

GASTRONOMY TOURISM: AN OPPORTUNITY FOR LOCAL DEVELOPMENT IN CATALONIA? A STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS.

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ABSTRACT

The development of tourism and particularly public administration have had to adapt to new trends and the demands of the tourist market (Fayos-Solá, 2004) especially in Spain, thus generating some of the most remarkable and structural changes which constitute the emergence of new touristic dynamics (Lopez Palomeque and X. Font, 2010). The Catalan territory, which has participated in those dynamics where wine tourism becomes an alternative product of the diversification of touristic offerings, traditionally focused on sun-and-beach not only in this region but also in the whole of Spain.

To revitalize the turistic offer historically focused on sun and Beach tourism, the Catalan government , bet for the gastronomic tourism through the creation of the strategies as the Gastronomic Club in 2001 or the Gastroteca in 2006; which link different stakeholders not only publics but also privates (travel agencies, universities, private foundation, NGO, producers, etc) interested in gastronomy, responding to this phenomenon that is increasing around the world and specially in Catalonia thanks to important figures like one of the most well known chefs around the world which is Ferran Adrià.

Catalonia as a region is particularly varied, no only because it's characteristics biogeographically but also for its touristic resources, generating in this territory the production of a set of "micro territories" which are constantly looking for authenticity and differentiation from highly competitive tourism brands such as the city of Barcelona.

This paper analyzes the advantages and disadvantages which arise this new touristic phenomenon in Catalonia and its relationship with the local development in different scales; through the perceptions and actions carried out for the stakeholders involved in this strategy.

To achieve this, was taken the reflexions and the relationships that keep between them, 12 personalities from the public and private sector and the academy. Were applied semi

structured interviews and their perceptions were systematized and analyzed using SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) methodology as the primary tool. This methodology, examines this phenomenon in Catalonia and its possibilities as a generator of local and regional development.

Key words: Gastronomic tourism, territory, diversifying tourism, local development, stakeholders, Catalonia.

INTRODUCTION

Donaire (1993, 179) claims that the most significant change undergone by contemporary tourism is the role it now plays in society as a whole. The author cites Alvin Toffler (1971:208) who, back in the seventies, predicted a “revolutionary expansion of certain industries whose sole output consists not of manufactured goods, nor even of ordinary services, but of pre-programmed ‘experiences’”. Today, gastronomy tourism is perhaps one of the best expressions of our post-industrial society, in which the use of our senses – sight, smell and taste – has become the activity generated by these "industries" (food producers, processors and restaurants), whose primary purpose is to give the visitor an “experience” via the sampling of food and drink. Seen in this light, Donaire (1993) argues that gastronomy runs counter to the uniformity of urban spaces, the imitation of distant geographies and the creation of aspatial scenarios and is an alternative to the McDonaldization process first defined by George Ritzer (1996), since gastronomy tourism is based on what is local, traditional and authentic in food and drink.

For Kivela (2006), gastronomy is often referred to exclusively as the art of cooking and good eating, but this is only part of the discipline. For other authors, gastronomy is the study of the relationship between culture and food. A person who works in gastronomy is often involved in the tasting, preparing, experimenting, researching, discovering, understanding and writing about food and typically, but not exclusively, about wine too. Gastronomy, as a fundamental part of culinary tourism, is today a growing sector within the overall tourism market. For many tourists, sampling food and drink is one of their main reasons for visiting new destinations. A country’s gastronomy is a manifestation of its culture; its local food markets are recognized as important elements of the cultural and tourist experience of a region, its local identity being strengthened thanks to the products it sells. The increase in information

available to tourists and consumers nowadays means there has been a growth in demand for local products, often associated at the same time with the trend towards a healthier lifestyle. This relationship between local food production and tourism is being increasingly recognized by the tourist sector, which has managed to involve the various parties that make up these systems.

In the case of Catalonia, its autonomous government, the *Generalitat*, has played a key role in recent years, manifested according to Lopez Palomeque and Font (2010): “on the one hand, by the intensification of the dissemination of tourism throughout the region, and on the other, by the participation of government bodies in this process, resulting in the institutionalization of tourism management”. Over the last eight years, local government has taken a greater role in the management of tourism throughout Catalonia (Lopez Palomeque, 2004), in which time the government has opted for the diversification of its tourism, seeking to relocate an activity that was traditionally focused on the “sun and beach” tourist sector.

This paper describes aspects (both positive and negative) of gastronomy tourism as identified in interviews with those involved in various activities associated with Catalan cuisine, including food producers, restaurateurs, and those agents (both public and private) who promote this phenomenon in the region. These reports are triangulated with data obtained from direct observation and documented information. The information collected was then evaluated by applying the SWOT methodology in order to identify facets of interest to those involved in regional management and local development so that they might exploit gastronomy as an engine for a diversification of tourism.

