

GASTRONOMY TOURISM: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

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ABSTRACT: Residing with the exponential growth of gastronomy tourism research, a number of review articles have examined the relationship of gastronomy and tourism from distinct thematic and disciplinary perspectives. What remains absent is a comprehensive overview that encapsulates the interdisciplinary dimensions of this area of research. In response, this study comprehensively investigates gastronomy tourism literature utilising a network and content analysis, with an aim to map the main subject areas concerned with gastronomy tourism and relations between varying subject areas. In doing so, themes determining gastronomy tourism and focus for future exploration are identified. The review findings suggest that the trajectory of gastronomy tourism research is characterized by the dominance of ‘tourism, leisure and hospitality management’ and ‘geography, planning and development’. Three recommendations are proposed to assist development of gastronomy tourism research: increased dialogue across subject areas, development of critical and theoretical approaches, and greater engagement with sustainability debates.

Key words: REVIEW OF LITERATURE, CUSTOMERS, SATISFACTION, GASTRONOMY TOURISM, FOOD

INTRODUCTION

The significance of gastronomy tourism is so eminent within contemporary tourism management, that it has come to form the foundations of much policy and industry strategies and agendas (notably including, the Common Agricultural Policy, European Region of Gastronomy network and UNESCO’s Cities of Gastronomy program). As a result, the relationship between gastronomy and tourism has been examined from a number of dimensions. Available assessments have, however, tended to focus on particular areas of thematic or disciplinary interest (primarily, within tourism marketing and management paradigms) rather than providing a comprehensive overview of gastronomy tourism research. Previous

reviews have identified, for example, critical factors in food tourism success (Henderson, 2009; Lee & Scott, 2015; Richards, 2015), relations between intangible gastronomic heritage and innovation in place promotion (Molina et al. 2016), as well as how gastro-tourism can advance and be maintained through basic infrastructure, such as transportation and safety (Williams et al, 2014). This work is invaluable in rendering insights into specific areas of inquiry. Yet, working within the confines of thematic and disciplinary areas risks overlooking important contributions and developments, as well as limiting understanding regarding thematic relations across subject areas.

Recognizing the exponential growth of gastronomy tourism scholarship from a host of disciplinary and thematic areas, we endeavor to provide a comprehensive review to shed light on the ways the research field has developed - both thematically and across time. Only by identifying trends and relations between varying subject areas and their thematic focus can we understand what gastronomy tourism research is, and why it has taken its current direction. By critically exploring the directions of scholarship over time we provide a critical perspective of the research field's growth areas and identify areas for development in the literature.

In consideration of this aim, through a quantitative approach, this paper maps the main thematic areas by subject area in gastronomy tourism, and relations between varying subject areas and their thematic focus, as a way to identify gaps and boundaries. This ambitious task meets serious challenges within the context of academic publishing. Specifically, an exhaustive analysis spanning all scholarship relating to gastronomy tourism is beyond the scope and spatial capacity of an academic article. Within this context, comprehension is attempted through focusing solely on journal articles relating explicitly to the themes of gastronomy and tourism. Such an approach is not without its limitations and omissions, yet working with a large data set, over a relatively long time period, within a large research team (11 researchers) went some way to overcoming the difficulty in contextualizing and understanding this area of research (Guldi & Armitage, 2014). A remaining limitation is that of the review's use of English search terms and databases, ensuring findings are limited to an Anglo context.

Using food as a differentiating asset of destinations and its potential in influencing tourists' travel decisions is being much discussed in academia. Different countries use distinct terms to relate food to tourism. Concepts such as culinary tourism, food tourism and gastronomy tourism are used interchangeably. This paper aims to explore regional innovation strategies based on food and tourism and on how they can contribute to destination management. The study adopts a systematic literature review by focusing on two main databases, namely SCOPUS and ISI Web of Science. In total, 538 articles (from

