

## GASTRONOMIC HERITAGE: DEMAND AND SUPPLY

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**Abstract.** Gastronomic cultural heritage is a part of cultural heritage. Today people are becoming interested in gastronomic topics, such as reconstruction and conservation of cultural traditions, authentic cuisine, gastronomic customs and traditions at local, regional or national scale, and promotion of local products. Previous research studies conducted in Latvia focused on the progress of cultural heritage products as value and the introduction of such products by businesses in Latvia's rural areas. Scientific cooperation opened up opportunities to study the phenomenon across a wider geographical space covering four countries – Poland, Lithuania, Romania and Latvia. This research phase aim: identification of an impact of information on the demand-supply balance of gastronomic heritage as a product in the market. The method of the research: a sociological survey (n=1000 from Poland, Lithuania, Romania and Latvia; 285 men and 715 women) that was carried out during 2016.

**Keywords:** gastronomic heritage, demand , supply.

**JEL code:** O1, L66, L83

### Introduction

At EU level, an increasing interest in European gastronomic heritage was manifested in the last years. In this sense, the European Parliament in the Report of 2014 states that gastronomy forms part of our identity and is an essential component of the European cultural heritage and of the cultural heritage of the Member States and emphasises the need to create awareness of the diversity and quality of the regions, landscapes and products that are the basis of Europe's gastronomy, which forms part of our cultural heritage, and also recommends the Commission to include European gastronomy in its cultural initiatives and programmes (European Parliament Report, 2014).

Previous research studies have led to a conclusion that gastronomic cultural heritage is a part of cultural heritage that can be contacted by any member of society under many and various circumstances, thus showing the understanding of the national value accumulated within many years (Albala, 2000; Katz, 2003; Bendiner, 2004; Poulain, 2005; Watson and Caldwell, 2005; Duran and MacDonald, 2006; Pfeilstetter, 2015; Matta, 2016).

The studies of revival and consolidation of national and local traditions, preservation of cultural and historical heritage are becoming increasingly popular worldwide (Nestle, 2000;

Mennell, 2005). This matter is influencing the marketing concept, especially in the field of gastronomy. The questions of locality and authenticity of gastronomic experiences are becoming vital nowadays. On this subject, in the project Food as Cultural Heritage: A critical and Comparative Perspective, Matta (2013) considers that "in different regional context, heritage policies are encouraging the revitalisation and the promotion of particular and "traditional" food products with different aims, such as cultural recognition and market exploitation. The listing of the "gastronomic meal of the French", the "traditional Mexican cuisine" and the "Mediterranean diet" as Intangible Cultural Heritage by UNESCO, along with promotion of "routes" of gastronomic heritage, are clear evidence of these trends. As a consequence, food cultures have moved to the centre of a triangulation between culture, identity and markets".

Today people are becoming interested in gastronomic topics, such as reconstruction and conservation of cultural traditions, authentic cuisine, gastronomic customs and traditions at local, regional or national scale, and promotion of local products.

Many authors consider gastronomy to be closely linked to cultural tourism, viewing food as a manifestation of the culture of a destination

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(Van Westering, 1999; Hjalager & Corigliano, 2000).

Scientific literature abounds today in papers devoted to gastronomy in the different aspects, as well as gastronomy tourism, gastronomic events or gastronomic festivals, but the benefits of gastronomic cultural heritage as a promoter of small business and as a response to globalization are still barely studied.

Many research studies indicate that the modern world is characterised by two pronounced trends: the expansion of globalisation in the economy, politics and culture and at the same time the preservation of national identity; the preservation of national cultural heritage and the use of it in real life are emphasised as significant indicators of national and territorial identity (Morley, 2002; Moore, 2007; Pieterse, 2015; González, 2017).

The trend of preserving and strengthening the national identity and of appreciating the cultural heritage emerges to ensure their transfer to next generations, stressing the role of cultural heritage in preserving the local identity. The national identity is strongly associated with the national country, a single ethnic community and a single culture, whereas globalisation erases these traditional boundaries, supposing that national identity and cultural uniqueness are possible only in relation to some locality, whereas globalisation as deterritorialisation (decreasing the role of territory) melts national uniqueness (Jeroscenkova, 2016).

