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## **Emergence and spread of practice in an international field: why and how vegetables became gastronomic ingredients**

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### **Abstract:**

Based on the case of vegetables in haute cuisine and chef Passard as an institutional entrepreneur, we analyze how a practice emerges and spreads in an international field. We show that the emergence and spread of a practice is profoundly conditioned by the person who creates it and the position he/she takes in the field. We also suggest that the spread of a practice at the national and international levels present important similarities. The dominant role of interpersonal networks and media in practice spread is especially comparable.

**Key words:** practice, institution, institutional entrepreneur, gastronomy

### **INTRODUCTION**

The institutionalisation of practices has been a burning issue for the last twenty years. In this perspective, understanding how practices spread in a field has been a major focus of attention. New institutionalists and particularly institutional entrepreneurship scholars examined the spread of practices. They more often focused their attention on isomorphism and practice homogenisation at an often national level yet. In addition, the emergence of these specific practices is still to be explored despite its importance (Lounsbury & Crumley, 2007). How do internationally spreading practices initially emerge?

We attempt to tackle this last question with the view that a practice-based approach (Chia and McKay, 2007; Jarzabkowski, 2004; Nicolini, 2007; Gherardi, 2006) can fruitfully complement the institutional perspective, as suggested by Lounsbury and Crumley (2007). For this purpose, we study the case of the emergence of a practice, cooking vegetables as gastronomic ingredients, and its spread in the field of haute cuisine. Haute cuisine is a specifically well suited context for the purpose of our research as it is both international and mainly constituted by small organisations in which it is possible to conduct a close examination of practices emergence.

The first section of this paper reviews contributions of the new institutionalism literature and complements it with a practice-based approach. The second section presents our empirical study: we first describe the field of haute cuisine and its internationalisation, then present our method and turn to the case of chef Passard and the spread of the practice of cooking vegetables as a gastronomic ingredient. The third section discusses some issues raised by our case.

## **BACKGROUND**

Institutional scholars have been studying change in practice from various perspectives for several years: conflicting institutional logics (Haveman and Rao, 1997), disruptive events (Hoffman, 1999), co-evolution of institutions and actors (Washington 2004). Yet and despite

differences in approach, they all insisted on the coercive and reproductive role of institutions that limit change. They hardly explained how non-isomorphic change in practice occurs (Munir and Phillips, 2005). As asserted by Lounsbury, “institutionalists have tended to bracket the origins of new kinds of activity, and instead have emphasized the importance of *theorization* by field-level actors” (Lounsbury, 2006, pp. 6).

In contrast, new institutionalists explore how change can occur, which originates outside or inside the field (for instance Meyer, 1982; Munir, 2005; Seo and Creed, 2002; Thornton, 2002). They suggest that powerful actors able to reshape practices are most often existing institutions, profession or the state (Lounsbury, 2001; Scott et al., 2000; Suddaby and Greenwood, 2005; Washington, 2004). Change was also studied through the role of institutional entrepreneurs, that is to say those organizations or individuals who initiate radical changes that break with existing institutions. In this literature, a change in practice is portrayed as produced either by transposition (selecting and transporting practices across fields; for example Sewell, 1992) or translation (adaptation of practices external to the field; for example Czarniawska and Joerges, 1996; Sahlin-Anderson, 1996; Hargadon and Douglas, 2001). Yet and despite the literature's focus on change and its ways, institutional entrepreneurs are mainly presented as organizations, possibly peripheral or challenger (D'Aunno et al., 2000). Little research in this stream has in fact considered the role of individuals as institutional entrepreneurs (Battilana, 2006), especially in highly institutionalized (Greenwood and Suddaby, 2006) and in international fields. Moreover, studies that centre on individuals focused on the enabling role of actors' social position (Battilana, 2006; Maguire et al., 2004) thus conveying a very partial understanding of individuals as institutional entrepreneurs.

A notable exception here is the study by Boxenbaum and Battilana (2005) of the case of diversity management and how it was transposed in Denmark. Authors highlighted the role of three specific individuals and analysed how they came up with the idea of transposing diversity management from the US to Denmark. However, while authors' considering that

