

VERONIKA DEBRECÉNIOVÁ

FOOD TOURISM

POTENTIAL OF LOCAL PRODUCTION SYSTEMS OF FOOD
INDUSTRY AND TOURISM IN CHOSEN REGIONS OF SLOVAKIA



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OF SLOVAKIA**

**Master in Tourism Economics and
Regional Development**

Dissertation made under the supervision of:

Prof. Hugo Pinto

Prof. Danka Moravčíková



UNIVERSIDADE DO ALGARVE

Faculdade de Economia

2016

Statement of Originality

Work Authorship Declaration

I declare to be the author of this work, which is unique and unprecedented. Authors and works consulted are properly cited in the text and are in the listing of references included.

Candidate:

(Veronika Debrecéniová)

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Veronika Debrecéniová

Faculty of Economics, University of Algarve

Supervisor:

Professor Hugo Pinto

Centre for Social Studies, University of Coimbra & Faculty of Economics, University of Algarve

Co-supervisor:

Professor Danka Moravčíková

Faculty of Economics and Management, Slovak University of Agriculture in Nitra

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Abstract

The tourism industry, for being one of the most rapidly growing industries is facing numerous challenges and bears certain responsibility. Therefore, numerous alternative and innovative tourism products are brought up to satisfy raising demand, cope with the sustainability measures and stakeholders involved. 'Food' emerges as a pleasant concept that has connecting power and capability to bring about many actors and initiate cross-sectoral cooperation. 'Food tourism' has been neglected for many years but is raising now as considerable niche market and instrument for regional development that can not only lure tourist but also benefit the local community and preserve cultural traditions. Both of these concepts are spatial concepts, and thus this dissertation dares to bring the agrofood industry, tourism and gastronomy sectors together through an innovative system of cooperation. This dissertation aims at observing the organization of relationships and potential of a Local Production System of agrofood sector, gastronomy and tourism sectors in two tourism regions of northern Slovakia. By developing a SWOT analysis this thesis seeks to describe the current situation of the cross-sectoral cooperation in the region of Liptov and Spis. Furthermore, Social Network Analysis is developed to track the relationships of the different stakeholders and show the key actors and nature of cooperation amongst them. The lack of cross-sectoral cooperation and clear division of the two regions has been detected, as much as importance of member associations highlighted. This study aims at encouraging dialogues between the policy makers, academia and involved stakeholders to enhance the potential of LPS of Agrofood sector, Tourism and Gastronomy in order to boost regional development and competitiveness in the two tourism regions.

Keywords: Food Tourism, Local food, Local Production Systems, Regional Development, Slovakia, Tatras.

Resumo

O turismo, por ser uma das indústrias de mais rápido crescimento, está a enfrentar inúmeros desafios e assume responsabilidade no desenvolvimento regional. Por conseguinte, numerosos produtos turísticos alternativos e inovadores são criados para satisfazer a procura crescente, promovendo a sustentabilidade e envolvendo diversos stakeholders. O conceito de ‘alimentação’ emerge como um conceito que possui a capacidade de conexão e de favorecer o início de cooperação intersetorial entre uma variedade de atores. O ‘turismo alimentar’ tem sido negligenciado durante muitos anos, mas a sua importância está a aumentar sendo atualmente considerado um mercado de nicho valioso e um instrumento para o desenvolvimento regional que não só pode atrair turistas como também beneficiar a comunidade local e ajudar a preservar as tradições culturais. Ambos os conceitos são noções espaciais, pelo que esta dissertação pretende aproximar a indústria agroalimentar, o turismo e a gastronomia através de um sistema regional de cooperação inovador. A dissertação tem como objetivo observar a organização das relações e potencialidades de um sistema produtivo local no setor agroalimentar, gastronomia e turismo em duas regiões turísticas do norte da Eslováquia. Ao desenvolver uma análise SWOT o estudo procura descrever a situação atual da cooperação intersetorial na região de Liptov e Spis baseando-se nas opiniões das próprias entidades envolvidas. Além disso, desenvolve-se uma Análise de Redes Sociais, que rastreia as relações entre as diferentes partes interessadas e mostra os principais atores e a natureza da cooperação entre eles. A falta de cooperação intersetorial, a clara divisão entre os atores das duas regiões e a importância das associações de atores, foi destacada pela análise. Esta dissertação visa encorajar o diálogo entre as entidades políticas, o mundo académico e as diversas entidades envolvidas, a fim de reforçar o potencial dos sistemas produtivos locais no setor agroalimentar, do turismo e da gastronomia, a fim de promover o desenvolvimento regional e a competitividade.

Palavras-chave: Turismo de Alimentação, Alimentação Local, Sistemas Produtivos Locais, Desenvolvimento Regional, Eslováquia, Tatras.

Resumo Alargado

O turismo é, por natureza, uma indústria trans-setorial que tem o poder de reunir numerosos stakeholders, participantes e entidades, mas também os visitantes e as comunidades locais para interagirem uns com os outros. Acredita-se que o turismo é a mais rapidamente crescente indústria no mundo sendo responsável por cerca de 10% do PIB global. A sua importância também está a aumentar em países que não seriam considerados destinos turísticos típicos como por exemplo a Eslováquia. No entanto, este crescimento surpreendente implica mudanças e revisões da situação atual e exige uma inovação multinível e ações de cooperação. O aumento da procura, a globalização, o cisma urbano-rural exigem que as entidades do turismo, da hospitalidade e os decisores políticos criem novas alternativas e produtos inovadores para acompanhar a concorrência. Além disso, os turistas de nova era estão desejosos por experiências e desejam participar ativamente para satisfazer todos os seus sentidos. Na realidade europeia, um desses produtos é muito promissor graças à sua natureza de estímulo à colaboração e à diversidade cultural regional. O setor alimentar e, conseqüentemente, o turismo alimentar é inseparável da agricultura e da atmosfera rural e é uma ótima maneira de comunicar tradição, história, cultura local e autenticidade de uma região. É um instrumento de marketing e de branding de diferenciação, que atrai turistas com especial interesse em alimentos, mas também os turistas “normais”, uma vez que todos têm de comer. O conceito de ‘alimentação’ nesta dissertação não só destaca o fenómeno como necessidade básica humana e como ferramenta para gerar mais rendimentos para um destino. O conceito assume-se como capaz de despertar o potencial de uma região para criar cooperação trans-setorial, trazendo o efeito multiplicador e benefícios para o território. Esta dissertação relaciona o turismo e a alimentação com modelos territoriais de inovação e emprega o conceito de sistema produtivo local (SPL), uma vez que este está estreitamente associado à produção tradicional e artesanal. A relação entre produção agroalimentar, turismo e gastronomia pode parecer bastante distante, mas é descrita como necessária, lógica, até condicional e muito complexa. Por outro lado, os seus inúmeros benefícios para a região, entidades envolvidas, comunidade local e turistas são inegáveis. O estudo confere atenção à Eslováquia, um país pequeno europeu com uma elevada diversidade cultural, histórica e natural, onde o turismo é concentrado principalmente na

capital e nas duas regiões de montanha de Tatry-Liptov e Horny Spis. Os conceitos de SPL ou outras formas de aglomeração empresarial são bastante novos para a política, legislação e situação económica da Eslováquia. No entanto, as vantagens de tal organização das atividades económicas têm sido percebidas rapidamente e, assim, nos últimos anos surgiram várias iniciativas para construir SPL de diferentes tipos e fornecer apoio e recursos financeiros às entidades relevantes. No entanto, existem inúmeras limitações e fraquezas que impedem a implementação bem-sucedida e o sustento dessas estratégias. Esta dissertação tem como objetivo detetar a perceção sobre a cooperação entre os diferentes atores relevantes e mapeá-la, a fim de descobrir as principais partes interessadas e os laços relacionais entre elas. Além disso, a Comissão Europeia sugere que a cooperação nas cadeias de valor agroalimentares e, sobretudo, as possibilidades de cooperação intersetorial e mesmo transregional, sejam exploradas e mapeadas. Nesta dissertação procuramos captar a imagem da cooperação no setor agroalimentar, gastronómico e turístico, e descobrir o potencial de criação de um SPL baseado nas duas regiões mais turísticas da Eslováquia.

A dissertação é dividida em três partes principais. A primeira parte é meramente descritiva e fornece uma ampla revisão da literatura atual sobre os tópicos estudados. É composta de dois capítulos que tratam separadamente das noções de turismo alimentar e SPL, embora em contextos sobrepostos. Em primeiro lugar, a atenção é direcionada à alimentação e ao seu uso como produto turístico, meio de marketing e diferenciação de destinos turísticos. Além disso, os tipos escolhidos de turismo alimentar são descritos e a identidade gastronómica dos destinos é introduzida. No segundo capítulo, a noção de SPL é apresentada e diferenciada de outros modelos territoriais de inovação. A ligação do SPL com o desenvolvimento regional, o turismo alimentar e setor agroalimentar, mas também com o sistema alimentar local é analisada. A segunda parte desta tese descreve as metodologias utilizadas para o estudo empírico. Os diferentes métodos aplicados ao longo da dissertação são brevemente delineados, as questões de pesquisa são levantadas, o modelo conceptual é introduzido, o local do estudo é descrito e, finalmente, a população e a amostra são delimitadas. A terceira parte é reservada para a elaboração do estudo empírico. O quarto capítulo descreve a situação atual do turismo e dos SPL no contexto eslovaco, utilizando investigação documental e estatística. Os resultados da pesquisa e a discussão são apresentados no quinto capítulo. Os resultados do questionário aplicado a

entidades identificadas nas duas regiões turísticas estudadas são apresentados. Os resultados são resumidos usando estatísticas descritivas, pontos fortes, fraquezas, oportunidades e ameaças organizadas numa análise SWOT que pode ajudar ao desenvolvimento de futuras políticas e, finalmente, o mapeamento das relações entre as entidades é feito usando a Análise de Redes Sociais. A dissertação termina com o resumo de resultados, principais lições aprendidas, limitações da pesquisa e possibilidades para investigação académica futura.

Palavras-chave: Turismo de Alimentação, Alimentação Local, Sistemas Produtivos Locais, Desenvolvimento Regional, Eslováquia, Tatras.

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Abbreviation List

CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
DMO	Destination Management Organization
LAG	Local Action Group
LPS	Local Production System
LTO	Local Tourism Organization
NUTS	Nomenclature des Units Territoriales Statistiques
R&D	Research and Development
RTO	Regional Tourism Organization
SACR	Slovak Tourism Board
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SNA	Social Network Analysis
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats
TIM	Territorial Innovation Models
TMR	Tatry Mountains Resort

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Introduction

Tourism has been identified as one of the broadest and most rapidly evolving industries, accounting for up to 10% of GDP worldwide (UNWTO, UNWTO Annual Report 2015, 2016). Climate change, globalization, technologic revolution and shifts of the population from rural to urban environments have significant impacts on the dynamics of tourism. Around one billion of tourists have travelled internationally in the year of 2015 which equals 1/7 of the entire world population. Today people travel more, have more information, interact more and demand more. Tourism offer, as wide as it already is, is being constantly challenged by the many tourists, travellers, but also by the local communities. Moreover, the tourism and hospitality companies struggle with globalization, tourism territories must be able to accommodate ever more people, regions and destinations constantly strive to survive in ever more competitive economy and together with policy makers and academia are all responsible for the future face of tourism. This face should be in accordance with sustainability, should pursue effective management of resources, encourage sustainable production and consumption, and finally preserve natural, cultural and social heritage. So that the tourism contributes to cooperation and harmonic coexistence of visitors and local communities, and to dispersion of knowledge and tolerance (UN, (2016); UNWTO (2016)).

This dissertation deals with several concepts related to tourism, agro-food production and gastronomy. In the face of raising demand for tourism, there are many new products to appear in order to lure and satisfy modern tourists that are hungry for experiences, demanding of quality and yearn to employ all of their senses (Quan & Wang, 2004). Many alternative forms of tourism are gaining noteworthy recognition as they are innovative and distinct from the traditional mass tourism type. One such example is discussed in this dissertation. It is a tourism product that can bring about numerous advantages. From environmental, economic and social to benefits for the local regions, community and the tourists (Sims, 2010). Food tourism, although for very long time neglected in the literature for being considered only a supplementary product or a necessity to be mandatory, appears as a pleasing option for sustainable tourism development (Mak, Lumbers, Eves, & Chang, 2012a).

Food is a basic necessity and pre-condition for any human activity to occur, not excluding tourism where it accounts for up to 35% of the overall tourist expenditure.

Food has immense social and cultural value that should be preserved as part of individual and collective identity and heritage. Food serves as holder of memories and embodies traditions, values and history of a given region and is therefore an interesting instrument for destination differentiation and marketing. This tool should ideally be used to develop tourism that encourages tourists to preserve and appreciate a tourism destination, rather than exploit its resources (Mak et al., (2012a); Sims (2010)).

Food tourism is defined as special interest tourism that encompasses many different activities such as: visiting of restaurants, thematic routes, degustation, events, festivals and fairs, buying local food from local producers, visiting of farms, cellars or vineyards and is related to other kinds of tourism such agro-tourism, rural tourism or ecotourism (Wolf, 2016). Moreover, food is an indispensable part of a tourism destination offer, especially local food and traditional foodstuff that emphasize authenticity of a given destination. Locally produced food sold for the tourism purposes can not only boost local agriculture and rural environment, but also bring the coveted multiplier effect as tourism employs many associated industries and sectors. Therefore, level of cross-sectoral cooperation and networking is needed in order to develop a competitive tourism product.

Certainly, several possibilities exist, yet this cooperation ought to be achieved in an innovative way using policies that would bring positive externalities both, to the region and to the stakeholders in question. Indisputably, economic geography abounds in concepts of spatial clustering that have positive effect on regional development. TIMs (territorial innovation models) as they can be generally named, cover numerous notions of territorial clustering or networking. This study disserts upon a particular kind of TIM, that is the Local Production System (LPS). Precisely, LPS that tries to join agro-food production with hospitality and tourism offer in two tourism regions of northern Slovakia, where food production has a great tradition and tourism has enormous potential.

The LPS may be creative or industrial, traditional or non-traditional. In this dissertation, we comprehend traditional LPS as a LPS with the preservation of accumulated traditions, embodied conventions and means of production, local capacities and rules for developing, communicating and interpreting knowledge and innovation are what makes for better and globally more competitive products. This brings a great

opportunity for rural tourism to emerge based on traditional products and related activities, effective instruments of regional development, and for differentiation of tourism destination based on food tourism (Lombardi, 2003).

The first part of this dissertation is merely descriptive and provides a broad review of the current literature on the studied topics. It is composed of two chapters that deal with the notions of food tourism and LPS separately, although in overlapped contexts. The first chapter is divided into five sub-chapters that discuss particularities of two concepts, namely food and tourism, and the importance of their interconnectedness and relationship. The dissertation tries to briefly outline food as an inseparable component of everyday life and its extraordinary role in recreation and tourism. Moreover, food's potential is presented as a tool for destination marketing, differentiation, and rural development. Culinary, gastronomy and wine tourism will be delineated as special components of food tourism.

The second chapter deals with the economic theories of agglomeration and takes a spatial view on the studied phenomena. In this part the work will relate concepts of food and tourism with territory and start understanding that these concepts are still, even in the 21st century notions with a geographical dimension that have strong local and regional importance. We will outline the basic concepts that stimulate any kind of territorial innovation and are crucial for the development of LPSs. Furthermore, we will shed some light on the different topics of TIM and try to distinguish LPSs as the enrichment of industrial district school. Furthermore, the dissertation will state the different advantages that LPS are believed to bring to the regional development and tourism and build the connections there exist between the trinity Agro-food production, Tourism and Regional development.

The second part of the dissertation discusses the methodology and presents the methodological design used to conduct the research in this study. Research questions are stated based on the literature review. Different analysis methods and their applications will be described in details. The study site will be elucidated and population and sample for the survey are introduced.

The following part of the dissertation deals with presentation of the results from the empirical study. The fourth chapter examines the current situation of tourism in Slovakia and places the LPSs in the country. Chapter five provides complete results from

the questionnaire and application of SWOT analysis and Social Network Analysis (SNA). Furthermore, a discussion of the results is incorporated in this section.

The last chapter reflects the outcomes of research, its implications and limitations. It summarizes the knowledge and information acquired throughout the development of the dissertation and sets policy recommendations as well as possible developments in future research.

**PART I – Food Tourism, Theory of Local Production System and the
Importance of LPS of Food in Tourism and Regional Development**

Chapter 1. Food and Tourism

The first chapter of this dissertation discusses the particularities of 2 concepts of high importance to this dissertation in 5 sections. Firstly, the concepts of food and tourism are outlined. Secondly, the role of food in tourism industry is presented. The third section explores selected types of food related tourism. In fourth section the tourist food consumption is examined. In the last section of this chapter the potential of food as tool for destination differentiation, economic diversification and marketing is discussed.

1.2. Introductory Remarks on Relationship between Food and Tourism

Food and tourism are concepts that share one feature in common. For many years, both have been neglected in terms of academic and scientific research. However, thanks to their cultural and social implications both food and tourism are, finally, gaining today noteworthy recognition in academia.

Research suggests that tourism is an interdisciplinary and multidimensional field comprising and merging numerous industries. It examines a person out of his/her home environment, experience and activities related to satisfaction of various demands that arise from a stay in such environments (Jafari, 2000). The purpose of engagement in a tourism activity is in its simplest form very clear. Tourists seek to escape the monotony of everyday life, relax, indulge and most importantly expose themselves to unusual situations and distinct experiences they most likely would not be able to experience in their homelands, or at least not to such a great extent.

Tourism is one of the pioneer sectors of so-called experience economy. Tourism is an experience *per se*, it is a journey to acquire new experiences. However, it is not singular, but rather composed of many dimensions that make each tourism experience unique. Tourism honours bodily desires by pleasing aesthetic values and senses. But the usual sightseers are slowly dying out, modern tourists are hungry for experiences they want to hear, feel, smell, taste and see. Food and gastronomy are the optimum tourism product for a tourist to get full involvement of all five senses (Hall & Sharples (2003); López-Guzmán & Sánchez-Cañizares, (2012); Quan & Wang, (2004).

Food is one of the common biological needs in all living things. As a substance of animal or plant origin it serves to nourish, to fuel ones' body and mind. Food is also a

cultural phenomenon and fairly all life events are accompanied with food. Likewise, “*cultural and social occasions often centre around food*” (Jafari, 2000, p. 232).

Celebrations of holidays in the major religions are famous for typical feasting traditions and folkloric dishes which vary not only among the particular religions but also countries professing the same religion (see Figure 1.1: Christmas *Bacalhau* in Portugal, fish soup in Hungary, Cabbage soup and potato salad in Slovakia; Easter, Ramadan and Eid al-Fitr, Yom Kippur, Pesach, Vesak, Diwali). In addition, family and friends’ encounters, weddings, sport events, exhibitions, celebrations, funerals, birth of a child are all experiences, which importance is accentuated by food and feasting. Food is not only one of the most social but also the most socializing activities.

Food is a mean of expression, bears symbols, communicates values and provides “*glimpse into the various cultures*” (López-Guzmán, ElideDi-Clemente, & Hernández-Mogollón, (2014); Mitchell & Hall, (2003); Jafari, (2000, p. 232)).

Figure 1.1 Typical Christmas food in Hungary, Portugal, Slovakia



Source: Internet online¹

Food consumption is generally understood as a set of contextual and evolving social practices. Here food no longer serves only as nutrition but it is a way to relate to

¹ <http://www.srbacalhau.com/> <http://recepty.netcabinet.net> <http://hungarytoday.hu>

other people in social, cultural, religious and political terms. Numerous studies of sociology, anthropology and medicine have been elaborated to address the importance of food in human life, yet it is only rarely perceived as an important factor in the field of tourism, destination image or local production systems. Food in tourism stands out as a provider of social and cultural distinction, and exceptional experience of new food-ways and local traditions. Furthermore, food stands out as a contrasting, enhancing and intensifying force to tourism experience whereas tourism experience itself is the opposition, extension and intensification of the daily routine of a tourist. In tourism, food consumption is perceived to be a unique form of food that is essential, momentary, takes place in an unexplored environment and is a holder of symbolic value that is often associated with the motivation to travel (Mak, Lumbers, Eves, & Chang, (2012a); Quan & Wang, (2004)).

For many years, food tourism has been left unseen by the academy due to a common perception that food consumption is only a supplementary activity to the main tourism activity and cannot be considered the principal tourism intention. In more recent studies, however food consumption is perceived as being:

- one main reason to travel (food tourism),
- one of the ingredients of the peak tourism experience, or
- complementary touristic experience depending on various circumstances.

Therefore, it is no longer taken for granted (Ardabili, Rasouli, Daryani, Molaie, & Sharegi (2011); Cohen & Avieli, (2004); López-Guzmán et al., (2014); Mak et al. (2012a); Quan & Wang, (2004)).

As defined by World Food Travel Association (Wolf, 2016) food tourism is a special interest tourism that is: “*the pursuit and enjoyment of unique and memorable food and drink experiences, both far and near*”. This means that people do not need to travel long distances to be considered food tourists, it is enough to visit their own regions, cities or neighbourhoods in their own country in the pursuit of food experience. This definition will be applied throughout the entire dissertation and will be helpful to distinguish the food tourism from culinary or gastronomy tourism (that are used as components of food tourism or synonyms) and manifest the complexity of this phenomenon that includes different food related activities, dining and wining out, food trails and routes, festivals or simply buying regional produces on local markets or farms.

There is no doubt that tourism industry has evolved into top quality industry where food sector has an irreplaceable position and tourists more often desire to collect real authentic experiences and top quality services (Ardabili et al., (2011); Yurtseven & Kaya, (2011); Quan & Wang, (2004)). Food tourism industry encompasses many subsets and has a lot to offer to each and every tourist. Even though the variety is endless and the demand is diverse all the different kinds of food tourism and food related tourism activities have one thing in common: they communicate the uniqueness of a place combined with culinary tradition and preservation of local culinary culture (Mitchell & Hall, (2003); Wolf (2016)).

Nevertheless, food tourism is only one of the four perspectives on food consumption in tourism. In accordance with the classification proposed by Mak et al. (2012a) and Mitchell and Hall, (2003), food in tourism can be seen from perspectives such as:

- product/attraction,
- tourist food consumption patterns,
- tourist dining experience,
- tourist special interest in various foods and beverages or food related events activities, gastronomy tourism and culinary tourism.

Although all four perspectives on food in tourism are of high relevance, and all of them are embodied in the definition of food tourism, in this study we intend to focus predominantly on: food and beverages viewed as being the tourist special interests, gastronomy and culinary tourism, and the linkages to local production systems and regional and rural development.

1.3. **Role of Food in Tourism**

As already mentioned, food and nutrition are physiological needs common to all living creatures (Yurtseven & Kaya, 2011). However, humans not only eat because they need to eat, but also because we like to eat, moreover we love to eat good food. Together with other fundamental needs food constitutes the bottom of Maslow's pyramid, meaning in order to be able to proceed to the satisfaction of more sophisticated needs the very basic, biological ones must be met at first. Hence to live everyday routines and sustain

their bodies and minds people must eat. This makes food an inevitable product to be consumed at any moment, on any place.

Tourism activities and travelling are no exception. Moreover, food sets in motion other aspects such as travel agencies' culinary programs, the final price of hotels, culture assimilation, and so on. (Ardabili et al., (2011)). In addition, food plays a particularly important role in tourism offer and differentiation of tourism destination and it is the key “*precondition for other touristic activities*” (Cohen & Avieli (2004, s. 758); Jafari, (2000); Mak, Lumbers, & Eves, (2012b)).

As Fox (2007) points out, literature shows that a successfully developed tourism destination is always renowned for an exceptional culinary offer. Food and cuisine are therefore, in terms of tourism, perceived as a unique combination of cultural, biological, social and locational aspects that contribute to the diversity and richness of tourist experience, and viability of the tourism destination (Aslimoski & Gerasimoski, (2012); Mak et al., (2012a)).

Indisputably, human beings are biologically, psychologically and socially composed of the foods they choose to intake, not to mention that by eating they embody partially or completely the food's properties and outside environment. Thus, it can be concluded that food is one of the key elements to construct ones' identity (Fischler, 1988). Food and nutrition may be the principal motive of tourism activity or simply just complementary. Wherefore, there are most commonly tourists for whom food intake on holiday is only one part of their experience and then tourists whose activities, behaviours or even destination selection are subject to their interest in food (Hall & Sharples, 2003). In either case, tourists can opt to taste the locally produced food to foster the authentic experience of a given place.

It is important to distinguish two major types of tourists based on whether one has a ‘neophobic’ or ‘neophylic’ tendencies - meaning if they are prudent and unenthusiastic about eating strange foods in unfamiliar environment or they search actively for unusual exotic flavours and novelty. These two opposing tensions result from the omnivore's paradox that is crucial to human beings (Cohen & Avieli, (2004); Fischler, (1988); Mak et al., (2012a); Quan & Wang, (2004)). Although there exist plenty of factors that influence tourist food consumption, for the tourist with prevalent neophobic tendencies

the globalization brought a simple solution that eases traveling and diminishes their preoccupation about the food intake.

McDonald's and 'mcdonalized' food chains provide most travellers with the convenience of familiarity and homogenous food in an, otherwise, novel ambient (Ritzer, 1996). For that McDonald's offers their food in over 32,700 establishments all over the world. Mak et al. (2012b, p. 172) add up that such "*globalization and cultural imperialism may lead to homogenization that can result in global cuisine and global plate*". Nevertheless, in the same article these authors argue that people when exposed to ever more homogenous goods, services and ideas incline to adopt different attitudes and incorporate them into everyday practices according to their particularities and realities.

Globalization has negative just as much as positive aspects. In food production, however, it ultimately leads to heterogeneity as the following equation holds true:

globalization + localization = heterogeneity \wedge traditon + modernity = creolization
Mak et al., (2012b).

Where modern collides with traditional the cultural value is preserved, tradition or manner is to be given a modern raiment taking into consideration its appreciable historic complexity. Culture and especially food culture is not stagnant, it is alive, evolving, changing, responsive to internal and external impulses and so, leading to invention of new cuisines, new plates or preparation techniques. Thus, it can be argued that the ultimate result of globalisation is not homogenisation but increased heterogenisation as the clash of cuisines and innovation bring about new recipes that might turn into traditions later on. Consequently, it leads either to 'glocalisation' of given products, or to renaissance of the local traditions, cuisines and gastronomy not excluding. The recognition of cultural preferences and differences can be also seen among the fast food chains through adopting localised marketing strategies and enriching the usual offer with traditional products such as the example of Figure 1.2-, Maestro Ostiepo and McSyr in Slovakia and Czech Republic, McCurrywurst in Germany, McBifana and McPrego in Portugal, among other examples. (Mak at al., (2012b)). Although, these would probably not be procured by the many foodies.

Figure 1.2 McDonald's regional variations, McOstiepok, McCurry Wurst, McBifana, McPrego



Source: National McDonald's websites

Here food may serve as an attraction but just as well as an impediment. Thus food may not only add up to the positive picture tourists have of a destination, it can also ruin their expectations or completely discourage from visiting some regions all together (Aslimoski & Gerasimoski, (2012); Cohen & Avieli, (2004); Fox, (2007)). As Aslimoski and Gerasimoski, (2012, p. 358) state, food is a tourism phenomenon that: “*affects the senses of tourist that are felt much stronger and much longer than any other tourist experience*”. Certainly, food intake involves “bodily involvement” rather than just passive participation or observation. And as such food is not only very important but we are very picky and cautious when it comes to food. For all that, it is via food and drinks that one’s body gets to taste and experience the outside environment which may lead to both memorable experience or unpleasant suffering (Cohen & Avieli, 2004). Indeed, already as kids, people acquire information about the outside environment by tasting and chewing everything.

Food is a subject, or rather a matter, but it is also an activity and process. Food that is not just the ingredients which it comprises of, it is the unique mode and methods

of preparation – recipes, traditions and stories associated to food, spices used, culinary service styles, the entire special ambient, means of consumption, types of eating utensils and cutlery used (recently even many edible ones are available), drinks for accompanying, etc. All of these particularities make for the inimitable experience associated to the consumption of a given food (Aslimoski & Gerasimoski, 2012).

Being holders of symbolic value certain foods are used to denote concepts such as “*tradition, modernity, masculinity, femininity, superiority or inferiority*” (Mak et al., (2012a, p. 932). As Fischler (1988, p. 4) points out: “*food incorporation is also the basis of collective identity and, by the same token, of otherness.*” Therefore, to reasonable extent food and cuisine reflect the social status and self-identification of an individual, and represent the valuable asset of one’s cultural capital acquired throughout the life. Here cultural capital can be defined as: “*an asset which embodies, stores or gives rise to cultural value in addition to whatever economic {or social} value it may possess*” (Throsby, 1999). New cuisine equals new culture, just like a new language. In other words, food is considered an art and understanding of food became a reflection of sophistication, cosmopolitanism where “*cultivation of taste for exotic foods*” equals the skill in society’s high-class culture (Kim, Eves, & Scarles, (2009); Mak et al., (2012a); Throsby, (1999)).