The local products and ingredients have their own value in the context of globalization. The modern gastronomy has a strong local vocation: creative global chefs, in their pursuit of quality, encourage and commonly use fresh, local, non-industrialized and organic ingredients. But they do not feel bound to the area where they work because local has been redefined in nowadays (Scarpato and Daniele, 2003).

"Globalization will not make local cultures disappear", on the contrary, in a framework of

worldwide openness, "all that is valuable and worthy of survival in local cultures will find fertile ground in which to bloom" (Vargas Llosa, 2001).

The understanding of cultural heritage in terms of intangible and tangible value or historical and socio-economic value is an important feature of a society in the modern world regardless of a country's location or the ethnicity of the society (Jeroscenkova et al., 2016).

The European Parliament states that gastronomy is a source of both cultural and economic wealth for the regions which make up the EU, and in cultural aspects points out that gastronomy is an instrument which can be used to develop growth and jobs in a wide range of economic sectors, such as the restaurant, tourism, agri-food and research industries; it notes that gastronomy can also develop a keen sense for the protection of nature and the environment, which ensures that food has a more authentic taste and is less processed with additives or preservatives. Also, it stresses that gastronomy is a strong cultural export for the EU and for individual Member States and calls on the Member States to support initiatives related to agri-tourism that foster knowledge of the cultural and landscape heritage, offer regional support and promote rural development (European Parliament Report, 2014).

The concept of heritage leads us to a discussion of the continuity between past and present. Heritage provides historical depth and a permanent pattern in a perpetually changing world. Heritage is part of the present, and at the same time holds promises for the future; the problem of the past is a modern one. (Besiere, 1998).

Gastronomic heritage has positive economic impacts, especially for rural areas. As tourists become more adventurous in their interest areas, rural areas have an opportunity to develop. Promoting gastronomic heritage in rural areas helps local farmers, producers and small business

owners, and helps these rural economies to diversify (Everett and Aitchison, 2008).

Gastronomy is one of the elements incorporated in a new concept of cultural heritage and cultural tourism, driven by growing trends of a well-being lifestyle, authenticity, environmental protection and the need to have a high-quality experience. The relationship between gastronomy and heritage is a key motivator for travel (Van Westering, 1999). Tourists increasingly want foods which emphasise the heritage and culture of a place, which assist the preservation of traditional forms of agriculture and cultural heritage. Tourists agree that local cuisine is an important part of the culture of the region and that the taste experience is important to the overall experience of the journey (Velissariou and Vasilaki, 2014). In this context, gastronomy, as a tourist resource, is appreciated not only for its own sake, but also for its ability to generate rural development. Gastronomic tourism is helping to increase rural revenue sources and improve income levels and employment of local labour (especially women). "Local food" has the potential to enhance the visitor experience by connecting consumers to the region and its perceived culture and heritage (Sims, 2009).

Gastronomy is considered an important cultural product, not only being by itself very attractive for visitors, but also constituting a valuable complement to the conventional portfolio of cultural products offered by destinations, which includes the monuments, museums, local architecture, etc.

Previous research studies conducted in Latvia focused on the progress of cultural heritage products as value and the introduction of such products by businesses in Latvia's rural areas (Jeroscenkova, 2013; Kruzmetra, 2013a; 2013b, Jeroscenkova et al., 2016).

The consumption of local products which are considered as 'authentic' and qualitative is a means of developing rural areas. The advantages of such initiatives can be the economic and

technical infrastructure, the improvement of the characteristics of the human and social capital. The development of local products even means development of associated enterprises and thus improvement of many sectors of the local economy while enhancing the development. At the same time the promotion of local products in the tourist market can increase the agricultural activity and the production of agricultural goods, the strengthening of the region (through job creation and encouraging local entrepreneurs), but also by strengthening the identity of the brand name from food-local products. (Lamprianidis, 2003).

Poland, Lithuania, Romania and Latvia are privileged by a good geographic position, cultural characteristics and ancient traditions, which make the local products of both agriculture and tourism unique. Linking tourism and agriculture through the use of particular agricultural food products is important for both the local products and gastronomic heritage.

