
ANNALES
UNIVERSITATIS MARIAE CURIE - SKŁODOWSKA
LUBLIN – POLONIA

VOL. LXXVII

SECTIO B

2022

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Conceptualizing a General Model of Gastronomic Tourism in Relation to Development and Tourism Development

Konceptualizacja ogólnego modelu turystyki gastronomicznej w odniesieniu do rozwoju
oraz rozwoju turystyki

Abstrakt: Turystyka gastronomiczna jest coraz bardziej ważnym podsektorem turystyki. Dla wielu podróżników głównym powodem wyboru miejsca docelowego jest jedzenie. Turystyka gastronomiczna ma znaczny potencjał, aby przyczynić się do rozwoju turystyki, a także do ogólnego rozwoju regionu. Ważne jest, aby lepiej zrozumieć złożony związek między turystyką gastronomiczną a rozwojem turystyki – i rozwojem w ogóle – i dzięki temu być lepiej przygotowanym do wykorzystania tej formy turystyki dla rozwoju destynacji. Celem artykułu jest wniesienie wkładu teoretycznego do literatury dotyczącej rozwoju turystyki poprzez przedstawienie roli turystyki gastronomicznej w odniesieniu do rozwoju turystyki i zagadnień ogólnorozwojowych. Dążąc do zrozumienia tej zależności, w artykule przedstawiono konceptualizację ogólnego modelu ilustrującego pozycję turystyki gastronomicznej w odniesieniu do rozwoju i rozwoju turystyki. Ponadto zauważono, że w oparciu o proponowany model strategia rozwoju turystyki gastronomicznej w destynacji powinna opierać się na czterech osiach: współpracy, zrównoważonym rozwoju, CBT/ lokalizacji i doświadczeniu turystycznym. Współpracując, oferują bowiem solidną podstawę do zrównoważonego rozwoju turystyki gastronomicznej w miejscu docelowym. Informacje zawarte w artykule mogą przydać się w formułowaniu i wdrażaniu strategii mających na celu zwiększenie wkładu turystyki gastronomicznej w tym zakresie.

Słowa kluczowe: turystyka gastronomiczna; turystyka; rozwój turystyki; turystyka kulinarna

Abstract: Gastronomic tourism is an increasingly relevant tourism subsector. For many travelers, food is the main reason for choosing a destination. Gastronomic tourism have significant potential to contribute to tourism development as well as overall development. It is, therefore, important to

better understand the complex relationship between gastronomic tourism and tourism development – and development in general – so as to be better prepared to exploit such tourism for a destination’s development. This article aims to contribute to the literature on tourism development by demonstrating the role of gastronomy tourism in relation to tourism development and general development issues. In seeking to understand this relationship, this article conceptualizes a general model that illustrates gastronomic tourism’s position in relation to development and tourism development. The article also notes that, based on the proposed model, a destination’s gastronomic tourism strategy should be based on four pivots: collaboration, sustainability, CBT/localization, and the tourist experience. Working together, they offer a solid base to advance sustainable gastronomic tourism development in a destination. The article could assist policy makers to formulate and implement strategies to enhance gastronomic tourism’s contribution in this regard.

Keywords: gastronomic tourism; food tourism; tourism; tourism development; culinary tourism

INTRODUCTION

People that travel have basic needs, with eating being the most obvious (López-Guzmán, Sánchez-Cañizares 2012). While it is an obvious truth – a *lapalissade* – that “All tourists eat...” (Mackenzie 2019, p. 72), this should be borne in mind as it has implications for the tourism sector. Food expenses constitute more than a third of a tourist’s total spend (Gajić 2015). Furthermore, food-related attractions and experiences lure tourists and eating while travelling often means the “»consumption« of local heritage” (Hjalager, Richards 2002, p. IV). In the current global tourism context, food has shifted from a supportive to a central position in relation to travelers’ decision-making. Food tourism’s links with local cultural, economic, social and environmental contexts offer unique prospects for travelers and locals alike (Wondirad et al. 2021). It is thus not surprising that the growth of food tourism has gained the attention of researchers and companies operating in the sector (Wondirad et al. 2021).