Denmark and the US consisted in two distinct fields enable the development of the practice transposition view, it also limited the explanation power of the role of individuals for the spreading of the practice in an international field. Moreover, authors focused their attention on the diffusion/ transposition of an existing practice. They did not explore the creation of a practice and its diffusion inside the same field. In this regard, a second study is of particular interest here: Lounsbury and Crumley (2007) were among the few to trace the emergence of a practice in a field, with the analysis of the creation of active money management in mutual funds industry. They also detailed the different steps in the institutionalization of the practice by analyzing the role of multiple and heterogeneous agents. However, they remained at a very macro level of analysis and in fact do not detail the role of specific agents. In addition, the international dimension of their study is limited as the analysis is exclusively grounded on the American mutual fund market, with the comparison between New York and Boston companies. The third study of particular interest here is that of Svejenova, Planellas and Mazza (2006), which focuses on an individual agent as institutional entrepreneur and investigates the field of haute cuisine. These authors studied the role of Ferran Adria (chef of restaurant El Bulli) in the transformation of Spanish cuisine. They analysed the co-constitution of Adria's identity and the emergence of the Spanish cuisine as a creative cuisine in the international scene. Examining the parallel recognition of Adria and Spanish cuisine in press, critics and guides, they identified the different stages of Adria's identity transformation and showed that it paralleled and was actually embedded in the field changes occurring at that time: Ferran Adria's identity transformation coincided with the raise of Spanish cuisine. However, authors did not specifically characterize the specific influence of Ferran Adria on Spanish or haute cuisine worldwide.

In all, institutional entrepreneurship literature provides fruitful insights on how practice spreads inside and circulates between fields. However, it provides little insight regarding the role of individuals as institutional entrepreneurs, and the spread of practice within

international fields. Moreover, this literature barely dealt with the emergence of a spreading practice, whereas authors acknowledge that this is a key issue to understand practice diffusion (Djelic and Gutsatz, 2000, Lounsbury and Crumley, 2007). In other words, the role of individuals as institutional entrepreneurs in the emergence of a practice spreading in an international field is both central and still under studied.

For the purpose of our study, we adopt the practice perspective that in order to better understand organizations and institutions we should attach more attention to the very concrete way they function, focusing on daily work (Wilson and Jarzabkowski 2004), actors, doings, and their taking sense and value in the social world (Chia & MacKay, 2007). In fact and as suggested by Lounsbury and Crumley (2007), we maintain that "an approach to new practice creation that seeks points of integration between practice and institutional scholarship promises contributions to both theoretical perspectives, given that they have the potential to address each other's blind spots" (2007, pp. 994), that is to say to satisfactorily bridge the micro and macro levels in organization research (Nicolini, 2007; Whittington, 2007). Based on this premise, we propose to investigate the emergence and spread of a practice through the empirical study of a single case in the field of haute cuisine.

## **EMPIRICAL STUDY**

In this section, we analyze how the practice of cooking vegetables as a gastronomic ingredient emerged and spread in the field of haute cuisine worldwide. Haute cuisine is a specifically well suited context for the purpose of our research for two reasons. First, haute cuisine has become an international field (Parkhurst-Ferguson, 2004). Second, haute cuisine is mainly composed by small organisations in which it is possible to conduct a close examination of practices emergence. In fact, in practice-based approaches "it is crucial to be able to observe what people do, what their work is like and what efforts it takes" (Carlile

2002, p. 447). We therefore chose study a single case (Eisenhardt 1989) with an in-depth ethnographic approach (Yanow, 2000).

We first present the field of haute cuisine and suggest that it nowadays is an international field. Then we detail our methodology and present our results.

### ***The field of haute cuisine and its internationalization***

The field of haute cuisine is the space composed of agents and organizations engaged in the world of gourmet restaurants: the restaurants themselves, their employees and clients, gastronomic critics and journalists, specialized journals, suppliers and contractors, some cooking schools and, last but not least, guidebooks. It was initially constituted as a cultural field in the post-revolutionary French society (Parkhurst-Ferguson, 1998) but has nowadays become an international field. French haute cuisine has long been dominant, with French chefs launching restaurants abroad, which were considered as best (such as Daniel in New York). Then, Non-French chefs came to France to be trained and returned to their home country to launch their own French-inspired gourmet restaurant. Today, Michelin awards restaurants proposing non-French cuisine. In parallel international gastronomic events grew in importance. Such events as the Garcia Santos yearly congress (San Sebastian, Spain) The Madrid Fusion / International Gastronomy Summit (Madrid), the World Gourmet Summit (Singapore) or the Gourmet Abu Dhabi are as many occasions for international chefs to meet, exchange, demonstrate new techniques and concepts and further develop haute cuisine as a worldwide field. As noted by Planellas and Svejenova (2007), "as information about chefs and elite restaurants flows internationally and the distance travelled by both chefs and diners grow, haute cuisine is further globalizing" (2007, pp. 3-4). Yet, and following Parkhurst Ferguson (2004: 168) we would rather use the term internationalization instead of globalization. As this author insists, globalization refers to "the (re)production of an identical product in a vast range of countries in the world" whereas internationalization refers to "the marketing and consumption of a singular product from a particular location across national