The aim of the research: identification of an impact of information on the demand-supply balance. The method of the research: a sociological survey (n=1000 from Poland, Lithuania, Romania and Latvia; 285 men and 715 women) that was carried out during 2016. Despite the fact that the sample groups were not representative (did not reflect the views of the entire population), the obtained data and results of this analysis provided insight into the cultural issues under today's circumstances through the population's views.

The proposed tasks: 1. the demand for and supply of culinary heritage in the countries surveyed; 2. information sources for the provision of relevant information and their evaluation by their users; 3. the gender impact on the gastronomic cultural heritage: the demand, the supply and the current information sources for this kind of cultural heritage.

The information about the assessments of demand for and supply of gastronomic heritage

acquired in the present research can contribute to the expansion of small businesses in the rural territories of the countries examined by the present research.

**Research results and discussion**

Over the past 10 years, there has been a surge in demand for locally produced foods. The availability and amount of local food products are unprecedented in recent history. Consumer decisions to buy local or purchase items for specific product characteristics have proliferated into new marketing opportunities for farmers and ranchers. In addition, local direct marketing opportunities – such as farmers’ or greenmarkets, retail food cooperatives – have grown as consumers have been increasingly looking for local and regional foods (Matson, 2013).

Individuals increasingly consume high-quality and healthy food products. This particular wish make them interested in gastronomic cultural heritage both in the narrow sense of this term – in some foods nominated by UNESCO or the EU (e.g. "sklandrausis" for Latvia etc.) and in the broad sense – the foods traditionally consumed by the people before chemicals started to be intensively used in agriculture, which are now produced by organic farms in each of the country surveyed. According to the survey data, the demand for such products was quite high in all the countries where a survey of their residents was conducted( Figure 1). This was confirmed not only by the respondents’ wish to purchase such products themselves but also their readiness to recommend the products to others – their relatives, friends and acquaintances, which would result in an increase in the demand.

The supply of gastronomic cultural heritage is reflected, first of all, by shopping sites for this product, which is the territorial distribution of the supply. The survey did not reveal too large disparities in terms of demand for the product, yet in terms of supply of the product, i.e. the

shopping sites for it, the disparities were significant (Figure 2). As regards shops as shopping sites, in Romania, Latvia and Lithuania the demand was mainly met at specialty shops (50.9 % in Romania, 22.3 % in Latvia and 27.0 % in Lithuania) rather than at the organic departments of stores (13.7 % in Romania, 9.2 % in Latvia and 16.0 in Lithuania % ). In Poland, the organic departments of stores (18.9 %) were more popular than specialty shops (16.0 %). Shopping for gastronomic cultural heritage products at marketplaces was also done in two ways: at conventional marketplaces and at so-called greenmarkets that recently emerged with traditional organic foods becoming more popular.

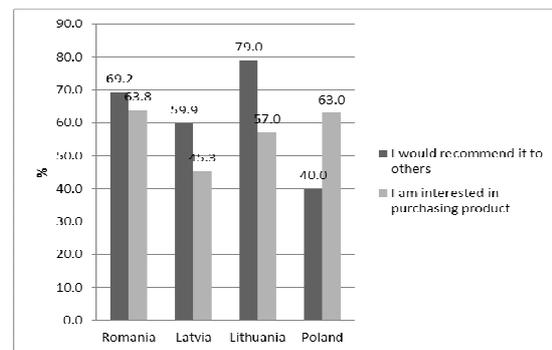


Fig. 1. Current and potential demand for gastronomic cultural heritage, %

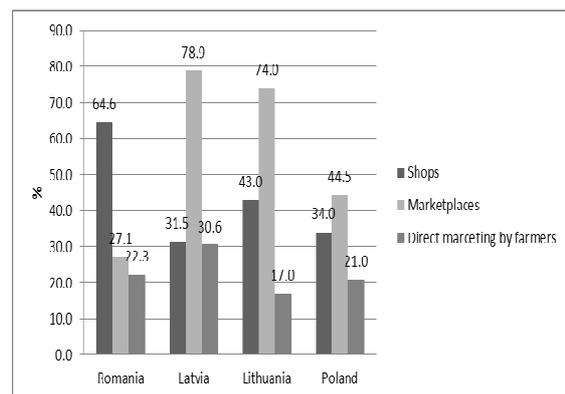


Fig. 2. Supply of gastronomic cultural heritage (shopping sites), %

Conventional marketplaces, which are used for shopping for gastronomic heritage products, were popular mostly in Romania and Poland, although at very different extents (18.8 % of the respondents preferred them in Romania and 40.0 % in Poland). Greenmarkets are an explicit phenomenon of Latvia and Lithuania. Of the