Numerous terminologies have been developed in relation to the general concept of food tourism, among which is gastronomic tourism. While some scholars use terms such as “culinary tourism”, “gastronomic tourism”, and “food tourism” (Dixit 2019a), it has been noted that they tend to be “used in slightly different contexts, and the meaning of each term represents different perspectives within the host-guest structure of tourism” (Ellis et al. 2018, p. 252). However, “the widely used term »gastronomic tourism« is typically defined as the pursuit of a unique experience of eating and drinking” (Pavlidis, Markantonatou 2020, p. 2). The term “gastronomy” rather than “culinary” or “food” is generally preferred because it is “all-encompassing in its approach to food and drink, relating to the cultural and material processes through which certain things become consumable. Gastronomy [...] encapsulates everything relating to the nourishment of

individuals” (de Jong et al. 2018, p. 134). The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) defines gastronomy tourism as “a type of tourism activity which is characterized by the visitor’s experience linked with food and related products and activities while travelling. Along with authentic, traditional, and/or innovative culinary experiences, Gastronomy Tourism may also involve other related activities such as visiting the local producers, participating in food festivals and attending cooking classes” (UNWTO n.d.).

Gastronomy tourism has been divided into three categories: gourmet tourism (or gastronomic/cuisine tourism), culinary tourism, and rural/urban tourism (Hall, Sharples 2003; also proposed in Dixit 2019b; Jebotip 2021). Gourmet tourism (or gastronomic/cuisine tourism) takes place when visitors are extremely interested in food such that they travel “to a destination with the primary motive being to visit a specific restaurant, market or winery. All, or nearly all, tourist activities are food related” (Hall, Sharples 2003, p. 11). Culinary tourism attracts tourists with a moderate interest in food that are likely to visit “a local market, food festival, restaurant or winery [...] arrived at [...] as part of a wider range of life style activities” (p. 11). Rural/urban tourists have little or no interest in food (Hall, Sharples 2003). This article considers the first two categories (gastronomic/gourmet/cuisine tourism and culinary tourism), prioritizing the first. This choice is based on Hall and Sharples’ (2003, p. 10) proposal that “such is the need for food to be a primary factor in influencing travel behaviour and decision-making that as a form of special interest travel, food tourism may possibly be regarded as an examples of culinary, gastronomic, gourmet or cuisine tourism that reflects consumers [...] whose interest in food and wine is a form of »serious leisure«”.

Gastronomic tourism is currently one of the fastest growing sub-sectors in global tourism and it has become a central element of countries’ tourism marketing (Nesterchuk et al. 2021). Indeed, “it has come to form the foundations of much policy and industry strategies and agendas” (de Jong et al. 2018, p. 132). Gastronomic tourism is linked to culture, agriculture and tourism (Dixit 2019b) and it is generally accepted that it can play a positive role in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in destinations (UNWTO 2019). It also contributes to development in various ways, including job creation, rural development and responsible production and consumption (UNWTO 2019).

Gastronomic tourism’s standing as an essential aspect of the tourist experience has resulted in numerous academic investigations of its relationship with economic development (Manola, Koufadakis 2020). However, based on comprehensive research, it has been concluded that, firstly, “gastronomy tourism research is too narrow in its conceptualization within certain subject areas, limiting ontological understanding of what gastronomy tourism *is* and what its

effects might be across the foodscape” (de Jong et al. 2018). There is thus a need for a broader approach to gastronomic tourism research across disciplines (see de Jong et al. 2018). Secondly, research on gastronomy and tourism has mainly focused on practical aspects, with little attention paid to conceptualizing it (de Jong et al. 2018). Lastly, there is a need to investigate “the ways (in which) tourism and gastronomy can enhance sustainability and development within rural and urban destinations” (de Jong et al. 2018). In the absence of critical research, gastronomic tourism’s potential “to enhance the social, cultural environmental, and economic dimensions of place risks becoming unmeaning, and potentially overtime, discounted” (de Jong et al. 2018). A conceptual analysis that embraces broader views is therefore required.

This article conceptualizes a general model that illustrates gastronomic tourism’s position in relation to development and tourism development. It proposes a flexible model that accommodates adjustments based on specific geographical contexts. The UNWTO (n.d.) describes the possible role(s) of gastronomy in tourism, illustrating its roles in development and tourism development. It notes that gastronomic tourism attached to local traditions can enhance destination branding and open opportunities to revitalize and advance local development (UNWTO n.d.). In line with these propositions, this article aims to contribute to the literature on tourism development by demonstrating the role of gastronomy tourism in relation to tourism development and general development issues.

RESEARCH PURPOSE, METHODS AND DATA SOURCES

This is a conceptual article. While conceptual research is not common in the field of tourism, it does exist. For example, 15% of the articles in *Annals of Tourism Research* in 2011–2012 were conceptual/review articles (Xin et al. 2013). However, its smaller presence means that conceptual articles should be encouraged to advance debate on tourism.