The knowledge of local dining etiquette, methods of preparation or simply one’s ability to order the food are highly appreciated competences. In the recent years, food became indicator of prestige and social networks and media burst with stylish pictures of foods from travel and food bloggers from all around the world (Mitchell & Hall, 2003).

In addition, the new-era tourist is more eager to experience rather than just observe and thus thematic tourism is now wanted where the recovery and improvement of the cultural, social and environmental heritage of different geographical locations can be seen (López-Guzmán et al. (2014)). No wonder, this trend led to increased demand for various kinds of culinary tours that are now widely offered by the tour operators such as: cooking schools that include tasting and preparation of the foods, dining in famous restaurants with Michelin stars awarded chefs that appear in renowned shows and media, international food expos (Milano 2015²), even creation of food theme parks (wine theme

² (Expo 2015 S.p.A., 2016)

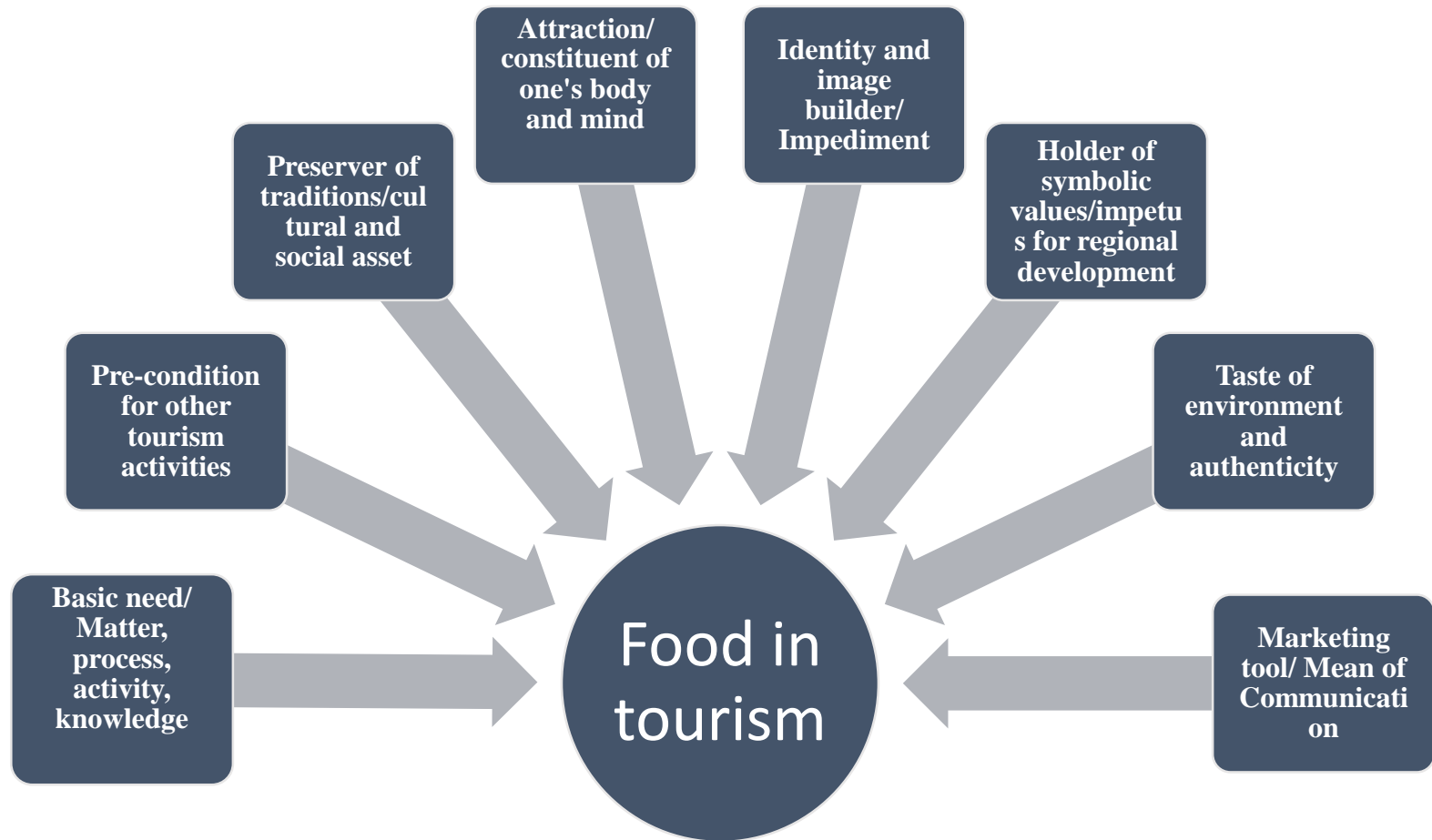
park: see La Cité du Vin³), buying the indigenous foods from local people on farmers' markets and fairs, visiting the food producers (coffee, tea, chocolate plantation, salt fields, vineyards and wine cellars) which links food tourism to rural tourism and ideally to regional development (Cohen & Avieli, (2004); Fox, (2007)).

Food consumption in tourism is a holistic, hedonistic involvement targeting emotions that mixes “*sensorial (sense), affective (feel), cognitive (think), behavioural (act) and social (relate) experiences*” (Mason & Paggiaro, 2012). Moreover, eating local food is a way to ingest destinations intangible heritage by consuming its tangible sources (Yurtseven & Kaya, 2011).

Finally, it can be concluded that food assumes numerous roles in tourism. These are summed up in the Figure 1.3. Food can become the ultimate tourism product or attraction, identity and image maker, social, cultural and economic booster, destination marketing tool, mean of economic development, and impetus for regional development and formation of clusters and LPS. However, it can be much more, for each and every one of us something different, something special.

³ (La Cité du Vin, 2016)

Figure 1.3 Roles Food plays in Tourism



Source Own Elaboration

1.4. **Wine Tourism and Difference between Culinary and Gastronomy Tourism**

Food tourism is extremely diverse. Famous types of food-related tourism are: wine tourism, chocolate tourism, cheese tourism, beer tourism, food tourism, culinary and gastro-tourism, ethno-tourism, nutrition and health tourism, or event tourism, where food is the central or one of the most important reasons to visit. Talking about food tourism we must not omit the beverages and especially wine (and more recently also beer) which is an integral part of food experience and can be the leading attraction of a destination. Wine can be used as valuable marketing tool that shortens the distribution channel for wine and other products associated with it, and thanks to on-site experience and learning it can enhance brand loyalty of tourists and create positive idyllic images of wine production and rural areas (Byrd, Canziani, Hsieh, & Debbage, (2016); López-Guzmán et al., (2014)). Wineries can even be considered individual tourism destinations themselves (Gómez, Lopez, & Molina, 2015).

Wine tourists are interested in getting the entire bundled experience of the thematic routes. Not only they want to taste different wines, more importantly they long for authenticity of the places where the grapes are harvested, understand the production techniques and admire picturesque rural landscapes and thematic cellars, learn basics about the agronomy and plantation, understand specificities of different grapes, witness production and maturation procedures, history of the wineries, manners to taste and drink the given wine and finally buy a nice craft souvenir or present. In the recent years, wine tasting and visits to wineries became popular social activity for high society encounters, teambuilding or conferences.

Wine tourism is still in its infancy, especially in countries like Slovakia, which despite its incredible wine production has until now been unable to develop more sophisticated wine tourism offer, although it is evolving rapidly and it is very interesting sector of food tourism in terms of revenue. It is not just wine tasting and purchasing that makes for a wine tourism. The offer spans across many grape and wine production related activities such as visits to vineyards, wineries, thematic routes, wine trails and cellars, wine festivals and wine shows, and least but not last getting to know the particular wine, rural region and its further attractions (Byrd et al., (2016); Gómez et al., (2015)).

However, wine tourism is never solely about the wine itself, to accompany good wine good food is often served and vice versa. And thus, wine tourism is also a way to

bring people to taste the local food that best pairs with the grape drink and connects with the inimitable cultural and natural background of the destination (López-Guzmán et al., (2014)). Wine tourism is one of the most rapidly growing sectors of food tourism, supposedly because people like to drink, moreover they love to drink good wine.

Other types of food tourism, even though these are many times used as interchangeable concepts that are part of and at the same time comprise of food tourism, need to be distinguished. Various authors use different wordings and definitions, therefore we decided to shed some light on these terms. Following Rozin and Rozin (1981 as cited in Mak et al., (2012a)) basic ingredients, preparation methods and culturally specific flavour doctrines are the principal elements to form a particular 'cuisine'. While Fischler (1988) argues that there exists a 'culinary order' that comprises of specific rules, criteria, classification and nomenclature and that meals are designed obeying this complex grammar and syntax that serves as a communicator of worldview of a given culinary group.

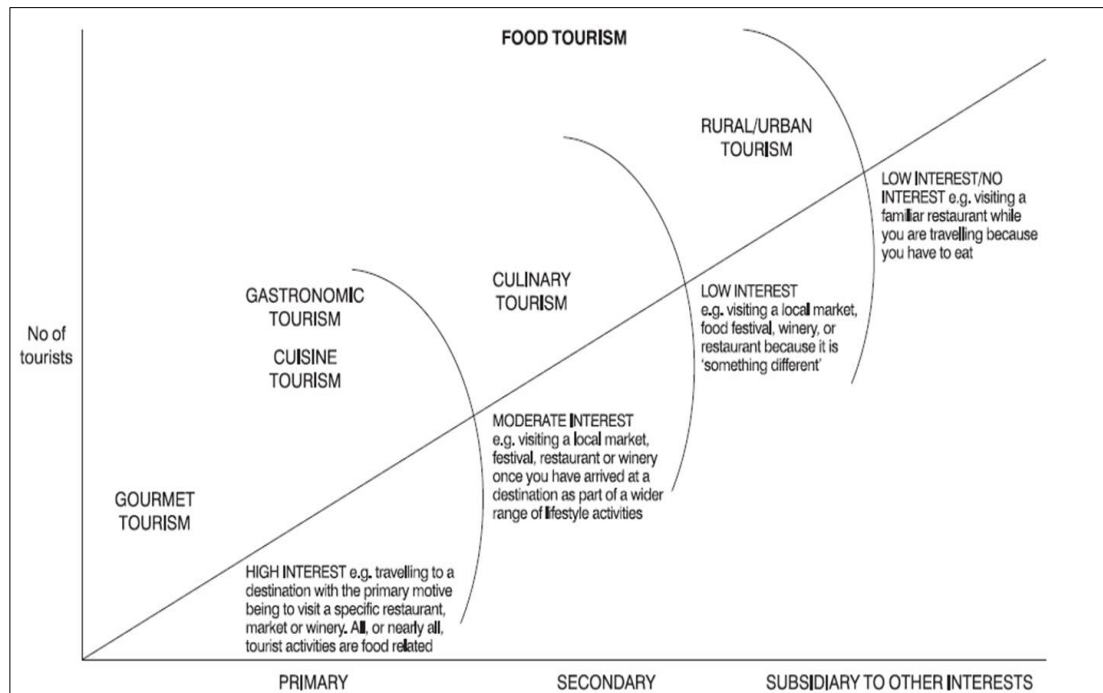
Culinary tourism is a form of cultural tourism as consumption of food usually brings the tourist to experience a whole variety of associated elements of the given culture such as local music and language, way of serving the food and feasting customs, folkloric costumes and presentation of traditional arts, rituals, ethnographic objects and architecture (Aslimoski & Gerasimoski, (2012); Horng & Tsai (2010)). As Fischler (1988, p. 9) contends: "*cuisine enables neophile innovation to be reconciled with neophobic conservatism or distrust*" moreover he adds poetically: "*novelty, the unknown, can be steeped in the sauce of tradition; originality is tempered by familiarity and monotony relieved by variety*", all that to serve you with an edible experience on a plate. Culinary tourism is the pursuit of acquisition of knowledge about the culinary culture, enjoyment of regional plates, local foods and the authentic genius loci which are the principal motivational factors for tourist to engage in such a tourism activity (Horng & Tsai (2010); Mason & Paggiaro, (2012)).

Gastronomy, is the study of good eating, is a science of food. Literally as derived from Greek 'gastros' stomach, 'gnomos' law, that blends in deep understanding of cooking practices and possibilities. Therefore, a thorough knowledge of chemistry, literature, biology, geology, history, agronomy, anthropology, music, philosophy, psychology, and sociology of food is required from a person that is involved in

gastronomy (Kivela & Crotts, 2006). Then again ‘culinaria’ or culinary from the Latin *culina* (kitchen) or *culinarius* (belonging to the kitchen) is the practice, recipes and technique of preparation of dishes that gives the origin to regional or national authentic dishes. No matter the wording used the point is that food and local cuisine echo the cultural and social legacy of a place, which in itself embodies the particular quirks of its inhabitants. Hereby, culinary tourism also represents a tool for measurement of regional development depending on nature of ties between culinary traditions, local culture, agricultural production and the natural resources found in the area in which tourism is being developed (López-Guzmán et al., (2014)).

From the Figure 1.4 Food tourism as presented by Hall and Sharples (2003) along with the culinary and gastronomy tourism, in literature, there appear different concepts related to food as special interest tourism. These are scaled based on the quantity of tourists that can be found in this group and their pronounced interest in food while travelling. In the figure, it can be observed that ‘gourmet tourism’ is poor in number of tourists, yet these are highly interested in food at their destination and thus food is the primary activity. Already gastronomic or cuisine tourists are a larger group, but for culinary tourists, food is just a secondary interest. Even though they are more numerous, their interest in food can be labelled as moderate, here food servers for widening the range of activities at a destination. Rural/urban tourists are considered to be the less interested in food and food for them is just a complementary activity to add up to other tourism activities or they simply eat because they need to.

Figure 1.4 Special Interest in Food as a Travel Motivation



Source: Hall and Sharples, (2003)

Rural and urban tourists in the Figure 1.4 exhibit least special interested in food. Indisputably, tourists' interest very significantly depending on socio-demographic, economic, cultural and educational variables. This is especially true in their food choice and destination choice. However, we believe that the rural and urban tourists may become more affected by food offer at the destination, if food is developed and integrated as a smart function of the given destination.

1.5. Tourist Food Consumption

Commonly, consumption may lead to exploitation as we observed it in many fast-rising destinations, consequently to deterioration of the tourism product itself and ultimately to the decay of a destination. Therefore, the importance to encourage 'sustainable consumption' is stressed out in the recent studies. As Sims (2010, p. 105) cites in her paper 'Putting place on the menu', tourism is "*the consumption of a place...*" or "terroir" (Hodges, (2001); Mak et al., (2012a); Trubek, (2008)) and Fox (2007, p. 549) adds that idyllically it is an: "*act of consuming cultural heritage*". Tourist products that aim at increasing the quality of the destination in question (such as locally-sourced

products) rather than at nothing but exploiting its resources, is preferred (Sims, 2010). Although, the final choice is always taken by the tourists themselves, recent studies advocate that the food inclinations and interests of tourists may have crucial impact on the destination selection and incentive to re-visit it (Ardabili et al., (2011); Kim et al., (2009);Mak et al., (2012a)).

Food preferences and food choice comprise of incremental conscious and unconscious considerations that result ultimately in the consumption of a given food item. These are influenced by the many demographic and symbolic aspects and food related personality traits (Kim, Suh, & Eves, 2010). Although tourists are novelty seekers in the first place, they always preserve their home habits and practices and therefore, prefer eating familiar foodstuff most of their holiday. This helps them to overcome cultural shocks and provide them with the comfort of familiarity (Cohen & Avieli, (2004); Mak at. al., (2012a); Mak at. al., (2012b); Quan & Wang, (2004)). To most tourists, local food is acceptable only if modified to some degree, while they are willing to allow for changes in ‘secondary’ and ‘peripheral’ foods (i.e., foods eaten often but not on daily basis and foods eaten occasionally) they tend to have strict consumption patterns and do not allow for compromising when ‘core’ foods (main staples) are considered. Thus, most tourists are eager to taste exotic foods but only if they feel these do not comprise any threats and are in harmony with their cultural and religious believes, and can be categorized as edible (Okumus, Okumus, & McKercher, 2007).

Kim et al. (2009) presented a model based on the grounded theory that led them to distinguish three categories of factors that have the strongest influence on tourist food consumption on holidays. These are ‘motivational factors’, ‘demographic factors’ and ‘physiological factors’. In order to develop successful food tourism in a destination, all the relevant stakeholders must be aware of the tourists’ diverse food related traits, motivations and behaviour in order to assess these by satisfying demand for the food and food related activities.

For instance, over 70% of UK visitors in 2000 were interested and excited about tasting the local food (Enteleca, 2000). Some authors suggest that the people interested in learning and appreciating local foods are just a small group of tourists that are especially attracted by destinations’ cultural offer, from the middle and higher middle class, have high level of education and have sufficient money and sophistication to order

these foods. Typical food tourists are therefore a lucrative niche market to be targeted in any tourism destination (Ardabili et al., (2011); López-Guzmán & Sánchez-Cañizares, (2012)).

Westerners are more likely to opt for local foods than Asians, and female travellers are more inclined to experiment with exotic tastes and expose themselves to higher risks than their fellow male companions (Ardabili et al., (2011); López-Guzmán & Sánchez-Cañizares, (2012)). Moreover, women are also more likely to purchase fresh foods at direct points of sale. As stated in Mitchell and Hall (2003, p. 63) a *full 86% of the produce buyers surveyed for The Packer Fresh Trends edition were women*. They further conclude that this is due to the fact that women are more price sensitive and still 99% of women in households with children under 18 are believed to make decisions when food is considered. All of these comments make sense in the perspective of globalization that is prevalent in Western and westernized countries which imposes that the higher the exposure to local cuisines at home, and information acquired before the holiday, the higher the probability of tourists' consumption and preferences for given food (Ardabili et al., (2011); López-Guzmán, et al., (2014); Mitchell & Hall, (2003)).

There exists vast number of categorizations of food tourists most of which tend to classify tourist according to their passion for food on holidays. For instance, there are 'general' tourists and 'specialists', according to Hjalager's (as cited in (Kivela & Crofts, 2006) theory there are 4 different categories of food tourists: *recreational, existential, diversionary and experimental*.

- 'Existential tourists' are the ones who pursue the acquisition of knowledge and are eager to eat and live like the locals, mostly they are found in small eateries where they eat simple yet quality local dishes⁴.
- 'Experimental' gastronomy tourist are hipsters, fashion and design seekers that end up blogging about latest trends in gastronomy.
- 'Recreational' gastronomy tourists are believed to be old-fashioned familiarity seeking neophobic tourists.

⁴ One of the most successful countries to attract existential food tourists is indisputably Portugal with its rich offer based on traditional recipes and renown conviviality

- ‘Diversionsary’ tourists need simplicity, food must come easy in huge portions and must be in highly socializing environment. For these tourists, chain-restaurants and popular eateries are the best solution.

As already pointed out there exist many approaches to classify and segment food tourists. In spite of that, precise research on consumer behaviour in many destinations is lacking. Even though in order to promote food tourism in any tourism destination it is essential to understand wants and consumption patterns of the different typologies of tourists.

1.6. **Gastronomic Identity of a Tourism Destination**

Food and feasting are closely related to place as eating always occurs in time and space, where the environment can strengthen the overall experience of eating. It is certain that cuisine is place, region and country sensitive and it is undoubtedly an effective marketing medium to differentiate a tourism destination. Furthermore, it is an “*essential cultural element*” to be offered (Mak at al., (2012b)). On the other hand, we cannot forget that using the notion of tradition when food is being discussed can be very relative and misleading as many traditions are only historical constructs and many dishes are hardly one century old (Majer, 2016). Therefore, the comment of Hodges (2001) that rather than claiming that the traditional cuisine is present “*incarnation*” of traditions or reinvented tradition, it is more precise to state that such authentic cuisine communicates certain temporal and territorial identity of place that has indisputable continuity over time.

However, many times gastronomic identity creation is heavily influenced by the tendency to commodify, institutionalise, legitimise and pronominalize its image in order to satisfy tourists’ expectations that exist long before the actual visit of a destination but also to bring tourists attention to the distinctive local foods (Fox, 2007). Numerous destinations use marketing channels, creative ‘gastrospeak’ and promotion tools to communicate the uniqueness, prestige and nomenclature of given cuisine. Creation of creative food clusters that aim to promote the “*distinctive local identity and marketable place image to outsiders*” is a great way for region to communicate its gastronomic identity and expand its portfolio to other food related attractions and rural tourism (Lee, Wall, & Kovacs, 2015, p. 133). This leads to increased interest in tasting local or ethnic food. Several researches concluded that food can be one of the most important reasons

to opt for a destination, thereafter food is an important product that advertises the local culture and character (Quan & Wang, 2004).

On the other hand, we should not forget that a destination usually possesses a complex portfolio of tourism products that must be marketed in complementary harmonized way. Furthermore, when memorable experience is gained it can lead a tourist to return to the destination to savour its unique taste. When satisfied, tourists are more likely to spread the positive image of a destination by word-of-mouth. Therefore, it is vital for the destination management to be able to understand tourists' needs and habits and segment the market accordingly and capture this opportunity in order to convert it into value adding and viable attraction of a tourism destination (Ardabili et al., (2011); Kivela & Crofts, (2006); Quan & Wang, (2004)). Some tourism destinations can easily be named food destinations, paradise for "foodies" for their renowned cuisine where everything else is just a secondary attraction to the main reason to visit: to eat an experience, to experience eating well (Kivela & Crofts, 2006). According to vast amount of researches (Ardabili et al., (2011); Quan & Wang, (2004); Yurtseven & Kaya (2011)) food consumption is a key activity that can account for up to 25-35% of overall tourist expenditure.

More importantly, local food can become a strategic contribution to the economy of tourist destinations (Kim et al., (2010)). Its special nature of essential yet experience product to be consumed at any time indemnifies food's noteworthy contribution effect on destination's revenue. Indeed, food unlike many other attractions is enjoyable throughout the entire year in any weather conditions and any time of the day. Therefore, it can bring significant economic benefits to a destination and consequently contribute to sustainable competitiveness and long-term viability of the place, possibly diminishing the negative effects of seasonality (Kivela & Crofts, (2006); Mak et al. (2012b); Quan & Wang, (2004)).

The offer of hospitality business is driven by many forces where globalization and tourists' demand for food stand out as the most visible ones. Consequently, these have an undeniable impact on the local supply chain, depending upon the proportion of import-export of food goods and domestic food production. As Mak, et al., (2012b, p. 172) further point out tourism demand for food both influences and is being influenced

by the: *“linkage between local agricultural production and tourism, and the use of provenance as a distinctive attribute of local food products to attract tourists’ attention.”*

As already stated herein, globalization has a profound effect on the gastronomic identity of a destination. Research proves that it puts in motion two opposing forces - divergence and convergence in food consumption. Globalization can impose a potential risk on the local cuisine by accepting food products and plates from western countries and influential cuisines (Mak et al., (2012b)). For instance, Fox (2007) stays that Croatian tourist destinations bring in foods from Italy, Austria and Bosnian cuisines, and the gastronomic offer consists of pizza, pasta, Wiener Snitzel, Čevapčići, kebab and hamburgers yet the traditional Croat dishes are rather rarely found on the offer. On the other hand, as Mak et al. (2012b) argue globalization can lead to the renaissance of the destinations gastronomy. Innovation in the culinary offer can ultimately result in attracting more food tourists.

As mentioned previously, renown gastronomy at a destination is an outstanding tourist decoy and mighty marketing instrument. Positive food experiences constitute a strong incentive to re-visit a destination. The impression of a food can be so durable that it lasts long after the visit, and the tourist carries memorable tastes and feelings associated to food consumption for years. It can happen to people that move temporarily or permanently to another country with very different cuisine styles, that they even feel hungry, or unsatisfied if they don't eat certain “home foods” in a long time (Aslimoski & Gerasimoski, 2012). The taste is a very powerful memory maker and can create strong associations to moments, places, people and memories. Such memories can then lure tourist to the authentic brand of a region, especially when strengthen by locally produced iconic products. So there exists a possibility to create linkages between the food styles and a destination, and thus generate export markets by influencing visitors' taste. (Fox, (2007); Hall (2005); Okumus, et al., (2007)).

According to Fox (2007) and Okumus et al., (2007) successful gastronomic identity of a destination is shaped only if it is the common goal of and if strategic alliances among the numerous stakeholders (food producers, processors, distributors, hotels, wineries, chefs, artists, associations, local authorities, governing institutions) are created,

and smart instruments of marketing and public policy are employed both on destination and regional scale. These are:

- Eloquent ‘gastrospeech’ that is capable of transmitting the authenticity of a taste by words,
- Differentiation that render the (re)socialization of a tourist according to local norms,
- Aestheticization that satiates body, mind and senses, and relates with tourist in idiosyncratic way,
- Authenticity that wisely converts reality into ‘*romantic nostalgia for the good old times*’,
- Symbolization that communicates the perceived values of food and related activities,
- Segmentation and direct targeting of the different food tourist segments, and finally
- Rejuvenation and constant innovation of the sector.

In other words, it regards a smart innovative networking system where every stakeholder plays its part in harmony with the others, capable of transmitting the traditions and value system, needs to be build up.

In the first chapter of this dissertation, different roles food plays in tourism and its potential as a powerful marketing instrument for destination differentiation were described. The idea that both food and tourism are territory based concepts is stressed out and that only in combination with authentic terroir it becomes an effective attraction of the tourism audience. Therefore, we sense the urge to take a look at these concepts from the spatial loop and employ theories of regional and geographical economics. Moreover, importance of tourism in rural and regional development will be discussed.

Chapter 2. Local Production System (LPS) and its Role in Regional Development and Tourism

Second chapter of this dissertation deals with Local production system in its diverse forms. In the first part, theories of agglomeration economics are explored. Second part delineates the model of LPS. In the third section the Local food system is introduced. Fourth and fifth part link local production to regional development and tourism, respectively.

2.2. Theories of Agglomeration Economies

Agglomeration economies, as a concept of economic geography, are defined as spatial dispersion and coherence of economic activities (Nijkamp & Mills, 2000). There are abundant notions with higher and lower relevance, all of which are somewhat related to innovation and regional development policies and benefit from externalities and proximity. We can generally label them territorial innovation models (TIMs) (closely related to national innovation systems or regional innovation systems) where endogenous potential of the local or region, embeddedness, networks of relations and innovation play crucial role (Doloreux, (2002); Moulaert & Sekia, (2003)).

We will try to draft briefly several of the models that are of relevance for this dissertation, especially because many of these concepts are used in academic papers simultaneously and as synonyms (Collective of Authors, 2014) or are referred to or derived from “local/localized production systems” (Doloreux, (2002); Moulaert & Sekia, (2003); Parrilli, (2010)). For clarification and capture of complexity of these concepts it is necessary to introduce the key linkage notions present in all TIM’s. Because ‘social capital’, ‘proximity’, ‘innovation systems’ and ‘knowledge’ are the fuel for, but not solely, any kind of successful LPS, these need to be delimited in the first place. Since these factors are:

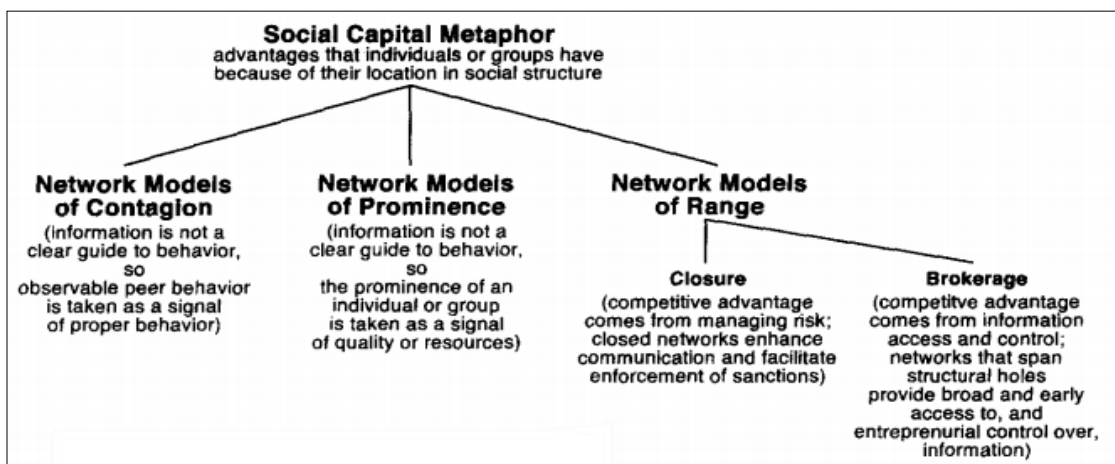
“...at the base of the local external economies which, in turn, define the socio-economic dynamics of local systems, to a large extent through the creation, adoption, development or introduction of innovations in local productive and innovative systems.”
(Esparcia, 2014, p. 1).