Here, we examine both conceptual questions and development issues in undertaking: a) an introduction to the global phenomenon, b) a study of gastronomy as a tourism resource and product in Catalonia, and c) an examination of the potential of gastronomy tourism as a strategy for local development in Catalonia.

OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

This article examines the potential of exploiting gastronomy tourism as a strategy for local development in Catalonia. Various agents intervene in the production and marketing of gastronomy tourism as a local activity, forming the supply and distribution chain which

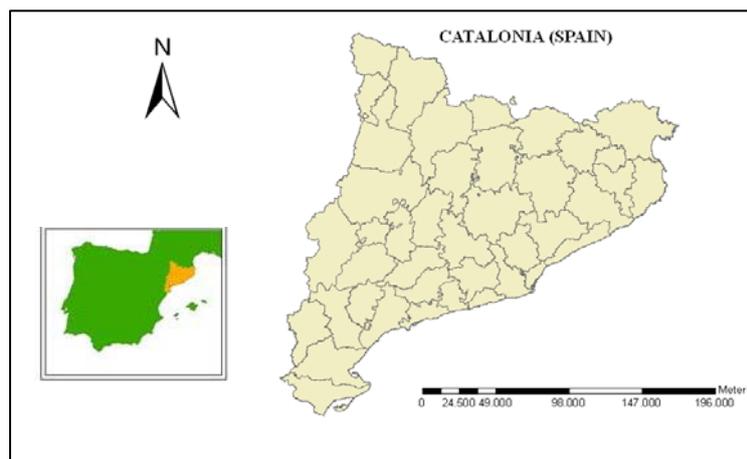
generates complex combinations of activities, ranging from production to the sale of products. A theoretical and empirical understanding of those who participate in Catalan gastronomy should enable us to define a contextual framework for food tourism as an economic activity and, at the same time, to determine both its current and future potential for this region.

The methodology employed in undertaking this study included an exhaustive review of the literature and related documentation examining the following three prime concepts and the interrelationship between them: tourism, gastronomy and local development. These elements represent the starting point for the identification and assessment of relevant information. To these elements was added a fourth: information concerning the study area, the geographical region of Catalonia.

Study area

The study is conducted in Catalonia, which lies in the north-eastern tip of the Iberian Peninsula, extending from the Pyrenees to the Mediterranean Sea. Its territory covers an area of 31,932 km², roughly half of which (15,902 km²) lie at altitudes higher than 600m a.s.l. and about 17% (5,288 km²) rise above 1000m a.s.l. These variations between sea level and the highest peaks in the Pyrenees (reaching 3000m a.s.l.) account for the marked climatic and biogeographic contrasts in the region (see, Lopez Palomeque . *et al.*, 2002:)

Titel: The Catalan Region



Source: Leal, 2011

These biogeographic characteristics have also endowed Catalonia with considerable variety in its products and cuisine, which ranges from typical fish and seafood dishes to the food typical

of the Pyrenees and the highland areas. Traditional Catalan cooking know-how has, therefore, developed such dishes as *fideuà* (paella-type dish with noodles), breaded artichokes, cod *brandade* (emulsion of fish and olive oil), mushroom casserole, *hervor de atún* (a tuna stew), cuttlefish “*a la bruta*” (a rich stew), *allipebre* rabbit and langoustines, and *xató* (almond-based sauce), among many others.

Tourism is a key component of the economy of Catalonia. In 2010, according to the observatory of tourism in Catalonia, the region became the largest recipient of international tourists in the whole of Spain, accounting for 25% of the country’s total. This boom in tourism in Catalonia has given rise to a process that might be referred to as “touristification”, which since the nineties has been characterised by three specific elements: a) the intensification of the phenomenon of local leisure-tourism, generated above all by the Barcelona metropolis; b) tourism as a strategy for the socio-economic development of inland areas (especially rural areas); and c) the need to restructure traditional coastal areas and the “incorporation” of inland areas as one of the formulae or strategies for upgrading obsolete tourism products, resulting in the expansion of tourist activity from the coast to inland areas (Lopez Palomeque, F., 1997).

GASTRONOMY TOURISM: AN INTRODUCTION TO THE PHENOMENON

Gastronomy is everywhere in society today; you only have to enter the term in any internet search engine to see the myriad of potential uses attributed to the word. Yet, it is only since the 1950s that gastronomy began to adopt a broader nature, and along with it one that brought it closer to many different social groups. Today, gastronomy adopts many guises and is present in many different settings. Thus, we see that the concept has evolved to the point that it is now inextricably linked with “culture”, since according to Scarpato (2002) and her analysis of the evolution of the term gastronomy, it cannot be separated from cultural practices, and as such we can speak of “food culture”.