1985 to 2017) published in English peer-reviewed academic journals were analysed. The systematic review revealed that food and tourism has been approached from varied perspectives, from interactions with traditional protection strategies under European food quality labels, such as Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) and the Protected Geographical Indication (PGI), to innovative actions, which encapsulate the reengineering of places transforming them into creative food spaces or food clusters. Finally, this paper seeks to contribute to the body of knowledge on food and tourism, under the perspective of regional innovation strategies, applying a qualitative systematic literature review of a 27 selected articles within the scope of the research.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), on the other hand, does not directly recognise the gastronomy sector as a creative industry, but considers it under the umbrella of cultural heritage, along with crafts, traditional cultural expressions, festivals and cultural sites (UNCTAD, 2008). In this line of thought, namely highlighting the relevance of events as trading spaces in stimulating economic, cultural, environmental and social cohesion (Getz, 2009), wine and gastronomy festivals, wine museums and art exhibitions in wineries can be characterised as examples of creative activities and adequate to integrate UNESCO'S Framework for Cultural Statistics (UNESCO-UIS, 2009).

The authors do recognize, however, that within certain contexts gastronomy is understood to possess a classed dimension (Bourdieu, 1984). In early 1800s France, for example, gastronomy referred to the art of good eating and drinking – utilised in reference to the enjoyment of the very best in food and drink. More recently, through cultural policy and hospitality industry strategies and agendas (such as the European Region of Gastronomy network and UNESCO'S Cities of Gastronomy), gastronomy is often linked to notions of fine dining, innovation and creative cities (Khoo & Badarulzaman, 2014). The actual study of gastronomy, itself, takes its impetus in understanding the term as relating to everything through which food and drink intersects - be it production, associated cultural values, the economy, storage, transport, chemistry, the body and so on.

Variations in reference to the discussion of food and drink are both temporal (as just discussed) and geographical. British scholars, for instance, generally prefer the term 'food tourism' (cf. Henderson, 2009); while in the North American context, 'culinary tourism' is more often used (cf. Long, 2015 and Montanari & Staniscia, 2009). No one term is without its limitations, yet it is here hoped that the use of 'gastronomy' is productive in representing a comprehensively that does not favour Global North terminologies.

Already a decade ago, Everett & Aitchison (2008) claimed that there was a scarcity of academic research when it comes to tourists engaging with local food and, hence, its impact in regional development and sustainability in an interdisciplinary approach. In fact, one of the first efforts to evaluate the impact of food in territorial dynamics was made by the European Commission establishing the interconnection between food, gastronomy and territory, stressing their potential for innovating and diversifying regional strategies, particularly when it comes to developing regional umbrella brands for European Union sustainable agrofood products (Cavicchi & Stancova, 2016). Immediately after, the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) reiterated the tourism perspective, stating that local cultures can be absorbed through food/gastronomy and wine tourism since they have become one of the most dynamic and creative parts of tourism (UNWTO, 2017). Furthermore, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) associated gastronomy to the creative industries, based on the relationship between culture and food (Kivela & Crofts, 2006) allowing visitors to access culture and heritage in an innovative way by adding creative elements (OECD, 2014). It is further suggested that food is one of the essential expressions of any culture and one of the elements of creativity in everyday life that is engaging for many tourists (Richards, 2012) and the creative elements are added by the combination of knowledge, skills and values through different food elements and/or places outside traditional eating establishments (Justiniano, JaríaChacón & Valls-Pasola, 2017). Additionally, the UNWTO (2016, p. 15) claims that 88.2% of destinations consider gastronomy a strategic element in defining its image and brand. This trend is confirmed by the increasing number of existing publications that analyse food tourism from a marketing perspective.

In recent years gastronomy has become an indispensable element in order to get to know the culture and lifestyle of a territory” (UNWTO, 2012, p. 10). The demand for new food products with local origins is, for example, amplified by Michelin star chefs (Hjalager & Wahlberg, 2014), who play the role of “interpreters of the territory” (UNWTO, 2012, p. 15). For destinations, food consumption represents a substantial proportion of tourist spending (Eurostat, 2015).

Along with the rise of the service sector, investing in a “cultural economy” has been an outstanding characteristic of the capitalist societies (Perkins et al., 2015; Scott, 2010). As a result we have witnessed the appearance of cultural and creative districts, in general, and enogastronomic clusters, in particular. New stakeholders are increasingly involved and looking forward to develop cross-sectoral and transregional collaborations in order to generate innovative agro-food products and services (Cavicchi & Stancova, 2016).