2.3. Social Capital

Social capital differs from other kinds of capitals. The fact that collaboration and working in group may have positive implications for both the community and individual is nothing new to the sociological studies (Castle, (2002); Portes, (1998)). Social capital is in its nature an asset that aims at the facilitation of acquiring access to cultural capital (embodied and institutionalized) information channels and channels to economic resources or networks.

Moreover, social capital is a territorial concept that explains partially the embeddedness of firms in localized structures that have shared cognitive and normative dimensions (Pinto, Cruz, & Combe, 2015). It is based on non-pecuniary influence (although its ultimate objective is the pursuit of one's interests that are oftentimes monetary) and can be derived from person's position within a structuralized, to some degree, institutionalized network of relationships that have mutually beneficial character and are recognized and acknowledged by both parties. As such, social capital must be constructed, invested in, and maintained in order to be functional. This way it brings competitive advantage to the individuals and/or groups and facilitate actions within the structure (Burt, (2000); Castle, (2002); Portes, (1998)). Social capital is an essential element in formation of LPSs and represents linkages amongst actors. In Figure 2.1 the metaphor of social capital that connects to network theories is presented. Burt (2000) introduces the three kinds of network mechanisms that describe the social capital. These are models of contagion, of prominence and of range.

Figure 2.1 Social Capital, in Metaphor and Network Structure



Source: Burt, (2000)

2.4. Proximity

Proximity is another key concept for LPS that denotes the distance of different kinds between or among actors. There exist geographical, organizational, institutional, cognitive and social proximity (Boschma, 2005). We can say that geographical proximity is the spatial distance between the actors and has a great influence on knowledge dispersion, trust, uncertainty reduction and acquisition of social capital. Basically, the shorter the distance between two economic entities the larger the benefits of positive externalities and opportunity for interaction, cooperation, transfer of tacit knowledge, and creation of informal relationships. Although in the era of technology and internet the importance of this particular kind of proximity shrinks it is impossible to eliminate. Coordination mechanisms within a given structure are possible thanks to ‘organizational proximity’. It enables the exchange of knowledge, transactions and information and is characterized as internal and external interdependence of organizations of financial or economic character. A third kind, the ‘social proximity’ is derived from the embeddedness of economic activities in social context. Trust, fellowship and friendship are examples of innovation and creativity boosters.

Table 2.1 Five Forms of Proximity

Type of proximity	key dimension	too little proximity	too much proximity	possible solutions
Cognitive	Knowledge gap	Misunderstanding	Lack of sources of novelty	Common knowledge base with diverse but complementary capabilities
organizational	Control	Opportunism	Bureaucracy	Loosely coupled system
Social	Trust (based on social relations)	Opportunism	No economic rationale	Mixture of embedded and market relations
Institutional	Trust (based on common institutions)	Opportunism	Lock-in and inertia	Institutional checks and balances
Geographical	Distance	No spatial externalities	Lack of geographical openness	Mix of local ‘buzz’ and extra-local linkages

Source: Boschma, (2005)

Consequently, ‘institutional proximity’ is characterized by the compatibility on institutional level. It represents the similar rules of the game. Together with social proximity it lowers uncertainty and reduces risk of opportunism. Finally, ‘cognitive proximity’ is the pre-condition for diffusion of knowledge, it regards the capability of the actors to effectively communicate, understand, absorb, diffuse and apply knowledge (Crespo & Vicente, (2015); Boschma, (2005)). Proximity enables the creation of linkages. The Table 2.1 sums up some features of the different types of proximity.

2.5. Innovation

Innovation regards new solutions to existing problems and combination of opportunities in a creative way to come up with new products and services, processes, technological approaches, organizational methods or bring traditions back to life in a novel way. Innovation is believed to be the main contributor to economic viability, revitalization and competitiveness of a region and is mostly driven by universities and research institutions associated with major investments and implementation of advanced technology. But this perception is somewhat misleading as innovation is the basic precondition for success in low or medium technology industries, too.

Innovation can thus be found both in urban and rural areas, in both it has strong potential in regional context. Therefore, we can conclude that innovation presumes a multilevel interaction between people, technology, information and resources and is essential for determining sustainable development and resilience of a given region.

Innovation is a concept that finds multiple usage and applicability in diverse fields of research in the recent years. However, its importance is especially remarkable in regional development as innovation is also a territory sensitive phenomenon and a process of localized, cumulative, and collective nature. For innovation to occur, employment of the proximity, knowledge sharing or rather complex forms of collective learning, social capital and technology is needed (Boschma, (2005); Pinto & Da Cruz, (2011); Pinto et al., (2015)). This reveals the fact that these concepts are intertwined and neither one of them exists in isolation but are rather outcome of combination of the other ones. Innovation is rooted in cooperation of different stakeholders, partnership, and existence of effective communication forums and flexible organizations and institutions.

Innovation serves to explain cluster dynamics and regional economies of agglomeration (Pinto & Da Cruz, 2011).

For the rural spaces four areas of opportunities for innovation can be detected, namely: tourism, forestry, renewable energy and local foods, together with four areas of weaknesses that innovation can help to reverse. These are: demographic change, climate change, declining fiscal resources and single industry towns (Moravčíková & Adamičková, 2015). Table 2.2 shows some of the major recent innovations in direct marketing in agriculture, environmental technologies and rural services.

Table 2.2 Recent Significant Innovations in Rural Areas

	Direct marketing in agriculture	Environmental technologies	New rural services
Main innovations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consumer/community-supported agriculture (CSA) • Solidarity consumer groups • Selling via internet • Farmers' collective shops • Collective sale to local communities • Selling to individuals in groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Production of biofuels • Wood-based heating plants • Biogas from agriculture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social services • Health care • Green care farms • Social care farms • Rural tourism • New links with other products and services (care + organic farming + region branding) • New ways of organizing the service system

Source: Knickel, Talis, & Peter, (2009)

In the Table 2.3 are listed some of the innovation strategies for rural development as presented by IN-SIGHT (Strengthening innovation processes for growth and development) (Knickel, Talis, & Peter, 2009). For this dissertation the most outstanding ones are in category of 'reinventing traditions' which perceives the value of traditional agriculture, embeddedness and traditional food; category of 'radical creativity' that stresses out the importance of new models of economy (e.g. sharing economy); category of 'scaling-down' that deals with shrinking of distribution channels, re-territorialisation and re-localization; and finally 'cooperation' as a category that highlights different kinds of cooperation and networking and innovation platforms. Innovation enables creation of new linkages and usage of resources in novel way.

Table 2.3 Innovation Strategies

Reinventing traditions	Radical creativity	Scaling-down	Cooperation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ The value of traditional agriculture ♦ Embeddedness ♦ Traditional food ♦ Local energy ♦ Living countryside ♦ Public goods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Designing new models of economy: bio, eco, creative, lifestyle, regional, local ♦ Radical transdisciplinarity ♦ Mixing culture, arts, IT and RD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Shrinking of markets ♦ Anti-Globalisation ♦ Revisiting the growth model of innovation ♦ Re-territorialisation ♦ Re-localisation ♦ Principle of reduction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Cognitive ♦ Transdisciplinary ♦ Sectoral ♦ Territorial ♦ Innovation platforms, forums, alliances, communities, networks

Source: Knickel, Talis, & Peter, (2009)

2.6. Knowledge

Knowledge is a notion of particular importance to this dissertation as much as to the creation of LPS and emergence of innovation and development policies. Knowledge is an intangible asset that is present in all tangible outcomes of an economy. It is stored in different forms and fluids amongst different actors like a liquid. Where there exist channels supporting knowledge mediation, it will be shared, where are impediments knowledge will not be transferred or only hardly (Fernández-Esquinas, Pinto, Yruela, & Pereira, 2015).

Knowledge can be codified or tacit, informal or formal, local and thus ‘sticky; or global ‘ubiquitous’ (Asheim & Isaksen, 2002). Tacit knowledge can only be shared if proximity, especially geographical and cognitive proximity exists. There must be apprenticeship relationships created and interaction between the stakeholders.

There are many categorizations of knowledge which serve to understand its profound complexity. The article of Johnson, Lorenz, and Lundvall (2002) shows four basic types of knowledge:

- Know-what - it is factual knowledge, called also information, medicine and law are examples of ‘know-what’ intensive fields,
- Know-why – is the knowledge of laws and principles, chemical, electro-technical or physics industries are ‘know-why’ knowledge intensive,
- Know-how – refers to skills or practical knowledge, important in many fields, usually company or process based,

- Know-who – is a social knowledge which outcome is the social capital; it is a combination of skills to know who possesses a given kind of knowledge or information; required in managerial positions.

Know-what and Know-why are scientific, formal kinds of knowledge, whereas know-who and know-how are firm or person specific, informal kinds of knowledge. However, new models of learning and knowledge diffusion emerge such as the *DUI* model or: *learning by-doing, by-using, and by-interacting*. This approach is concerned with acquisition of knowledge by practice, and thus relies on participative learning. Therefore, innovation is generated where firms are able to develop informal and formal ties within the firm, but also create relationships with suppliers, customers and competitors (Parrilli & Heras, 2016).

The ability to attract, disperse, absorb and apply knowledge is crucial in explaining cluster dynamics, competitiveness, and positive propensities of path dependency of a region. Presence of localised knowledge pools and learning ability together with effective supporting institutional factors is key for viability and regional economic, social and environmental development (Rehák & Sokol, 2007). Research institutes, universities, NGOs, training agencies and individual firms are the greatest producers of knowledge of different types. For the formation of successful LPS the communication and effective exchange of knowledge among the different stakeholders is necessary. Moreover, formal knowledge and expertise must be supplemented by tacit knowledge, personal experience and artisanal skills (Asheim & Isaksen, 2002). As Belussi (1999, p. 734) states:

“...knowledge, acquired through direct experience and observation, and very often practical and tacit in nature, cannot be conceived into toto as a public good (especially where traditional methods of production are still important, as in clothing, ceramics, furniture, {or local food production}). This knowledge that characterises the specific competences or even specific and latent resources of the enterprises that are a part of a given local context, is embodied in individuals and in the collective learning of the organizations, and is freely socialised and spread only among the {agents} within specific context... characterising the productive culture of each local production system.”

This statement highlights the territorial nature of tacit knowledge together with the cumulative effect of such knowledge in LPSs.

2.7. Special Topics in Territorial Innovation Models

Territorial Innovation Models are based in several interconnected and overlapped ideas. The most common models used in the literature are briefly explained below.

- **Networks** can be described as: *governance structures specifically created with the intention of active collaboration, and process of socialization through which disparate entities are connected in a cogent way for mutual benefit and synergies* (European Commission, 2012); (Yeung, 2000, p. 302). Defined this way, it is obvious that the actors and organizations take part voluntarily in the networks and in search of some beneficiary relationships and they seek to diminish the risks of operation (European Commission, 2012); (Przygodzki, 2014)). Moreover, in social context, networks are mappings of and operate on social capital that is both invested (brought by each actor) and derived from the existence of networks (Burt, 1995).
- The **Innovative Milieu** (and related concept of learning region) shows how agents are mutually interconnected. Cooperative and competitive forces, and ability for shared apprenticeship are essential for creation of an innovation milieu.
- The **Industrial District** is a globally localized productive system based on participation of interrelated innovative, inter-industrial SMEs with defined work division.
- The **Regional Systems of Innovation** are based on the perception that innovation is territory embedded, evolutionary or cumulative, based on strong social bonds and possibility for collective learning. Regional system of innovation can be either a subdivision mirroring the national system of innovation or an independent subsystem with its own tendencies (Moulaert & Sekia, 2003). Regions grew on importance for being dynamic bases of economic governance at the mezzo-level and closely associated with innovation thanks to regional clustering and network organizations (Asheim & Isaksen, 2002). Therefore, regional systems of innovation emerge as planning policy instrument for enhancing competitiveness of the region and individual firms and may exist as agglomeration of individual or networked actors (Asheim & Isaksen, 2002).

- Another crucial model is a **Cluster**. Clusters are geographical concentrations of co-located interconnected entities (companies, institutions, government, universities and training facilities, research institutes etc.) that are geographically located, are engaged in economic activities, connected by diverse types of linkages and benefiting from externalities which mainly positively affect production. There might occur collaboration or/and competition at the same time in different stages and dimensions, and may exist either for particular purpose or general enhancement of competitiveness. Clusters also often extend vertically to channels and customers and horizontally to manufacturers of complementary products and to companies in industries related by skills, technologies or common inputs (Doloreux, (2002); European Commission, (2012); Hamdouch, (2007); Moulaert & Sekia, (2003); Pinto et al., (2015); Porter, (1985)). The concept of cluster is nowadays widely used in different contexts based on the sectors specificities and/or particularities of structuring and organization of a given cluster.

2.8. **Local Production System**

Local production system is indisputably a concept of high relevance in the context of regional development. Its importance grew up recently in the reality of global economic crisis where the regions (of different scale) can no longer rely on help from outside and need to employ or redevelop mechanisms of self-governance and sustainability and boost diversification (Burmatova, 2014). The LPS embodies cooperative behaviours of the localized endogenous actors with respect to the exogenous economic, social and policy environment, taking into account the local-global schism. Different kinds of actors can participate in or found an LPS. The LPS may be creative or industrial, traditional or non-traditional in either case it is strongly related to national and regional innovation system (Lombardi, (2003); Moulaert & Sekia, (2003); Power & Hallencreutz, (2005)).

Local production systems originate from the French “*systemes productifs locaux*”. This concept aimed to enrich the industrial district school by the idea of ‘back to the roots’ *artisan* tradition, which differs it from the other concepts of TIMs. LPS is by its definition agglomeration of networks and agents, generally composed of innovative SME’s engaged in process of interactive learning and are definitely part of

regional transitions. Inter-firms and inter-institutions networks emerge most commonly (Doloreux, (2002); Moulaert & Sekia, (2003); Ritaine & Vermeiden, (1991)). Actors of LPS are individual innovative firms capable of creation, diffusion and absorption of innovation and knowledge, universities and R&D entities, NGOs, supporting institutions (economic, social, legal and political) and local (and national) governing authorities (Nowakowska, 2015).

Local production systems operate with the concept of diffuse (rampant) industrialization where all the economic processes are of evolutionary character. LPS's communitary nature is caused by relations deeply rooted in social and cultural capital and bonded by local networks and regulations of the given community (Ritaine & Vermeiden, 1991). Pursuing common goals leads to creation of organizations and institutions of different kinds and new ways of networking amongst them. LPS brings numerous advantages for the entities involved in a LPS. Reduced expenses for promotional activities, marketing (place branding or marketing of the region), R&D, infrastructure, inputs, presence of resource pool, diffusion and creation of innovation and knowledge. Moreover, it allows these clustered firms to gain certain control over the markets where they operate, namely of the input and auxiliary products and services (Moulaert & Sekia, (2003); Przygodzk, (2014)).

But LPS do not emerge in isolation and are not finite. They are present in constantly evolving and competing global systems of larger and smaller actors, whose importance may be of alliancing or competitive nature (Parrilli, 2010). There emerge different types of LPS either with large influential company/companies being surrounded by supplying and auxiliary SMEs ("*hub-and-spoke*" or "*satellite*" e.g. automotive cluster in Slovakia⁵), in other case it might be the university or other public actor (*state-anchored*) or a small innovative enterprise, or group of SMEs (*Italian industrial district*) that stand behind the creation of LPS (Sokolowicz, 2015).

⁵In some instances, it may lead to creation of so called monotowns. That was the case in some former socialist countries like Slovakia, where cities emerged as result of localization of a significant company or industry that attracted population. One such example is the town Svit (abbreviation of Slovenská Viskózová Továreň-Slovak viscose factory) or Podbrezová with the metallurgy factory that nowadays owns a hotel, golf park, ski center and a castle and is a founder of private vocational school and high school and contributed significantly to the regional development of that particular region (Blam, Petrikova, & Borsekova, 2015).

In the academic field, numerous comparative studies have been developed to identify the right ingredients and mixtures of policy and cooperation to discover the recipe for successful innovation clusters and regional development. But regional strategies and policies are made throughout the entire world, yet somewhere they flourish and elsewhere they fail to contribute to the economic growth. So, what precisely is it that lies behind the success? Usually the conclusions state that: “*for each innovation region there is a specific combination of success factors, institutional characteristics and political initiatives*” (Krawchenko, 2014, p. 181) and thus the one-size-fits-all policies are replaced by region sensitive ones that mind the local particularities and therefore, no omnipotent model could be elaborated (Pinto et al., (2015); Suzigan, et al., (2007)) .

What we know, however, is that all the LPS must be characterized by “*economic viability*”, “*manageability*” and presence of “*institutional factors*” (Burmatova, 2014). Hence, it is the localized social capital, effective apparatus for knowledge diffusion, facilitating proximity, multilevel governance, economic potential and innovation that need to be employed for development of successful local production system of any kind.

2.9. Local Production System and Regional Development

Local production system, innovative clusters or industrial districts, are often found in literature as synonyms. We have outlined the differences yet we must admit they have many features in common. The main difference however, is that the LPS is strictly bonded by social capital of the given community and stresses out the importance of ‘artisanal’ production (Moulaert & Sekia, 2003). These are two main aspects that will be of highest importance to the current study as we are convinced that there exists huge potential in communitarian social and cultural capital in terms of regional development that can emerge from or result in tourism. Previously we mentioned some advantages that membership in a LPS gives to the companies. Our interest, however, is more on the advantages that creation and presence of a LPS brings to the region as a whole, and how this concept can be valuable for regional development.

On one hand, we can accept the association between regional development and industrial clustering and networking, although the approaches vary significantly among scholars and policy-makers. On the other hand, the presence of agglomeration of any kind (such as networks or LPS) alone in the region does not directly constitute to regional

growth or enhanced innovation dynamics, as these are much more complex phenomena and demand deeper analysis of given region and network analysis of organizational, informational and market relationships (Lee C.-Y. , 2009).

Nevertheless, we see that most of the innovative variations in spatial patterns linked with regional development have, indisputably, been ascribed to local clustering of firms, although under certain conditions. For instance, existence of supportive institutional arrangements or access to markets. Yeung, (2000, p. 303) argues that: “*territorial development is significantly embedded in networks of relational assets and geographical proximity particularly at the local and regional scale*”. Therefore, the spatial agglomeration and existence of local production systems are recognizably important and interesting tools for policy makers and researchers in regional economics and planning.

In addition, following Power and Hallencreutz (2005, p. 4), regional competitiveness is said to be enhanced considering the:

“interlinked assumptions that a) locally and globally successful products tend to be based on strong local production systems” and also “b) the processes and dynamics of the selling, distribution and retail specificities in destination markets have profound effects on products’ success.”

Moreover, Nowakowska (2015) adds that ‘smart specialization’ of regions⁶ is unavoidable in order to increase regional competitiveness especially with the presence of open European market. LPS here functions as a basic approach to determine the policies of regional development focusing on innovation and enhanced competitiveness of regionally located firms.

LPS brings about different benefits to a region ranging from economic and social, to cultural or political. Creation of an LPS sets in motion centrifugal and centripetal forces of development. By the centripetal force, we mean the potential to lure talent,

⁶ “*Smart specialisation is a new policy approach to regional development and regional innovation strategy planning, introducing integrated, place-based evolutionary process grounded in Entrepreneurial Discovery Process (EDP). Smart specialisation is an approach to developing a regional innovation strategy which recognises the importance of specific regional knowledge, technological assets and critical mass. A specific dimension of smart specialisation approach is the focus on diversification of regional economies alongside specialization.*” (Cavicchi & Stancova, 2016)

investment, innovation and knowledge. By the centrifugal force we mean the ability to diffuse and inspire innovation and knowledge and construct networks and ties of relationships with other regions and sectors. Effective exploitation of competitive regional advantage, employment and re-use of local resources, localized increasing returns effects, dynamic learning effects, cumulative causation, and increased internationalization are just a few of the effects LPS may bring to a region and it is a potential tool for sustainability and resilience of the region.

But the relationship LPS versus region is highly reciprocal and thus in order to establish a LPS that would be advantageous for the region and contribute or initialize regional development, certain policies must be introduced. These should aim at providing institutional and physical infrastructure, facilitating the creation of ties and relationships amongst the various entities, creating forums for discussion and collective action, support development factors such as quality human resources and schooling and training systems, and encouraging the flow of information, technology, and marketing (Moulaert & Sekia, (2003); Nowakowska (2015); Suzigan, et al., (2007)). An early dialogue about such policies is generally initiated by universities and specialized agencies of private or public nature, R&D institutions, or professional unions.

2.10. Local Food System

The food system consists of all parts of food production, processing, wholesaling, retailing, distribution, marketing and food related services. Starting with local growth and raising, processing, packaging through food transportation and retail. There exist two types of food systems. These are commonly differentiated by the level of proximity and organization of marketing channels. The first one is the global industrial food system.

The second, an alternative type, is the local (regional) food production system that takes diverse forms. In the second type, the production (grown, raised, harvested) is spatially localized (rather than general) exactly where the consumption occurs and so the distribution channels are much shorter than it is common in industrial food production global chains. This enables to cut intermediaries through alternative distribution channels such as direct selling (farmers' markets, home delivery, community supported agriculture, direct-to-retail, food boutiques, regional food hubs, garage and yard selling). Shorter distribution channels together with application of direct selling techniques lead

to opportunity to provide local economic value added and emphasize the distinctiveness and local nature of products, thus contributing to and promoting regional development and being a potential instrument for destination image creation based upon food tourism of local authentic kind (Halweil, (2002); Noronha Vaz & Nijkamp, (2009)). Moreover, it contributes to the relationship between producer and customer and encourages local networking.

Commonly, local food systems are understood as being sustainable whilst global food production is based upon massive industrial and mechanized agriculture. Although local and sustainable are not interchangeable adjectives here. Definition of local food is quite biased by the varying perceptions of stakeholders and the different objectives they pursue when referring to local food, and also by tourists' ambiguous perceptions of local food. But the definitions usually oscillate around geographical or/and socio-cultural authenticity of given food and likewise tourists tend to conclude that local food is healthier, fresher, better for the environment and that dining and wining out in an authentic environment are highly personal experiences that may eventually result in alteration of ones' eating habits and preferences (Enteleca, 2000).

However, 'local food and beverages' should not be restricted solely to locally grown food items, but should incorporate also local specialities that bear the regional identity (Kim, et al., (2009); Kivela & Crotts, (2006)). As Feenestra (1997) points out local production is an "*important indicator of community's vitality and sustainability*" benefiting both individual consumers and producers. Among the many advantages it brings we shall mention economic viability, positive environmental issues, social aspects, community identity enhancement, diversification, health and mental issues (Brain, (2012); François, (2000); Kasilo, et al., (2010); Martinez, et al., (2010); Grace Communications Foundation, (2016)). So, the idea behind regional production is that it remains small scaled, a production of minor commodity producers, that is merchandised through short distance, predominantly direct markets (Hodges, 2001).

We already sketched the line between local food system and global (industrialized) food system both of which are to greater or lesser extent influenced by globalization. While at the beginning of the 20th century, almost all the people were considered rural nowadays the rural population reaches 46.4% in Slovakia. The percentage of farming population is only 8.7% in Slovakia while in the U.S it is less than

2% of the total population and the share of Agricultural world GDP has decreased in the past 20 years from 8.12% in 1995 to only 3.88% in 2014. All of these facts indicate increasing dependence of majority of consumers on the minority of food producers (Debrečéniová, (2014); FAO, (2014); The World Bank Group, (2016). Industrial food production is beneficial for the producer, as it generates higher profits than small traditional farming. It also enables the majority of people to employ themselves in other sectors and have greater variety of food throughout the year. Moreover, food became cheaper and affordable for more people. Industrialized food production helped other sectors to develop along with it. Therefore, our intention is not to demonize industrial food production but rather emphasize the need for coexistence of the two systems (Currey & Hinote, (2011); Wirkkala, (2010)).

Ideally local food production bursts into creative food clusters that are oriented around food as the core tourism product, are concerned with sustainability and offer variety of food related complementary, experimental activities. One such project emerges under the name of ‘regional products’ or ‘regional brands’ that serve to distinguish the exclusive nature of a given region. It is said that food has the potential to fertilise a cross-sectoral cooperation between agro-food production, artisanal and craft production, tourism, retail and basically entire rural economy when developed as regional “*umbrella brands*” (Cavicchi & Stancova, 2016). These bring synergy effects on tourism, which aims at increasing the interest in a region and unified communication of regional characteristics. Regional brand products certificate is given to local authentic products, foods but also to hospitality and gastronomy facilities, catering services and other tourism facilities to guarantee the origin of a product. This idea comes with three kinds of certified products: certified product, certified service and certified experience (Štensová, (2013); Regionálne Produkty, (2015)).

Cavicchi and Stancova (2016, p. 32) argue that:

“It is crucial to explore niches in the agro-food sector that have the potential to generate new innovative products and services. These niches can emerge from the cross-fertilisation of traditional agro-food sectors and services, e.g. agriculture, food production and gastronomy with other sectors including tourism, hospitality, handcraft and education.”

Here food production no longer serves only for the purpose of supplying the region (or exportation) with fresh produce, but it aims to develop a food industry of regional character that is capable of effective capitalization of its produced values. Moreover, it is an instrument of place branding, strategy to include in regional development at any time (Lee et al., (2015)). Research concludes that local food and tourism have the potential to be developed as joint products based on local branding or local food branding and thus benefit from externalities and economies of scope (Ohe & Kurihara, 2013). Further de Noronha Vaz and Nijkamp, (2009, p. 114) argue that:

“While accepting that other productive forms than mass production, based upon segmentation and networking are flourishing, a solid argument is provided in favour of the value of local production to strengthen the food system.”

Such forms are indisputably Local production systems. There is not much risk in saying that in Europe we have enormous diversity and strong cultural base for local food production that is embedded in agricultural tradition. Food production that is based upon specialization, have been traditionally linked with preservation of authentic cultural landscapes, can benefit both the farmer and further community through creation of food related or auxiliary job opportunities and facilitate adaptation of technological innovation in regions and rural areas where such processes would otherwise hardly happen. (de Noronha Vaz & Nijkamp, (2009); IGCAT, (2016); Lee, et al., (2015)). Moreover, local food can be marketed through tourism opportunities and gastronomy facilities and events.

2.11. Local Production Systems, Food, Tourism and Regional Development

Tourism and food - also in Slovakia - have been neglected for many years but not only among academic studies but also by policy-makers and governing organisations. Since the general perception of tourism and local food production has changed, policy makers and researchers realized that tourism is the chief source of FDI and together with LPS and local food production play a major role in rural and regional development and employment (Hall M. C., 2005). When we speak about food tourism and LPS oriented

towards food, we must remember the importance of rural areas and the backbone sector of both rural spaces and food production – agriculture. As de Noronha Vaz and Nijkamp (2009) point out agriculture is very tightly linked with food industry in the rural reality of Europe. And it has a great potential to be smartly linked with tourism too.

Recently, urban population's perspective on rural spaces evolved, which also contributed to the re-shaping of rural areas. Massive urbanization resulted in increased demand for authentic and conserved cultural traditions, natural environments, that are abundant in recreational and relaxation tourism opportunities. Rural tourism attracts tourists for the closeness to nature and connection to the past via marketing that creates an imaginary sentimental idealization of practise and cultural traditions. Harmony, peacefulness of the steady permanence and tranquillity of the rural areas lure people from hectic urban spaces. Moreover, studies suggest that tourists recognize the quality time with family and friends in picturesque environments as enriching and seek spiritual fulfilment and harmony. Surrounded by aesthetically appealing settings they tend to appreciate the communal familiarity and idyllic nature of the rural processes (Short, (2006); Zhou, (2014)).

Rural areas can be seen from the geographical perspective, and thus reflecting its localization or from social perspective and thus referring to its social, cultural and economic particularities. Rural areas are compounded by: 'rural localities' related to particular manners of production and consumption, 'formal representations of the rural' based on the political, economic and social structuring, and finally by 'everyday life' composed by the everyday reality and routine of the rural residents (Halfacree, 2006).