One of the relations established today with food is that which has been forged with tourism, now a widespread phenomenon practiced throughout contemporary society. In recent history, tourism has acquired undeniable importance establishing itself across all areas of society (Lopez Palomeque, 1997). In the last decade, reflecting changes in the habits and behaviours of demand, society has opted for the diversification of tourism, seasonal adjustment,

innovation, sustainability and a change in the traditional models of tourism such as those typified by “sun and beach” holidays. These new elements have created new horizons focused, in the main, on generating experiences for tourists.

Today, there exists a large body of literature dedicated to tourism and its various “dimensions”; however, the relationship that has been established between tourism and gastronomy as a new tourist phenomenon, and all aspects related to this and the territory in which it is developed, have not been widely studied. This is perhaps because it was not until the year 2000 and the conference entitled "Local food and International Tourism", organised by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) in Cyprus, that the importance of gastronomy for tourism was recognised.

The relationship, moreover, between a tourism product and a destination is symbiotic, since the destination provides the food, recipes, chefs, and the cultural backdrop that make its gastronomy an ideal product for tourist consumption (Richards, 2002). Gastronomy is the point of convergence of food production and processing, storage, transport, cooking and preparation. A meal involves choices, customers, manners, traditions and political-economic context, and many physiological motivations. Gastronomy tourism is currently emerging as one of the most promising segments in the tourism sector (Antonioli Corigliano, 2002).

A fuller understanding of gastronomy tourism, and within this sector the role played by the participation and networking of stakeholders, should contribute to a more effective implementation of local development strategies in regions or communities that exploit food products as a means of enhancing their socio-economic status, since “tourism creates, transforms and even differentially enhances spaces that might not otherwise have a value in the context of the logic of production” (Hiernaux, 1996).

Finally, an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of gastronomy tourism, together with an examination of the interests of the stakeholders involved, should contribute to our understanding of its actual effects on the development of a given area as well as to our understanding of gastronomy as a tourism resource and product.

GASTRONOMY AS A TOURISM RESOURCE AND PRODUCT

Gastronomy, as argued by various authors (see, for example, Hjalager and Richards, 2000), can be a tourism product or, on occasions, a tourism resource. Its conversion into a product is the result of the transformation or revalorisation of the resource, which is very much in line with the definition formulated by Anton et al. (2005), where the tourism product “comprises a set of elements that make up the tourist offer of a destination. These are the tourism resources that are exploited and which are adapted to the functions and tourist uses through their presentation and marketing”. Below I provide a brief description of how gastronomy can be understood as both a tourism resource and product.

Gastronomy as a tourism resource

Gastronomy in combination with tourism has become a tourism resource for the creation of new products and for the reinvention of those that have run their course, and which, as such, often appear in the final stage of Butler’s (1980) “tourism area life cycle” (cited by McKercher, 2005). Butler considers destinations as amalgams of products that are geographically clustered and which include tourism products and services, and both these products and destinations need to be continually refreshed and revitalized (Cooper & Hall, 2008).

In contrast with other tourism activities and attractions, food is available all year round, any day of the week, at any time of the day, regardless of the weather. A region’s gastronomy can become the “motor” that serves to reactivate a tourist destination that has suffered a decline in its life cycle as a tourism product. The combination food and tourism is increasingly occurring in formats such as agri-tourism, wine tours, the sale of food products as souvenirs, among others (Hjalager & Corigliano, 2000).

In Smith and Xiao’s (2008) typology, three types of culinary tourism resource are identified:

1. **Facilities:** refers to buildings/structures and land uses associated with food production or preparation, as well as distribution, ranging from pick-your-own operations to food processing operations to restaurants. Activities include educational opportunities such as attending cooking schools, participating in informal tastings, and reading books and magazines devoted to food.

2. **Events:** includes consumer shows presenting food products and cooking equipment. Food and wine festivals are one of the main attractions for gastronomy tourists and typically one of the most visible aspects of gastronomy tourism.

3. **Organizations:** includes all those dedicated to serving the interests of gastronomy tourists or supporting the development of the gastronomy tourism market, including organizations such as Slow Food, cooking clubs, professional associations, among others.

In the context of Spain's tourism, gastronomy is clearly an emerging product of some importance as shown by its development in recent years. On this subject, Armesto and Gomez (2004) describe the "the appearance of tourism products based mainly on culinary resources and a steady increase in the number of establishments serving food (restaurants, bars, etc.)". This increase, as the authors note, is based on the wealth of gastronomic resources thanks to the country's geographical and cultural diversity, which ensures a broad range of food types and recipes.

In the case of Catalonia, the *Generalitat* has sought to promote tourist products based on its local and traditional food resources through the work of a number of government departments that include the Catalan Tourist Board and the Consortium of Trade, Handicrafts and Fashion of Catalonia. In addition, these government initiatives have generated a series of actions and strategies related to food, such as the Gastronomic Club, the *Gastroteca* and a number of other strategies that are discussed in more detail below.