lines" (Parkhurst Ferguson (2004, pp. 168). French cuisine is not globalized; it is regularly attacked and described as declining in face of other cuisines. A recent article from The New York Times (2003) even announced that Spanish cuisine had surpassed it in creativity, talent and quality. Interestingly though, the criteria considered are those that used to prevail in French haute cuisine and which became international. Internationalization is the term that better suits the evolution of haute cuisine because it is a highly institutionalized field (Rao et al., 2003), which rules and stakes (as opposed to recipes and production) progressively become internationally shared. As Parkhurst Ferguson (2004) outlines, elite chefs today face the same conditions, rules, exposure, and expectations throughout the world.

In the field, gastronomic guidebooks and critics play a fundamental role, through the rankings they periodically issue and in relation, in regard of the underlying expectations towards restaurants. Among these actors, the Michelin Red Guide holds a very specific place, being the most important and internationally acknowledged (Karpik, 2000; Rao et al., 2003). Michelin awards restaurants with forks (from none to five) and stars (from none to three). Forks reflect the decorum and stars reflect the gastronomic level. Stars grew in importance during the past decades and are today the criterion most valued by all agents in the field (Karpik, 2000). Initially a purely French guidebook, Michelin progressively extended its hegemony over haute cuisine worldwide with the development of country-specific guides, first in European countries (England, Ireland, Belgium, Spain...) and then in the rest of the world (US in 2005, Japan in 2008). Currently, the city with most Michelin stars is Tokyo. In addition to the Michelin stars, other rankings emerged worldwide (such as "The world's 50 best restaurants" published yearly by the British magazine Restaurant) or more locally (country-specific guidebooks). These additional rankings contribute to defining the field and identify non-Michelin elite chefs (especially in countries where Michelin is not published). They also contribute to define international haute cuisine standards, mostly in reaction to Michelin's elitism and certain conservatism. Yet and despite the Red Guide being periodically questioned by would-be challengers, it is noteworthy that the Michelin ranking is always put

forward by elite restaurants worldwide: when Michelin covers the focal country stars are systematically displayed up front by restaurants, and when Michelin does not cover the focal country its ranking is systematically referred to in chef's curricula, which highlight past experiences or collaborations with Michelin starred-chefs. As such, we define haute cuisine restaurants as those awarded with at least one Michelin star or those combining high ranking in national / international guidebooks and multiple references to Michelin in the chef's curriculum.

Most additional characteristics of haute cuisine originate in the paramount transformations the field experienced in the 1970's with the nouvelle cuisine wave in France (Rao et al., 2003). Nouvelle cuisine generated changes for food maters, with the introduction of new recipes, new products, more simple cooking styles and lighter meals. It also bore more social consequences in the field (Rao et al., 2003), with chefs taking an increasing importance as dominant players, and gaining increased influence over the menu. More importantly, all of them have their name attached to the Michelin stars or restaurant ranking, as the role of culinary innovation took on an ever growing importance (Rao et al., 2003, pp. 806-807). The ability to innovate and be gastronomically creative is highly valued today in the field worldwide, with the prerequisite of technical excellence (Parkhurst-Ferguson 1998: 637; Parkhurst-Ferguson, 2004; Rao at al., 2003). Being considered a reference for particular cooking techniques, gastronomic universe or specific food products has also become a stake for most elite chefs (Durand et al., 2007). Last, notoriety (through guide reference, image, media coverage at large and promotional activities) grew in importance too and more specifically in accordance with the need to maintain visibility, value innovation (Rao et al., 2003 pp. 22) and attract international clients.

## **Methods**

To answer our research question, we needed to both be able to analyse the emergence of a practice and to characterize its spreading over time. This required a temporal ubiquity. As we have been involved within the field of haute cuisine and star chefs for several years, we had the unique opportunity to having studied the case of a chef whose practice later turned out to be impacting the field: Alain Passard and the vegetable-based cuisine he developed, with the official announcement of a change in menu at the end of year 2000. As such, we could ground our analysis on two-period real-time data, one for each aspect of our question. Studying a single case (Eisenhardt, 1989) was therefore both theoretically relevant (Carlile, 2002) and linked to a methodological opportunity to privileged data. Here, we present our dual data collection: for the emergence and spreading of the practice.

