Branding Romania through food tourism

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ABSTRACT

Food tourism has known a continuous development in both the eyes of stakeholders and tourists, in the recent years. Thus it is now at a level where there are clear examples of destinations that brand themselves through food tourism, using food tourism as strategy to develop the regional tourism and increase the number of the tourists. However, there are also destinations that have not begun using food tourism as a branding strategy. One such example is Romania, which although has received good feedback for its food, its destination branding strategy does not include Romanian traditional food. The authors of the present research believe that the traditional food can help Romania attract more tourists, especially those who come from countries with good rename in food consumption and tourism, like Denmark. Denmark has developed in the last years a food culture by revolutionizing its cuisine, but also a travel culture where Danes travel often as it resulted from our empirical data. Looking into Romanian inbound statistics in the last years, we have observed that the number of Danish tourists in Romania has not registered a growth tendency, but instead tends to remain somewhere at the same levels, being surpassed by other countries in the statistics. This aspect caught our interest and therefore, in this thesis, we have focused on the following research question: *How would branding Romania through food tourism influence the Danish tourists to visit the destination?*

In finding an answer to our research question, there were used both questionnaires and interviews with Danes; there were 230 questionnaires and six interviewees. The findings of the empirical data were analyzed and discussed with the help of literature review on food tourism, branding and tourist behavior. Based on the analysis, the answer to the main research question of this project is that Romanian traditional food is not yet a strong trigger to be used as a branding strategy for attracting more Danish tourists to Romania. This is due to the fact that Romania does not have a destination image engraved in the minds of Danes. But if that will change and Danes will be more aware of the possibility to travel to Romania. However, even in that situation the food would still not be the attraction that the Danes will want to discover first. Food is though considered as a enhancement of their experience, thus the Romanian traditional food might play an important role in strengthening the Romanian tourism and improve the experiences Danes might have in Romania. The participants in both questionnaire and interviews suggested that food can be an add-on to other attractions Romania has to offer to tourists, such as: nature, history and culture. Moreover, Danes consider the Romanian traditional food as not being of a high level; a gourmet level that the Danes seem to be used with. Thus it is also implied that if Romania wants to attract Danish tourists through food, the Romanian food has to be upgraded; a modernization that will take the food at another level, offering to the Danish tourists more exciting culinary experiences. From the findings as well, we see that Romania is not a known destination to the Danish market, and one of the reasons resulted from our analysis based on empirical data is related to the country image, which seems to influence tourists behavior in a high degree. Moreover, Romania's lack of promotion as a tourist destination may also contribute to the reduced number of Danes traveling there. For this to change, Romania has to promote itself intensively on the Danish market in order for the Danes to become aware of its existence and to remember Romania's destination image more than the country image; and if it is to incorporate the food element in branding strategy, then it is expected that the food should be revolutionized with a modern touch in order to arouse interest and become an important reason for traveling.

1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism plays an important role in the economies of most of the nations in the world (WTTC, 2015; UNTWO, 2015), especially for its qualities as job generator and one of the main sources of recovering for national economies (Petrescu et al., 2010). The importance of tourism is growing and it impacts societies not only directly but also indirectly (WTTC, 2015). In this context we hear about tourism destinations with a well-developed touristic sector, that works well and attracts many tourists, but there are also destinations with poorer tourism strategies, and with implications in the number of tourists they attract; one example of such destination being Romania.

Romania has tried for a long time to find the right strategy to promote itself for the international market as a tourist destination. However, tourism in Romania is still a field that has to improve. Romania's DMO (Destination Management Organization) have tried so far to make use of a series of universal attractions such as: nature and history for building up branding strategies. Yet, the most well-known Romanian tourist attraction can be considered Dracula and its myth. There have also been other branding strategies, but they remained at the level of ideas. Furthermore, based on the reduced number of international tourists visiting the country, Romania seems to be in a search for new ideas that will help them attract more tourists to the destination. In this context, in the recent years it has started to appear in the scientific literature articles debating the importance of Romanian traditional food for developing tourism in Romania (Florea, 2013; Teodoroiu, 2015). This trend can be based on the recognition of food tourism as an important branch of tourism (Hall et al., 2003), which has led also to more and more academic articles on this subject. Yet, the literature related to food tourism in Romania is scarce, with a few articles on this subject written among others by Teodoroiu (2015), Florea (2013) and Sava and Clesiu (2014).