Gastronomy as a tourism product

The concept of the tourism product is derived from marketing and corresponds to "the set of goods and services that are used for tourist consumption by selected groups of consumers" (Sancho *et al.*, 1998). This in turn includes both tangible and intangible products (goods and services), as well as being based on the interaction of the service provider and the consumer. A marketing approach addresses all market agents and the way in which they are in constant interaction, thereby integrating, in line with Sancho *et al.* (1998), tangible and intangible goods and services.

The products of gastronomy tourism are then delivered to consumers through various distribution channels, such as markets, festivals and restaurants (Smith & Xiao, 2008). According to Hjalaguer & Richards (2002) this corresponds to her four-order typology of activities that add value to gastronomy tourism and which, as such, in many cases create tourism products. First-order activities focus on sites where visitors can enjoy food, such as festivals and campaigns, among others. Second-order activities aim at promoting the visitor's better understanding of food by, for example, creating and promoting quality labels and product standardization in a region. Third-order activities refer to experimentation through packages and cooking schools, while the fourth involve exchanging knowledge about nutrition through research projects.

According to Ravenscroft and Van Westering (2001), Spain has once again successfully reinvented itself by creating a brand as a tourist destination where sun, sea and sand are equal partners to paella, gazpacho and Rioja. The global impact of its food has been surprisingly high. Spanish food products are also exported to many other countries where they enjoy notable success. Note the growing number of popular *tapas* restaurants to be found in many European cities. The authors comment that local production is the basis of regional Spanish cuisine, which highlights regional gastronomic identity, pride and tradition that can be found on the menu of most restaurants in an area.

To this we can add the large number of food festivals held in Catalonia. These include the festivals of *romesco* sauce in Cambrils, of *calçots* (a variety of mild, spring onion) in Valls, and of snails in Lleida. It is the authors belief that *romesco* sauce forms part of Catalan identity and that events of this kind today are tourist products generating gastronomy tourism, where perhaps the main reason for visiting Valls in Tarragona is the opportunity it affords of sampling the *calçots* at a *calçotada*.

New products such as these are important for the diversification of destinations, as they increase sales and exploit a competitive advantage. Cooper and Hall (2008) present the idea of the product as an experience, in which providers and destinations respond to the challenge of creating products based on experiences. Such experiences are personal, memorable and evoke an emotional response, whereby the tourist enters into a multi-faceted relationship with both the actors and the destination that provides the experience.

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT: GASTRONOMY TOURISM STRATEGIES

Many rural development programs frequently include among their actions the promotion of typical or traditional products, usually referred to as “local products” (Caldentey, 2004). Clearly, the promotion of such products can serve as part of a wider programme for spurring regional development. Indeed, the existence of a growing market sector that demands products of these characteristics makes the promotion of local products, as part of gastronomy tourism, particularly interesting.

We can assume that these “local products” come from small or medium-scale farmers and producers, which means their promotion needs to be conducted collectively with the support of institutions involved in local development (Caldentey, 2001). According to Espeteix (2007), state and even supra-state authorities see the exploitation of local food products as a means of mitigating rising levels of depopulation in “marginal” territories, promoting a better balance between regions in a framework of “sustainable development”, providing support for the primary sector and stimulating exports through strategies such as quality certification. In a similar vein of thought, the authorities expect local products and dishes to maintain and even create jobs, revitalize areas and “fix” the population.

Gastronomic tourism is ultimately a means to achieving local development and serves as a basic tool for the promotion and distribution of local agro food products. Furthermore, it has been suggested that gastronomy tourism can play a key role in strengthening a region’s identity, sustaining cultural heritage, staving off fears of global food homogenisation (Everett, S. & Aitchison, C., 2008). For authors such as Sims (2010) promoting local food and drink is also a mechanism to promote sustainable tourism. She describes three levels at which food can be important: first, increasing the tourist consumption of local foods can generate a multiplier effect that is beneficial to the local economy; second, concerns about the environmental impact of transporting food across the globe has led to the argument that “buying local” is vital if the tourist industry wishes to reduce its carbon footprint; and, third, there is a growing recognition that tourism destinations are competing with each other in a bid to attract visitors.

STRATEGIES IN CATALONIA

In the case of Catalonia, in 2003, the administration led by the *Generalitat's* Catalan Tourist Board created the Gastronomic Club as the first step in its strategy to help market and, thereby, boost gastronomy tourism “in close cooperation with all companies, organisations and bodies engaged in this sector of the tourist industry”. The club allows companies to participate in various strategies designed to promote Catalonia as a tourist product. Each entity pays an annual fee (350 euros) entitling it to enjoy all membership privileges. The club comprises culinary associations, locally- or district-based accommodation and restaurant services, producers and service companies linked to culinary tourism.