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respondents, 40.1 % preferred this kind of shopping site in Latvia and 39.0 % in Lithuania. Conventional marketplaces were also popular in Latvia and Lithuania (38.8 % in Latvia and 35.0 % in Lithuania). The popularity of marketplaces in Latvia and Lithuania may be associated with the relatively small territories of both countries compared with Romania and Poland, which reduce the distance between the customer and the seller and therefore promotes direct marketing – purchasing products from the producer on the farm. The trend in making direct contacts between the customer and the seller is characteristic of all the countries surveyed, and especially Latvia where 30.6 % of all the respondents mentioned this kind of shopping for gastronomic heritage products.

Since the gastronomic heritage market system becomes noticeable, as the market demand and supply exist, an urgent problem is marketing communication. From the customer perspective, it, first of all, represents information about shopping sites and the available assortment as well as – which is even more important – the quality of the product, the effectiveness of it in comparison with other products and knowledge needed for its production (Table 1).

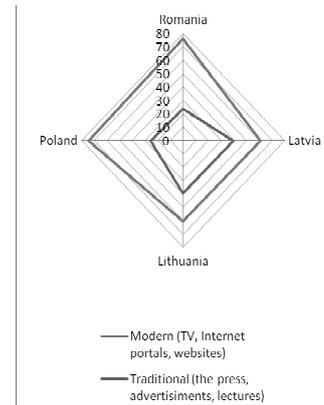
Table 1.

**Percentage of the consumers wishing relevant information, %**

	Romania	Latvia	Lithuania	Poland
Shopping sites	28.7	26.9	24	31.5
Available assortment	10.7	39.4	27	34
Specific qualities of a product	23.1	32.4	28	27.5
Production of the product	20.4	44	30	33

Romania's respondents mentioned information about shopping sites for gastronomic heritage products as the most important. Information about the production of a product seemed to Latvia's and Lithuania's respondents the most important. In contrast, Poland's respondents almost unambiguously preferred information

about the available assortment and product descriptions.



**Fig. 3. Percentage of the respondents using particular information sources for acquiring information about gastronomic cultural heritage, %**

The set of the information sources was the same in all the countries, yet there were some differences in their use (Figure 3). In Romania (74.0 %) and Poland (88.0 %), the key information source, according to the respondents, was the Internet, while in Latvia (73.7 %) and Lithuania (62.0 %) the prevalent source was TV. This means that modern information sources widely used by the public were the most popular. As shown in Figure 3, traditional information sources still played some role, yet they were used less than the digitalised ones.

Although the flow of information on gastronomic heritage functioned, the surveys in all the countries examined showed that the respondents wished more information and that of better quality (in terms of content, design, explanations). This was mentioned by 31.0 % of the respondents in Romania, 41.9 % in Latvia, 31.0 % in Lithuania and 29.5 % in Poland. The data obtained in the surveys convincingly show that the improvement of marketing communication is necessary, which, in its turn, can result in an increase in the demand for gastronomic heritage; this, in its turn, promotes the development of small businesses in rural areas through the expansion and enhancement of the supply.

Although gender equality is legally and really in place under today's circumstances, the surveys showed that gastronomic activities still were mainly the sphere of women's interests. This was proved by the overall opinion of the respondents (Table 2).

If focusing on the geographic affiliation, there are some nuances regarding women's interests. Of the women surveyed in Poland, 68.9 % expressed their wish to consume gastronomic heritage products. In Lithuania, 80.2 % of the surveyed women would recommend such products to their friends and acquaintances. Specialty shops as shopping sites for gastronomic heritage products were especially stressed by the surveyed women in Romania (57.4 %). In contrast, the female respondents in Latvia and Lithuania preferred greenmarkets (43.8 % in Latvia and 45.3 % in Lithuania).