All research includes concepts in one way or another (Xin et al. 2013). Conceptual papers can rely on data, but this empirical element emanates from previous research by the author or other authors; “a key characteristic of conceptual research is that it can progress without the need for immediate or specific empirical data to support its knowledge claim” (Xin et al. 2013, p. 70; see also Jaakkola 2020). Both conceptual and empirical research build knowledge from sources of information. Thus, in conceptual studies “arguments are not derived from data in the traditional sense but involve the assimilation and combination of evidence in the form of previously developed concepts and theories” (Jaakkola 2020, p. 19). Conceptual papers are built on the previous literature and concepts

and aim to propose “new relationships among constructs; the purpose is thus to develop logical and complete arguments about these associations rather than testing them empirically” (p. 20).

This article is therefore based on previous documents, literature and models relating to gastronomic tourism. It “combines” and “summarizes” them to develop a general model that illustrates gastronomic tourism’s relationship with development and specifically tourism development. Thus, the proposed model seeks to be a comprehensive all-encompassing one that illustrates the place occupied by gastronomic tourism in a destination’s context.

CONTEMPORARY CONNECTIONS OF GASTRONOMIC TOURISM WITH LOCAL DEVELOPMENT AND TOURIST DESTINATIONS

Various new types of tourism, one of which is gastronomic tourism, are making their presence felt in the “niche” tourism market segment, expanding tourism offerings and opening new possibilities for development in rural areas (Torres, Momsen 2011). The growth of new forms of tourism such as responsible and sustainable tourism, pro-poor tourism, agritourism and gastronomic (and wine) tourism, is based on changes in tourist perspectives, with more travelers interested in sustainability, natural products (such as organic food) and a connection with the locality (Torres, Momsen 2011). The value of food tourism is much higher than mass tourism (Nesterchuk et al. 2021). “Culinary tourism grows exponentially every year” (Gajić 2015, p. 156), supporting the proposition that, after culture and nature, gastronomy is the third most important reason for travelers to visit a destination (Privitera et al. 2018). Food tourism is closely related to conservation of local traditional cooking, the quality and local origin of ingredients and produce, and the desire to enjoy the final product (López-Guzmán, Sánchez-Cañizares 2012).

Various connections between gastronomy and tourism have been proposed. The relevance of gastronomy to tourism has been proposed to be based on two factors: firstly, it enhances the tourist experience and secondly, it supports the local economy (Manola, Koufadakis 2020). Four relationships between food and tourism have also been suggested: “first, food as a tourism product; second, the marketing of food to tourists; third, food tourism as (an) instrument for general development in the destination; and four, implications for practitioners” (López-Guzmán, Sánchez-Cañizares 2012, p. 65). Gastronomy’s (and wine’s) interaction with tourism occurs in four ways: as a tourism attraction, a tourism product; an experience, and as an element of local culture (López-Guzmán, Sánchez-Cañizares 2012). The gastronomic tourism resource structure also

illustrates the connections between the four main elements and their various sub-elements, namely geography (landscape, soil, climate, topography and proximity), culture (cuisine, culinary heritage, defining dishes), food (local/regional foods, food events and activities and food attractions), and tourism (infrastructure, tourist attractions and tourism routes) (JeboTip 2021). JeboTip (2021, p. 33) notes that the “success of gastronomical tourism relies on a combination of factors such as food, culture, geography of the destination and availability of other tourism support infrastructure”.

From a tourist perspective, gastronomic tourism is built on “knowing and exploring, eating, tasting and enjoying the gastronomic culture of a region or country” (Nesterchuk et al. 2021, p. 1876). Thus, gastronomy and tourism converge to enhance value for their clients (Richards 2002). Gastronomic tourism is also relevant from a development/economic perspective. Scholars (Nesterchuk et al. 2021; Wondirad et al. 2021; de Albuquerque Meneguel et al. 2019; Gheorghe et al. 2014; Rand et al. 2016, p. 2; UNWTO 2019, p. 15; Gajić 2015; Mulcahy 2019) note that it revitalizes and diversifies tourism products, augments the tourism value chain boosting positive local impacts, involves numerous actors (food producers, transport companies and chefs), enhances local economic development, is labour-intensive (and plays a specific role in woman’s employment), is not as seasonal as other forms of tourism, promotes conservation of culture and the environment and enhances local livelihoods. Furthermore, it attracts visitors that stay longer, increasing the multiplier effect (Wondirad et al. 2021, p. 4). A correlation has been found to exist between the type of traveler visiting a destination and the destination’s local gastronomy. Thus, “the category of tourists who show interest in local gastronomy, tend to be able to spend more money on the tourist destinations they visit” (Manola, Koufadakis 2020, p. 86) and “gastronomy was found to account for a significant part of tourism development” (p. 83). There is a close relationship between “culinary tourism development and national or local strategies” (Su, Horng 2012, p. 94). Gastronomic tourism’s multiplier effect incorporates infrastructure development, increased demand for accommodation, employment creation, an improved destination image, community empowerment, and markets to export local products (JeboTip 2021). In addition, gastronomic tourism does not necessarily require large new investments (Mulcahy 2019).