Club members are grouped in three categories: A – Service Providers, B – Tourist Promotion Companies, and C – Partners. Group A comprises 24 tourist service groups, 15 cuisine collectives, 14 hotel groups and 7 intermediary services. Section B is made up of 27 entities comprising municipalities, provincial tourist boards and tourist promotion groups. And, finally, Group C comprises, at present, four entities dedicated primarily to research in the field of tourism and given this focus they do not have to pay a membership fee. The Catalan Tourist Board offers its members the following main services: receipt of the Club's advertising and marketing material, a professional advisory service, participation in the Club's forum for tourist professionals and use of its tourist promotion centres abroad.

The second step in the administration's strategy to promote gastronomy tourism throughout the region was the founding in 2007 of the *Gastroteca* by the Directorate General for Trade of the *Generalitat* of Catalonia. This comprises a website providing promotional and marketing support for local food products. This interactive channel of communication is open to producers, distributors and establishments working in the catering industry as well as to consumers and stakeholders with an interest in gastronomy tourism.

Both strategies, the Gastronomic Club and the *Gastroteca*, have designed tourist routes for those consumers interested in tasting the local products that make up Catalan cuisine. Today there are 16 gastronomy routes designed by the Catalan Tourism Board, which serve to introduce the visitor to the rich offer of Catalonia's cuisine and gastronomy. Similarly, the *Gastroteca* has designed a further eleven slightly more specialised food and wine routes. These include the addresses of establishments where the visitor can sample, purchase and enjoy the food and wine of the various provinces and districts of Catalonia.

STAKEHOLDERS AND THEIR PERCEPTIONS

As discussed above, the primary data were drawn from twelve, semi-structured interviews (see Table 1), with various individuals involved in this sector either as promoters or as agents of production and marketing of Catalan gastronomy at different scales.

Table 1 List of Individuals Interviewed

Name	Institution	Date of Interview
Rocío Baez	<i>(Gastronomy Club Manager- Tourism Catalan Agency- Generalitat de Catalunya)</i>	09/07/2010
Ramón Sentmartí	<i>(Gastroteca Manager)</i>	30/09/2010
Pepa Aymami	<i>(Catalan Cuisine Institute Foundation Manager)</i>	05/10/2010
Cecilia Lorenzo	<i>(Magazine “Viatges.cat- Manager”)</i>	19/10/2010
Manuel Colmenero	<i>(Travel Agency - Ocio Vital)</i>	20/10/2010
Xavier Medina	<i>(Professor- Universitat Oberta de Catalunya)</i>	21/10/2010
Jesús Contreras	<i>(Professor- University of Barcelona)</i>	19/11/2010
Damià Serrano	<i>Regional Administration of Barcelona Province- Diputació de Barcelona</i>	02/02/2011
Marina Duñach	<i>Gallecs Park (private farming organization)</i>	10/02/2011
Josep Pamies	<i>Pamies Hortícolas (Farmer)</i>	17/02/2011
Jordi Tresserras	<i>Professor – University of Barcelona</i>	15/02/2011
Guillem Miralles	<i>Regional Administration of Barcelona Province- Diputació de Barcelona</i>	12/03/2011

Source: Leal, 2011

The information obtained from these interviews was then organised into a SWOT matrix so as to analyse the sector’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats based on the responses recorded to the following specific questions:

1. How can gastronomy tourism help contribute to regional development?
2. What are the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of culinary tourism in Catalonia?

In reply to the first question, all the respondents were unanimous in declaring that gastronomy tourism could serve to promote local development. In specifying how they believed it could act, some respondents mentioned not only the potential impact of the activity on aggregate demand, i.e., on trade and the catering industry, but also the effect the product could have as a promoter of the region. The promotion of local products in specialty stores, sold as souvenirs

and the like, is seen as a means of promoting and developing the region. Some of the actual answers are recorded below to illustrate these beliefs:

“As I see it, if people are looking for it (local gastronomy) and you manage to persuade them to visit a particular place, and all that that means in terms of accommodation, then there is the immediate impact in terms of all the expenses they incur in staying there. But it also has a subsequent impact on trade by increasing demand. So it has a dual component”. (Ramón Sanmartí – *Gastroteca*)

“What gastronomy tourism does is to promote the local region, where promote means the creation of wealth, not only thanks to the tourism but also thanks to the expansion of knowledge”. (Marina Duñach (Producer) – Gallecs Agricultural Park)

“Yes, directly from the profit made from increased sales and indirectly by helping to position the destination. A good example are the calçots of Valls, where there has been an increase in hotel accommodation, restaurants and sales to tourists, which mobilizes other elements in the territory”. (Damia Serrano – Provincial Council of Barcelona).

“It can help generate a lot of development, simply because gastronomy tourism is committed to exploiting the product, production, the local labour force, local catering, all of which means that the product mobilises the territory”. (Xavier Medina – *Universitat Oberta de Catalunya*).

Table 2 below records the responses to Question 2 made by each of the respondents (“Please mention one weakness, threat, strength and opportunity of food tourism in Catalonia).