Rural areas combine well with tourism. Indeed, rurality is home to rural tourism, eco-tourism, second home tourism, farm-tourism, heritage tourism, wildlife tourism, spa-tourism and the possibility spans across many other, attracting all kinds of tourist and making rural areas the ideal and diversified tourism environment intended for relaxation. Yet this reveals the inherent ambiguity of rural areas that can range from countryside, wilderness, outback, periphery, farm belt, village, mansions, forests, hamlet, bush, peasant society, pastoral, garden, unincorporated territory to open space. Hence the only downward delineation of rural areas is that it is everything that is not urban, nevertheless this definition embodies numerous limitations and is broadly open to interpretations (Halfacree, 2006). Rural tourism sector has been enlarged with diverse creative offers,

tours, recreation and bundled tourism products, many of which are food related. Indeed, research concludes that among the most influential motivations for tourists to consume local food are authentic experience and contribution to rural development followed by quality of taste, health concern and knowledge acquisition (Hall, (2005); Yurtseven & Kaya, (2011)).

Industrialization, free trade (with policies of high and extensive protectionism being abandoned, CAP-common agricultural policy), increased growth in wealth and leisure, environmental responsiveness, growing conflict among competing land use interests, concerns of quality and traceability of food, ageing populations, reduced 'tyranny of distance' in people's travel plans, instable farm incomes, increasing pressures for long-term payment conditions, unattractiveness of the agriculture and rural environment for the young generation, decreasing prices on the producer level and declining agricultural employment, marginalisation of rural tourism, health affairs, all of these have contributed to the new face and phase of rural economies and their inhabitants.

Changed economic conditions (financial crisis, free trade, global warming) and globalization (geo-economical interconnection and interdependency of the major economies, global productive forces, technological innovation) caused the requirements for rural areas have changed dramatically in both developed and developing countries (although we shall completely omit such distinction as irrelevant in terms of regional development, because the particularities of regional development and regional tradition originate in the individual regions based on geographical coverage rather than their presence in the group of low and middle income countries) and led to tightening up the budgets for regional development. The agricultural production and manufacturing alone are no longer sufficient for sustenance of the rural environments and together with massive unemployment and population loss to cities these had to readapt and become competitive in the new globalized economy (de Noronha Vaz & Nijkamp, (2009); Hall, (2005); Hall, Mitchell, & Sharples, (2003); Mair, Reid, & George, (2005);).

Tourism and food are indisputably a reasonable solution as they are based on regional differentiation which emphasizes its importance on regional level and are capable of creating a strong regional multiplier effect by connecting numerous sectors of the regional economy (Hall et al., (2003); Moulaert & Sekia, (2003)). There is no doubt it can bring numerous advantages to the region, if this has a deep understanding of the

global intangible nature of economy and is capable of adding value to its tangible products using its intangible assets. Unique tangible assets of a region are the natural resources, production and market trends, infrastructures, cultural heritage and geographical location, whereas the intangible assets comprise of linkages, mutual interactions, policies, jurisdictions and laws, quality of employable resources, effectivity of R&D and transfer of tacit knowledge, traditions, values and common norms. Indisputably, successful brand, talent, intellectual property, and networks created upon social capital are the key to creation of strong linkages between tourism and food that can benefit the region and contribute to sustainable development.

Here food tourism emerges as an outcome of local production that ideally leads to increased valorisation of rural environment, perceived local pride, community fellowship and emphasized cultural identity and heritage (Collective of Authors, 2014). Furthermore, food tourism requires the usage of local food items, and by this rising issues such as: quality of food, sustainability of agricultural production and preservation of local food traditions (López-Guzmán et al., (2014)). Indeed, tourism and food production together do have the potential to meet the sustainability goals, as these are positioned in the 2030 agenda for sustainable development (for more information see: (UN, 2016)).

As Hall et al. (2003) further conclude globalization together with tourism in rural areas bring the potential for development of strong local food identities and for substantial growth in sustainable food systems. This brings us to the observation that the academic research and significance of food tourism does not only lie in its cultural importance. It also brings about the fact that the agricultural production that is still home to rural areas is being innovated and diversified, enhanced by tourism-related production and consumption. Local agricultural production, is therefore aimed on satisfying the local demand and bring about local solutions, in the first place. Hand in hand with tourism, both (agriculture and tourism) labour intensive, seem to be just the right collaboration to set the rural economy in motion, principally in regions that are short in alternatives. Rural tourism, agritourism, Voluntourism, farm tourism or eco-tourism are just a few of the many possibilities (de Noronha Vaz & Nijkamp (2009); (Hall M. C., 2005)).

Local food is a fundamental component of a destination's attributes, adding to the range of attractions and the overall atmosphere. Parallel debates are also taking place in agriculture, where focus upon local food products directly sold through farmers market

or other projects of direct sale are being championed as a way to boost the sustainability of traditional farming and the community⁷. These perspectives make local food an essential constituent of tourism product and a feature that can add value to a destination for both the visitors and locals (Yurtseven & Kaya, 2011). Hence, local food is an effective tool to bridge agricultural production with tourism creating Local Production Systems or Cluster in a way that will lead to re-vitalization of rural areas and make the agricultural industry attractive again for the young generation. Moreover, the linkage between food and tourism is capable of creating the awareness of individual agents about the value of rural areas and their personal impact on the rural environment and economy. Resulting in endogenous initiatives and cooperation on developing local supply chains and branding strategies by employing the uniqueness and traditions of the given region and introducing quality standards and accreditation systems for increased recognition (Hall M. C., 2005).

In the Table 2.4 we grouped the major advantages food tourism can bring to regional development. These are divided into three main categories: economic, social and environmental.

⁷ In Slovakia, several of such project emerged as small retails selling strictly local food, Debničkári (Debničkári, 2016)/, (PoctivéPotraviny.sk, 2016), Dobré zo Slovenska - (dobrezoslovenska.sk, 2016)/, Bio Tatry - <http://www.biotatry.sk/> at the moment of development of this dissertation website under construction, Kozi Vrsok- (kozivrsok.sk, 2016).

Table 2.4 Positive Impacts of Food Tourism on Regional Development

SOCIAL	ENVIRONMENTAL	ECONOMIC
Relationship between Host and Visitor	Reduction of Emissions and Carbon Footprint	Regional Multiplier Effect
		Rural employment
Contribution to the Authenticity of a Region	Promotion of Sustainable Tourism	Loyalty to Regional Produce, Local Branding and Marketing
Cultural and Natural Distinctiveness and Differentiation	Eco-infrastructure Development	Decrease of Seasonality in Tourism due to its Year-round Availability
Community Development and Involvement	Promotion of Sustainable Agriculture	Value Added Through the Creation of a Tourist Experience Around the Agricultural Production
Increased Pride and Community Relationships	Decreased Massification of Food Production	Attract Human Resources to Live in Country Side, Attract Outside Sources
Increased Dialog Between Rural and Urban	Even Dispersion of Occupied Land	Recycling of Financial, Natural, Economic Resources Within the Local System
Diminished Health Concerns, Increased Food Security	Maintenance of Animal and Plant Variety	Strengthen Links Between Different Sectors

Source: Developed by the author, inspired by (Hall M. C., 2005); (Kivela & Crofts, 2006); (Mason & Paggiaro, 2012); (Quan & Wang, 2004); (Yurtseven & Kaya, 2011)

The essential idea of this dissertation is that food tourism is a sustainable product and strategy to be included into regional development. The cross-sectoral cooperation between tourism and hospitality, gastronomy, local government and agricultural production is capable of creating a creative local production system that can lure tourist in today's highly competitive environment and generate positive externalities to the region and community. Local production systems can be of different nature and assume different focuses. However, there does not exist a coherent definition of what a LPS of Agri-food Production, Gastronomy and Tourism industry would be. Therefore, this dissertation joins several delineations to come up with a comprehensive description of

such a system. This LPS, as its name reveals, would be a system or regional development strategy that considers multiple stakeholders based on cross and inter-sectoral cooperative relationships amongst:

- networks of mostly innovative SMEs from the agro-food industry, hospitality and tourism sector,
- engaged public and private endogenous actors concerned with tourism, agriculture and rural development,
- local governing organs,
- participative and empowered local community, but also with
- multi-national enterprises, and
- R&D and academic institutions, which all pursue a common goal:

produce, promote and position high quality products of small scale artisanal production that preserve local traditions and heritage and communicate jointly the uniqueness of a region for tourism purposes, but also for the purpose of regional development and community well-being. (Cavicchi & Stancova, (2016); Doloreux, (2002); Moulaert & Sekia, (2003); Nowakowska, (2015); Ritaine & Vermeiden, (1991))

We will apply different methodologies to understand the cooperation of these sectors and potential to develop such LPS in two studied regions in northern Slovakia.

PART II - Methodology of Research

Chapter 3. Methodology

In this chapter the various methodological approaches used in this dissertation are delineated. Research process is decomposed into individual phases and each phase is described in detail by presenting the data collection, analysis and evaluation techniques applied.

3.2. Methodological Design

The theoretical part of this dissertation was elaborated using whole variety of different types of secondary sources such as national as well as international literature, journal articles, books, book sections, reports, websites and other source available on internet. In order to acquire and summarize relevant information about the studied issues we used mainly documental analysis and literature research.

In the empirical part, we will apply descriptive and exploratory approaches and the data analysis will be both qualitative (predominantly) and quantitative. The exploratory research has applicability to this dissertation as it is oriented on new areas of inquiry and attempts to provide clarification based on scoping out the nature and extent of the studied issue. Despite its limitations and criticised inaccuracy, the exploratory approach is the best applicable at this stage of research. Since the existence of the issue studied within this context is only presumed and our goal is to extract the potential of its future development, exploratory approach is the adequate method to be applied (Bhattacharjee, 2012).

The aim of this study is to generate initial ideas and perspectives on the given topic and test whether and how the future research of this phenomenon should be elaborated. The research method used is interpretative applying inductive approach aimed at developing a case study that will provide the basics for further and continuous research of the studied topic. The descriptive research applied, on the other hand, aims at precise observations and description of the studied phenomenon based on scientific method that is replicable, measurable and precise. Secondary data will be analysed such as annual reports, documents, statistical information accessible online from the websites of identified stakeholder (Bhattacharjee, 2012).

Qualitative research focuses on analysing qualitative data such as text, occurrence of communication or content and is significantly dependent upon researcher's knowledge of the social context of studied phenomena, analytic and interpretative mind-set. Qualitative research provides understanding and satisfaction of curiosity. Quantitative research presents numerically arranged, aggregated and described outcomes of statistical analysis.

3.3. Research Delimitation and Case Study Approach

Having reviewed the current literature about the food tourism and LPS, it is clear that merging these two phenomena is an uneasy task, and it arises many questions for research. In order to formulate the research questions, the key concepts presented in the first part of this dissertation must be summarized and the relationship amongst them needs to be delineated. There exists mutual relationship among the different concepts, where they influence each other and require level of cooperation. TIMs represented by the notions of social capital, knowledge, proximity and innovation are the base concept for developing the LPS theory. Furthermore, Food LPS is characterised by its connection to agriculture, rurality (rural tourism), shorter distribution channels and local production that finds its market in Food related tourism that can assume different roles. For the cooperation to take place certain policy instrument and facilitation must be introduced, mainly on regional level. On the other hand, externalities and advantages for the region from such a relationship can be derived. Figure 3.1 introduces the conceptual model which illustrates the relationships among the key concepts crucial for developing the empirical part of this dissertation. For that we formulate the following research questions:

1) What is food tourism and local production system of tourism and agro-food industry?

For this, relevant literature will be reviewed to provide explanation of food tourism and differentiate it from culinary and gastronomy tourism. Moreover, literature review and documentation analysis will be used in order to delineate LPS of agro-food industry and tourism and discover existing synergies.

2) Who are the core stakeholders and what are their main activities?

The study will discover the key stakeholders relevant to Agro-food production, gastronomy, traditional local production and tourism, and auxiliary subjects, in order to derivate conclusions about how to anticipate and amend the future cooperation in the given region.

3) What are the linkages and cooperation amongst these stakeholders, do they engage in R&D and innovation activities?

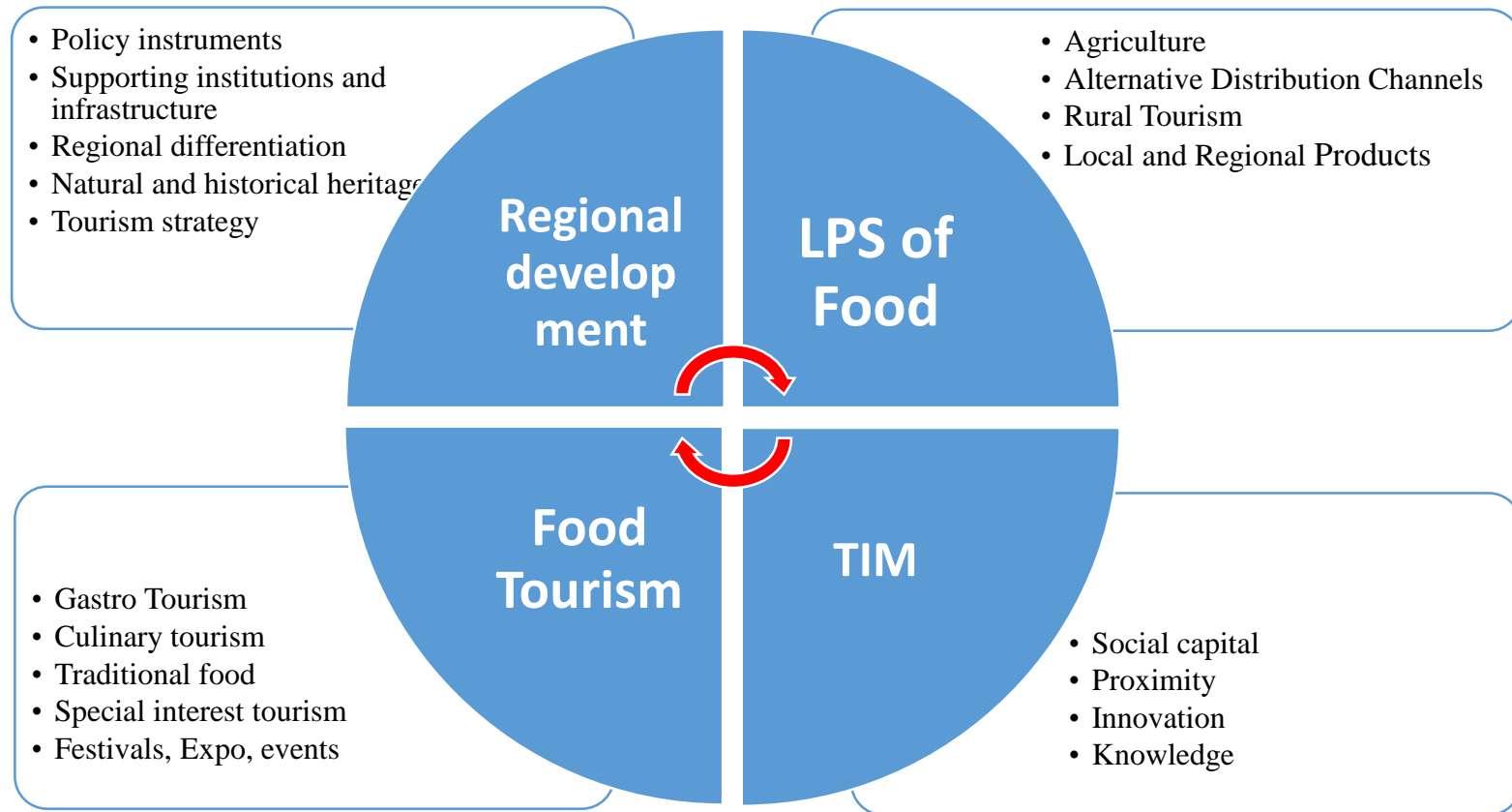
The study will explore the existing relationships amongst the stakeholders applying the case study method based on questionnaire research. In order to detect the key nodes (stakeholders) and ties (relationships) amongst these we will use Social Network Analysis and the outcomes will be graphically illustrated. Furthermore, we will test the engagement in R&D and innovation activities based on other descriptive variables using a statistical package (SPSS).

4) How can be anticipated and enhanced the future potential of the tourism and agro-food sector in the studied region?

After reviewing the current literature and analysing relevant documents and reports we are inclined to believe that food tourism has great potential for growth within the context of LPS. To understand how this potential can be anticipated and how the cooperation is perceived by the individual actors we will derivate a SWOT analysis based on answers from the questionnaire. Furthermore, we asked our respondents to reveal their perception of how this could be accomplished.

The Table 3.1 presents the planning matrix for the dissertation and explains in more detail each research question. Namely the importance of each question is clarified, the conceptual framework each question is based on, the information and data to be collected and the research method applied.

Figure 3.1 Conceptual Model



Source: Own elaboration

Table 3.1 Planning Matrix for Dissertation

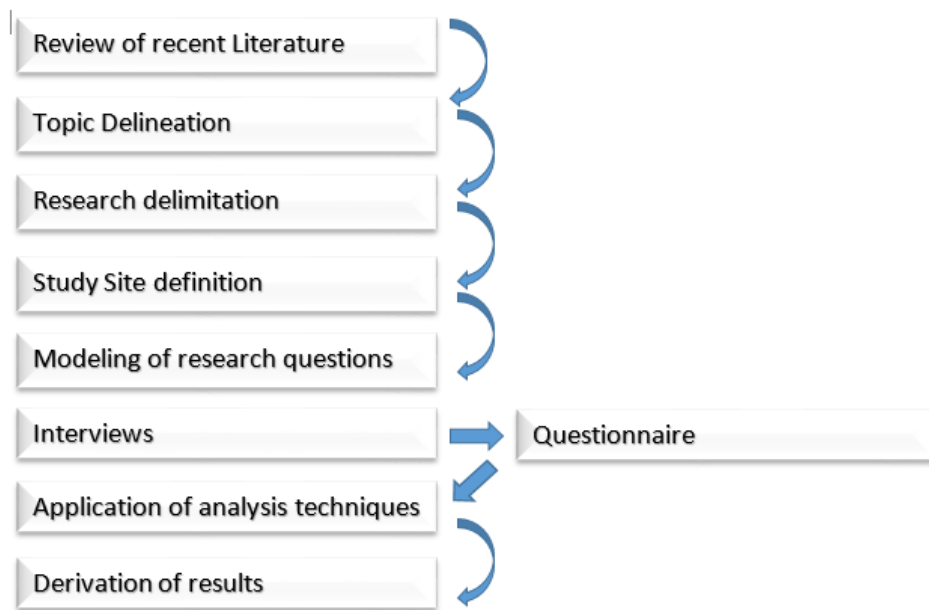
What we intend to find out	Why do we intend to find it out	Conceptual framework	The information to be collected	Approach applied/methodology
What is Food Tourism and the Local Production System of Tourism, Gastronomy and Agro-food industry?	Base concepts and linkages between them, Food is cultural heritage, powerful tool for destination differentiation	To define Food Tourism, Local Production Systems, Local Food Systems, their role in tourism and regional development	Review of the relevant literature on the concepts	Literature review to create the theoretical framework
Who are the core stakeholders and what are their main activities?	To know the principal stakeholders of the LPS for future planning and positioning of strategies	Detect subject of food tourism renowned for their gastronomy, innovative food production or governing capabilities	Examine web content and document search of professional institutions, ministries, and portals	Analysis of web content, Questionnaire
How can be anticipated and enhanced the future potential of the Tourism and Agro-food sector in the studied region?	find out how to make LPS more dynamic on the basis of interconnectedness of tourism and agro-food industry	SWOT analysis	Insights and opinions of different stakeholders	Content analysis of the questionnaire, SWOT analysis
What are the linkages and cooperation amongst these stakeholders, do they engage in R&D and innovation activities?	To understand the structure of the LPS and cooperation, to identify most influential actors	We will try to detect any traces of networking among different stakeholders of local character. Build a map of linkages, graphical illustration.	Relational Data collected from the questionnaires and websites	Personal and Online questionnaires, Social Network analysis

Source: Elaborated by the author, from Choguill (2005)

In order to find satisfactory answers to the presented research question we will use the case study approach applied to two mountain regions of northern Slovakia, namely the Liptov region and region of Horný Spis (Tatras). Using the case study, we will develop comprehensive, contextualized and detailed inferences about the study site that are not transmissible onto other such cases, are unique to the study site and may only serve as inspirational practice for similar research (Bhattacharjee, 2012).

Firstly, the study site is delineated by analysing secondary data extracted from national and international annual reports and documentation. As can be seen from the Figure 3.2, literature review, topic delineation, and research delimitation forego the study site definition. Further we proceeded to modelling of research questions.

Figure 3.2 Phases of Research



Source: Developed by the author, inspired by Churchill (1979)

Secondly, the primary data was obtained by distributing internet questionnaires to the stakeholders (referred to as subjects). These were distributed both electronically using Google forms and personally. Quantitative data was performed using descriptive statistics. Qualitative data was processed applying content analysis, social network analysis and SWOT analysis. Content analysis can be defined as: “a systematic technique for coding symbolic content (text, images, etc.) found in communication, especially structural features (e.g., message length, distribution of certain text or image

components and semantic themes” (Herring, 2010, p. 2). As it is simply applicable to examine any piece of writing or occurrence of recorded communication, content analysis is currently used in a broad range of fields. There exists further division of different kinds of content analysis. For the purpose of this dissertation mainly relational analysis will be considered. Conceptual analysis serves for instance to detect the frequency with which some given word or phrase is used in the text, and relational analysis helps to detect the relationship of respective concepts (Dickinson & Scharl, 2008). This analysis will be applied in order to summarize and supplement whatever qualitative data will be extracted from the questionnaires to ensure coherence of the information.

Further Social Network Analysis will be elaborated. SNA serves to detect the relationships and connections of different core entities of the LPS and create the map of linkages. In a given social context, networks are mappings of and operate on social capital that is both invested (brought by each actor) and derived from the existence of networks (Burt, 1995). SNA is quantitative and statistical tool mainly used in the research fields of social sciences. It serves to analyse networks of ties (e.g., as constituted by communication or transaction, projects and agreements) between nodes (e.g., stakeholders, institutions, actors) (Herring, 2010). The nodes are graphically represented by dots and the ties take form of lines that indicate the linkages between the nodes. The resulting graph-based structures are often very complex. The ties between the nodes can vary significantly as they may incorporate diverse characteristics of displayed relationships such as the strength of given relationship, flow of information or subordination. The nodes to which an individual is thus connected are the social contacts of that individual (Freeman (2011); Wellman & Berkowitz, (1998)). Here we will create a XLS table and process the information using NODE XL software.

3.4. Study Site

Slovakia is divided into 4 NUTS II regions and 8 NUTS III self-governing units further divided into 79 districts (LAU1) and 2.878 self-governing units (LAU2), furthermore Slovak Tourism Board and the Ministry of transport, construction and regional development recognize 21-25⁸ traditional tourism regions, and there is no consensus about these (SACR, 2016a). For a better illustration please see the Appendix 1 which shows the division into traditional regions and highlights the two cases studied. The tourism regions of Liptov and Horný Spis (Tatras regions) have been selected for the study of this dissertation. These regions are situated in the northern part of Slovakia where the highest and most famous mountains of High and Low Tatras are located. These two regions spread over to two NUTS III units, namely Zilinský and Prešovský region, and also across two out of the overall four NUTS II regions Východné and Stredné Slovensko. Therefore, it was very hard to select the most relevant stakeholders mainly when it comes to administrative and auxiliary agencies and institutions of governance. For this purpose, we searched the following conceptual, statistic, listing documents: Register of Regional Tourism Organizations, Register of Local Tourism Organizations (MINDOP, 2016a), Conceptual Document for Regionalization of Slovakia (MINDOP, 2016b), Portal Top Horeca.sk, Register of LAGs and members of NRDN (NRDN, 2016), Register of organizations of Slovak Republic (Štatistický úrad SR, 2016), Portal gurmannaSlovensku.sk.

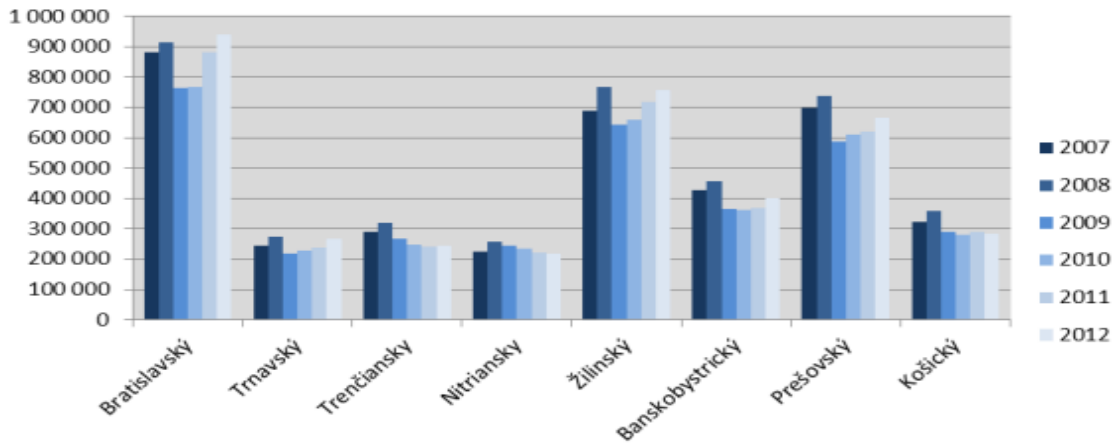
Other difficulty was that the available statistics could only be found for NUTS III units and the information for the mentioned two regions is rather dispersed across multiple sources and fields and is not continuous. Moreover, these traditional tourism regions are based on the historic divisions of the Slovak area from the Austria-Hungarian Kingdom and Hungarian and Czechoslovak era, with unique cultural, natural, social and economic characteristics. Slovakia is a very small yet enormously diverse country and each of its regions is represented by unique folkloric culture, food, dances and songs, and therefore for this study it is more than appropriate to study regions based on the traditional rather than administrative division. Nevertheless, we picked up these two most touristic regions

⁸ Stating that there is 21-25 traditional historical regions is confusing but it is based upon inconsistent information found from the SACR-Slovak Tourism Board, slovakia.travel official national tourism portal (SACR, 2016b), and the different documents of Ministry of transport, construction and regional development such as regionalization of tourism in SR or Annual reports

of Slovakia covering most of the biggest and the oldest national parks (High Tatras National Park-TANAP and Low Tatras National Park-NAPANT both put on UNESCO list of Natural heritage). From the Figure 3.3 we can see that the Zilinsky and Presovsky region (which contain the two tourism regions of Horny Spis and Liptov) were in 2012 after Bratislava region the two most frequented by tourists and based on the information from online portal Slovakia.Travel.sk. (SACR, (2016b); MINDOP, (2016b)) 57% of Slovaks are inclined to spend holidays in Slovakia because of Horny Spis region, and 37% because of the region of Liptov, as seen on

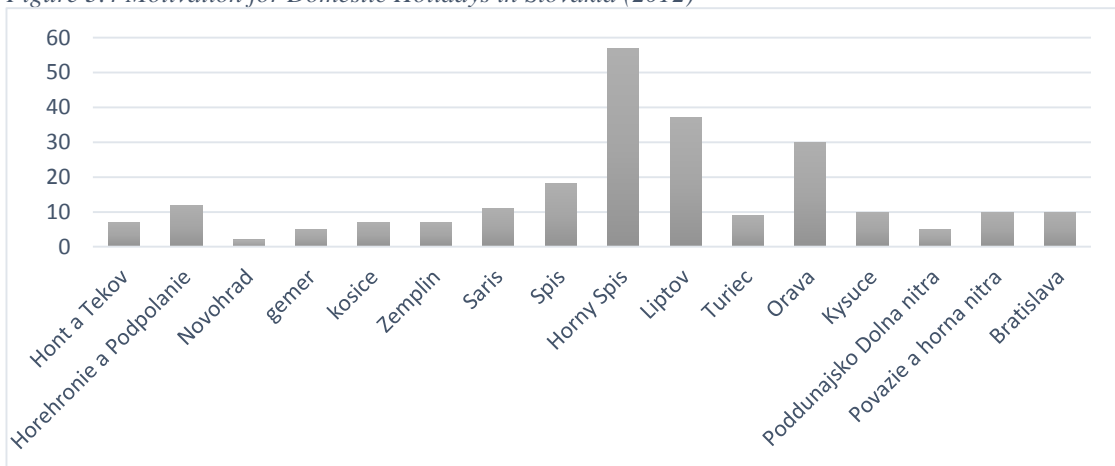
Figure 3.4 Motivation for Domestic Holidays in Slovakia (2012)

Figure 3.3 Number of all Tourists in Accommodation Facilities by NUTS III Regions in the years 2007-2012



Source: (MINDOP, 2016c)

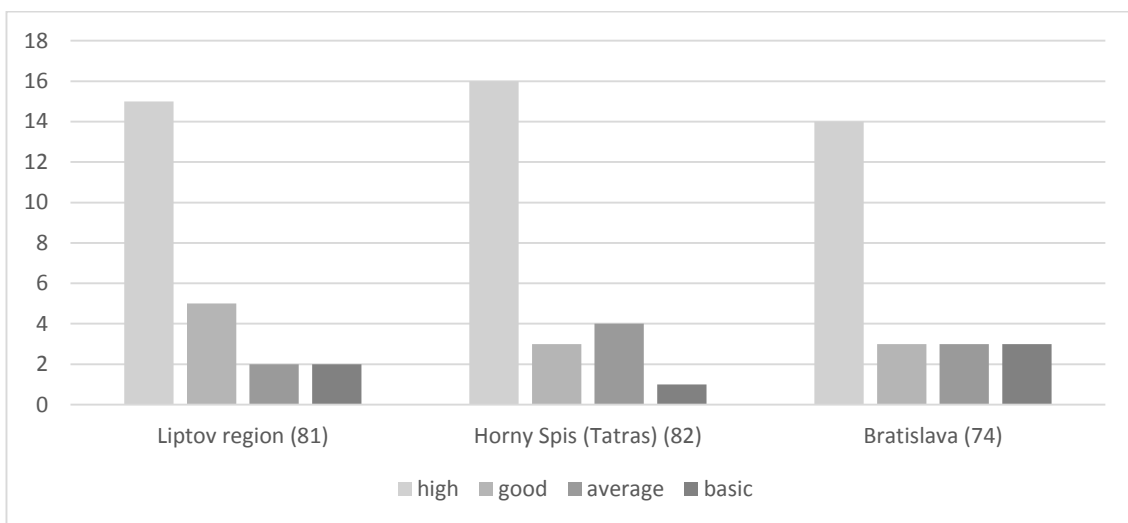
Figure 3.4 Motivation for Domestic Holidays in Slovakia (2012)



Source: (SACR, 2016a)

When we zoom into the studied regions these are indisputably the regions with higher potential for long-term growth in tourism as depicted on Figure 3.5. Based on the weighted potentials of individual tourism activities these scored far the highest scores which means these are both tourism regions with international importance. Both regions scored high in categories such as: knowing the cultural and historic heritage, knowing local traditions and very good score in accommodation capacities and rural tourism which can all be considered relevant in terms of food tourism.