The competitive global tourism market forces destinations to differentiate their offerings from those of others in order to attract tourists with their unique products. Local gastronomic heritage and products are becoming a fundamental tool in this process. Gastronomy is a “source of identity formation in post-modern societies” (Richards 2002, p. 3). In this context, a destination’s cuisine becomes an important element for local development and the destination must

market itself effectively in order to grow the number of visitors (López-Guzmán, Sánchez-Cañizares 2012). The food sector makes a major contribution to a destination's image and it can become one of its distinctive features that opens many "opportunities and initiatives for the development of food tourism products" (de Albuquerque Meneguel et al. 2019, p. 221).

Creative chefs, a distinctive culinary tradition and agricultural and marine products are some of the elements that give a destination a competitive edge in gastronomic tourism (Su, Hornig 2012). It is important to note the relevant role played by chefs, especially Michelin Star Chefs, in gastronomic tourism (see de Albuquerque Meneguel et al. 2019). Chefs promote the image of a destination and influence recognition of local cuisine (de Albuquerque Meneguel et al. 2019). As agents of a destination, they have been associated with destination tourism, culture, community, events, food heritage, the environment and many other aspects related to locality, food and restaurants (de Albuquerque Meneguel et al. 2019). As such, the Michelin Guide exerts influence beyond the restaurant and food context and impacts "all levels of society in many cultures" (Kiatkawsin, Sutherland 2020, p. 1). In Europe, this guide has been found to contribute to "innovations and advancements among some of the worlds' top chefs and, consequently, the entire industry" (p. 1). A destination that offers a Michelin chef, thus, has a competitive advantage and will attract international as well as local tourists (Batat 2021).

Culinary tourism promotes sustainability, sustainable agriculture and other forms of sustainable/alternative tourism (see, e.g. Gajić 2015). For example, agritourism and wellness tourism are tied to gastronomical elements such as healthy eating (Manola, Koufadakis 2020) and culinary tourism can be "intertwined with other tourism activities such as festivals and events, conference tourism, agritourism, and nature- and culture-based tourism" (Wondirad et al. 2021, p. 2). Gastronomic tourism is closely connected to local agriculture; thus, local farmers need to be part of the local value chain, rendering the role of local institutions fundamental in assisting such farmers (Wondirad et al. 2021). Gastronomy tourism contributes to biodiversity by using diverse ingredients or products (Legrand et al. 2020). Scarpato (2002, p. 140) and Berno (2006, p. 212) write of sustainable gastronomy, which implies local food production and the preservation of local knowledge. Importantly, "sustainable gastronomy also means a commitment and responsibility of all institutions, organizations, businesses and communities in relation to the production and consumption of food" (Legrand et al. 2020, p. 226). "Sustainable cuisine promotes local food economies"; thus the relationship between sustainable agriculture and the tourism sector can be enhanced by the promotion of sustainable cuisine (Berno 2006,

p. 212). A case study in Kenya illustrates the connections between gastronomic tourism and local development, noting that “gastronomic tourism far outweighs the costs and therefore it makes business sense for Kenya to develop and actualize its gastronomic tourism potential” (Jebotip 2021, p. 33). The study shows positive linkages between gastronomic tourism, agriculture and a destination’s authentic resources which, in turn, enhance the destination’s brand image and local pride, fostering local development (Jebotip 2021).

The farm-to-restaurant concept is a positive development in relation to sustainable agriculture, cuisine and the tourism sector (Berno 2006). It goes beyond the eating experience to involve activities and products such as food festivals and food merchandise (Berno 2006). Local culinary heritage can be promoted through the use of local food in restaurants. This supports “rural economic development and biodiversity through direct farm-to-table linkages” (Legrand et al. 2020, p. 228). Furthermore, in culinary tourism “establishments are locally owned or managed, and [...] products are processed in an authentic way” (Rand et al. 2016, p. 2).