Table 2 weakness, threat, strength and opportunity of food tourism in Catalonia

WEAKNESSES	THREATS	STRENGTHS	OPPORTUNITIES
<p>Little appreciation of local products on the part of restaurateurs and producers.</p> <p>Little work being undertaken in the marketing of food products and in the development of marketing strategies.</p> <p><i>(Ramón Santmartí-Gastroteca)</i></p>	<p>The global economy is a threat to the small-scale producer .</p> <p><i>(Ramón Santmartí-Gastroteca)</i></p>	<p>The existence of a good product and increasing demand. <i>(Ramón Santmartí-Gastroteca)</i></p>	<p>The promotion of actions that unite forces throughout the region. <i>(Ramón Santmartí-Gastroteca)</i></p>
<p>Information and communication technologies (ICTs) are not used nearly enough, although it is increasingly common for restaurateurs to have websites or at least an email address. <i>(Pepa Aymami- Catalan Cuisine Institute Foundation Manager)</i></p>	<p>Other destinations that can offer better options, such as Tuscany.</p> <p>The equivalent services in Catalonia are not as competitive, and their price does not help either. <i>(Pepa Aymami- Catalan Cuisine Institute Foundation Manager)</i></p>	<p>We know how to sell our products, the media and press play their part, our products are good as is the case of the “volcanic” cuisine of la Garrotxa. <i>(Pepa Aymami- Catalan Cuisine Institute Foundation Manager)</i></p>	<p>The use of ICTs is especially important these days.</p> <p><i>(Pepa Aymami- Catalan Cuisine Institute Foundation Manager)</i></p>
<p>The invasion and occupation of the territory - we need to know how to control this, because</p>	<p>The disappearance of a particular product. A constant threat is the growing uniformity of what we</p>	<p>The increasing demand for products of this kind. <i>(Marina Dunyac-Gallecs Gallecs Park)</i></p>	<p>Gastronomy tourism can help promote many areas of Catalonia. I think it can help promote</p>

<p>tourism is often synonymous with invasion. Here we have the example of the Costa Brava, a part of our region destroyed by tourism. I think the government needs to control this. <i>(Marina Duniac-Gallecs Gallecs Park private farming organization)</i></p>	<p>eat. <i>(Marina Duniac-Gallecs Gallecs Park private farming organization)</i></p>	<p><i>private farming organization)</i></p>	<p>impoverished areas, particularly those products that have not left the area and have remained tied to a territory. I think that at the European level it can enhance a country such as Catalonia, the obvious example is Ferran Adrià who has promoted Catalonia through his cuisine. <i>(Marina Duniac-Gallecs Gallecs Park private farming organization)</i></p>
<p>In the relationship between the territory and the promotion of Catalan tourism in general, there is a need for more communication. Catalan tourism should be promoted more within Spain. <i>(Cecilia Lorenzo-Magazine "Viatges.cat"- Manager)</i></p>	<p>Competition from other regions, such as the Basque country, which has similar products and which enjoys the promotion of high profile chefs. <i>(Cecilia Lorenzo-Magazine "Viatges.cat"- Manager)</i></p>	<p>Catalonia is unique in terms of its distinct territories and quality products. <i>(Cecilia Lorenzo-Magazine "Viatges.cat"- Manager)</i></p>	<p>The danger I see is that in the rush to promote local, traditional products, we might end up promoting poor quality products. We must proceed in a sustainable fashion. <i>(Cecilia Lorenzo-Magazine "Viatges.cat"- Manager)</i></p>
<p>The weak connection between local people and local products. Local people do not consume</p>	<p>The trivialization of products, whereby they end up by becoming poor quality products</p>	<p>The great reception given to the country's gastronomy. The cuisine of Ferran Adrià, creative</p>	<p>To generate development, there is plenty of wealth that can be transformed into tourist</p>

<p>them nor do they appreciate what they have. Then, there is the urban-rural divide, here we do not value rural products. A frontier has been set up between urban development and that of the countryside in a disparaging way. <i>(Damia Serrano- Regional Administration of Barcelona Province)</i></p>	<p>as a result of competition and excess offer. <i>(Damia Serrano- Regional Administration of Barcelona Province)</i></p>	<p>cuisine, has opened the door. The role played by Ferran Adrià, as an ambassador, is very important. <i>(Damia Serrano- Regional Administration of Barcelona Province)</i></p>	<p>development. <i>(Damia Serrano- Regional Administration of Barcelona Province)</i></p>
<p>It is difficult to express because tourism is currently undergoing a low cost trend – it's not easy to explain that a one-day activity involving a visit to a couple of wine cellars and a restaurant can cost 65 euros when for that price you can fly to London and back ... it's not easy. <i>(Manuel Colmenero- Travel Agency - Ocio Vital)</i></p>	<p>It's a dangerous type of tourism; it's all too easy to fall into the trap of the trivialization of gastronomy tourism. We are poorly positioned, today people find what they want more easily in Italy, in Tuscany. We are a long way behind, we'll have to work very hard if we want consumers to visit us and know our products. <i>(Manuel Colmenero- Travel Agency - Ocio Vital)</i></p>	<p>We have the landscapes, the culture, we have the ingredients needed to position ourselves strongly in the market, we have a great location, we have good products, and little explored territories <i>(Manuel Colmenero- Travel Agency - Ocio Vital)</i></p>	<p>It is a current trend in tourism, it is a great opportunity. <i>(Manuel Colmenero- Travel Agency - Ocio Vital)</i></p>