Our first data collection consisted of the case study of Passard's practice. In 1999, before Passard turned to officially cooking merely vegetables in his starred restaurant, we interviewed him and members of his team. We conducted direct observations in the kitchen during a full-length sitting. We also collected secondary data on Passard and haute cuisine (press articles from general newspapers and professional journals, gastronomic critics, books, some blogs...). Such field work provided us with a clearer view of individual and more tacit aspects of practice: artistic sensitivity, comparing gestures and postures between different cooks and a deeper understanding of kitchen work. At that time we were also studying other three-star chefs, which provided us with a broader picture of, and a higher acquaintance with, the field. It helped us to distinguish specificities in Passard's work. We followed Strauss and Corbin's (1998) principles and acknowledge an interpretative posture. Our data coding reflects our interpretation of reality, not that of the interviewees (Schwandt, 1994). Here, we use this real-time and ante-2000 data to analyze Passard's orientations.

Our second data collection involved building a systematic database indexing 1192 press articles naming Passard between 1987 and mid-2009, in the English, Spanish and French speaking press (extracted from Factiva), regardless of whether Passard was the central topic

of the article. Press articles are a pertinent source to analyze haute cuisine as a field (Parkhurst-Fergusson, 1998, pp. 611; Rao et al., 2003, pp. 22). We used this database to analyze the evolution of Passard and vegetables in the field. Thus our coding reflects the way Passard is presented in the articles. In this study, we used four categories referring to Passard's relative position ("Rising Chef", and "Mentor") and stakes in the field ("Innovator", "Reference for Vegetables"). We complemented this data base with qualitative secondary data regarding the type of dish served in two kinds of restaurants: gourmet restaurants and those restaurants in which we identified former team-mates of Passard (former seconds or apprentices, in accordance with the "Mentor" category in the database) worldwide.

In the following pages we first present the spreading practice of using vegetables as gastronomic ingredients. Then we analyse Passard's orientations before detailing his initiative and role in the emergence and spread of this practice.

### ***Cooking vegetables as gastronomic ingredients: an internationally spreading practice initiated by chef Passard***

In 2008, cooking vegetables as gastronomic ingredients is taken for granted in haute cuisine. Food critics, journalists and clients hold it as legitimate (Beaugé, 2008): they celebrate the "vegetarian redemption" (Wells, 2007). "Noble products (caviar, foie gras) have long trusted the first place on menus. Veggies are now the stars" (Le Figaro, 2006), "think vegetables first. [...] They represent a seismic shift in the French culinary mindset. [...] The best chefs are now treating vegetables with the same respect once reserved for foie gras". (The Globe and Mail, 2007). "Carrots are the new caviar" (Financial Times, 2009). Most gourmet restaurants throughout the world now treat vegetables as gastronomic ingredients. They detail them explicitly on menus: for example "Grass fed beef fillet with nameko, shimeji & enoki mushroom" (Tetsuya's, Australia). They propose sophisticated vegetable preparations: for example "Lobster poached in vanilla butter with avocado lasagne" (Chez Dominique,

Finland). Some restaurants even offer vegetarian menus such as De Librije (Netherlands) or The French Laundry (US) where one of the two daily nine-course tasting menu is a vegetable menu.

Yet vegetables were not traditional gastronomic products. Twelve years ago they were a side dish, which name was barely quoted on menus and which did not merit specific attention or preparation. As a matter of example and as shown in Table 1, in 1997 only 25% of French Michelin starred restaurants referred to vegetables in their specialties. A closer examination of these cases additionally shows that most of these vegetables were in fact either starchy foods (potatoes, pasta, lentil...) or simply unspecified "vegetables". In 2009 in contrast, the share of restaurant quoting vegetables in their specialty rose to nearly 50%, with the variety of specifically green vegetables being wider and that of starchy foods remaining stable.

**Table 1**

Illustrative evolution of the use of vegetables in French Michelin starred restaurants

	1997	2009
Number of Michelin starred restaurants	462	548
Restaurants quoting vegetables in their specialties	115	264
	Share	Share
	24,9%	48,2%
Nature of vegetables	24 varieties (7 starchy & 17 green)	38 varieties (9 starchy & 29 green)

In all, in twelve years, from "martyr's food" (*Daily Express*, 2001), an "unglamorous staple diet for weekdays" (*The Independent*, 2001) vegetable became haute cuisine ingredients, source of gastronomic experience and food pleasure.

A particular chef is acknowledged by the field itself as the initiator of this practice in haute cuisine: Alain Passard (*Le Monde*, 2008; *The Times*, 2006, *Financial Times*, 2009 for example): "The green revolution [...] was first tilled by Chef Alain Passard". (*The Globe and Mail*, 2007). Passard was the first starred chef to ban meat from his menu and to value

vegetables in his cooking. His turning to vegetables was formally announced at the end of December 2000 and widely publicized, being the central topic of 30 press articles in generalist newspapers (such as Le Monde, International Herald Tribune, The New York Times, La Vanguardia, The Times...) within only two months (December 2000 to February 2001). Others may have been cooking vegetables prior to Passard's announcement; they now claim to have been interested in vegetables for many years, but these claims have only appeared lately, after vegetables had already gained a new status.