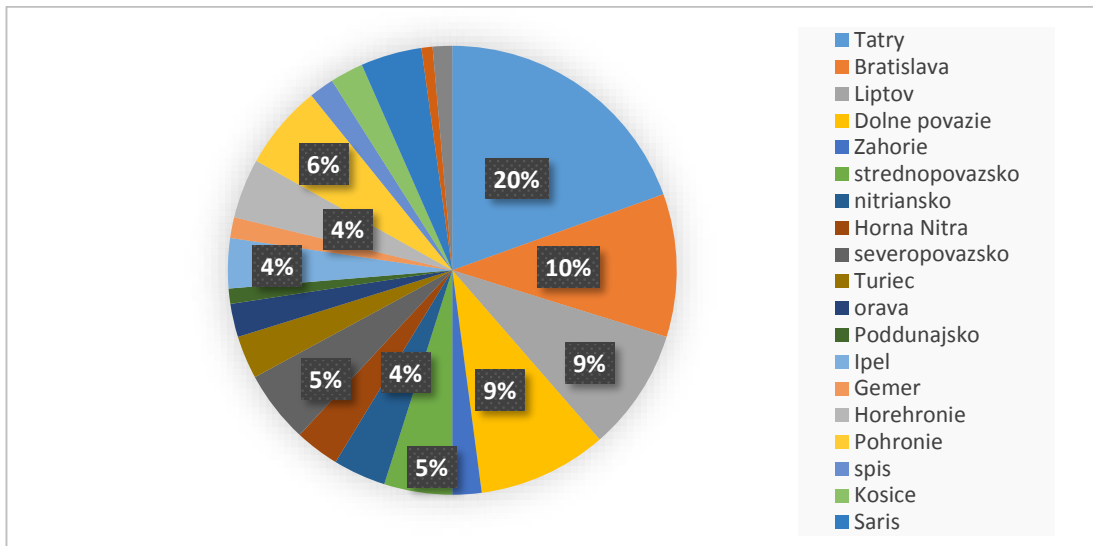
Figure 3.5 Evaluation of long-term Potential for Different Tourism Activities (2005)



Source: (MINDOP, 2016b)

The twenty-one regions were valued and given score for 26 different tourism activities based on if these are perceived as having long-term and short-term potential for tourism development. Furthermore, from the Figure 3.6 Share of all Tourists in Accommodation Facilities we see that Liptov region absorbs 8.8% of all tourists in accommodation facilities, Tatras (Horny Spis) 19.5% and Bratislava 10.3%.

Figure 3.6 Share of all Tourists in Accommodation Facilities



Source: MINDOP, (2016b)

Taking into consideration all of the above facts and figures we can conclude that the two regions of Liptov and Horny Spis have just advantageous location within the most important national parks, with favourable natural and weather conditions that contribute to their enormous potential for development of diverse kinds of tourism. Moreover, the regions are already being used for exercising tourism activities mainly by the domestic but also foreign tourists.

3.5. Population and Sample

The study is elaborated in the two regions of Liptov and Horny Spis. After reviewing the relevant literature, we were able to detect subjects of food tourism, renowned for their culinary offer, gastronomic tradition and/or innovative approach to agro-food production. We know that stakeholders in this case means also those who are directly involved in a LPS but also those impacted by it (Lee et al., (2015)). We identified 62 subjects belonging to 5 categories.

- 1) Local Action Groups (LAG) as the grouping of public and private actors from different socio-economic sectors as defined by the Leader programme and local tourism organizations (LTO) which aim at promoting tourism and creating conditions for sustainable development of tourism activities in the given territory-NACE: 94.99

- 2) Horeca facilities identified as having significant influence on Slovak gastronomy⁹. and Salas Facilities as the producers of local traditional food products, traditional Slovak restaurants related to Slovak shepherd tradition - NACE: 55.10, 56.10
- 3) Agro-food production and farms - NACE: 01.50, 14.10, 10.51.0, 15.00
- 4) Related agencies and associations, local governance, information centres- NACE: 79.9, 91.02, 85.59, 94.12

Initially we were able to contact six representatives (directors, deputy directors or appointed representatives) of five different stakeholders, namely LAG Middle Liptov, National Agency for Rural Development, Ecotrend Association and Eco Farm Odorica, Rural Parliament and finally regional antenna for region Horný Spis, who assisted us with editing the questionnaire. Further we distributed a questionnaire to 62 identified entities, that consists of four sections designed to answer the research questions stated in this dissertation. The complete list of the individual stakeholders can be found in Appendix 2.

⁹ Identified by the platform Gurmán na Slovensku, (2016) and tophoreca.sk, (2016)

PART III – Empirical study

Chapter 4. Local Production System in Slovak region of Liptov and Tatry region (Horný Spis)

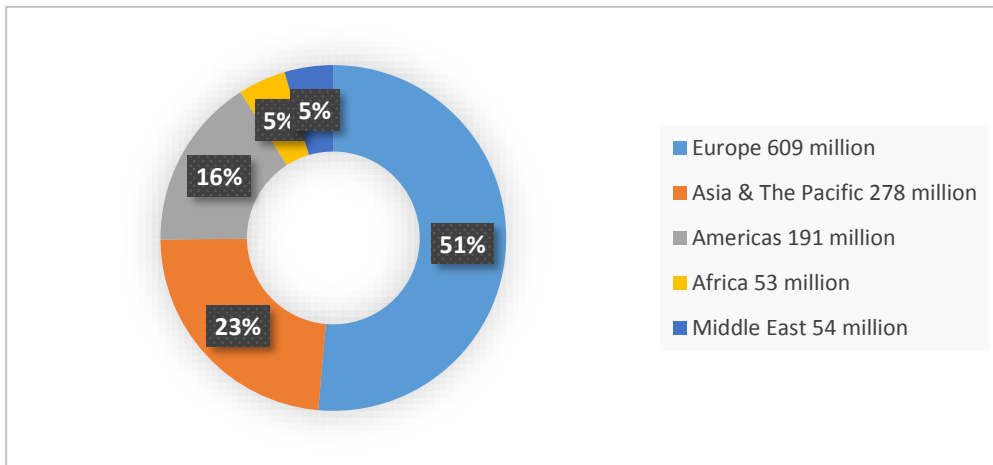
4.2. Dynamics of Slovak Tourism

Tourism is one of the fastest growing industries on worldwide scale, contributing both positively and negatively to a variety of sectors and areas of human activity. Importance of tourism is stressed by perceiving its great potential in diminishing poverty, increasing employment (1 in 11 jobs is generated within tourism), encouraging sustainable development (included directly in 3 out of the 17 SDG – Sustainable Development Goals), production and consumption, increasing economic and social growth, encouraging tolerance and cooperation.

In 2015 tourism reaches 10% share on global GDP, comprises 7% share on overall global exports, counting 1,186 million of international tourists and 5-6 billion of domestic tourists worldwide. It is well-known that tourism positively influences local employment, FDI, GDP, development of infrastructure, development of SMEs, competitiveness and openness of a country (UNWTO (2015); (2016)).

Slovakia is a part of the leading region in terms of tourist arrivals as depicted on Figure 4.1 with 51% arrivals to the European region. Moreover, Central and Eastern Europe is celebrating a 6% increase in tourism arrivals for 2015. These suggest positive tendencies for Slovak tourism too, although we must understand that Slovakia is situated in a highly competitive environment with significant dependence upon domestic tourism and tourist arrivals from neighbouring countries. Even though, the economic and social figures related to tourism and tourism activities in Slovakia are a little bit different from the global measures, tourism still plays an important role in Slovak economy and has been identified as one of the industries with the greatest potential for development. Tourism constitutes only 2.5% of Slovak HDP, generates altogether about 353K jobs and domestic tourism comprise 59.5% of all visitors to the country.

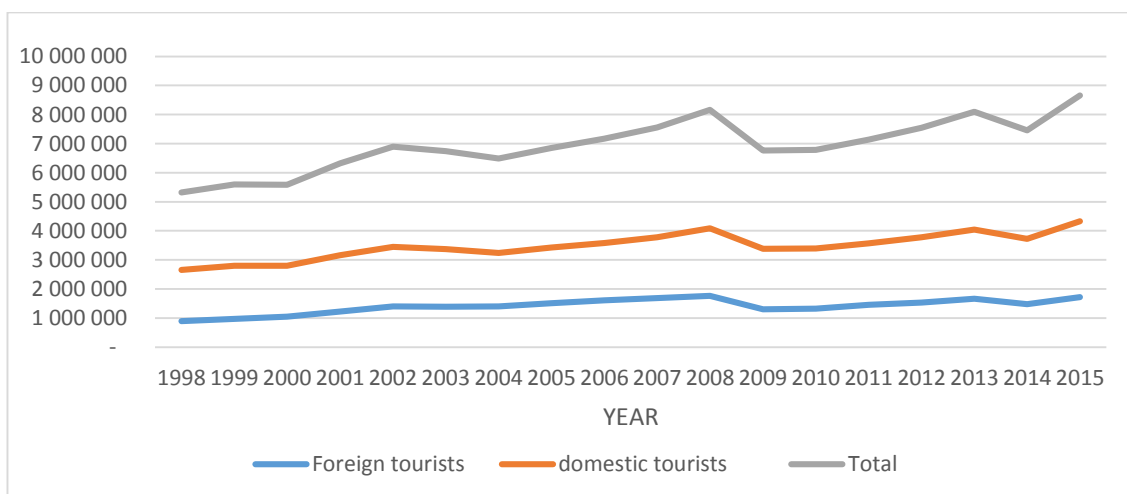
Figure 4.1 Tourist Arrivals over the World



Source: (UNWTO, 2016)

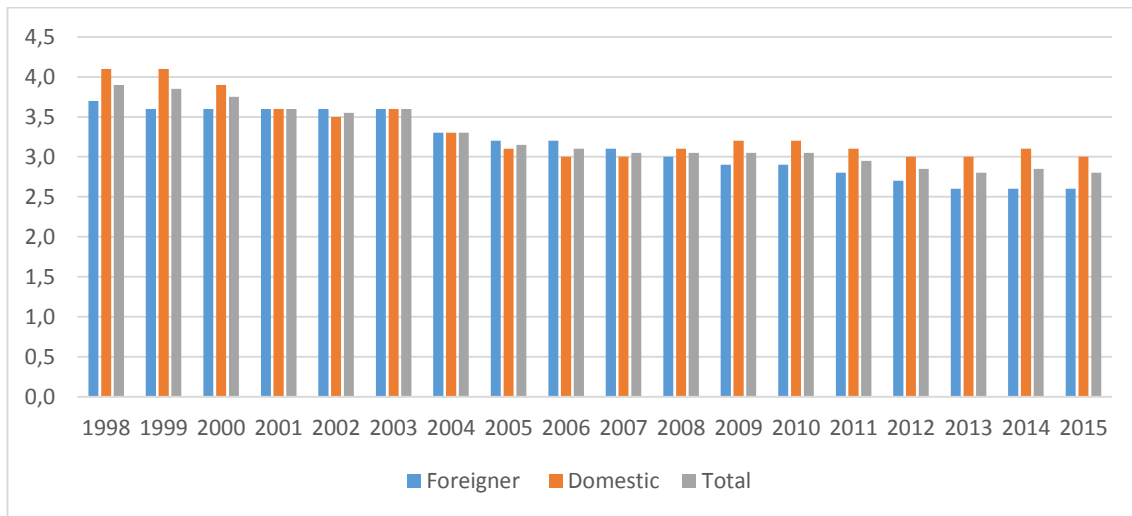
On the other hand, tourism in Slovakia exhibits progressive, although tiny, still significant increases over the last 17 years. As we can see from Figure 4.2 there was a significant drop in the crises year 2009 but it seems like in the last year Slovakia recovered from this drop and reached the total of 4 330 249 tourists in accommodation facilities from home and abroad and over 12 million of overnights spent. Yet as we can observe from the second Figure 4.3 there has been a decrease of 1.1 nights from the average number of overnights and over the years it has dropped from 3.9 in 1998 to only 2.8 nights in 2015.

Figure 4.2 Evolution of the number of Tourists in Accommodation Facilities between years 1998-2015



Source: Own elaboration based on (SACR, 2016c)

Figure 4.3 Evolution of Average number of Overnights by Domestic and Foreign Tourists over the years 1998-2015



Source: (SACR, 2016c)

Although tourism sector in Slovakia is gaining on importance, as it is happening in neighbouring countries, it still represents only small share on country's economy and GDP. The cultural, locational and natural potential must be enhanced in order for Slovakia to stay competitive in the Central Europe region.

4.3. Problematics of Local Production Systems in the Slovak Reality

The concept of LPS is a new concept not only to Slovak academic research and economic reality but also to its legislation and policy formation. Until nowadays there is no legal definition or conditions for development and regulation of LPS in Slovak law, except for the amendment to the Tourism Act No 386/2011.¹⁰ Thus the main guideline for the LPS is the legislation pertinent to business and business related activities. As stated in (Kolosta, 2014, p. 330):

"{Slovak} Ministry of Economy launched a scheme to promote the industrial cluster organisations (de minimis aid scheme) - Scheme DM - 3/2013, published in the Commercial Bulletin No 177/2013 on 13th of September 2013. The de minimis aid

¹⁰ According to Act No 386/2011 a regional tourism organisation (form of cluster or LPS) will – in accordance with the provisions of §29(4)(a) – receive a grant in the amount of the aggregate value of selected regional organisation membership fees in the year preceding the previous financial year.

scheme is in the form of subsidies from the state budget to finance projects aimed at supporting the development of professional associations of legal persons under §20f - §20i of Act No 40/1964. The aid is intended to enhance the transfer of increation, expert activities presentations of industrial cluster organisations and their integration into international projects and networks.”

This scheme is a strong proof that LPS is recognized and supported by the Slovak law but a development of clear definitions and regulations of LPS is needed. As already mentioned herein LPS or clustering of firms does not have a long tradition in Slovak business and development environment. Only recently the phenomenon of LPS started to be recognized as powerful mean for sustainable development, mainly on regional level. Therefore, in the recent years we have witnessed several initiatives of national government to support and enhance the creation of LPS of different kinds and provide the regional authorities with support and financial resources to enhance the creation of local production systems. Delegation of competences from the national to local/regional level empowers regional authorities and allows for localized solutions of problems, initiatives of development, and allocation of resources. In Slovakia, the local and municipal governments play significant role in creation of LPS as they are noteworthy property and land owners. Furthermore, they develop and implement regional strategies and plans, and have capacity for financial and non-financial interventions, and governance of territory.

Among the main restrictions of successful implementation and sustenance of LPS in Slovakia the lack of professionals and ideologues on positions, which would take decisions on the activities in the territory; dependence on state and EU help; lack of abilities how to use strategic marketing planning; insufficient participation and involvement of important subjects in the territorial development, which is often the result of insufficient quality of relationships and communication between territorial representatives and important subjects (big entrepreneurs, associations of legal and natural persons, citizens) etc. were identified as the most relevant (Kolosta, 2014). Yet in the recent years we observe ever more initiatives taken on national, regional and even individual level for cooperation, networking and grouping of subjects in order to participate on projects, increase the market share or promote the region jointly.

Chapter 5. Survey results and Discussion

This chapter presents and discusses results of the questionnaire distributed to 62 identified subjects of the potential Local production system of Liptov and Spis region. It is divided into three main parts. Firstly, results obtained from descriptive analysis are presented. Secondly, we develop the SWOT analysis based on results from the questionnaire. And thirdly, we develop the mapping of cooperation of identified subjects of the LPS using the SNA.

5.1. Characterisation of the Survey

The goal of the study is to acquire information from and about the different stakeholders, to recognize their cross and inner-sectoral relationships with other entities, and thus to identify the core stakeholders of the potential LPS, and lastly to develop a comprehensive SWOT analysis from their opinions about advantages and disadvantages of the LPS in the region.

The questionnaire consists of four sections. The first section collects information about the appointed representatives of the different entities. The first group of questions in our questionnaire is composed of so-called assessment questions that serve to sort the respondents according to different criteria. For the purposes of this study we only asked three close-ended questions and one open-ended, namely sex, age, education and current position within the entity.

The second part of the questionnaire aims at profiling the individual entities and their further classification according to the size, type of entity, respective industry and main activity, region and NACE code. In this section, entities are also inquired about their engagement in R&D and innovation activities and main sources of information. Questions are open-ended, close-ended and dichotomous.

The third section contains two open-ended questions for respondents to express their opinions and views on what are the strong points and weaknesses of the cross-sectoral cooperation within the LPS and what opportunities and threats are the tourism regions currently facing. Secondly, they were asked to give their opinion on the question: *“How can be anticipated and enhanced the future potential of the tourism and agro-food sector in the studied region”*.

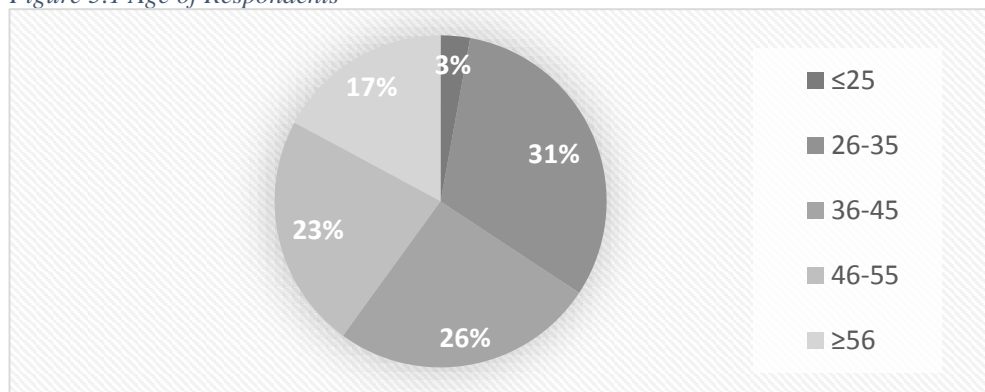
In the last section, we created four questions on basis of which we will develop the SNA. Entities were asked to name at least five cooperative entities from private sector, five entities from public sector, R&D and educational institutions they cooperate with. Moreover, the following two questions aimed at finding out if the given entity is a part of any association, LAG or LTO and if it took part in any kind of project related to development of the relationship tourism, gastronomy and agro-food production.

A simple questionnaire, developed using online tool- google forms, was distributed to the stakeholders via emails, after personal or phone pre-contact had occurred. In the preparation of the survey we have identified 62 subjects belonging to one of the five categories of relevant stakeholders and obtained 35 valid questionnaires, and were able to retrieve information from two other entities via their website pages. This means a total of 59.67% rate of return.

5.2. Descriptive Statistics

In the first part, we presented four assessment questions to determine the structure of the respondents. Gender is the first assessment dichotomous question which shows that our sample consists of 20 female (57.14%) and 15 male respondents (42,85%). The median age is 40 years and shares can be seen on Figure 5.1. As the outcomes of the 3rd question reveal our respondents were highly educated with up to 77.14% of respondents having university education of some degree. 22.86% of respondents indicates Secondary grammar school with state leaving, as highest achieved education. 3/5 of respondents are assigned to 2nd degree university diploma, 11.43% declare University 3rd degree as the highest achieved, and lastly, 5.71% state University 1st degree.

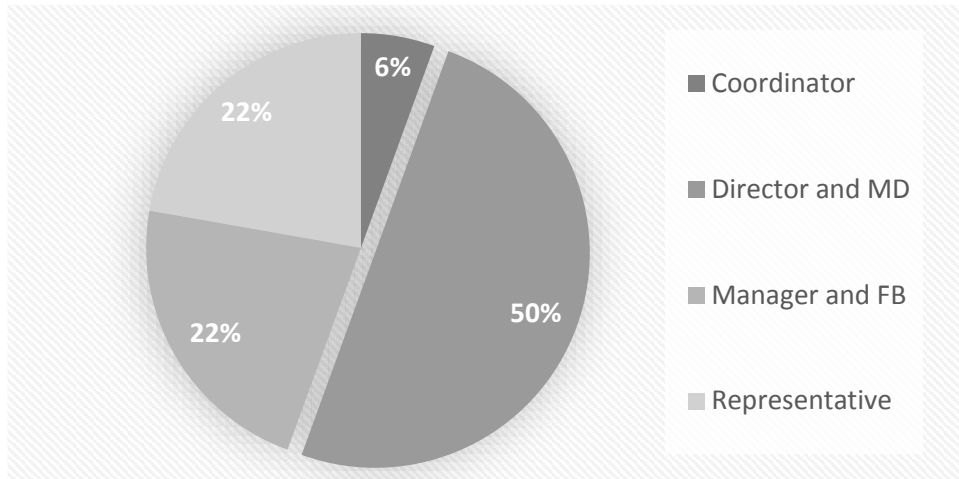
Figure 5.1 Age of Respondents



Source: Own elaboration

We can assume that the questionnaires were also responded by appropriately chosen representatives who had sufficient information about the internal affairs of the entities. Since the questionnaire has been responded by 2 regional coordinators, 18 directors (exactly ½ of all were MD and executive directors), 8 Managers and F&B and 8 appointed representatives of different kind (Figure 5.2).

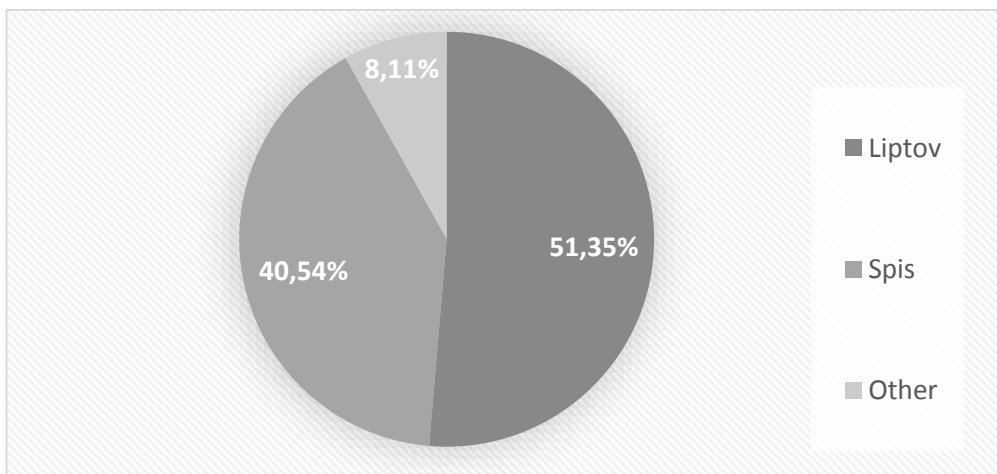
Figure 5.2 Job Position of Respondents



Source: Own elaboration

The survey was conducted in two adjacent regions from which we obtained information in the following pattern: 19 entities situated in Liptov region, 15 in Spis region and 3 with national scope, distribution of frequencies can be seen at Figure 5.3.

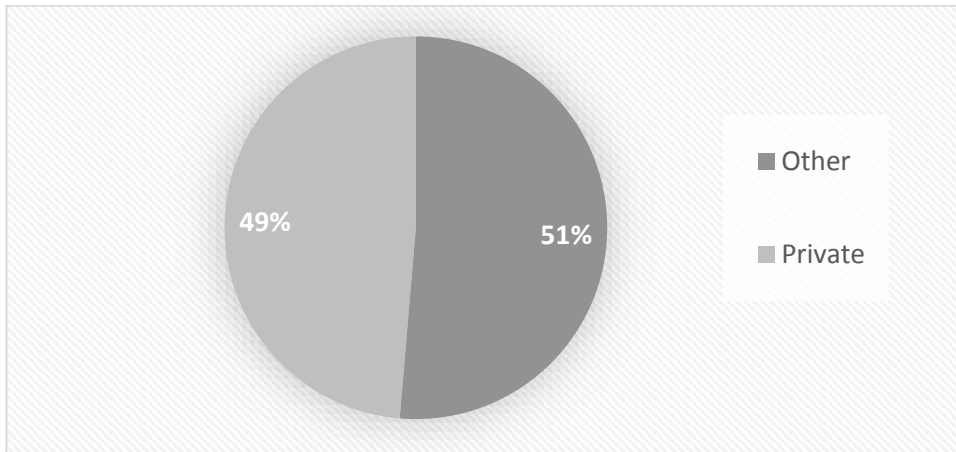
Figure 5.3 Distribution within Regions



Source: Own Elaboration, processed using SPSS

The 37 entities were compared based on two different perspectives one of which divides them into 18 private companies (for profit organizations) and 19 other (public, civil associations, NGOs, paying agencies), the frequencies can be seen at Figure 5.4.

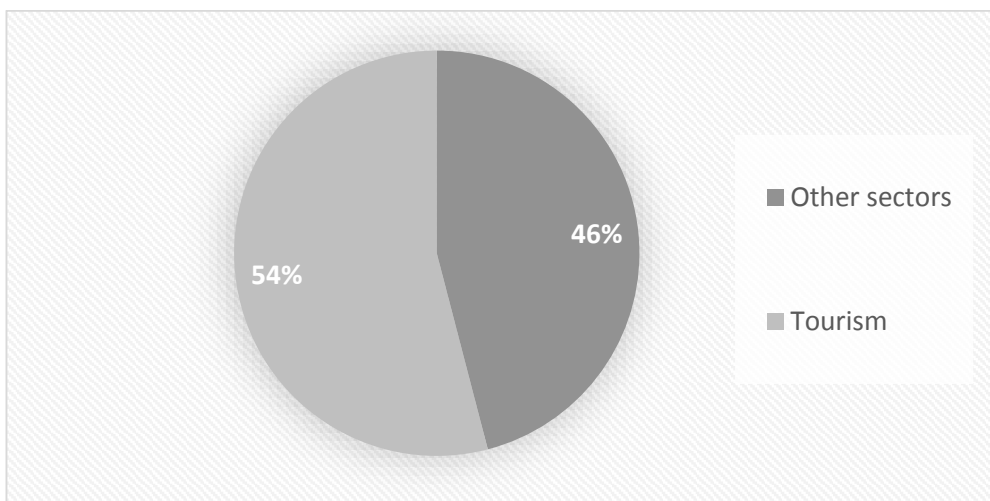
Figure 5.4 Distribution to Public and Private



Source: Own elaboration, processed using SPSS

The other perspective was applied to consider them based on the sector, therefore according the questionnaire there are 17 non-tourism entities (agro-food sector and rural development) corresponding to 45.95% and 20 tourism sector entities, 54.05% (Figure 5.5).