Gastronomic tourism can also occur through community-based tourism (CBT). CBT-food relationships “can improve a [...] tourist experience and, at the same time, [...] contribute to CBT and associated community development” (Mnguni, Giampiccoli 2016, p. 9). Given that “local food production depends on agriculture, hunting and fishing, the appropriate development of linkages with tourism can aid the stimulation of indigenous entrepreneurial activity and stimulate the »bottom-up« development of community-based tourism initiatives” (Richards 2002, p. 13; on the CBT-food relationship, see also Diaconescu et al. 2016; Mnguni, Giampiccoli 2016; Giampiccoli, Mnguni, Dłużewska 2020; Sosa et al. 2021). For example, Giampiccoli, Mnguni, and Dłużewska (2020) proposed a model on the relationship between “tourists, local community, CBT and local food for tourist and local community wellbeing”. In a context where CBT is understood as a process to localise the entire tourism sector (see Saayman, Giampiccoli 2016) its links with gastronomic tourism can take on a new dimension to stimulate gastronomic tourism based on local resources within a framework of local ownership and control of (and associated benefits from) gastronomic tourism resources and associated sectors such as agriculture. A World Bank (2018, p. 7) report on tourism in Africa proposes that “food is a growing global cultural trend and could be an important growth driver for the CBT market”. This represents an opportunity to increase, enhance and diversify tourism offerings related to gastronomic tourism within a CBT context.

Gastronomy tourism is not just related to the “experience economy” (see, e.g. Richards 2021) but is also linked to the creative economy (see Martins 2016) and to the existence of “creative gastronomy” (see Forleo, Benedetto

2020). For example, creative cities are more inclusive and sustainable, favor private-public-civil society partnerships and promote professional and artistic networks (UNESCO n.d.). The UNESCO Creative Cities of Gastronomy “have sound local gastronomic wisdom if these culinary tours provide easy access for regional and international tourists and (are) part of a tourist attraction” (Wijaya et al. 2021, p. 59). UNESCO (n.d.) includes culinary tradition as an important tourism attraction and recognizes it as World Heritage Sites. Creative gastronomy can be considered relevant for agricultural and local development as it promotes consumption of novel food products that are linked to primary production and connect rural and urban areas and sectors to satisfy “food and gastronomy consumers’ research for food excellence, local foods and novelties” (Forleo, Benedetto 2020, p. 2).

Gastronomic (culinary) tourism forges relationships with a variety of activities and establishments that foster local development and tourism development and promote a specific gastronomic experience. Scholars (Wondirad et al. 2021; Rand et al. 2016; Pavlidis, Markantonatou 2020; Nesterchuk et al. 2021; Ashok 2019; Privitera et al. 2018; Richards 2021) identify a wide range of activities, experiences and establishments/companies (in addition to regular visits to restaurants and hotels) that have a relationship with gastronomic tourism, including events, festivals, local culture and nature, museums, cheese manufacturers, cafes, farm stalls, agri-food markets, fish markets, honey producers, food and agricultural producers, including preserves and confectionary, cooking schools or seminars, cookbooks, gastronomy clubs and associations, dining areas, culinary travel agencies and guides, related TV programs, magazines, gastronomic tours, breweries, wineries, vineyards, and distilleries.

Nesterchuk et al. (2021, p. 1877) list the numerous players involved in gastronomic tourism that promote a region’s economic development, including restaurants, bars, hosts of tasting experiences, beverage producers and manufacturers, cooking schools and classes, food and beverage events, farmers’ markets, catering and food and drink services, food producers and manufacturers, food and drink distributors, retail and grocery farms, attractions, tourist carriers, hotels and lodging, tourism operators, guides and travel agents, meetings and conventions, destination marketing and organizations, the media, suppliers, government, technology platforms, professional services, educational establishments, and trade groups and associations.

Cooking schools (or classes) are an example of a growing form of gastronomic tourism-related activities that can influence local development. These schools offer visitors the opportunity to experience local gastronomy. They can “take many forms such as part of homestay accommodation, homebased cooking

classes, professional culinary schools and small restaurants offering cooking lessons” (Kokkranikal, Carabelli 2021). Indeed, they enable tourists to not just “eat like the locals” but “cook like the locals” (see Richards 2021, p. 1041). Second to gastronomic events, gastronomic routes are Europeans’ preferred gastronomic activity, followed by fairs with local products, visit to markets and producers, museums and product reviews (Gheorghe et al. 2014).