How and why did this practice of vegetable cooking emerge at Passard's, a chef who was recognized as a rotisseur? How does it spread in the field? In the following pages, we answer by analyzing Passard's practice and the positions he took in the field.

### ***Chef Passard***

Alain Passard is one of the most renowned chefs worldwide. He was born in 1956, a son of musicians, a saxophonist himself and fond of classical music. His grand-mother Louise was a restaurateur and a well known cook. She conveyed to him both the pleasure of cooking for guests and the art of roasting and mastering fire. Passard regularly quotes his grandmother as his most important influence. This family background made him pay particular attention to gestures and sounds. Passard defines himself as an artist and a craftsman: "some chefs are restaurateurs. I am a cook, I feel myself as a craftsman" (Interview). He attaches much importance to his sensitivity.

Passard finds most of his inspiration in the arts: music, paintings, sculpture. He even worked with perfume designers to find new associations. He insists on the sensorial aspects of his job: "you need to listen to the food products, you need to master the fire so that it never damages but rather caresses" (interview with Passard). He removed all the clocks from his kitchen so that the cooks would be aware of their senses and not focus on timing (observation and interview). This sensorial dimension is also apparent in his cooking

gestures: more than others in the kitchen, he bends over the pan to keep a closer eye on the preparation, to smell it and to better hear it (observation).

Passard started his apprenticeship at age 14, spending 4 years with Michel Kéréver who taught him the classics. He continued with Gaston Boyer, developing his mastery of the greatest classicism and haute cuisine and spent the next three years with Alain Senderens, at that time a leader of nouvelle cuisine. There, he exerted the subtle art of roasting and integrated the power of imagination and creation in cooking. He also acquired an understanding of the new rules and expectations regarding gourmet restaurants, which is a paramount requisite for haute cuisine. In 1980, Passard became a chef himself and, at the age of 26, was the youngest awarded two stars. He launched his self-managed Parisian restaurant (Arpège) in 1986 and gained three stars in 1996. Passard became famous for his superior mastery of fire and for his creativity. He is a roaster because he masters this specific technique, but his mastery of fire is not limited to cooking particular ingredients. He experienced it on poultry and meat (duck or T-bones for example) but also on his famous innovative desert, the spiced candied tomato. This reveals the core dual orientation of Passard: technical dispositions developed through his apprenticeship and cooking experiences, and artistic dispositions primarily acquired in his family and with innovative mentors (Senderens). With regards this innovative orientation, it is noteworthy that during the 1990s' vegetables became the inspiration for all Passard's new dishes. In fact, while he was still preparing meat at Arpège, Passard was progressively becoming a vegetarian himself. He found no more inspiration in meat. In the meanwhile, Passard also opened to worldwide haute cuisine. He travelled a lot, from Asia to the US. Abroad, he regularly cooked for prestigious guests, collaborated with peers, and participated to gastronomic events (he even won the Iron chef competition). In his Parisian kitchen, Passard also welcomed many international cooks. Some were apprentices others sous-chef (among them a German, a Mauritius, a Japanese). This disposition is particularly distinctive of Passard; contrary to chefs who have been working with the same sous-chef for years, Passard frequently