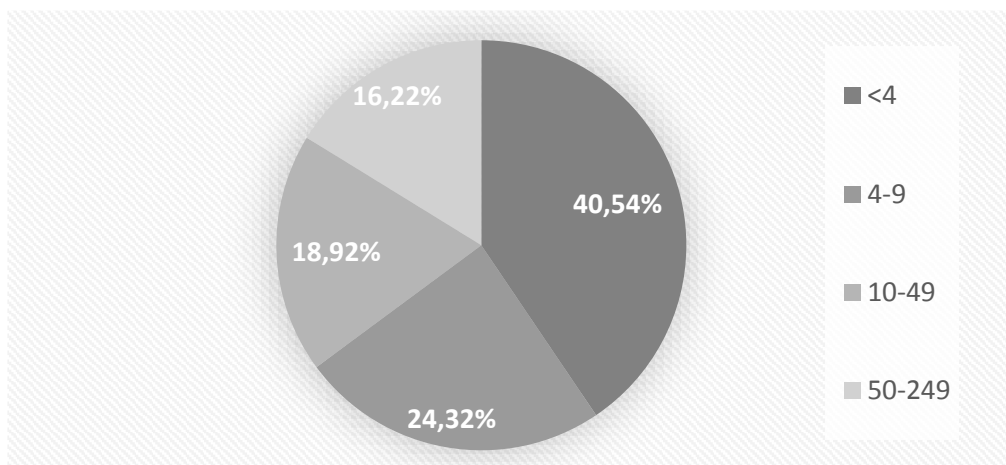
Figure 5.5 Distribution Across Sectors



Source: Own elaboration, processed using SPSS

Based on the answers most entities that took part in the questionnaire are micro entities - 64.86% with the share of companies up to 4 employees representing the most numerous group- 40.54%, as can be seen on Figure 5.6. Furthermore, 24.32% companies have up to 9 employees which still classifies as micro entity. Small entities up to 49 employees correspond to 18.92% share and the remaining 16.22% can be considered medium-sized entities. This is mostly caused by rather simple structure of the LAGs and LTOs and of other NGOs and civil associations.

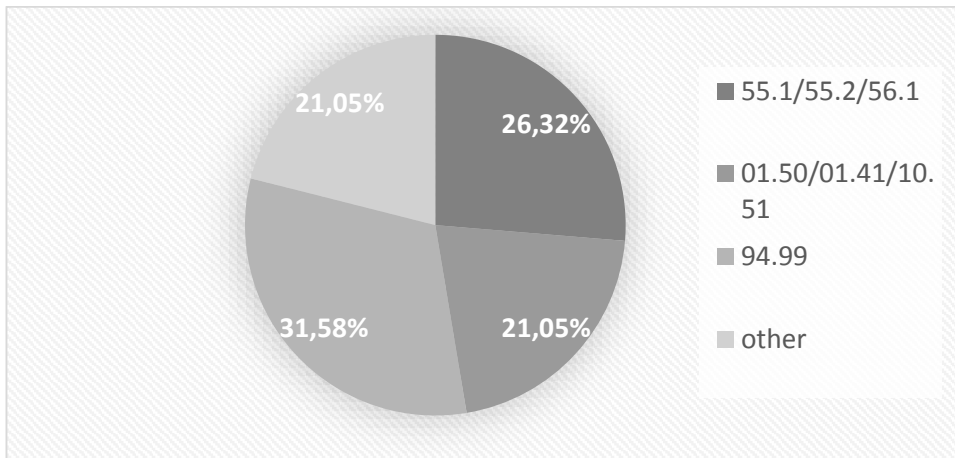
Figure 5.6 Size of Entities by No. of Employees



Source: Own elaboration

In our sample, there are 10 entities from 55.1, 55.2 or/and 56.1 NACE category, 8 entities in 01.50, 01.41, 10.51, 12 entities of 94.99, 8 with other NACE codes, Figure 5.7 . Moreover, out of the 37 participants only 21.62% claim that they engage in R&D activities, whereas 45.95% claim they engage in innovation, following the Table 5.1 Distribution of R&D Engagement and Innovation Activities. But only 47.06% innovative entities are in the tourism sector, which states the agro-food sector into slightly leading position in innovation, on the other hand R&D activities are 50-50. Also, the private sector outperforms public sector in innovation by 47.06% to 52.94 %, while in R&D it is the opposite and only ¼ of R&D engagement occurs in private entities.

Figure 5.7 NACE Codes



Source: Own elaboration

Table 5.1 Distribution of R&D Engagement and Innovation Activities

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
No innovation activities	20	54,1	54,1
Engaged in innovation activities	17	45,9	100,0
Total	37	100,0	
No R&D	29	78,4	78,4
Engaged in R&D activities	8	21,6	100,0
Total	37	100,0	

Source: Own elaboration, using SPSS

To proceed with further analysis, it is important to test the distribution of key variables. By testing our data for normality, we used Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk test (Table 5.2) which suggest that we must reject the H0: Our data follows normal distribution, and therefore we accept H1: The data does not follow normal distribution, thus the non-parametric tests must be applied.

Table 5.2 Normality Assessment

Testing for normality						
	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Research	,482	37	,000	,508	37	,000
Innovation	,359	37	,000	,635	37	,000

a. Lilliefors significance correction

Source: Own Elaboration, processed using SPSS

Table 5.3 Descriptive’s Table presents the mean for the variables “Research” and “Innovation” for the individual groups and total and number of cases when the entities engage in R&D and innovation activities.

Table 5.3 Descriptive’s Table

		N	Proportion	Frequency
Research	Governmental	6	,5000	3
	Private	17	,1176	2
	Users	13	,1538	2
	Education	1	1,0000	1
	Total	37	,2162	8
Innovation	Governmental	6	,5000	3
	Private	17	,5294	9
	Users	13	,3846	5
	Education	1	,0000	0
	Total	37	,4595	17

Source: Own Elaboration, processed using SPSS

To assess the equality of variance of the population we applied the Levene’s test that assumes common variance, Table 5.4. Based on the significance level we can conclude that in the case of Research the H0: is rejected whereas in the case of Innovation activities the H0 is not rejected. Therefore, we must switch to non-parametric tests that are free from the homoscedasticity assumption and thus we test our population using the Kruskal-Wallis Table 5.5 test which gives us a slightly different result when the 5% level

of significance is considered, however there is evidence for the H0 to be rejected if we considered 10% level of significance.

Table 5.4 Test of Homogeneity of Variances

	Levene's Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Research	3,435 ^a	2	33	,044
Innovation	,494 ^b	2	33	,614

a. Groups with only one case are ignored in the calculation of the Test of Homogeneity of variances for Research.

b. Groups with only one case are ignored in the calculation of the Test of Homogeneity of variances for Innovation.

Source: Own Elaboration, processed using SPSS

Table 5.5 Kruskal Wallis test

	Research	Innovation
Mean Square	7,540	1,477
df	3	3
Significance Sig.	,057	,688

a. Kruskal Wallis Test

b. Grouping variable: Sector

Source: Own Elaboration, processed using SPSS

Having tested the data for differences in engagement in “Innovation” and “R&D activities” based on the sector (government, third sector users, business and Education) we realized that there is no difference in innovation activities based on the sector yet we found out there is difference when it comes to the R&D activities. Further we decided to test our data based on whether it is tourism related entity or ‘other’. Since we know that our sample is of a small size which variables follow a non-normal distribution we applied non-parametric test Mann-Whitney and Wilcoxon W that prove that there is no difference in engagement in “Innovation” and “R&D activities” based on if the entity is tourism related or other (Appendix 3) so we do not reject H0 of equal medians. On the other hand, we found out that there is difference based on region of localization of the given entities

and that thus, we reject H0 for the “Innovation”. There is no difference in engagement in R&D based on the region. Further we tested the data using a Chi-Square contingency table. The outcomes are presented in Appendix 3 and Table 5.6, which suggest that the only dependency is between region variable and innovation¹¹. Entities in the Spis region and ‘Other’ are more inclined to engage in innovation activities than those in Liptov region.

H0: There is no dependency of the engagement in R&D activities/innovation activities based on the region/sector/public or private.

H1: There exists dependency of the engagement in R&D activities/innovation activities based on the region/sector/public or private.

Table 5.6 Rejecting H0 Hypothesis based on Chi-Square

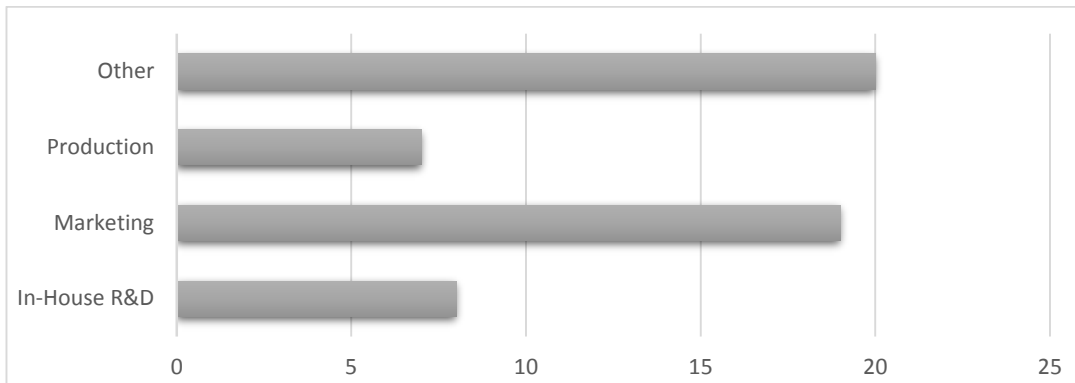
	R&D	Innovation
Region	Don't Reject H0	Reject H0
Tourism/non-tourism	Don't Reject H0	Don't Reject H0
Public/Private	Don't Reject H0	Don't Reject H0

Source: Own elaboration

The next group of questions aimed at detecting the main sources of information. These were grouped into four multiple choice questions, namely internal, external, education and research institutions, and generally available information. The results of the first question can be seen at the Figure 5.8 and reveal that most entities retrieve their internal information from “other” internal sources, however, unfortunately, they did not specify which would that be. 19 (51.35%) entities stated they acquire information from their marketing activities, whereas production and R&D activities are most important for 7 and 8 (18.92%, 21.62%) entities respectively.

¹¹ The interpretation of these results should be taken very carefully since the requisites for a robust chi-square are not met due to the size of our sample in each category

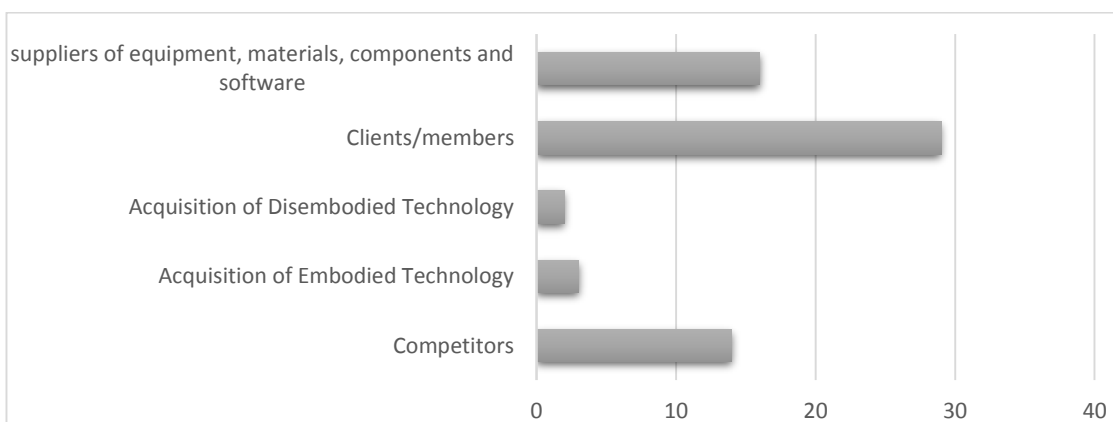
Figure 5.8 Internal source Information within the Firm or Business Group



Source: Own elaboration

The next multiple choice question is oriented on external sources of information. The Figure 5.9 reveals an interesting fact that 29 entities, corresponding to 82.86% of all the entities that participated on the questionnaire acquire their external information from their clients or members. Contribution of member associations such as LAGs and LTOs is undoubtable, yet we discovered that 7 out of the total of 9 hospitality and gastronomy entities and 4 out of the total of 8 agro-food producers chose this option as well. This can indicate that these entities, especially in the hospitality and gastronomy are highly customer oriented. Further, 16 entities (45.71%) get information from their suppliers and 40% indicate their competitors are the main source of external information. Acquisition of embodied and disembodied technology serves only to over 8.5% of respondents and little more than 5.7% of entities, respectively.

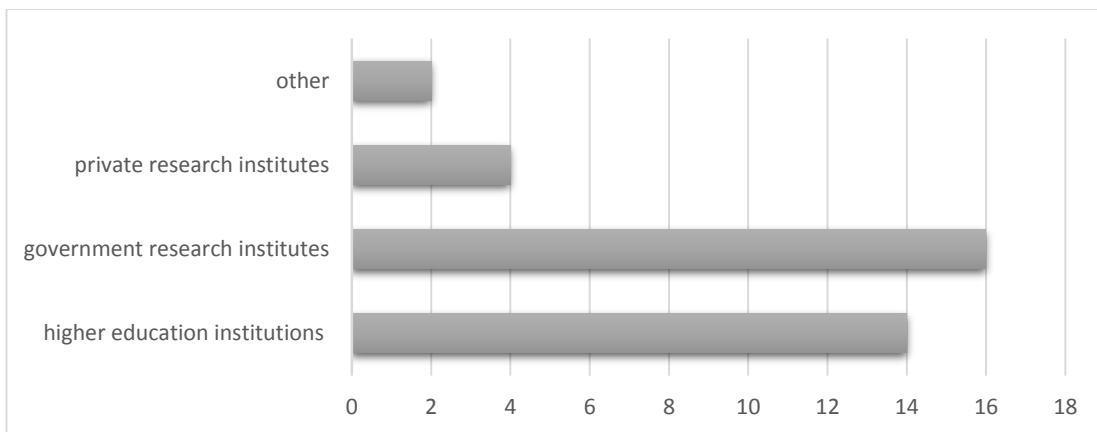
Figure 5.9 External source of Information



Source: Own elaboration

In the third question, representatives were given four multiple choices and asked to identify which professional research institutions they acquire information from. This was the least answered question and only 22 entities chose at least one of the options, while the other three questions of this section were all responded by 30 entities. This brings us to the observation that there are entities which do not acquire information from all four sources' categories. As can be seen from Figure 5.10 the most common source of information is government research institutions (9 private companies vs. 7 others, 11 agro-food sector and regional development entities, 5 tourism sector, only 1 hospitality and gastronomy), followed by higher education institutions (6 private, 5 entities from tourism sector, none from hospitality and gastronomy), private research and professional institutions were chosen by 4 and 'other' appear only in 2 cases.

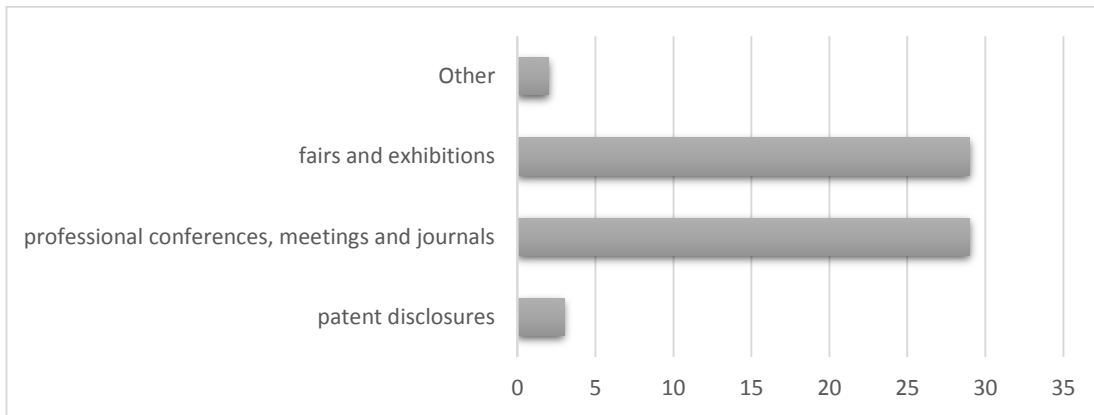
Figure 5.10 Education and Research Institutions Source of Information



Source: Own elaboration

The last question was regarding the sources of generally available information, offering 4 options. The results presented in the Figure 5.11 below, suggest that most, up to 29 entities or 82.86% acquire information by participating at fairs and exhibitions, and professional conferences, meetings and publications. Acquisition of information from patent disclosure has importance only to about 8.57%. of entities.

Figure 5.11 Generally Available Information



Source: Own elaboration

After assessing our data using descriptive, quantitative approach we continued with qualitative data and content analysis of answers from representatives of the 35 entities.

5.3. SWOT Analysis

The third section of the questionnaire consists of two open-ended questions that were used to capture respondents' perceptions of the local cooperation of/with different entities in their region and how the potential of LPS of tourism, agro-food and gastro industry could be enhanced. Qualitative data from these two questions were gathered and processed to form a SWOT analysis by content analysis. The information was grouped into strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats according to the frequency of appearance. Table 5.7 arranges the SWOT into sequences from the most frequently answered to the least frequently stated answers, distinguished by colours, too.

On the Table 5.7 we can observe that amongst the strengths the most frequently cited are the *sharing and flow of information and knowledge*, presence of *social capital and willingness to cooperate*, and *proximity*, concepts that have been identified by numerous authors as the key to innovation and creation of successful TIM of any kind (Moulaert & Sekia, 2003); (Pinto & Da Cruz, (2011); Pinto, et al., (2015); Boschma, (2005)). Enhanced *attractivity of the region* and increased *public interest* were second most cited. Other strengths identified are economic and social advantages but also preservation of folklore and diversity.

On the other hand, on the side of weaknesses we see some opposing pattern to the strengths. Up to nine entities identified the *unwillingness to cooperate* and *lack of motivation* to engage in a cooperation activity with other entities as the biggest weakness or even impediment for cooperation in the region. Furthermore, communication is the second most common weakness the entities perceive as problematic. *Inadequate legislation* and heavy *bureaucratic* burden seem to be also quite important obstacles for the development of LPS. Moreover, as seen in the Table 5.7 *transparency* and *long-term continuous strategic planning* is what the representatives identify as lacking in the governance dimensions. All of these statements are surprisingly in accordance with Kolosta (2014).

Furthermore, based on literature review we can say that geographical proximity and social proximity are perceived by the entities as both existing and advantageous (first precondition for a LPS to emerge Yeung (2000)), but further development of cognitive, institutional and also organization proximity is needed (Boschma, (2005); Crespo & Vicente, (2015)).

But the region, certainly, possesses a great potential which is expressed by the representatives in form of the many opportunities they identified. The most important of all opportunities is organization of the *in* and *out-flow of information* and *common marketing and promotion strategy* which are certainly advantages that should be derivable from the existence of a LPS (Cavicchi & Stancova, (2016); Moulaert & Sekia, (2003); Przygodzk, (2014)). *Cooperation within the sectors* and *across the sectors* can enhance the creation of a successful LPS just as much as creation of *regional product brands* (or other kinds of place branding strategies) that are very well established in other regions of Slovakia but also across the entire Czech Republic, Austria or Poland. Another opportunity for the cooperation in these two regions and LPS are the *short distribution channels* and alternative forms of tourism like *agro-turism, rural tourism* or even *food tourism*.

Table 5.7 SWOT Analysis of LPS in the Selected Regions according to Representatives' Perception

STRENGTHS	No.	Weaknesses	No.
Knowledge and information flow and sharing	6	Unwillingness to cooperate, lack of motivation	9
Social capital, willingness to cooperate	6	Problematic Communication	7
Attractivity of the region and increased public interest	6	Inadequate legislation	5
Enhancement of local economy and multiplier effect	5	Political nature of positions, lack of transparency	5
Physical and socio-economic Proximity	5	Discontinuity, inconsistency and political strategic planning	4
Cooperative financing and access to capital	4	Bureaucracy	4
Biodiversity & Cultural Diversity preservation	4	Lack of quality Employees	3
Local people knowing the product, region, traditions, vivid folklore	4	Lack of information being shared within the region	3
Increased employment and income	3	Lack of quality small local suppliers	3
Increasing quality of services	2	Share of local products in the supermarket chains	3
Social and health improvements	1	Unsatisfactory marketing of the regions	2
		Unsatisfactory State Support and Engagement	2
		Lack of cross sectoral cooperation	1
Opportunities	No.	Threats	No.
Organized promotion of the region, plan of cooperation, and marketing	6	Long way from theory to practice, GAP	5
Creation of Forums for opened discussions, education on national level	6	Reluctant investors and unwillingness to cooperate with smaller players	5
Organized information and, common web, common branding	5	Gap between private and public sector	4
Gastro events promotion of local and national cuisine	5	Obsolete soft and hard infrastructure	4
Cooperation within the sectors, common training	4	CAP, dependence on EU support	4
Increased cooperation of NGO's, tourism facilities and municipalities	4	Big investment groups and companies push away local players	3
Shorter distribution channels	3	Brain drain	3
Development of Regional Product Brands	3	Mentality and entrepreneurship environment	3
Increased competences of LAGs	3	Competition from other regions and local productions, mainly in CZ,PL	3
Agro-turism, Rural Tourism, Food tourism	2	Slow and Inefficient changes and legislation adaptations	2
Cross-sectoral promotion attractions, hotels, producers, municipalities...	2	Unclear hierarchy and responsibilities of the subjects	2
Networking	2	Economic underdevelopment of the region compared with others	2
Creation of competitive DMO's	1	Unclear competences of the regulatory and administrative entities	1

Source: Own elaboration

According to the outcomes of our questionnaire, representatives of the local entities perceive the *big investors* as the most threatening and disinclined to participate in cooperation and take into consideration the “*small players*” who feel to be *pushed away from the region*. Further the *gap between private and public sector* together with the *gap between theory and practice* is what is seen as other threatening dimensions. The underdevelopment of the regions, lacking infrastructure and foreign competition are just few of the many economic, social, policy and cultural threats that were identified in our SWOT analysis.

Furthermore, as seen on our Table 5.7, but also as mentioned in Moulaert & Sekia, (2003); Suzigan, et al., (2007); Nowakowska (2015), relationship LPS and Region is highly reciprocal and they identify that the existence of institutional and *physical infrastructure, forums for discussion* and collective action, support development factors such as *quality human resources* and *schooling and training systems*, and encouraging the *flow of information, technology*, and common *marketing* strategies is essential for a LPS to flourish in a region.

In the second question, we asked the entities to think about how could be anticipated and enhanced the potential of the LPS of agro-food, gastronomy and tourism in their regions. Numerous entities perceive the common marketing of the region and cross-sectoral cooperation and promotion, to be the best way to achieve the full potential of the region. Others state that alternative forms of tourism, creation of regional product brands and consequent promotion of the regional products, both home and abroad is what is missing. Moreover, they claim the regional products should be more advertised and have greater share in supermarket chains, increase demand and supply of such products. Modern and innovative gastronomy, that uses local production and communicates the uniqueness of a region is also seen as formidable in terms of LPS enhancement in the region. Hereby we provide two of the most relevant and complex insights, one from a private entity and other from a local tourism organization.

Hotel: “In my opinion, the cooperation would improve, if the subjects ever had the motivation to cooperate. It is important that as many entities as possible are shown the advantages cooperation brings. Many entities don’t see that and mind just their own business. Also, the tourism sector has very little information about the local food

production, and we constantly struggle to find quality local producers and suppliers, which is costly and time consuming. Surely, effective marketing instruments, improved information provision and communication must be deployed. Common education and training of the employees, sharing of information amongst the different players.”

LTO: Networking and cooperation of the subjects is essential! Grouping in LTOs or other civil associations, organizing of meetups and conferences where particular issues, goals and activities are proposed and discussed. Join the agro-tourism and tasting of the local products into one tourism bundle product to be sold at home and abroad. Joint events, thematic tourism products that would allow and call for cooperation of many entities from both public and private sector and also NGOs and municipalities.

These two comments call for organized action and increased willingness of the different entities to participate and contribute to the cooperation and improvement of the regions in question. Moreover, joint cooperation of public, private and governing entities is required, as much as cross-sectoral cooperation of agro-food sector, retail, distributors, gastro and tourism industry. In order to provide some insights about the stakeholders' relationships and level of cross-sectoral cooperation the next section applies a Social Network Analysis.

5.4 Social Network Analysis

The last section of the questionnaire consists of four open-ended questions created to identify and build a map of connections between the different entities. In the first two questions, we required the representatives to list at least 5 entities from private sector, public, governmental or R&D entities that they cooperate with. They were also asked to classify the entities based on the nature of cooperation, be that a project, a commercial relationship, or supportive cooperation. The third question aimed at finding out whether the company is a member of a professional association, LAG or LTO. Finally, in the fourth question we asked if the entity has participated in any kind of project related to food tourism in the given regions in the past two years.

Based on the responses retrieved from the online questionnaire and personal talks we were able to create complex web of nodes (vertices) and ties (edges) that illustrates

the variety of relationships and connections of different entities in the region. Using the NodeXL the Harel-Koren Fast Multiscale algorithm was applied. This is a force-directed algorithm that draws the edges as straight lines segments in order to create all the connections (edges) of approximately the same length and reduce crossing of the lines so that the graph is more comprehensible and readable (Harel & Koren, 2000). Together with our 37 entities which distribution can be seen at Table 5.8, 116 entities of cooperation were identified which put together 232 relational edges, meaning that on average each one of surveyed entity has at least 6 connections. As can be seen on Appendix 4 there emerged 206 unique edges and 26 edges with duplicate.

Table 5.8 Distribution of the 37 Entities across the Sectors

	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Government	6	16,2	16,2
Private	17	45,9	62,2
Users	13	35,1	97,3
Education	1	2,7	100,0
Total	37	100,0	

Source: Own elaboration, processed using SPSS

All the entities were grouped into four groups, inspired by the views of Leydesdorff (2012) and Harbers, et al. (2015), namely governmental entities, educational institutions, businesses or private entities, and civil 3rd sector users (complete list can be found in Appendix 2). Entities were assigned colour and shape based on the industry and groups they belong to. Governmental entities are shaped as disks ●, Third sector entities are square shaped ■, Education institutions are triangle shaped ▲, and business entities are diamond shaped ◆. Furthermore, tourism related entities are coloured in blue, agro-food industry assumes green, and auxiliary entities are given black colour. The nature of cooperation between entities is illustrated by assigning colours to the arrows that connect them. This way auxiliary cooperation is given yellow, mutual cooperation is assigned red and black arrows indicate commercial nature of the relationship.

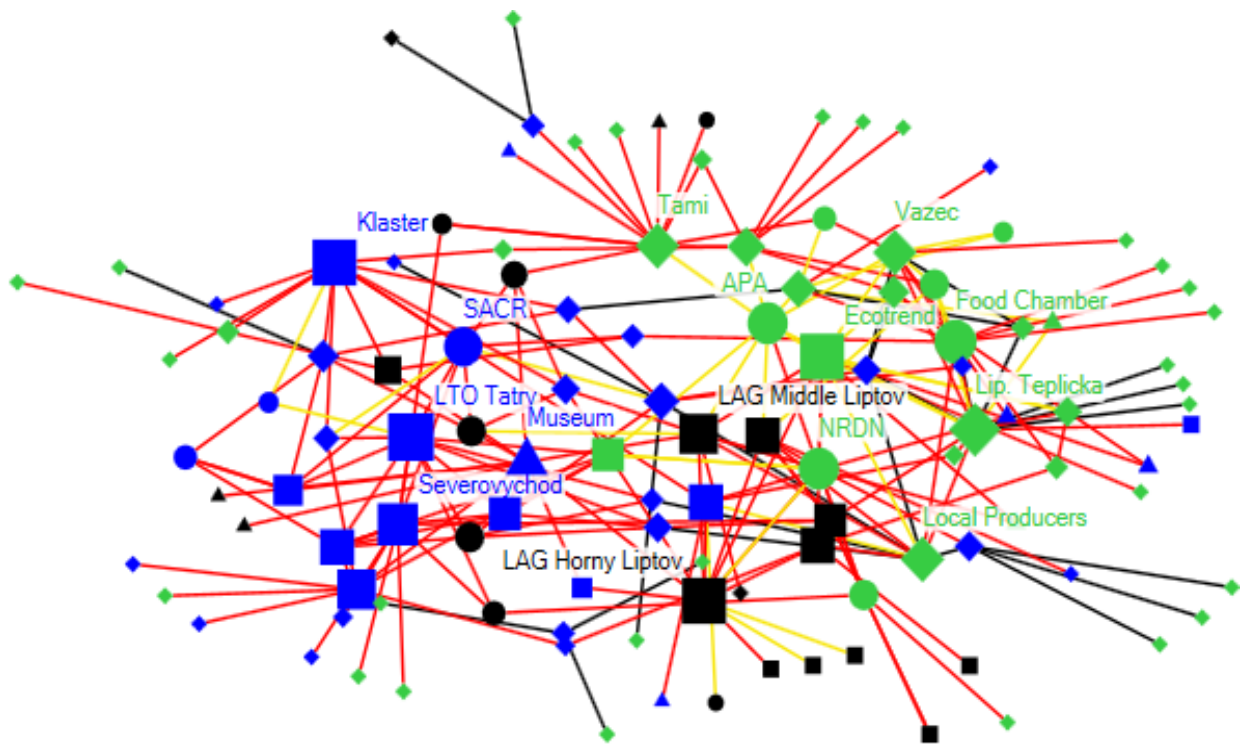
Importance and connectivity of the entities is displayed by the size of the individual shapes. The bigger the shape the higher the degree of connectivity an entity possesses. We decided to use undirected type of the graph so the connectivity is a

calculation of the final number of ties, rather than directed type that would calculate separately in and out-degree of the entities. The reason for this is the limited number of entities that took part in the survey compared to the entire network, which could cause distortions and give misleading perceptions about entities' importance within the network. Thus, the 37 entities that responded to our questionnaires would have the highest out-degree, but at the same time low in-degree since there would not exist reciprocity from entities that did not take part in the questionnaire yet were identified by the 37 respondents. Therefore, we compared the overall degree and in-degree of the entities in two separate graphs.