Yet when it comes to the tourism industry, for a long period of time production sites and consumption spaces were often discussed as separate units in tourism discourses overlooking the ‘in-betweenness’ of the categories. But new spatial configurations of tourism places, such as typical production sites, i.e. bakeries, dairy factories and olive oil industrial units are being turned into creative enogastronomic food systems, and a means to know the local lifestyle (Everett, 2012).

Despite the complementarity of gastronomy and wines as tourism products, each product has distinct dynamics and supporting structures. The wine tourism ecosystem encapsulates primary resources (e.g. vineyards, wine production processes, wineries) and is considered as a sub-set of food tourism (Hall, 1996); differing from food tourism regarding policies and planning. For this reason, and as wine tourism is previously described as an economic, territorial and social robust activity, the authors have focused mainly on the importance of the food tourism phenomenon in destination management emphasizing territorial innovation strategies.

Only three studies are quantitative in nature and all used questionnaires: Tsai (2016) applied structural equation modelling in order to model behavioural intentions in consuming local food; Prada-Trigo (2017) employed the Mann–Whitney test to evaluate the perception of residents and visitors to a territorial product, and Kiralova & Hamarneh (2017) used the arithmetic mean and sample coefficient of variations to assess local gastronomy as a tool of food tourism development.

Products with “geographical indication” are attached to the place, the terroir, encompassing unique attributes that allow their identification (Rinaldi, 2017), giving a sense of place (Lee et al., 2015) and adding ethnographic and landscape values to gastronomic offerings (UNWTO, 2012). As such, food is a mixture of old and new with clear continuity with the past. The word tradition simply means long-established or handed down (Kim & Ellis, 2015, p. 164).

Food is one of the basic needs of every being [1,2] and it is easy to make a tourism product out of it, as it is also one of the main components of a touristic package. As mass tourism alone can no longer satisfy the ‘new visitor’s requests’, the focus had to be switched to what else a destination can offer tourists. For example, people need more reasons to visit a city than just a sightseeing tour, which they might be able to do in just one day. Therefore, some destinations, especially those with an already well-known cuisine, started to use their local gastronomy in their branding.

Food, gastronomic or culinary tourism all refer to the same type of tourism which is defined by some authors as the type of tourism for which the main reason for travelling is food [3]. Whereas, others define it as ‘a journey, in regions rich in gastronomic resources, to generate recreational experiences or

have entertainment purposes, which include: visits to primary or secondary producers of gastronomic products, gastronomical festivals, fairs, events, cooking demonstrations, food tastings or any activity related to food' [3,4]

Some authors refer to gastronomy in a more poetic way, such as 'the art of cooking and good eating' [5], while others claim that it is the bridge which brings together culture and food. A more artistic approach to define gastronomy was taken by Gillespie and Cousins [6] where they define gastronomy as 'the art and science of cooking, eating and drinking as a pleasure using different senses'.

The reason why there are three terms referring to the same type of tourism is related to language and cultural differences. For example, in the European countries where Romance Languages are spoken, people refer to it as gastronomic tourism because the term 'food tourism' (generally used in the USA) is considered too basic and general; therefore they use a more elevated term for it [7]. Those countries (by coincidence or not) are, at the same time, some of the most developed in terms of gastronomic tourism, and have a very rich offer. Some authors even refer to this type of tourism as 'tasting tourism' [13]. Any of the terms used for food tourism, by default, refer as well to beverages; therefore, it includes activities which are related to beverage consumption, production, etc. Some authors consider food tourism as a part of cultural tourism because food and drinks are part of local cultures [14].

The keywords used for the above-mentioned topics were: 'gastronomic/food/culinary tourism' (to define what food tourism is, and get a general idea about the concept). These were chosen because we believe the terms, although different, refer to the same concept, and are at the same time comprehensive. 'Food motivation in tourism/food tourist profile', were the keywords used for the studies which gave us an image of food tourists and their motivations. We chose these keywords to lead us to specific studies on tourists' behaviors and traits that we could then use to describe food tourists. 'Gastronomic tourism destinations/gastronomic destinations/popular tourist destinations' were used in order to depict articles which were focused on food tourism destinations. We believe these terms are suitable as they can give us answers on where food tourists go; we included the last broader term here because, after an intensive search, we did not find many specific studies that answered our question.