Gastronomic activities “organized to protect and promote the gastronomic values of a region play an important role in the marketing of food destinations” (Manola, Koufadakis 2020, p. 83) and gastronomic-focused tourists can spur the development of specific attractions or services (Manola, Koufadakis 2020). This calls for a collaborative framework where all stakeholders in a destination’s gastronomic tourism sector work together (Gheorghe et al. 2014). Synergies among local food businesses “strengthen commercial relations between them for the benefit of the tourist region” (Manola, Koufadakis 2020, p. 88). Collaboration enables the fruits of gastronomy to be shared among the community, agritourist operators and local government; thus, promotion of a gastronomic culture will give towns and regions “new motivation to develop” (Privitera et al. 2018, p. 155). The role and value of gastronomic tourism in development have stimulated the involvement of actors such as governments in food (and wine) tourism development (Hall, Mitchel 2005). Scarpato (2002, p. 68) notes that gastronomy experts should be involved in tourism policy making and planning. For example, for the farm-to-restaurant concept “to support sustainable development [...] a broad range of stakeholders must be involved” such as chefs, the government authorities and tourism and agricultural organizations (Berno 2006, p. 213).

POSITIONING GASTRONOMIC TOURISM IN RELATION TO DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

Gastronomic tourism is, therefore, interwoven in various activities, and includes numerous stakeholders (including public sector institutions, private companies, individual businesses, educational institutions, civil society organizations and so on), other types of tourism/alternative tourism, the destination’s economic, social, cultural and environmental context and visitor experiences:

Inherently, culinary tourism has a complementary nature to other economic activities and tourism segments. Culinary tourism products are often intertwined with other tourism activities such as festivals and events, conference tourism, agritourism, and nature and culture-based tourism. Therefore, gastronomy is at the heart of every tourism activity in tourist destinations. Especially for tourists who consider culture as their major motivation, culinary

tourism provides the opportunity to experience more and learn local culture through local cuisines. (Wondirad et al. 2021, p. 2)

It is also clear that culinary tourism is not restricted “to urban regions and five-star restaurants” (Rand et al. 2016, p. 2). Thus, Fig. 1 proposes a general model that illustrates the role played by gastronomic tourism in a destination in relation to tourist attractions, stakeholders, social, economic and environmental issues and the visitor experience. It shows that gastronomic tourism is closely connected to tourism development and overall (typically local) development. Travelers’ experiences and sustainability are independently and conjointly interwoven with gastronomic tourism. The uniqueness of a destination’s gastronomic products and tastes make for an unforgettable visitor experience (Örgün 2021). Therefore, “gastronomy has become a catalyst for inclusion and sustainable development of tourist destinations [...] as well as a pleasant experience that defines individual and social well-being” (Sosa et al. 2021, p. 3). The “creative food economy might support sustainable place development by forging synergistic relationships between agriculture (primary sector) and the experience economy (tertiary sector), both of which are linked with and contribute to a vibrant creative economy (cultural sector)” (Rinaldi 2017, p. 8). Sustainable gastronomic tourism “supports agriculture and food production, increases attractiveness, (and) supports local development by strengthening both economic and local culture (and) [...] showing that it can contribute to the development of sustainable elements of a destination by supporting identity and brand formation based on the food experience” (Örgün 2021, p. 251). Within a competitive food branding market, it enables a location to differentiate itself from others in order to attract tourists (Rinaldi 2017). Sustainable gastronomic tourism can also extend beyond the local context to promote “gastronomic products globally by establishing international connections” (Örgün 2021, p. 251). At the same time, “regional cuisines enhance a destination’s image abroad” and local culinary traditions are harnessed to promote socio-economic development through tourism (Sosa et al. 2021, p. 3).

Therefore, this article proposes that gastronomic tourism is connected to various other types of tourism such as ecotourism and agritourism and it can be positively, although differently, linked to various types of gastronomies, from CBT-oriented gastronomy to luxury Michelin starred gastronomy. The intensity and types of linkage between gastronomic tourism and other types of tourism/gastronomies will depend on the local context and tourism development priorities.