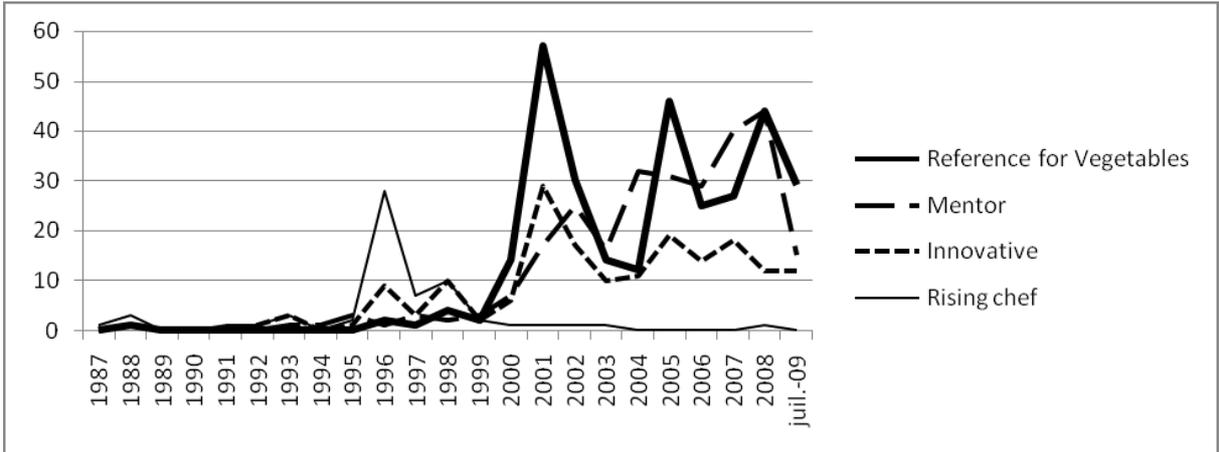
changes second. Seconds spend a few years at Arpège, rise from simple cook to domain-chef then second chef. They stay one year on average as sous-chef. Then Passard encourages them to launch their own restaurant, where he frequently invests his money or helps with advice, would it be in France or abroad. Passard considers being a second-chef as training for future elite chefs: he therefore involves them in innovation at Arpège, introduces them to his network of suppliers, bankers, clients....

**Passard's Initiative**

In December 2000, Passard radically announced that he would turn to a no-meat menu. It was not a vegetarian menu though, since Passard kept serving poultry and some seafood. Yet he abandoned 12 of the dishes that contributed to his reputation and stars (Le Monde, 2001) and reorganized his menu around his existing vegetable recipes. His decision was widely commented upon, as shown in Figure 1 with a sudden rise in press articles on the subject between 2000 and 2002.

**Figure 1**

International press articles quoting Passard



The announcement coincided with the paroxysm of mad-cow disease and a pig-meat production crisis and was often presented as having some links. But Passard claims that this

scare was only a minor factor behind his abandoning meat. He insists on his need for creativity and inspiration with vegetables: “I can't get excited about a lump of barbecue meat” (Seattle Times, 2001). “Vegetables are so much more colourful, more perfumed. You can play with the harmony of colours, everything is luminous” (Seattle Times, 2001). “I wanted to change the material with which I worked. It's like an artist who works in watercolours and turns his hand to oils or a sculptor in wood who changes to bronze”, he says (Daily Telegraph, 2001). However, Passard separates himself from classical vegetarian cooking, which he says is more based on fear of food than on love of flavours and variety. His own perspective is that of delight and discovery (International Herald Tribune, 2001).

This decision was a challenge for Passard, because the field could have proved resistant. “I am putting all the cards on the table” he says, “...questioning myself and my entire career: my three stars, the public, my clients” (International Herald Tribune, 2001). First, Michelin could have sanctioned Arpège and downgraded it, provoking a loss of turnover estimated at fifty percent (Johnson et al. 2005). Second, clients could have reacted negatively. Vegetables were often considered secondary ingredients with no intrinsic value, dull, boring, unattractive and tasteless products; at that time, they were often diametrically opposed to food pleasure and what haute cuisine represents. Moreover, the change in the menu did not imply a change in prices (about 300€ per guest plus wine) and clients were not accustomed to pay as much for vegetables as for meat.

Yet Passard prepared the field by presenting his decision directly to his clients and to the director of the Michelin guidebook with whom he had an appointment: “I came to them very naturally; I explained that I would remove all that contributed to my three stars. My decision was done. [...] I never balanced it with the risk of losing my stars. But the Michelin guide director answered that vegetables could also lead to three stars” (Le Monde, 2005). In all, few chefs publicly criticized his choice, most of them remaining cautious (The New York Times, 2001). The most direct attack came from the Parisian wholesale market that sued him for having declared in a TV interview his distrust in products' quality.

Passard rapidly consolidated his position in France by securing his vegetable supply with the best providers. He also bought land 150 km from Paris to grow his own organic garden (operational in 2002), then a second and third ones, in order not to have to buy vegetables and flowers any more, and to be able to fully control their production. With these gardens, Passard also further developed his own vegetable practice: it was a way for him to keep innovating. He reintroduced old vegetable species that were almost impossible to find on the market, and created his own varieties. These are as many new sources of inspiration. The new dishes Passard has created since 2000 are all centred on vegetables.

Since 2000, Alain Passard has also widely publicized his change worldwide. First, he has frequently given interviews and reaffirmed his choice of vegetables both in the written press and television where he participated to a variety of gastronomic programs on food topics, which were as many occasions to present and explain his choice. In 2006, a 52' TV documentary was even filmed and broadcasted which presents Passard and his vegetable choice, investigates how Passard finds inspiration in the gardens and creates new dishes in his kitchen. These media activities both contributed to announce and spread Passard's practice and stimulated reflexive thinking for further development of the practice.