These nuances could emerge owing to a number of reasons. Of course, the location of the respondents' countries, the historical events in their territories and the particular cultural heritage could contribute to the differences. At the same time, the quality of marketing communication systems could make considerable effects under today's circumstances, the key shortcomings of which noted by the respondents were mentioned above.

However, the use of information sources was gender specific. There were information sources that were not gender specific with regard to the acquisition of information about gastronomic heritage, and they were modern sources such as Internet portals, TV shows and websites of institutions and personalities (Figure 4). However, there were some information sources in which mostly women were interested in, i.e. newspapers (written text) and lectures, presentations ("live words").

The authors believe that it may be explained by women's interest in multiple accessibility of the same information in the form of written text or in discussions and in asking questions during

lectures and presentations, i.e. their strong interest in gastronomic heritage. This is also confirmed by the survey data, as women expressed a stronger interest than men in more information about gastronomic heritage. Such a wish was made by 20.7 % of the surveyed men and almost by a third (30.2 %) of the women. This means that gender makes some influence on the demand for gastronomic heritage.

Table 2.

**The most significant differences in opinions broken down by gender, %**

<b>Respondent wishes</b>	<b>Men</b>	<b>Women</b>
Wish to consume gastronomic heritage	52.3	58.7
Readiness to recommend it to others	56.1	61.4
Specialty shops as shopping sites	27.7	34.0
Greenmarkets as shopping sites	11.9	24.6
Information about the specific qualities of a product	52.3	56.8
Information about the production of the product	28.1	33.0

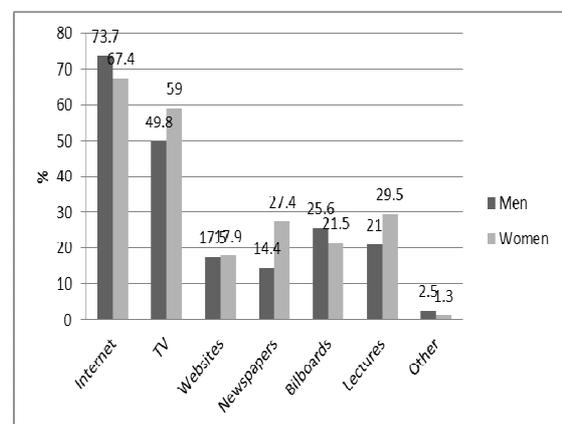


Fig. 4. Use of information sources broken down by gender, %

### Conclusions, proposals, recommendations

No matter how great globalisation effects on the world's countries are, which result in similar features in the countries, an increasing focus is placed on every country's and its people's cultural heritage and one of the most important components of it – gastronomic heritage.

- 1) The market demand for and supply of gastronomic heritage were explicitly observed in all the countries surveyed. At the same time, the respondents' wish to get more information about this heritage indicates that the demand for it could increase, compared with the current situation, and the increase in the demand could contribute to the expansion of small businesses in the rural territories of the countries examined by the present research. The process of development of small businesses with respect to the maintenance of gastronomic cultural heritage is an important priority of further research.
- 2) In case of both direct and indirect marketing communication between the customer and the seller, an essential role is played by information – its sources, availability of the sources, quantity of the information and especially its quality. The research results explicitly reflected the wishes of information requestors, which may be divided into two parts. The first one represents information about a product (the shopping site, the assortment and qualities of products, the production process of the products), while the second part – the information as such (its availability, amount and design). The present research only gives insight into the customer's wishes regarding indirect information sources used for marketing communication such as the Internet, TV, websites of institutions and individuals, billboards etc. Since there are not only customers but also sellers in the market, in the further research it would be important to identify the opinions of the sellers on information about gastronomic cultural heritage available in various sources, placing a special focus on the desirable content of the information.
- 3) Even though globalisation brings an increase in gender equality, the demand for gastronomic cultural heritage is mainly shaped by women, which is influenced by neither citizenship nor ethnicity. Women are more interested in the availability and usability of such products, confirming the gender difference that is still present in today's society. The further research on this phenomenon could help to explain the influence of respondent gender on the wish to consume particular gastronomic heritage products.

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