Dann and Jacobsen (2002) have also studied tourists' quest for smellscapes, and a few researchers have found linkages between tourism and gastronomy. Dahiya & Duggal (2015) have also identified that Gastronomic tourism has grown significantly in the last few years, thus improving the economic and social growth of weaker areas. Culinary tourism reflects the cultural side of food and is a powerful media for cultural exchange and exposure.

The countries that have taken encouraging steps forward to exploit the promises latent in their culinary wealth are Mexico, France, Italy, Thailand, California, Vietnam and the Caribbean. Hong Kong's gastronomy was a significant factor that positively contributed to the respondents' desire to return to Hong Kong (Kivela & Crofts, 2005; 2009).

According to Global Report on food tourism 2013 by UNWTO, food tourism is growing over the years. Gastronomy is becoming the central part of the tourism experience. The overall experience of visiting a tourist destination is accelerated through the sumptuous cuisine of a destination. A recent survey conducted in US inferred food as the prime motivation while choosing a destination.

Quan & Wang, (2004) opined food consumption to be a peak touristic experience that could be demonstrated by a newly emerging form of tourism, in which the major, sometime even sole, motivation to tourism was the tastes of foods that were much more various, with longer range of choices, and different from their daily reservoirs of foods. Such a form of tourism included gastronomic tourism, food festivals, wine tourism, and other foodrelated events. Maple Syrup Festival in Canada, Original Marathon Seafood Festival in USA, Chocolate festival in Suffern, New York, Oyster festival in California, Gourmet International food festival in Mexico, Cape Town's Good Food and Wine Show, Sydney Food Festival, Tuffle Festival in Italy and so on stress on the significance of food as an attraction in a destination or the distinguished gastronomic experience that can become a prime motivation to travel a destination.

Hall and Sharples (2008) also asserted that food tourism is characterized by a desire to experience a particular type of food or the produce of a specific region. Indeed, food tourism may possibly be regarded as an example of culinary, gastronomic, gourmet or cuisine tourism that reflects consumers for whom interest in food and wine is a form of serious leisure (Hall and Mitchell, 2001; Hall and Sharples, 2003; Mitchell and Hall, 2003).

Food and gastronomy are considered as identity makers of a region (Bessiere, 1998; Hjalager and Richards, 2002b; Boniface, 2003; Long, 2003) and heritage features that can redefine local uniqueness, being essential elements of regional culture (Jones and Jenkins, 2002), of a particular country or a region or even cities having their exclusive treasure of culinary attractions (Cohen and Avieli, 2004). Gastronomy is regarded as a key cultural product (Antónia Correia, Miguel Moital, Carlos Ferreira da Costa and Rita Peres, 2008). These attractions are not only becoming an integral part of holidays but also serving as both entertainment and a cultural activity (Bessiere, 1998).

The core and relevance of the distinction of culinary tourism from the other forms of tourism is therefore seen in a way of satisfying the demand for relaxation, rest, or entertainment by the means of

activities which are connected primarily or secondarily to food or gastronomy (Hall & Sharples, 2003). Reflecting the stated facts, it is possible to consider the culinary tourism as a form of adventure or cognitive tourism where the main motivation is visiting the place offering tasteful food products. According to Hall and Sharples, the main aim of such visits is leisure, entertainment, and getting to know the culture of a visited place, which is somehow connected to food and its degustation. Culinary tourism encompasses enormous tourist activities like intentional visits to certain restaurants, presentations and demonstrations of farmer markets and gastronomic.

The development of gastronomic tourism also contributes to improving the general perception of every global destination. Destinations that seek to promote food tourism have to recognise local products roles, and then develop of a range of competitive offerings. Thus food and beverage staff must be well trained in order to satisfactorily increase visitor satisfaction (UNWTO, 2012).

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