Second, Passard durably engaged in a wide variety of promotional operations ranging from a temporary vegetable restaurant in the largest Parisian department store to formal vegetable cooking demonstrations in gastronomic events abroad such as in The World Gourmet Summit 2005 where he was guest as Iconic Chef in Abu Dhabi 2009 where he thought "Celerisotto with Orleans mustard" and "Sweet and sour trilogy of beetroot". In addition, we noted from our database that these activities were regularly accounted for in the press, with an average 10 articles per year on the topic since 2000 as opposed to 0,5 per year before 2000. Third, Passard growingly took position publicly, first in favour of vegetables and later on against genetically modified vegetables (for example Le Monde, December 18<sup>th</sup> 2002, Le Monde May 13<sup>th</sup> 2008) and more generally in favour of quality products and healthy food (for example Business Times Singapore, 2009).

Fourth, Passard developed a range of vegetable related products. He wrote a vegetables recipe book for children. He designed a vegetable knife and a beetroot-inspired presentation plate for the silver flatware producer Christofle. He designed various vegetable-based labelled recipes for mustard, vinegar or olive oil fine brands. Since 2006, he also has been selling his vegetables to his peers and luxury shops.

Last but not least, Passard also exerted influence over the field through his former cooks and seconds throughout the world. Passard's long lasting approach that being a second-chef at Arpège is training for future elite chefs and his hosting international apprentices in his kitchen bore fruits in regard of the emergence and spread of the vegetable practice throughout the world. Our data indicates that most of the cooks having spend time at Arpège and that we were able to trace thanks to our press database now display vegetable orientated dishes on their menu. These "vegetable inclined" chefs are dispersed throughout the world: in the US (such as T. Des Jardins at Jardiniere or S. Goin at Lucques in California) in Europe (such as P. Barbot at Astrance in Paris, C. Bosi at Hibiscus in London or R. Gascoin at l'Idiot du Village in Brussel), in Asia (for example M. Best at Marque in Sydney or G. Hubrechtsen at Gunther's in Singapore). Some of them, such as chefs Kinch or Fox in California, even took inspiration from Passard to grow their own kitchen garden. Interestingly, not only do all these chefs cook vegetables as gastronomic ingredients but they also refer to their experience at Arpège as especially inspiring in his regard, thus reinforcing both the spread of the vegetable practice and Passard's fatherhood. In addition, working with those different cooks also enriched Passard's vegetable practice through the co-creation of knowing around new dishes (Authors, 2009).

In all, the vegetable practice emerged and was developed at Passard's at the same time as it began to spread in haute cuisine and contributed to reinforce Passard's position in the field. He is today celebrated as one of the best Chefs in the world. As shown in Figure 1 he is now quoted as a mentor of younger promising chefs worldwide, whereas in the early 2000s he was noted as a rising chef provoking shockwaves in the field. Passard, acknowledged as the

legitimate master of vegetables (The New York Times, 2005; Wells, 2007), exerted a profound influence on the field with the creation and spreading of a new practice.

## **DISCUSSION**

Our analysis of the case of Passard and the practice of cooking vegetables as gastronomic ingredients in the field of haute cuisine illustrates that the creation and spread of a new practice in an international field are intertwined. While examining separately the spread and creation of a new practice at an institutional level has been a fruitful avenue of enquiry, it allowed us to persist with a somewhat partial understanding of the phenomena that could be greatly enriched with a more micro practice approach. Analyzing the case of Passard with such practice lens extends our understanding of the role of individual agents in new practice creation and spread, helps better appreciate the international dimension for the spread of a practice, and provides new insights towards the role of specific aspects in the spreading of the practice.

### ***The role of individual agents as institutional entrepreneurs***

In the first place the study of the case of Passard and vegetables highlights how individual agents from within the field can be institutional entrepreneurs. Contrary to cases examined in past literature, Passard is an individual agent already part of the dominant actors in the field. We argue that this specific position of elite chef in haute cuisine is deeply related to Passard, creating then announcing and contributing to spreading the vegetable practice through a variety of means. In that sense, our study complements that of Svejenova et al. (2006) by tracing a specific practice in the field in relation with its initiator's trajectory and that of Lounsbury and Crumley (2007) by bringing their argument at an even more micro level. Our analysis suggests in particular that the emergence and spread of a practice is profoundly conditioned by the person who creates it and the position he/she takes when creating the