Figure 1 illustrates that, through its direct connection to tourism development and local development (in general), gastronomic tourism is at the center of a macrocosm of economic sectors (such as agriculture), activities (such as farm

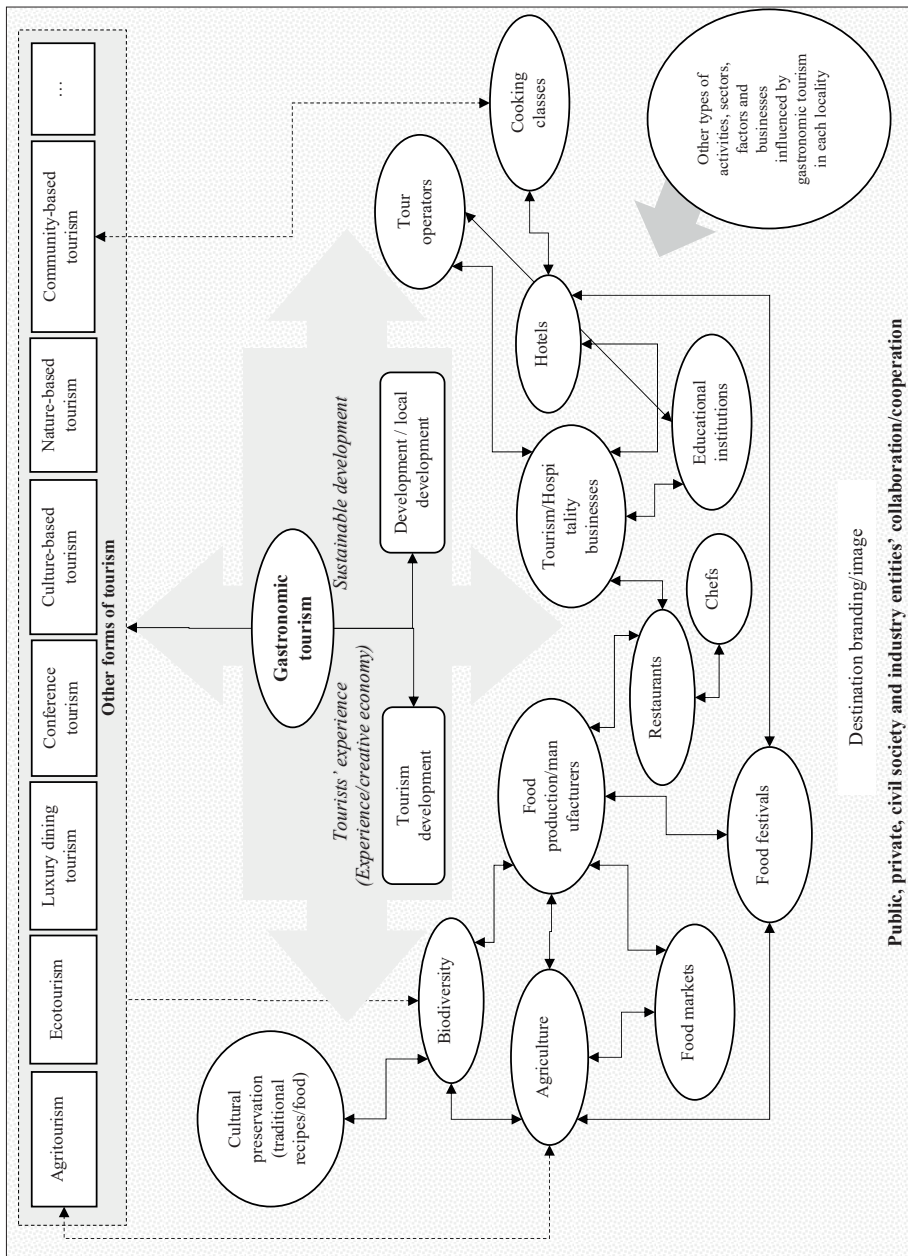


Fig. 1. Positioning of gastronomic tourism in relation to development and tourism development in destinations (authors' own study)

visits), social, cultural, environmental and economic factors (such as biodiversity and preservation of traditional recipes), and businesses (such as restaurants and hotels) (in dotted grey in Fig. 1) that influence gastronomic tourism (and its associated tourism development and local development processes). In turn, many of these sectors are linked one another in a web of networks (some examples of links are presented in Fig. 1) and they all remain within the area of influence (visible within the same dotted grey area) of gastronomic tourism. Figure 1 only shows a few examples of sectors, activities, factors and businesses that fall within gastronomic tourism's area of influence, as it is impossible to list them all and they will change based on local circumstance (the circle with three dots in the grey dotted area indicates that also other different types of activities, sectors, factors and businesses will be influenced by gastronomic tourism in each locality while the large grey arrow shows possible connections with other elements in the grey dotted area). Similar to sustainable development, where "each strategy [...] needs to consider both place-specific characteristics and stakeholders because a one-size-fits-all model does not exist" (Rinaldi 2017, p. 12), the local "gastronomic tourism milieu" will change from one destination to another.

