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MANAGEMENT & SOCIETY



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## “FROM DICTATOR TO EDUCATOR: THE EMERGENCE OF A NEW MANAGEMENT STYLE IN GLOBAL FINE DINING”

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### ABSTRACT

When workers become managers, they often develop a personal style shaped by past work experiences. These “styles” may also change in response to historical and social trends. Indeed, over time, different managerial fashions have risen in popularity or fallen out of favor. These transitions may be challenging, especially if a novel management style conflicts with an old dominant style of management in an occupation. In this study, we consider how managers navigate these tensions, bridging the old and new, as they craft their personal management style. We use the fine dining industry as our case. The fine dining industry has a historically institutionalized model of hierarchical and abusive management that has been questioned in recent years. A number of forces, such as the growing democratization of food and unveiling of the backstage through the trend of open kitchens, have influenced the emergence of a new management style, one that emphasizes individualize care and personal growth over autocratic discipline and abuse. Although this emerging care/accommodating style of management is not innovative per se, it was (and is) still novel for the culinary occupation at the time we conducted our interviews. Using 150 interviews with fine dining chefs across the US and UK, we examine how chefs make decisions about managing their staff and adopting a novel management style in their creative work. We find that the adoption of a new management style takes one of two paths: (1) chefs wholeheartedly transform their management style from disciplinary to care/accommodating, or (2) chefs blend the old and new styles through a toolkit approach. We consider the implications these findings have for the adoption of novel practices and research on creative/cultural fields.