<p>There is very little integration of the public and private sectors. The private sector is yet to be convinced that food and wine tourism are opportunities and often the public sector seeks to promote initiatives that have little success. There is little integration and dialogue between the two parties. One of the weaknesses is that the private sector has to pull the public sector along. <i>(Xavier Medina-Professor- Universitat Oberta de Catalunya)</i></p>	<p>That excessive growth or an excessive desire for profit might undermine the quality of our product. <i>(Xavier Medina-Professor- Universitat Oberta de Catalunya)</i></p>	<p>There is an enormous base on which to build, a base of products, as well as of heritage and interest. <i>(Xavier Medina-Professor- Universitat Oberta de Catalunya)</i></p>	<p>Gastronomy tourism can serve as an element for development, if we can ensure that it becomes integrated, then the territory can serve to promote the product. Only a small part has been exploited to date, what the people know, and so there is huge margin for growth. <i>(Xavier Medina-Professor- Universitat Oberta de Catalunya)</i></p>
<p>Excessive dependence on what is a current fashion; excessive sense of self-complacency <i>(Jesús Contreras- Professor- University of Barcelona)</i></p>	<p>Not only does it enjoy the advantages of being in fashion, but also the risks. The advantages are that it generates considerable demand in the short term but its duration can be limited. <i>(Jesús Contreras- Professor- University of Barcelona)</i></p>	<p>Food today has the value of folklore and tradition; cuisine has the value of being modern. <i>(Jesús Contreras- Professor- University of Barcelona)</i></p>	<p>We must recognize that Catalonia, on the one hand, and gastronomy, on the other, are in vogue. These factors encourage people to travel. <i>(Jesús Contreras- Professor- University of Barcelona)</i></p>
<p>The lack of knowledge as to what</p>	<p>Creating “white” brands as part</p>	<p>I think we have a well-prepared</p>	<p>Its diversity. Catalonia has great</p>

Catalan food actually comprises. <i>(Jordi Tresserras- Professor – University of Barcelona)</i>	of the Mediterranean diet. <i>(Jordi Tresserras- Professor – University of Barcelona)</i>	sector - chefs, producers, specialized tourist attraction. <i>(Jordi Tresserras- Professor – University of Barcelona)</i>	biodiversity not only in terms of products but also of culture, which means we have a very rich cuisine in a very small territory. <i>(Jordi Tresserras- Professor – University of Barcelona)</i>
The lack of structure for the region's products as a whole. <i>(Rocío Báez- Gastronomy Club Manager- Tourism Catalan Agency–Generalitat de Catalunya).</i>	Competition at home and abroad from the Basque Country, La Rioja, Andalusia and from Italy and France <i>(Rocío Baez- Gastronomy Club Manager- Tourism Catalan Agency– Generalitat de Catalunya)</i>	That a Government strategy is in place. <i>(Rocío Báez- Gastronomy Club Manager- Tourism Catalan Agency–Generalitat de Catalunya)</i>	Consolidate Catalonia as a quality destination, as a point of reference abroad. <i>(Rocío Báez- Gastronomy Club Manager- Tourism Catalan Agency– Generalitat de Catalunya)</i>
The tourist is above all local and the challenge is to open up the market to the rest of Spain. <i>(Guillermo Miralles- Regional Administration of Barcelona Province)</i>	The dynamics of globalization poses a threat to local products. Twenty years ago access could only be gained to these products, but today the offer is so vast that it is not easy to compete. <i>(Guillermo Miralles- Regional Administration of Barcelona Province)</i>	The quantity and variety of quality products available, but what is missing is the corresponding appreciation, providing them with added value and getting them to the consumer. <i>(Guillermo Miralles- Regional Administration of Barcelona Province)</i>	I believe it to be an emerging sector as increasingly the consumer is better informed. There has been a change in the consumer profile. <i>(Guillermo Miralles- Regional Administration of Barcelona Province)</i>
Overproduction leads to a loss in	That it be seen as a large-scale	Can breathe life into countless	Create jobs and give employment