A specific sector, activity, factor or business can be influenced by gastronomic tourism and be connected to other types of tourism at the same time (see, for example, the dotted arrows between agritourist and agriculture, ecotourism and biodiversity and cooking classes and CBT). The aim of the proposed model is to show gastronomic tourism's positioning in relation to specific issues (other types of tourism, tourism development, local development, economic sectors, and activities, factors and businesses) so to understand its central role and potential to broadly influence a destination's tourism development and development. A collaborative/cooperative approach should be adopted as a "working framework" for the gastronomic tourism macrocosm in order to enhance a destination's tourism/gastronomic tourism milieu and its branding and image. For example, collaboration between agri-food production and the sales chain can enhance the role of small companies "in the catering sector to contribute to territorial development through a strengthening of commercial transactions between suppliers and restaurants" (de Albuquerque Meneguel et al. 2022, p. 5).

Collaboration and sustainability are crucial for the success of gastronomic tourism. To avoid negative effects, it should be advanced within a sustainable framework because "uncontrolled and unplanned gastronomic tourism may cause some damage to the destination, nature and local people" (Örgün 2021, p. 245). In line with the sustainable development approach, a destination should focus on "the integrated and territorial agri-food paradigm". In this paradigm "the food-producing region provides products with specific features and distinctive qualities and

[...] food production is often integrated into other rural entrepreneurial activities” (Rinaldi 2017, p. 4). Thus, “a multi-level, multi-actor and multifaceted process evidencing the global interrelation of agriculture and society in which a new developmental model for the agricultural sector emerges based on synergy” (p. 4). Collaboration should work towards the establishment of a specific image, logo, certificate or other tools that brand the destination locally and internationally. For example, a case study in Córdoba shows that regional quality certificates boost gastronomic tourism, and promote local development and a destination’s image (de Albuquerque Meneguel et al. 2022, p. 2).

CONCLUSIONS

This article illustrates gastronomic tourism’s positioning in a destination’s context. The proposed model shows that it is at the center of a macrocosm of economic sectors, activities, social, cultural, environmental and economic factors and businesses. It also illustrates that gastronomic tourism is directly connected to tourism development and general local development within the context of the tourist experience (experience/creative economy) and sustainable development. A collaborative approach that involves all stakeholders in gastronomic tourism is recommended in order to advance and manage a destination’s branding and image.

The proposed model highlights that a strategy or policy to promote gastronomic tourism should be based on the following four pivots that should work in unison:

- Collaboration. It is important that all stakeholders are involved in gastronomic tourism development processes. This will promote links among the various actors and enable them to work together to formulate the destination’s branding and image strategy.

- Sustainability. Like any form of tourism, gastronomic tourism should be sustainable, especially because this type of tourism is intrinsically linked to traditional ingredients (and thus agricultural biodiversity).

- Community-based. Gastronomic tourism should work within a framework that localises the tourism/gastronomic tourism sector. It should thus operate within a CBT context and be based on local resources, culture, capacities, and so on. At the same time, ownership, control and the benefits associated with the tourism/gastronomic tourism sector should be localised.

- Tourist experiences. Attracting tourists to the destination remains the ultimate objective. It is thus fundamental that gastronomic tourism offers an unforgettable experience and that the destination’s image and branding portray the uniqueness and exceptionality of its gastronomy (and associated food tourism attractions and services).

Thus, the article also notes that, based on the proposed model, a destination's gastronomic tourism strategy should be based on four pivots: collaboration, sustainability, CBT/localization, and the tourist experience. Working together, they offer a solid base to advance sustainable gastronomic tourism development in a destination.

The article is relevant as gastronomic tourism is a growing phenomenon and food (specifically local traditional food) is becoming more relevant as a tourism marketing tool. Given the positive role that gastronomic tourism can play in enhancing a destination's development, specifically sustainable development, it should be facilitated and promoted. While the model represents a step forward in conceptualizing a general model on the position of gastronomic tourism in relation to development and tourism development, future research could build on it by focusing on and/or reformulating specific aspects such as the relationship between gastronomic tourism and other forms of alternative tourism such as CBT, ecotourism or adventure tourism.

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