Figure 5.12 Social Network Analysis of the Agro-food, Gastronomy and Tourism Entities of Liptov and Spiš Rregion, undirected represents the map of the social network analysis of the entities related to agro-food production, tourism and gastronomy in the two regions of northern Slovakia. The outcomes reveal that the web of connections is quite compound, yet there exists a clear boundary between the tourism and gastronomy (blue) and agro-food production (green) and the auxiliary (black) entities in the middle. Cross-sectoral cooperation appears more at the end connections. On the other hand, we see that the governmental, educational institutions, business and Third sector are evenly distributed and connected across the entire map. So are the entities with the highest degree of connectivity spread across all four sectors (shapes) and industries (colours).

Entity with the highest degree, and thus highest number of connections 17 is the Food Cooperative Liptovská Teplička, followed by Local Tourism Organization Region Tatry with 13 connections, next are LAG Horny Liptov, Association EcoTrend, DMO Klaster Liptov, Food Cooperative Važec, Tami -Tatra Diry, and diverse small local producers that were bundled into one entity, with 12 connections each. Governmental entity with the most connections is the Liptovian Agriculture and Food chamber, and Educational institution is the Sheep and Shepherd Museum. Perhaps because all of these entities also took part in our questionnaire, except for the small local producers. The most common relationships between the entities are cooperation indicated by red colour of the arrows, second follows support relationship represented by yellow, the least revealed relationships were of commercial nature, in black.

Figure 5.12 Social Network Analysis of the Agro-food, Gastronomy and Tourism Entities of Liptov and Spiš Rregion, undirected

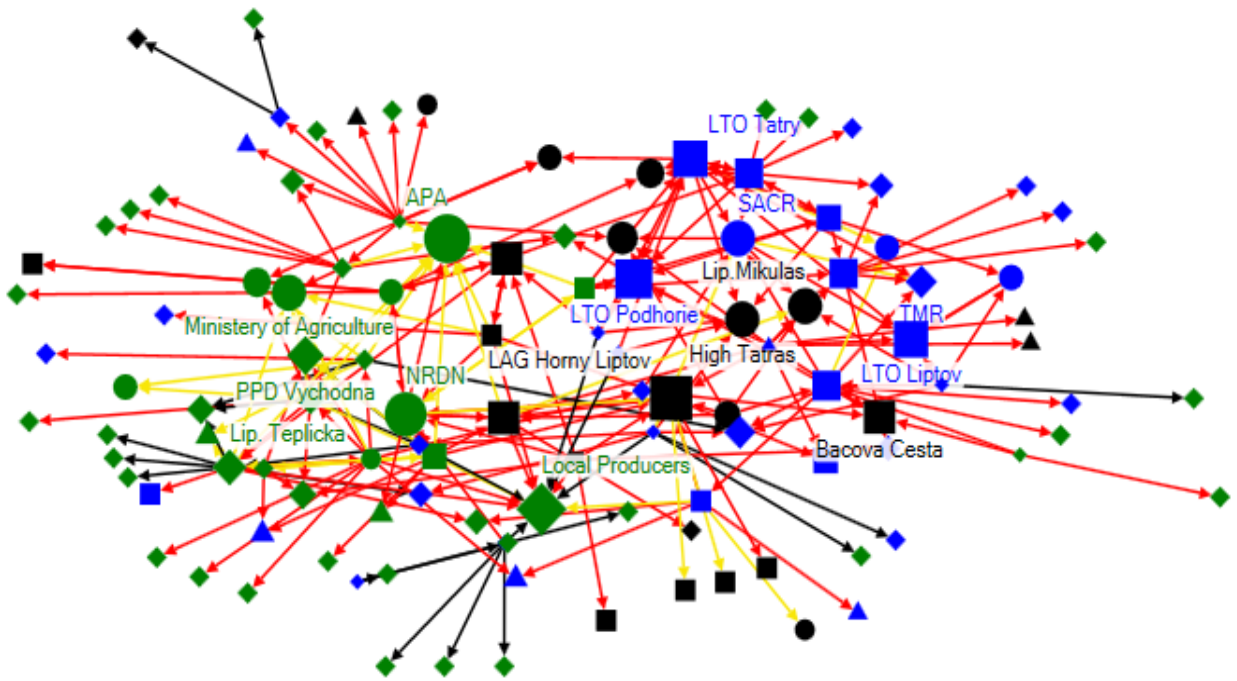


Source: Own elaboration using NodeXL

When directed graph approach is applied, we see slightly different results, as observable on Figure 5.13. The in-degree suggest that the highest number of connection has the entity- Local producers with 12 connections, followed by APA (Agricultural Paying Agency) with 10 connections, further NRDN (National Rural Development Network) and LAG Horny Liptov with 8 connections each. City of Liptovský Mikuláš and High Tatras have been identified 5 times and prove that there exists connection with the municipalities and local governance, too. Ministry of Agriculture, SACR, TMR, Bacova cesta and LTO Podhorie and Liptov are significant entities of cooperation with more than 5 connections that did not take part directly in our questionnaire.

For more advanced illustration of the existing relationships among entities of the two studied regions we grouped our vertices by clusters using Caluset-Newman-Moor algorithm. Our graph, Figure 5.14 suggest that there emerge 8 individual clusters, with one being completely separate from the entire network. By expanding these we discovered interesting spatial localization of the entities belonging to each cluster.

Figure 5.13 Social Network Analysis of the Agro-food, Gastronomy and Tourism entities of Liptov and Spiš Region, directed



Source: Own elaboration using NodeXL

Firstly, the smallest individual cluster illustrated by green disk is a Shepherd Salaš restaurant that claimed to cooperate with three local distributors but no governmental, educational or Third sector users within the region. The second smallest cluster coloured in bright orange represents entities centred around RTO Žilina, region of Žilina.

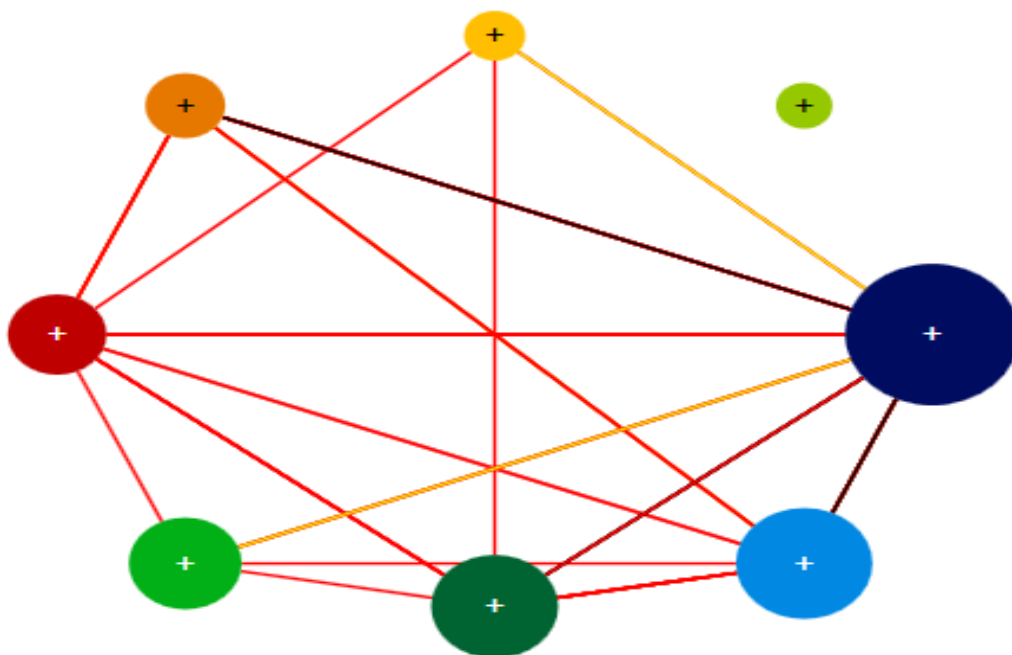
Secondly, dark blue disk represents the agro-food sector entities with the total of 6 local agro-food producers, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural development, 4 tourism entities, distributors and 3 agriculture sector related agencies. Relationships between the entities are quite evenly represented by yellow, black and red arrows, thus there exist all kinds of relationships: commercial, cooperative and supportive nature.

On the other hand, the light blue disk embodies the most tourism entities and could be geographically located to the High Tatras area, tourism region of Spiš and region of Prešov. Red arrows are far the most prevailing, suggesting cooperative nature of relationship between 4 LTOs, 1 RTO, 2 LAGs, 7 gastronomy and hospitality entities, municipality of High Tatras, region of Prešov, 4 local agro-food producers and

distributors (Appendix 5 - Entities by Clusters). Yet we see strong black, commercial, connection to the dark blue sector.

The third greatest cluster is depicted by dark green disk and is composed of both tourism and agro-food sector entities, mostly located across the Liptov tourism region. Klaster Liptov, LTO Liptov, SACR, Ministry of transport, construction and regional development, 4 gastronomy and hospitality entities, 3 agro-food entities and Bačová cesta make for the green cluster in region of Liptov as depicted on Appendix 5.

Figure 5.14 SNA grouped by Clusters



Source: Own elaboration using NodeXL

When developing the SNA of the local stakeholders of tourism, gastronomy and agro-food sector of the two tourism regions of northern Slovakia, four different groups of stakeholders were studied. One of the groups embraces member entities with NACE 94.99 that are by definition composed of different members, and thus there exists direct relationship of cooperation. These may acquire form of civil associations, interest associations, non-for-profit entities or microregions with the key objective to advocate members' interests. Members might be municipalities, natural persons or legal persons, and most of the LAGs and LTOs have dozens of members. Since the average number of connections in SNA of the agro-food, gastronomy and tourism entities of Liptov and Spiš region is 6, adding dozens of member connections to the member organizations would

cause biased outcomes. Moreover, the individual municipalities (or other members) did not take part in the questionnaire so these would become end connections.

LAGs merge public and private entities of different socio-economic sectors and their objective is development of rural areas using know-how, innovation and technologies. Additionally, promotion and enhancement of the local production by facilitating access to markets for smaller, local producers, improvement of the quality of life in the rural reality and effective management of the natural and socio-economic resources of the territory¹². LTOs are created on regional or local level as Regional Tourism Organizations and Local Tourism Organizations. RTOs are created by the self-governing region and member LTOs, whereas LTOs are created by municipalities, entrepreneurs and other entities active in the territory. LTOs serve for coordination, support and creation of conditions for development of tourism and tourism related activities in the given territory. Furthermore, LTOs participate in marketing activities and promotion of the tourism region both internally and abroad. Cooperation with local entities and municipalities in preparation and coordination of territory development strategies is another of LTOs' goals. Together with: promotion of cultural, natural, social and sport activities and preservation of cultural heritage. Besides that, LTOs are responsible for organization of events, info. centres, raising awareness among local communities and providing advisory and consulting services to its members (Šebová, 2014).

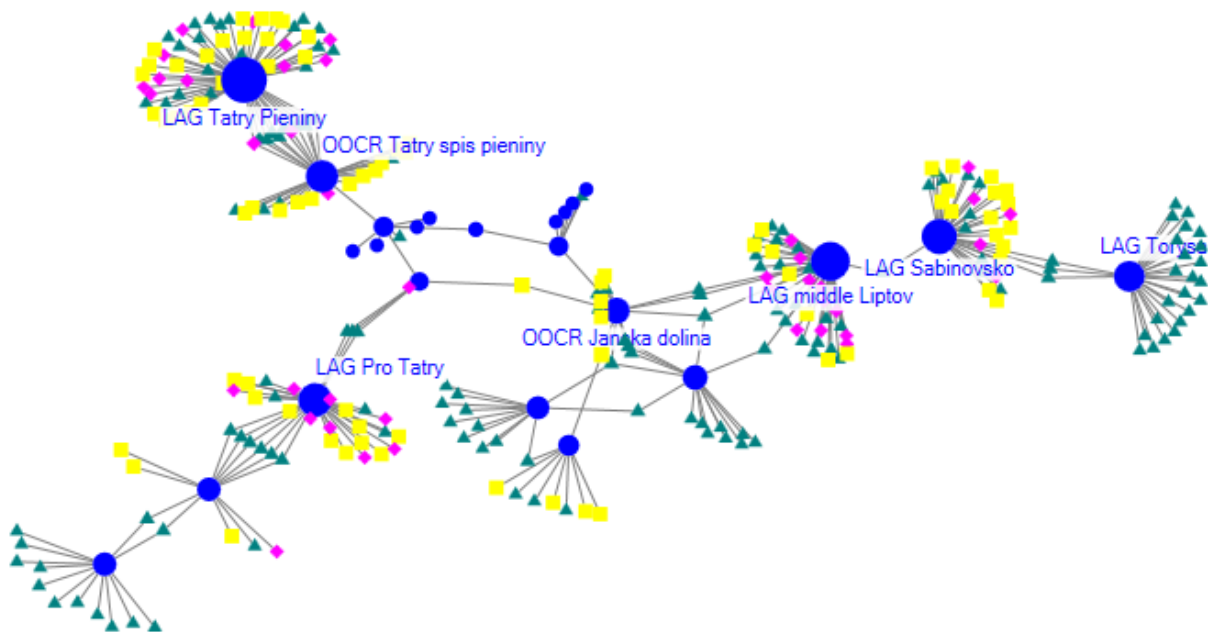
Nevertheless, presence of LAGs and LTOs in these regions and their high level of connectivity is crucial for regional development and tourism development strategies. Therefore, we created a separate map of connections of the member organizations of LTOs and LAGs in the two studied regions to illustrate their level of connectivity and highlight their importance in the development of LPS.

On the Figure 5.15 is portrayed the map of connections between the LAGs and LTOs that participated on our questionnaire or were identified by these. LTOs and LAGs were given shape of blue discs, while teal triangles represent municipalities, legal person is depicted by pink diamonds and yellow squares are for individual persons. Member organizations with the biggest number of connection are tagged on the Figure 5.15 SNA of Member Organizations LAGs and LTOs, with the LAG Tatry Pieniny, Middle

¹² (European Commission, 2016)

Liptov, Sabinovsko and Pro Tatry to be the most robust LAGs and LTO Tatry Spis Pieniny and Janska Dolina representing the tourism LTOs. We can see the two RTOs, namely Žilina and Severovýchod to be centrally located with the highest number of blue disc connections.

Figure 5.15 SNA of Member Organizations LAGs and LTOs



Source: Own elaboration using NodeXL

As already mentioned herein, LPS are not finite but evolving, living structures of cooperation and relationship of different nature among private and public entities in a region (Parrilli, 2010). Regarding the responses from the questionnaire, it is obvious that cooperative nature of relations is prevailing. However commercial and auxiliary are also represented. Moreover, numerous entities claim they acquire information from interacting with their competitors and clients. Entities with the highest number of connections, and thus could be considered to be the principal stakeholders that possess high degree of connectivity, and therefore influence and potential for cooperation are from different sectors, both from tourism and agro-food and located in both studied regions.

In accordance with the literature (Nowakowska, 2015) we identified entities that could be considered as the principal entities of an LPS- LTOs and LAGs: LAG Horny Liptov, LAG Middle Liptov, LTO Tatry Region, LTO Liptov, LTO Podhorie, RTO

Severovychod; Entities of National and Regional Governance: Ministry of transport, construction and regional development, Ministry of Agriculture and rural development, NRDN, APA, SACR, 2 self-governing units regions (NUTS III), municipalities (city of High Tatras, Liptovsky Mikulas); Agro-food sector- Small local producers, Agro-food cooperations (farms), professional and member associations: Klaster Liptov, Ecotrend; educational institutions, 3rd sector.

We created simplified maps of cooperation based on questionnaire distributed to 62 entities localized in the region of Spiš and Liptov to discover the core stakeholders of LPS and connections among these entities. From our study, we can claim that the networking is quite vivid in the two regions, although we witness clear division into tourism sector and agro-food sector with the auxiliary entities playing the middle man. Furthermore, inter-institutional and inter-firm cooperation can be seen, which on the other hand is a common feature of an LPS (Doloreux, (2002); Moulaert & Sekia, (2003). Also, application of grouping by clusters shows localization of entities that claim to cooperate into two rather separate clusters of Liptov region and region of High Tatras, Spiš (Appendix 6). Moreover, we discovered the high degree of connectivity of member association that proves their undoubtedly important role in the LPS and regional and tourism development strategies.

Conclusion

Tourism is a fast-growing mega industry that generates significant incomes worldwide. It is becoming a mass industry that is facing an uneasy challenge: to grow in accordance with sustainability measures and benefit the visitor but also the host community. Tourism offers endless possibilities and needs to stay responsive to tourist demand which is oriented around innovation and novelty. In the light of all these facts, this dissertation aimed at underlining food tourism as an option for developing tourism oriented around food and traditional production that exists locally to enrich the tourist, and bring social and economic advantages for both the region and host community. Moreover, a tourism that not only exploits the local values and traditions, but most importantly contributes to their preservation and improvement.

Food is an indispensable part of our everyday living and has irreplaceable value in terms of tourism. It not only is a holder of values and memories, socialiser, basic need and preserver of traditions, identity and image builder.

In tourism, it stands out as smart tool for marketing and destination differentiation, as an attraction and significant item on every tourist' expenditure list that can bring noteworthy income for the region. Food tourism offer spans from eating in a local restaurant, purchasing local foodstuff at farmer markets, food festivals, events, fairs to bundled tourism products such as wine tours and degustation to farm tourism and rural tourism activities. Moreover, food when marketed as a tourism product has the power to initiate local and regional multiplier effect, since both food production and hospitality employ many other industries and are human labour intensive. Besides, both are still in the 21st century spatially delineated concepts that must occur in a given time and place. This might be general space, giving origin to industrial production or localized-local production. Local food production brings several positive aspects compared to the industrial one, especially when tourism is in question. Beside the many environmental, health, economic and social benefits, local food can lure tourists to taste the place, experience not only the food itself but also the terroir, and understand the distinctiveness and local culture.

Local food production and its following marketing as tourism product, however, require a considerable level of cooperation and consolidation of activities of the many stakeholders. Territorial Innovation Models are networks of spatially located entities that

operate on social capital, proximity, knowledge and innovation. This dissertation chooses amongst the many theoretical models the one that stands out by being oriented around artisan - back to the roots production. The theory of Local Production System is linkable to regional innovation systems and regional development, and as such could be a way to organize the cooperation between agro-food industry, gastronomy and tourism.

Therefore, we explored possibilities of how such situation could be achieved in the context of two tourism regions of northern Slovakia, where the concept of LPS is not commonly implemented or used as a policy tool. Regions of Spiš and Lipotv are traditionally touristic regions with significant impact on overall Slovak tourism. Not only they possess privileged location in the heart of two oldest and biggest National Parks, and the most beloved Slovak Tatry Mountains, they are also a favourite tourism destination of locals and foreigners, and are renowned for their gastronomic tradition and food production.

This study aimed at discovering the potential of the Local Production System in these two regions and at finding out the relations among the stakeholders of the LPS. Several methods and methodologies were applied to detect the relations and perception about the cooperation in the regions. A questionnaire was distributed to 62 key stakeholders, based on literature and document research. This questionnaire contained four sections mainly composed of open-ended questions and was consequently analysed using qualitative and quantitative research techniques.

We were able to obtain responses from 35 entities, equal to 59.67% return rate, and retrieve information about another 2 entities from their publicly accessible websites. This was not possible for any other entity due to lack of available information online or inexistent websites, altogether. The questionnaire has been responded by appointed representatives most of which were Managing Directors or Deputy Directors and were very educated as 77.14% of the respondents has university degree, therefore we can conclude these were competent individuals to respond our questionnaire.

The entities were from different NACE groups, most of which, 12, were entities of 94.94 NACE code - other member organizations, namely LAGs and LTOs that seem to have high level of significance in the regions. 10 entities from hospitality and gastronomy industry 55.1, 55.2 or/and 56.1 NACE category and 8 entities in 01.50, 01.41, 10.51 agro-food production. Further, entities were 17 tourism related and 20 non-tourism related

entities, 18 private companies, 19 other, 19 situated in the region of Liptov, 15 in region of Spiš and 3 elsewhere. Therefore, the stakeholders cover both tourism and agro-food industry and are composed of private, public entities and member organizations, and educational institutions.

According to the result from quantitative research we found out that only 21.62% of entities engage in R&D activities, whereas more entities are engaged in innovation activities - 45.95%. Applying statistical research, we found that the entities engaged in R&D and Innovation activities are evenly distributed based on the sector (tourism/non-tourism) being private or other but not when regional perspective is considered. We found out that entities in Spiš and 'other' region are more likely to engage in innovation activities, since we discovered statistically significant dependency. Whereas in the case of R&D activities these variables remain independent.

Beside the information about whether the entities have tendencies to engage in innovation or/and R&D activities we were able to find out how the different entities acquire information. Most companies claim to get information from 4 different kinds of sources. The most common internal sources of information are the marketing activities and other, although it is not clear what exactly is meant by that. In-house R&D activities seem to serve as source of information for exactly 8 companies which corresponds with the findings from the previous set of questions, where precisely 8 entities claimed they do engage in R&D.

Information acquired outside the entity or business group-external information, are most commonly gained through the interaction of members or clients claimed by 29 out of the 35 entities. This proves that many of the participant entities are member associations such as LTOs and LAGs which exist to defend and fulfil interests of their members. Although, we can also conclude that the hospitality and agro-food entities in these regions are highly client-oriented and take into consideration the demand element. Moreover, suppliers and competition are the second most common source of external information meaning in this network there exist relationships of allying and competitive nature.

In terms of education and research institutions, as the source of information, most of participant entities would turn to state research institutions and universities to acquire

necessary information. Whilst private, professional and research institutions are contacted only sporadically.

As for the generally available information, it can be concluded that the entities actively seek information. They participate in fairs and exhibitions, and attend professional conferences, meetings and search professional journals to acquire the latest information from their area. Moreover, the outcomes show that most of the entities procure information from a variety of sources and maintain diversified portfolio of information pools.

In order to assess the perception of stakeholders about the cooperation within the region and their opinions how to enhance and anticipate the potential of the LPS of agro-food, tourism and gastronomy industry in the two regions of northern Slovakia we created a comprehensive SWOT analysis, applying the qualitative research method and content analysis method. According to responses from the surveyed entities they see enormous potential in the cooperation within their region, although they perceive many weaknesses and limitations, too. Firstly, most respondents notice that the region possesses important social capital. Therefore, there exist linkages between the different actors who are willing to cooperate and already benefit from the shared knowledge and information. Respondents see that amongst the many strengths of cooperation are the increased attractiveness and public interest in the region. Region that is perceived as home to tradition and has vivid folklore and people that know well the region, its products and are close to its traditions. Amongst the perceived benefits to the region we can mention local multiplier effect, increased employment and incomes. Individual firms are believed to benefit from increased accessibility of capital and increasing quality of services. Whilst the local community enjoys preservation of cultural and bio diversity, increased employment and income and claimed social and health improvements.

On the other hand, many perceive that the cooperation within a LPS has many limitations and weaknesses. Unlike in the case of strengths, there are even more entities who do not feel that the cooperation is working mainly because entities are unwilling to cooperate, lack motivation and are unable to communicate effectively. Additionally, the respondents feel that inappropriate legislation, bureaucratic burden, lack of transparency, political nature of positions and patchy strategic planning are not adding up to the positive development of a LPS. Amongst the economic weaknesses, they mention the

lack of quality human resource and quality local suppliers together with low share and marketing of local products. The brighter side of the many listed weaknesses is that the stakeholders are aware of these, and thus can take corrective measures and develop policies that would deal with these weaknesses. Furthermore, the representatives of surveyed entities see numerous opportunities to enhance the functioning of a LPS in the region.

The most cited opportunities are organized promotion of the region, plan of cooperation and marketing. This process has already been initiated by the first DMO in Slovakia, cluster Liptov and can be enhanced by cooperation of the numerous LTOs and LAGs in the region that are constructed of great network of connections. Following are the creation of marketing instruments for the region such as common web that would share information, creation of events and promotion of local products and gastronomy, or common branding that could be achieved by creating the Regional Product Brands, that would clearly distinguish the region for its folkloric and production tradition and communicate a unified message about the authenticity of the region. Another opportunity to improve the situation is seen in the development of discussion forums that would bring together different entities from both sectors and allow for dialogues about the current issues, and therefore encourage networking, creation of social capital, and cross-sectoral cooperation.

Not only seem the appointed representatives of the 35 entities (it was not possible to obtain perceptions of the two entities based on website research) to be well aware of the different weaknesses, moreover they are aware of the many threats that the region is struggling with and impede creation of a LPS. Amongst the most urging were mentioned gaps between the public and private entities and between what is said and what is done. Moreover, they perceive the big investors to be reluctant and unwilling to cooperate with the small players, but instead push them away from the region. The overall entrepreneurship environment and mentality, together with obsolete infrastructure and increasing dependence on European Union, CAP and the state authorities, is what may all be in favour of the many competitor regions in the central Europe, like Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland or Austria. For the region to stay competitive and create a functioning network of relations, certain innovative policies must be implemented. These

policies must encourage cross-sectoral cooperation and enhance development of auxiliary infrastructures hard and soft, physical, social and economic.

The outcomes of the Social Network Analysis helped us complete the case study about the two studied regions. We can conclude that the stakeholders of the potential LPS of tourism, agro-food industry and gastronomy in the tourism region of Spiš and Liptov are entities composed of member associations such as LAGs and LTOs that incorporate tourism and rural development, local producers and agro-food producers, municipalities, educational and professional institutions, governmental institutions and divers gastronomy and hospitality facilities.

Application of SNA proves the vivid dynamics of the relations within the region, but also substantial separation of tourism sector from the agro-food sector. It is noteworthy, that the entities with the highest degree of connectivity are several LAGs and LTOs, Ministry of agriculture and rural development, SACR, Ecotrend, Cluster Liptov, Local producers, some Food Cooperatives, TMR and municipalities. Not a single gastronomy or hospitality facility stands out amongst the principal stakeholders of the region, neither in directed graph nor in undirected. This discovery corresponds with the statement of one of the hotels that claims that the tourism companies have little information about the local production and strive to find quality local suppliers. Moreover, they add that hospitality entities lack motivation to cooperate and mind solely their own business.

This dissertation managed to find answers for all research questions it intended. However, it is obvious there are many limitations to the conducted research. First of all, as mentioned in the literature review, LPS are evolving systems and so is the mutual cooperation of the different entities of the studied (also of any) regions. Therefore, this study does not want to state the omnipotent truths but rather provide a comprehensive picture of the current situation of the LPS of agro-food production, tourism and gastronomy in the region of Spiš and Liptov, and capture the potential for its future development. Furthermore, because of monetary and time constraints it was not possible to capture perceptions of all selected entities in the region nor other entities that were identified by the surveyed entities, which would allow for much more complex and precise picture of the map of relations.

However, this study provided initial ideas by gathering the perception of the local stakeholders. Moreover, this dissertation sets some potential areas for future research on

the potential of food tourism to be included as alternative form of tourism in Slovakia from the perspective of tourists, hosts and for the purposes of sustainable regional development. Just as much as studying of the evolution of relationships amongst the different stakeholders. We encourage a continuous research of this topic. Hopefully, the work developed in this dissertation can be a contribution and an initial step to stimulate a fruitful dialogue among different types of stakeholders, about creation of a territorial innovative system that would allow the enhancement of cooperation and competitiveness of the tourism regions of Spiš and Liptov based on the principals of sustainability.