<p>quality. (<i>Josep Pamies- Pamies Hortícolas Farmer</i>)</p>	<p>business, leading to the desertification of certain areas, the transformation of agrarian landscapes, and the loss of product diversity with a particularly negative impact on small farmers. (<i>Josep Pamies- Pamies Hortícolas Farmer</i>)</p>	<p>farms and rural areas, reactivating the territory. (<i>Josep Pamies- Pamies Hortícolas Farmer</i>)</p>	<p>to young people in the sector. But agrarian laws need to be made more flexible so that more people can participate. (<i>Josep Pamies- Pamies Hortícolas Farmer</i>)</p>
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Source: Leal, 2011

An analysis of the above answers reveals a number of recurrent aspects in the responses of these stakeholders. Significantly, one of these is the lack of coordination identified between the public and private sectors, which hinders the introduction of initiatives and any attempts at strengthening those already introduced. In relation to the strategies adopted by the Government, most notably those involving the *Gastroteca* and the Gastronomic Club, the stakeholders are unanimous in expressing a need for greater coordination between the two, and the need for greater structure in the content of the product, especially as regards their gastronomy routes.

The interviews also revealed the existence of highly endemic relationships between agents according to the sector in which they work. Thus, the public bodies maintain very strong, close relationships. This is the case, for example, in the links between the *Generalitat* and the *Diputació* (Provincial Councils), and in those between the latter and the consortia that promote tourism. However, the private sector is often sidelined in these relationships, choosing to work more closely with tourist organizations and associations and the universities. Moreover, cases were found in which one institution was unaware of the work being carried out by another, which meant efforts were being duplicated.

The universities, however, are an example of an agent that interact and collaborate with other agents at all levels. Given that they also work with both the public and private sectors, they play an important role in establishing a bridge of communication between the two.

A further common denominator identified from the interviews are the local development opportunities provided by gastronomy tourism in Catalonia for those areas with few possibilities of attracting other types of tourism. Likewise, opportunities exist to continue promoting this sector, thanks above all to the region's good agro food products and the great impact in the media of Catalan chefs such as Ferran Adrià and Carme Ruscalleda, who, according to the stakeholders, ensure Catalonia is competitive at a range of scales. However, they also refer to the dangers of the potential trivialization of the product in the rush to position it in the market, while managing merely to create a tourism product of insufficient content.

FINAL REMARKS

As discussed by various scholars, the relationship between tourism and gastronomy appears unequivocal. Yet, even more evident are the possibilities afforded by this type of tourism as a motor for local development, based on local agro food products and the links in the chain that make up this activity. Thus, the marketing of these products represents an opportunity to promote the traditions, culture, heritage and identity of a region to a wider audience.

The origins of gastronomy tourism can perhaps be traced to the multi-functionality enjoyed by rural areas and which can be explained by turning to the thoughts of geographers such as Callizo Soneiro (1989), who wrote in relation to the thesis presented by Chadeffaud in 1987, of the existence of new needs created by the social demand nourished by the “recurrent passion for nature and the countryside” attributable to a variety of reasons, among which is “the conversion of the natural environment itself in a functional space for the practice of new forms of leisure” (Callizo Soneiro, 1989:40). And it is to these new forms of leisure which stakeholders must have recourse in their market positioning strategy and in their evaluation of the role that gastronomy tourism can play in promoting local agro food products, in particular, and a given territory, in general.

According to the interviews conducted here with the various agents that participate in one way or another in Catalonia’s gastronomy tourism, and based on the subsequent analysis of these findings as well as direct observation, this type of tourism is certainly an expanding phenomenon and one which requires the coordinated efforts of all those involved in it. Among its strengths are the fact that it serves to stimulate a region’s economy, it provides opportunities to create and organize tourism products and to reinvent and lengthen the lifecycle of tourism products traditionally dedicated to sun and beach tourism. By contrast, among the aspects that need to be improved, or which need to be given more careful consideration today, are the potential risks of product trivialization. The danger is that gastronomy tourism, suffering the effects of the media and adopting products with insufficient content, can ultimately fail to consolidate and position itself in the market.

This present study highlights the need for future research that can further our understanding of the demand for gastronomy tourism in Catalonia. Such work needs to examine in greater depth the region-demand relationship in order to shed greater light on the social, economic and cultural effects of the marketing of local food products via gastronomy tourism.

However, and by way of a conclusion based on the interviews and information gathered here, not only is gastronomy tourism a growing phenomenon in Catalonia, but it is also one that shows a clear commitment to the promotion and marketing of local, handmade, ecological products with protected geographical status (*denominación de origen* in Spain). Yet, above all it is a phenomenon that champions the region, offering possibilities for local development and the establishment of synergies with the tourist sector in general.

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WEBSITES CONSULTED

Official Website of Catalonia Tourism

<http://www.gencat.cat/turistex_nou/home_cast.htm>

Official Website of Gastroteca

<<http://www.gastroteca.cat/>>

Official Website of catalan observatory tourism

<<http://www.gencat.cat/diue/>>