practice. In our case, the choice for vegetable was deeply rooted in Passard's artistic orientations and in his being vegetarian whereas the market conveyed a negative image for these products. In addition, Passard's artistic orientation also contributed to infuse vegetables with creativity, glamour and a gastronomic dimension that was absent from a vegetarian cuisine from which Passard strongly demarks. These characteristic and Passard being immersed in the field also influenced the channels through which the practice initially spread: important newspapers, prestigious department store, refined flatware producer... They were in coherence with the gastronomic status Passard dreamt for vegetables. Similarly, the choice Passard made to announce a radical change in his menu rather than introducing progressive adjustments over a one year period (which would have resulted in the same menu) is also grounded on the chef's orientations. The announcement was a true risk taking with a requirement to be gastronomically innovative with vegetables in order to preserve the Michelin ranking (therefore the restaurants' turnover). At the same time it produced shockwaves in the field, which guaranteed a wide media coverage and contributed to the initial spread. In return, Passard's cuisine also remained a central focus of critics and journalists ever since, thus reinforcing the innovative and excellence expectations but also Passard's visibility. In that sense the emergence and spread of the vegetable practice is strongly linked to Passard at the same time as it positively influenced this position and made Passard more dominant actor. Further research could fruitfully investigate the importance and role of such individual dimensions for the emergence and spread of a practice in a field.

### ***The international dimension of practice spread***

In the second place our study helps better appreciate the international dimension for the spread of a practice. Our study shows that if multiple factors can influence a practice at an international level, the local considerations do not deeply modify it in fact. Cooking vegetables as gastronomic ingredients spread throughout the world in the field of haute cuisine regardless of the specific ingredients restaurants could be provided with. In that

sense our study is consistent with Parkhurst-Ferguson's (2004) argument that the field is internationalized and contrasts past institutional research, which tends to treat national and international contexts as different fields. What we show is that the practice of cooking vegetables as gastronomic ingredients spread in the field of haute cuisine as a whole, across national boundaries, regardless of the specific national recipes elaborated in response. We also suggest that the spread of the practice at the national and international levels did not fundamentally differ from each other. In fact the practice spread through rather similar ways at both levels: network of former cooks, media, and promotional activities. Further research could examine this issue in more detail and better highlight similarities and differences.

Our study therefore provides new insights towards the role of specific aspects in the spreading of a practice. In particular we show that although the emergence of a practice and its spread can be traced down to an individual agent, the spreading itself rests on a wide array of means and actors throughout the world. In that sense our analysis reconciles opposite research streams (Lounsbury & Crumley, 2007; Maguire et al., 2004): that of field level practice spread and that of a "hero" institutional entrepreneur. We show that if Passard's practice initially emerged in a focal restaurant in France, it spread throughout the world thanks to the additional contribution of other cooks and media. In particular the network composed by former Passard's seconds and cooks played a crucial role. These actors adopted the practice and, cooking vegetables as gastronomic ingredients in their own restaurants, ensured a rapid international diffusion. Yet, and although our data indicates that Passard's network played a fundamental role, it did not allow us to further examine interactions outside the sphere of Passard's former cooks. Further research could fruitfully investigate this dimension and clarify how direct and more indirect interactions contribute to spreading an individually developed practice. Our study also suggests that the influence of media has been determinant whereas past institutional literature has not highlighted their specific role. Not only did media publicized the vegetable practice around the world but they

also took it as example of healthy eating, innovative gastronomy and therefore reinforced its attractiveness for new cooks.

## **CONCLUSION**

"Wild-oat velouté with roasted almonds and chorizo", "Roasted salsify with gala apples, brioche & caramelized turnips", "caramelized endive, spéculoos butter, banana seasoning"... Today, such courses and many others are imagined by great chefs, served in the best restaurants worldwide, at haute cuisine prices, and acclaimed by enthusiastic clients and critics. It has not always been the case, though. Twenty years ago, it wouldn't have been imaginable even to read their names on restaurant menus: they are mostly vegetable dishes. Today, they are increasingly common place and the status of vegetables in haute cuisine is changing.

Based on an ethnographic study of chef Passard as an institutional entrepreneur, we analyzed how the practice of cooking vegetables as gastronomic ingredients emerged and spread in haute cuisine as an international field. We showed that the emergence and spread of this practice was profoundly conditioned by the chef and the position he took in the field.

Our study bridges aspects that were traditionally opposed: creation and spread of practice, individual and organizational actors, individual and field level effects, national and international contexts. It shows that whereas examining these facets independently proved useful in the past, our understanding is greatly enriched by analyzing them in mutual relation. In particular, bridging the micro and macro levels of analysis is a promising avenue of research both for institutional and practice-based studies.

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