything beyond the basic need of eating and is a whole concept, which can be remembered and enjoyed afterwards.*

Even though I found these hypotheses to be falsified, there are elements of both that are confirmed through the analysis. In the cases I have analysed, both restaurants have a whole concept, which the restauranteurs develop, but none of the respondents articulated it as being a timeless concept.

The same can be concluded regarding the second falsified hypotheses, as the experience was articulated as a whole concept that is remembered and enjoyed afterwards, but again not articulated as a timeless experience.

I consequently found the rest of the hypotheses to be verified, being the following four:

* *A customer has expectations when entering a gourmet restaurant and it is important that the restaurants meets these, in order to appeal to the customers and deliver a positive experience.*
* *The experience of the restaurant will depend upon how true the restaurant is to its concept.*
* *The staff at a successful gourmet restaurant is service-minded and adapt the service to the particular guest.*
* *A guest has expectations to the experience at a gourmet restaurant and if they are not met, the experience will be considered bad.*

All respondents articulated expectations as a part of entering a gourmet restaurant and that it is important to fulfil these in order to deliver a positive experience and appeal to the customers. Regarding the second verified hypothesis, the respondents also express the importance of being true to the concept, as the concept affects their expectation to the experience. All respondents verified the hypothesis regarding the staff in a very similar manner, as all respondents articulated service of a high standard and an adapted service to the individual guest at the restaurants. Regarding the last verified hypothesis, the respondents agreed upon that the expectations they have to a gourmet restaurant must be met during the experience, as it will otherwise be considered as a bad experience.

In this thesis I set out to answer the following research question:

**How do the gourmet restaurants ‘Restaurationen’ and ‘Anonymous Restaurant’ manage to give a successful experience to their customers and achieve long-term success, so that there is a unity between the customers’ expectations and the actual experience, when the business in general does not manage to generate long-term success of gourmet restaurants?**

In conclusion the gourmet restaurants ‘Restaurationen’ and ‘Anonymous Restaurant’ deliver an experience to their customers. They do so by having a clear concept, where there is concistency between price and product. The concept is perceived by the customers as consistent with the individual expectations, and the experience will depend upon how true these restaurants are to their selected concepts. Both Restaurationen and Anonymous Restaurant have service that is adapted to the individual guest. The analysis showed that these restaurants manage to deliver an experience that is coherent with the customers’ expectations, and is thus successful in signalling the right elements to the customers as they form the expectations based on these elements. The concept is also perceived as a whole through the experience, and they manage to develop upon the selected concept over time, but it does not need to be experienced as a timeless concept in order to achieve long-term success. Both restaurants manage to deliver a successful experience and avoid creating a negative experience by meeting the expectations of the individual guests.

# Appendix Overview

All of the below mentioned annexes can be found on the enclosed CD.

## Interviews

Appendix A:

Interview with Michael, owner at Anonymous Restaurant.

Appendix B:

Interview with Rene, guest at Anonymous Restaurant.

Appendix C:

Interview with Henrik, guest at Anonymous Restaurant.

Appendix D:

Interview with Per, guest at Restaurationen.

Appendix E:

Interview with Bo, owner at Restaurationen.

Appendix F:

Interview with Pia, guest at Restaurationen.

Appendix G:

Interview with Tine Skriver, HORESTA.

Appendix H:

Interview with Jørgen Kønigshøfer, DRC.

## Participating observation

Appendix I:

Participating observation at Anonymous Restaurant.

Appendix J:

Participating observation at Restaurationen.

## Others

Appendix 1:

Interview guide for trade organisations.

Appendix 2:

Interview guide for restauranteurs.

Appendix 3:

Interview guide for consumers.

Appendix 4:

Example of transcription for interviews.

Appendix 5:

Guide for observation.

Appendix 6:

Condensation of meaning for interviews with HORESTA and DRC.

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1. <http://www.theworlds50best.com/awards/1-50-winners/noma/> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Statistics accuired from Experian.com and through emails that can be seen as appendix 7. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Can be seen on enclosed CD as appendix 6. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. *Et socialkonstruktivistisk standpunkt mht. et givet fænomen hævder, minimalt, at det pågældende fænomen, som normalt betragtes som ”naturligt” og uafhængigt eksisterende, i virkeligheden er menneskeskabt og bærer aftryk af sin menneskelige oprindelse: Det er formet og præget af menneskelige interesser.* [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. *”Den grundlæggende ide i social konstruktion virker enkel, men den er også dyb. Alt, hvad vi regner for virkeligt, er socialt konstrueret. Eller, sagt mere dramatisk, intet er virkeligt, før folk er enige om, at det er det.”* [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. *”Enhver måde at konstruere verden på rummer bestemte traditioner – ladet med særlige værdier – og udelader samtidig alt, hvad der ikke indgår i traditionen.”*
 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. See chapter on respondents. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Text is here defined in the wider notion, which also includes interviews, pictures, experiences and more. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Repeat business is defined as the same customer returning to the same restaurant. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Information regarding HORESTA found at www.horesta.dk [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Information regarding Tine Skriver can be found in the sound file marked HORESTA under appendix G. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Information regarding DRC found at www.d-r-c.dk [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Information regarding interviewee Jørgen Kønigshøfer can be found on the sound file marked DRC under appendix H. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Michael is not the owners real name, as he has wished to be anonymous in this thesis. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Site Lead is another english term for CEO. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)