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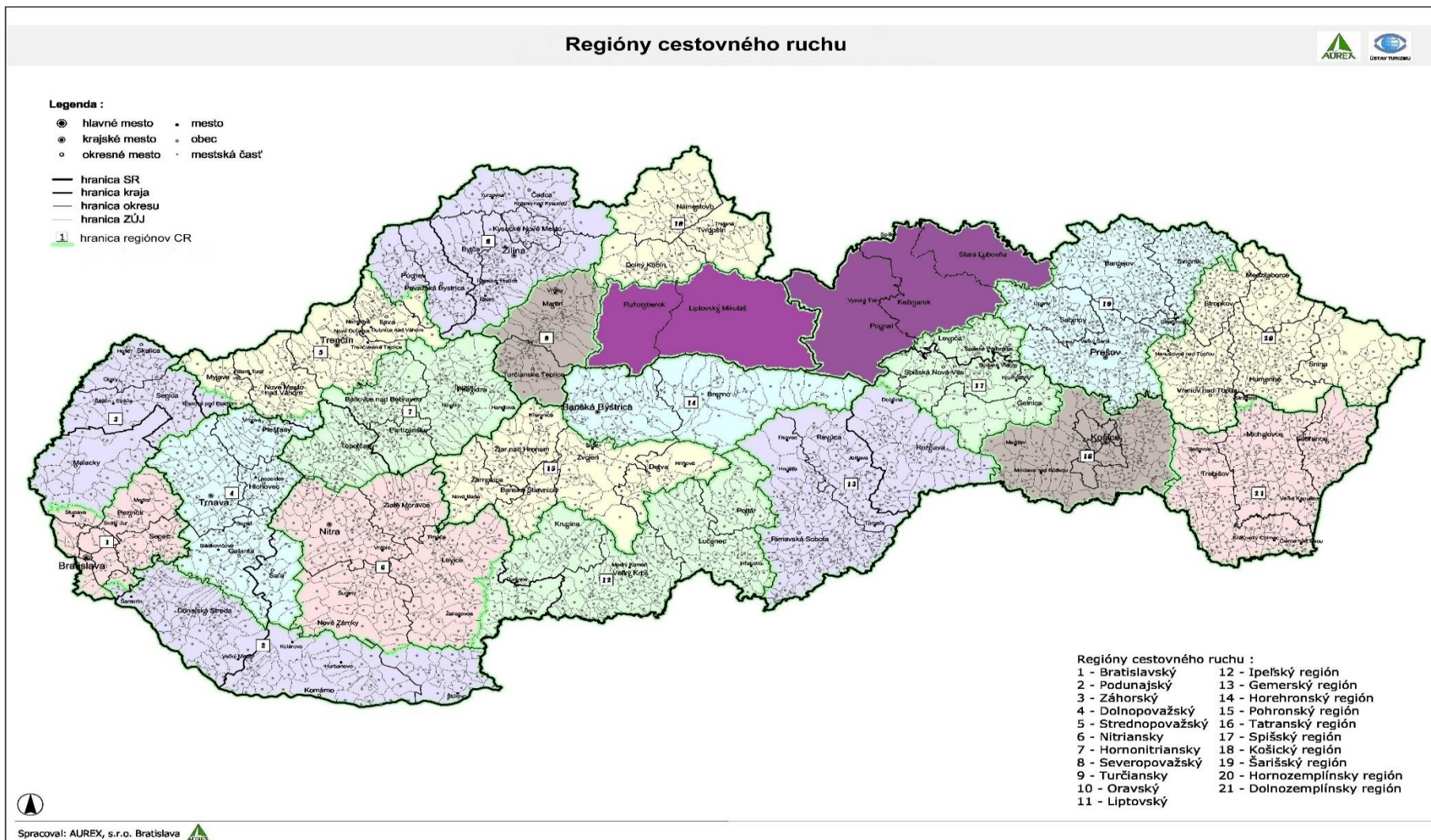
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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Map of the 21 Slovak Tourism Regions



Appendix 2 – List of entities

1	Kempinski	55.1	https://www.kempinski.com/sk/strba-strbske-pleso/grand-hotel-high-tatras/
2	PD Liptovske Revuce	*01.50	http://www.pdliptrevuce.sk/
3	SACR	79.9	http://www.sacr.sk/
4	Gasperov Mlyn	55.1, 56.1	http://www.gasperovmlyn.sk/
5	LAG Horny Liptov	94.99	http://www.hornyliptov.sk/
6	Salas u Franka	56.1	http://www.salasufranka.sk/
7	Hotel Solisko	56.1, 55.1	http://hotelsolisko.sk/
8	Penzion Drak	56.1, 55.1	http://www.penziondrak.sk/sk/
9	OOCR Vysoke Tatry	94.99	http://regiontatry.sk/sk/
10	PPS Bobrovec	*01.50,55 .2	http://www.ppsbobrovec.sk/
11	Informacne Centrum	79.9	http://www.visitliptov.sk/zaujímavosti/informacne-centrum-mesta-liptovsky-mikulas/
12	Salas Krajinka	56.1	http://www.salaskrajinka.sk/
13	Penzion Jurika	55.1, 56.1	
14	PD Cingkov Smizany	*01.50	http://www.pdcingov.sk/
15	PD EkoFarma Vazec	14.1	http://ekofarmavazec.sk/
16	OOCR Tatry Spis Pieniny	94.99	http://www.tatryspispieniny.sk/sk/
17	Klaster Liptov	94.99	http://www.klasterliptov.sk/
18	KOCR Severovychod	94.99	http://www.severovychod.sk/
19	Ovciarske Muzeum	91.02	http://ovciarskemuzeum.sk/

20	TAMI	10.51.0	http://www.tami.sk/
21	KOCR Zilinsky Kraj	94.99	http://zilinskyturistickykraj.sk/
22	Mas Pramene	94.99	http://maspramene.sk/
23	Agria Liptovsky Ondrej	*01.50	http://www.agria-lo.sk/
24	Voka	85.59	http://www.voka.sk/
25	Liptovská poľnohospodárska a potravinárska komora	9412	http://www.sppk.sk/
26	PD Liptovska Teplicka	*01.50	http://www.ppdliptovskateplicka.sk/
27	Lag Stredny Liptov	94.99	http://www.strednyliptov.sk/
28	EcoTrend	94.99	http://www.ecotrend.sk/zvaz-ekologickeho/
29	Rural Parliament	94.99	http://www.vipa.sk/
30	Arvi	7022	http://www.nsrv.sk/
31	Mediinvest	7022	http://www.mediinvest.sk/
32	Demenovska Dolina OOCR	94.99	http://www.demanovskadolina.info/
33	Penzion Gejdák	55.1, 56.1	http://www.penziongejdak.sk/
34	Tatry Pieniny Lag	94.99	http://www.tatry-pieniny.com/
35	Pro-Tatry	94.99	http://www.protatry.sk/
36	Hotel Lesna	55.1	https://www.hotellesna.sk/
37	Ecofarma Odorica	14.1	http://www.odorica.sk/

Appendix 3 – Descriptive Statistics

Classifications

	Tourism	N	Mean points	Sum of ratings
Research	Other sectors	17	19,35	329,00
	Tourism	20	18,70	374,00
	Total	37		
Innovation	Other sectors	17	20,29	345,00
	Tourism	20	17,90	358,00
	Total	37		

Test Statistics^a

	Research	Innovation
U de Mann-Whitney	164,000	148,000
Wilcoxon W	374,000	358,000
Z	-,256	-,776
Significance Sig. (2 extremes)	,798	,437
Sig exact [2*(Sig. de 1 extremidade)]	,869 ^b	,517 ^b

a. Grouping variable: Tourism

b. Not corrected for ties.

Classifications

	Region	N	Mean points
Research	Liptov	19	16,95
	Spis	15	19,93
	Other	3	27,33
	Total	37	
Innovation	Liptov	19	15,37
	Spis	15	21,60
	Other	3	29,00
	Total	37	

Test statistics a.b

	Research	Innovation
Chi-square	5,057	7,463
df	2	2
Significance Sig.	,080	,024

a. Kruskal Wallis Test

b. Grouping variable: Region

Crosstab

			Research		Total
			No R&D	Engaged in R&D activities	
Region	Liptov	Score	17	2	19
		% in Region	89,5%	10,5%	100,0%
	Spis	Score	11	4	15
		% in Region	73,3%	26,7%	100,0%
	Other	Score	1	2	3
		% in Region	33,3%	66,7%	100,0%
Total		Score	29	8	37
		% in Region	78,4%	21,6%	100,0%

Chi-square Test

	Value	df	Significance Sig. (2 sides)
Pearson's Chi-square	5,197 ^a	2	,074
Likelihood Ration	4,630	2	,099
Linear association by linear	4,556	1	,033
N Valid cases	37		

- a. 4 cells (66,7%) expected a count lower than 5. The minimum expected count is 65.

			Innovation		Total
			No innovation activities	Engaged in innovation activities	
Crosstab	Region Liptov	Score	14	5	19
		% in Region	73,7%	26,3%	100,0%
	Spis	Score	6	9	15
		% in Region	40,0%	60,0%	100,0%
	Other	Score	0	3	3
		% in Region	0,0%	100,0%	100,0%
Total	Score	20	17	37	
	% in Region	54,1%	45,9%	100,0%	

Chi-square Test

	Value	df	Significance Sig. (2 sides)
Pearson's Chi-square	7,670 ^a	2	,022
Likelihood Ratio	8,958	2	,011
Linear association by linear	7,439	1	,006
N Valid cases	37		

a. 2 cells (33,3%) expected a count lower than 5. The minimum expected count is 1,38.

Sector and R&D and Innovation activities

Crosstab

			Research		Total
			No R&D	Engaged in R&D activities	
Tourism	Other sectors	Score	13	4	17
		% in Tourism	76,5%	23,5%	100,0%
	Tourism	Score	16	4	20
		% in Tourism	80,0%	20,0%	100,0%
Total	Score	29	8	37	
	% in Tourism	78,4%	21,6%	100,0%	

Chi-square Test

	Value	df	Significance Sig. (2 sides)	Sig exact (2 sides)	Sig exact (1 side)
Pearson's Chi-square	,068 ^a	1	,795		
Continuity correction ^b	,000	1	1,000		
Likelihood Ration	,067	1	,795		
Fisher's exact test				1,000	,553
Linear association by linear	,066	1	,798		
N Valid cases	37				

a. 2 cells (50,0%) expected a count lower than 5. The minimum expected count is 3,68.

b. Calculated only for a table 2x2

Crosstab

			Innovation		Total
			No innovation activities	Engaged in innovation activities	
Tourism	Other sectors	Score	8	9	17
		% in Tourism	47,1%	52,9%	100,0%
Tourism	Tourism	Score	12	8	20
		% in Tourism	60,0%	40,0%	100,0%
Total		Score	20	17	37
		% in Tourism	54,1%	45,9%	100,0%

Chi-square Test

	Value	df	Significance Sig. (2 sides)	Sig exact (2 sides)	Sig exact (1 side)
Pearson's Chi-square	,620 ^a	1	,431		
Continuity correction ^b	,208	1	,648		
Likelihood Ratio	,621	1	,431		
Fisher's exact test				,517	,324
Linear association by linear	,603	1	,437		
N Valid cases	37				

a. 0 cells (0,0%) expected a count lower than 5. The minimum expected count is 7,81.

b. Calculated only for a table 2x2

Type of entity and R&D and Innovation activities

Crosstab

		Research		Total
		No R&D	Engaged in R&D activities	
Private ,00	Score	13	6	19
	% in Private	68,4%	31,6%	100,0%
Private	Score	16	2	18
	% in Private	88,9%	11,1%	100,0%
Total	Score	29	8	37
	% in Private	78,4%	21,6%	100,0%

Chi-square Test

	Value	df	Significance Sig. (2 sides)	Sig exact (2 sides)	Sig exact (1 side)
Pearson's Chi-square	2,285 ^a	1	,131		
Continuity correction ^b	1,237	1	,266		
Likelihood Ration	2,377	1	,123		
Fisher's exact test				,232	,133
Linear association by linear	2,223	1	,136		
N Valid cases	37				

a. 2 cells (50,0%) expected a count lower than 5. The minimum expected count is 3,89.

b. Calculated only for a table 2x2

Crosstab

		Innovation		Total
		No innovation activities	Engaged in innovation activities	
Private	Score	11	8	19
	% in Private	57,9%	42,1%	100,0%
Private	Score	9	9	18
	% in Private	50,0%	50,0%	100,0%
Total	Score	20	17	37
	% in Private	54,1%	45,9%	100,0%

Chi-square Test

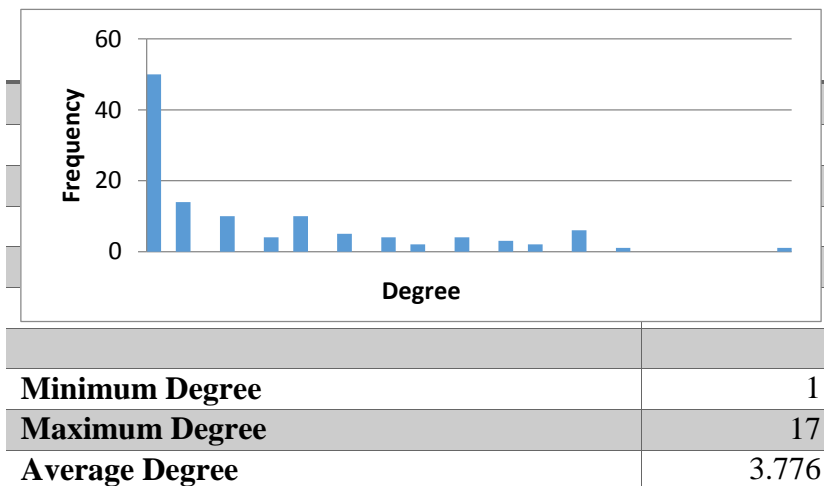
	Value	df	Significance Sig. (2 sides)	Sig exact (2 sides)	Sig exact (1 side)
Pearson's Chi-square	,232 ^a	1	,630		
Continuity correction ^b	,023	1	,879		
Likelihood Ration	,232	1	,630		
Fisher's exact test				,746	,440
Linear association by linear	,226	1	,635		
N Valid cases	37				

a. 0 cells (0,0%) expected a count lower than 5. The minimum expected count is 8,27.

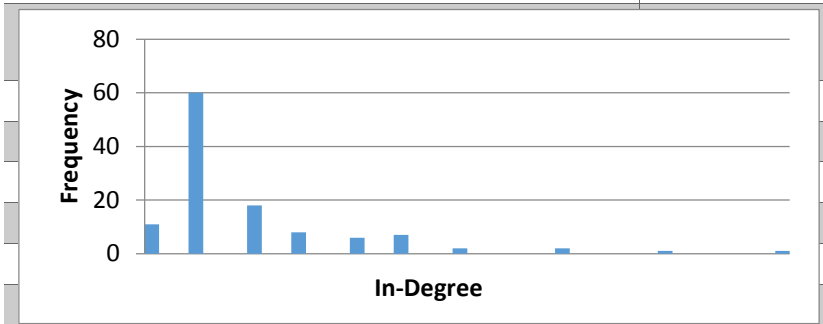
b. Calculated only for a table 2x2

Appendix 4 – Social Network Analysis of Agro-food, Tourism and Gastronomy Entities in the Two Regions

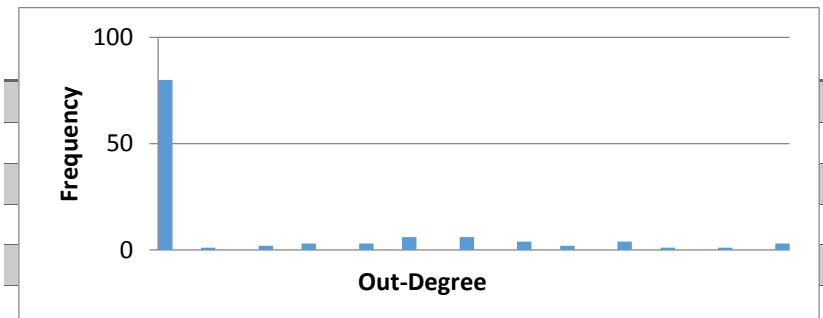
Graph Type	Undirected
Vertices	116
Unique Edges	206
Edges With Duplicates	26
Total Edges	232
Self-Loops	0
Connected Components	2
Single-Vertex Connected Components	0
Maximum Vertices in a Connected Component	112
Maximum Edges in a Connected Component	229
Maximum Geodesic Distance (Diameter)	7
Average Geodesic Distance	3.460191
Graph Density	0.032833583
NodeXL Version	1.0.1.361



Median Degree	2.000
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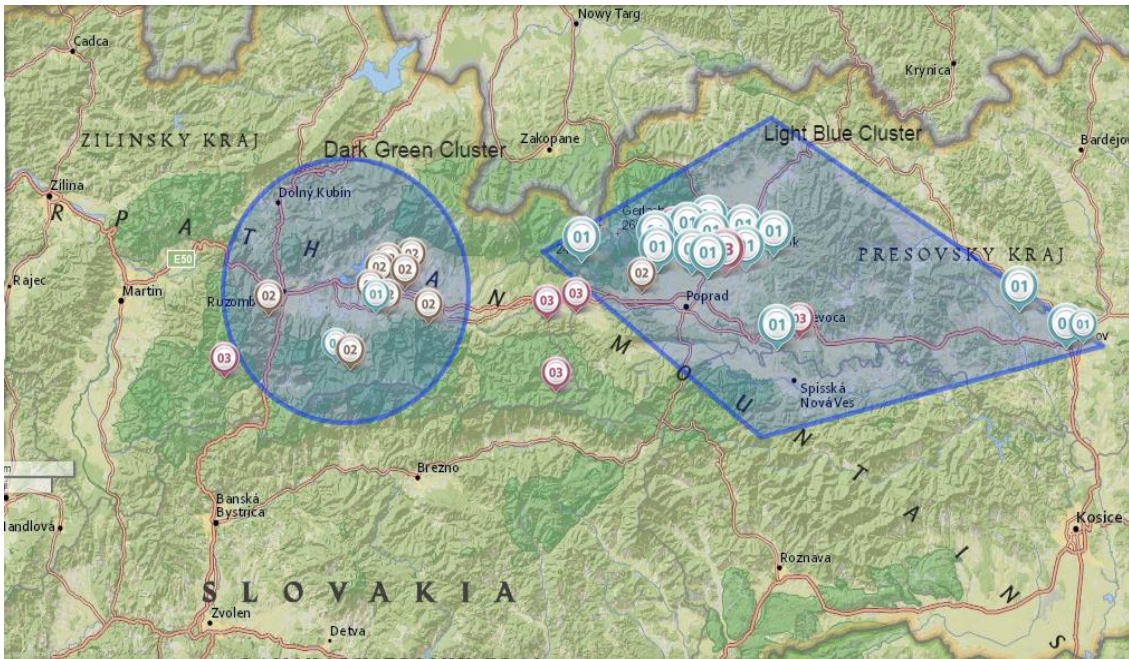
Minimum In-Degree	0
Maximum In-Degree	12
Average In-Degree	1.974
Median In-Degree	1.000



Minimum Out-Degree	0
Maximum Out-Degree	12
Average Out-Degree	1.974
Median Out-Degree	0.000

Appendix 5 - Entities by Clusters

<p>Dark Blue Disc Cluster</p>	<p>PPD Liptovská Teplička, PPD Važec, PPD východná, PPD Liptovská revúca, Ecotrend, APA, Local producers, Demand and distribution cooperatives, Liptovian food and agriculture chamber, Ministry of Agriculture and rural development, 4 tourism entities.</p>
<p>Light Blue Disc Cluster</p>	<p>Lag Pro Tatry, Lag Sabinovsko, LTO High Tatras, LTO Tatry Spiš Pieniny, LTO Demänovská dolina, LTO Podhorie, LTO Severovýchod, Prešov region, Municipality of High Tatras, Hotel Solisko, Grand hotel Smokovec, Hotel š studničky, Chopok, Kontakt, Lesná, Solisko, Rural Parliament, Lippek, PD Smižany, NRDN Regional Antena for Prešov, Dobré zo Slovenska, Pekáreň Gross</p>
<p>Dark green disc Cluster</p>	<p>TMR, Klaster Liptov, LTO Litpov, Info centre Liptov, SACR, Gašperov Mlyn, Penzión Gejdák, Hotel Lipotvksý dvor, Penzion Drak, PPS Bobrovec, Lip. Mliekareň, TMR, cech výrobcov ovčieho syra</p>



Appendix 7- Questionnaire

Mapovanie spolupráce

Identifikácia spolupráce a analýza potenciálu lokálnych produkčných systémov (klastrov) v oblasti gastronómie, cestovného ruchu a agropotravinárskeho sektora v regióne horného Spiša a Liptova. Dotazník pozostáva zo 4 sekcií a dokopy 21 otázok. Vyplnenie dotazníka by Vám nemalo zabráť viac ako 20 min. Nepýtame sa na žiadne ekonomické či finančné ukazovatele. Za Váš čas a ochotu Vám vopred ďakujeme.

***Required**

1. Vek *

<25

26-35

36-45

46-55

>56

2. Pohlavie *

Muž

Žena

3. Najvyššie dosiahnuté vzdelanie

stredná škola s maturitou

vysokoškolské/1. stupeň

vysokoškolské/2. stupeň

vysokoškolské/vyššie

4. Aká je Vaša súčasná pozícia v danom subjekte?

5. Prosím, uveďte názov subjektu, pre ktorý pracujete. Popríklad druh subjektu (hotel, reštaurácia, salaš...). *

Tato informácia slúži len na internú identifikáciu a organizáciu dát. žiaden subjekt ani osoba nebudú spájané s názormi ani informáciami poskytnutými v dotazníku. Nepýtame sa na žiadne informácie citlivej ani ekonomickej povahy.

Informácie o subjekte

1. Prosím, uveďte príslušný SK NACE kód daného subjektu.

2. Prosím, uveďte právnu formu subjektu.

3. Prosím, uveďte hlavnú činnosť/produkt Vášho subjektu.

4. Prosím, uveďte počet zamestnancov pracujúcich v danom subjekte *

<4

4-9

10-49

50-249

>250

5. Podieľa sa tento subjekt na vedecko-výskumných aktivitách v oblasti gastronómie, cestovného ruchu a/alebo agro-potravinárskeho sektora? Ak áno, prosím uveďte aké to sú.

6. Využíva Váš subjekt inovácie/inovačné technológie v oblasti gastronómie, cestovného ruchu a/alebo agro-potravinárskeho sektora? Ak áno, prosím uveďte aké to sú.

Networking a zdroje informácií

1. Prosím, uveďte aspoň 5 subjektov z regiónu Liptova či horného Spiša, s ktorými najviac spolupracujete v oblasti cestovného ruchu, agro-potravinárskej výroby a/alebo gastronómie *

Dodávatelia, odberatelia, partnerské organizácie. Prosím, ak je to možné, uveďte tiež formu spolupráce (projekt, zákazka, event, výmena skúseností, festival, konferencia, marketing, branding)

2. Prosím, uveďte aspoň 5 subjektov z verejného sektora a vedy a výskumu, s ktorými najviac spolupracujete v oblasti cestovného ruchu, agro-potravinárskej výroby a/alebo gastronómie. *

Spolupráca s verejným sektorom s regionálnym či národným vplyvom (Ministerstvá, podružné agentúry, platobné a administratívne agentúry). Prosím, ak je to možné, uveďte tiež formu spolupráce (projekt, zákazka, event, výmena skúseností, finančná podpora, informačná a poradenská podpora)

3. Je Váš subjekt členom nejakého združenia cestovného ruchu, Miestnej akčnej skupiny či zväzu? Prosím, uveďte, akých.

4. Zúčastnili sa Váš subjekt za posledné 2 roky na nejakom projekte zameranom na rozvoj cestovného ruchu a gastronómie v danom regióne? (festival, folklórne slávnosti, konferencia, výskumný projekt, propagácia lokálnych a regionálnych produktov, happening, škola varenia tradičných pokrmov....)

Your answer

5. Prosím, uveďte interné zdroje odkiaľ Váš subjekt čerpá informácie

In-house R&D

Marketing

Produkcia

Iné interné zdroje

6. Prosím, uveďte externé zdroje odkiaľ Váš subjekt najviac čerpá informácie

Konkurencia

Obstaranie hmotnej technológie

Obstaranie nehmotnej technológie

Klienti/členovia

Dodávatelia vybavenia, materiálov, komponentov či softvéru

7. Prosím, uveďte vzdelávacie a výskumné organizácie odkiaľ Váš subjekt čerpá informácie

Univerzity/vysokoškolské výskumné ústavy

Štátne výskumné ústavy

Súkromné výskumné ústavy

Other:

8. Prosím, uveďte všeobecne dostupné zdroje, odkiaľ váš subjekt čerpá informácie

Zverejnené patenty

Odborné konferencie, fóra a publikácie

Výstavy a veľtrhy

Other:

Potenciál lokálnych produkčných systémov

Význam spolupráce a networking-u v oblasti gastronómie, cestovného ruchu a agropotravinárskeho sektora v regióne horného Spiša a Liptova

1. Ako by sa podľa Vás dala do budúca zlepšiť spolupráca sektorov cestovného ruchu a agropotravinárskeho sektora v danom regióne?

2. Prosím identifikujte výhody, problémy, príležitosti a nedostatky spolupráce s inými subjektami v danom regióne.

ENGLISH VERSION

Mapping of Collaboration

Identification of cooperation and analysis of the potential of local production systems (clusters) in the area of gastronomy, tourism and agro-food sector in the Upper Spiš and Liptov region.

The questionnaire consists of 4 sections and 21 questions. Completing the questionnaire should not take more than 20 minutes. We are not asking anything about any economic or financial indicators of your entity. Thank you for your time and availability.

1. Age *

<25

26-35

36-45

46-55

>56

2. Gender *

Muž

Žena

3. Highest achieved level of education

High school

University/1. degree

University/2. degree

University/higher

4. What is your current position within the given entity?

5. Please state the name of the entity you represent. Or even the nature of your entity (hotel, restaurant, salaš...). *

This information will only serve for internal needs, identification and structuring of data retrieved from the questionnaire, no entity or person will be associated with information or opinions provided in the questionnaire. We do not require any information of economic kind or sensitive internal information.

Information about the entity

1. Please, state your SK NACE code.

2. Please, state the legal form of your entity.

3. Please, state main activity/product.

4. Please, state the number of employees working in this entity *

<4

4-9

10-49

50-249

>250

5. Does the entity engage in R&D activities related with gastronomy, tourism and/or agro-food sector? If so, please state which would that be.

6. Does the entity engage in innovation activities related with gastronomy, tourism and/or agro-food sector? If so, please state which would that be.

Networking and sources of information

1. Please specify at least 5 entities from the Liptov region or Upper Spiš, with whom you most cooperate in the field of tourism, agri-food production and / or gastronomy *

Suppliers, subscribers, partner organizations. Please, if possible, also specify the form of cooperation (project, contract, event, exchange of experience, festival, conference, marketing, branding)

2. Please indicate at least 5 public sector and science and research entities with whom you most co-operate in the field of tourism, agri-food production and / or gastronomy. *

Co-operation with the public sector with regional or national impact (Ministries, sub-agencies, paying and administrative agencies). Please, if possible, also specify the form of cooperation (project, contract, event, exchange of experience, financial support, information and counseling support)

3. Is your entity a member of a tourism organization, a local action group or an association? Please indicate which ones.

4. Have your entity been involved in a project focused on the development of tourism and gastronomy in the region in the last 2 years? (Festival, folklore festivities, conference, research project, promotion of local and regional products, happening, cooking school of traditional dishes)

5. Please provide internal resources from where your entity draws information

In-house R&D

Marketing

Production

Other

6. Please provide external resources from where your entity draws information

Competitors

Acquisition of disembodied

Acquisition of embodied

Clients/Members

Suppliers of materials, equipments, software, components

7. Please specify R&D institutions from where your entity draws information

Universities/university research institutions

State research institutions

Private research institutions

Other:

8. Please specify generally available resources from where your entity draws information

Patents

Conferences, forums, journals

Expos and Fairs

Other:

Potential of local production systems

The importance of cooperation and networking in the sphere of gastronomy, tourism and agro-food sector in the Upper Spiš and Liptov region

1. How can be anticipated and enhanced the future potential of the tourism and agro-food sector in the studied region?
2. Please identify the advantages, problems, opportunities and threats of cooperation and creation of a LPS of agro-food, tourism and gastronomy sectors.