Generally, food has earned a good name within tourism field, having the power to pull tourists to destinations and to foster regional development (Hall et al., 2003; Cohen & Avieli, 2004). Therefore more and more destinations recognize the importance of food, and focus on food as well in their tourism branding strategies. However, Romania has not focused on food tourism yet, although there have been discussions around the importance of the Romanian traditional food in regards to international visitors (Florea, 2013). We know neither why Romanian traditional food has not been used in the tourism branding strategies of the destination, nor why there are not more researches written about this subject. Yet, based on similar example of destinations in Sweden (Tellström, 2015) we believe that developing food tourism in Romania around the Romanian traditional food can help attract more international tourists, and also develop tourism in Romania. This is because Romania has many traditional products; beside these products there are also the cooking methods, old customs transmitted throughout many generations, aspects that can be a competitive advantage for Romania as a food tourism destination.

The tourism statistics about international arrivals in Romania in the last years indicate that there is an increase in the number of foreign tourists. However, there are nations that are growing constantly in these tourist statistics, but there are also others that do not present improvements, although at a first impression the name of the country can suggest that there could be triggers for their citizens to visit Romania in a sustainable way. However, the data we have covers the years 2013 and 2014; there is no data available yet for 2015 (Annex D). But, based on these data, comparing the statistics of these two years our attention focused on the fact that there aren't many tourists that come from Scandinavia. Moreover, if Norway and Sweden appear in the statistics, Denmark appears only in 2013, afterward the number of Danish citizens visiting Romania remained at around the same values, and consequently the name of Denmark does not appear in the statistics, being overcome by other nations. This caught our attention, becoming one of the starting points for our project. Being Romanian citizens and living in Denmark for some years now, we had the opportunity to experience both cultures; even more we consider that Romania has tourist attractions of interest for Danes. Although Romania does not seem to have attracted Danes in large numbers, we want to investigate in this research whether Danes would be influenced to travel in bigger number in Romania for the Romanian traditional food. Thus, the main research question of our research is:

How would branding Romania through food tourism influence the Danish tourists to visit the destination?

This idea is based also on our own experiences and knowledge about the both cultures, experience that tell us that branding Romania as a food tourism destination for Danes won't be a mismatch; on the contrary the two culinary cultures seem to have some similarities. The Danish cuisine has it roots in the old times in Denmark, and it aims to help people against the cold and wet climate in the country, providing the necessary nutritional values (copenhagenet.dk). Thus Danes used to eat heavy food, with many traditional dishes based on lots of pork and beef, but also poultry and fish which are usually eaten with sides of potatoes and vegetables (Denmark.dk; everyculture.com; copenhagenet.dk). Moreover, it is already acknowledge that Danes as consumers care in high degree of price, and are interested in bargain shopping (Bjerregaard & Schonherr, 2012), characteristic that match the low prices (in comparison with Denmark) of the Romanian food. Furthermore, even though the Danish society has changed and developed until today in all its domains, including food -mainly because the New Nordic Food trend- the Danes use still many of the old recipes in spite of the influences coming from foreign cultures (copenhagenet.dk); so Danes are still eating in the traditional way. The same do Romanians, and as it can be understood from the main characteristics of the Romanian cuisine, the main ingredients and habits are alike, which can lead to establish a comfort zone for the Danes visiting Romania. For this to happen one of the actions that are needed is that Romania is branded as a food tourism destination.

Answering our main research question can be useful for both Danish and Romanian parties implicated in tourism. First it may help Romania's national DMO -Tourism Romania- which may consider food tourism as promotional strategy. Then, it can help the destination and

the entrepreneurs to add food as an offer for the tourists, but also to contribute the overall economy of the country. On the Danish side, branding Romania through food tourism can be relevant for the Danish tour operators like Spies, Star Tour, Bravo Tour, or Apollorejser, because they will have the opportunity to expand their offerings as a travel agency and sell a new destination to their customers, which could bring good value for money.

Furthermore, our empirical data will be collected based on questionnaires and interviews with Danes. We are looking for Danes who have traveled to Romania, but also for those who have not been yet to Romania, because it will help us gain knowledge about Danes tourist behavior, their degree of interest in food, trips to Romania and consumption of Romanian traditional food. However, the interviews will be of high value because they are done with Danes who have eaten Romanian food, and so can give some pertinent assessment of the food, and the way they see it in relation to Danes food consumption behavior
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1.1 STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

Regarding the structure of the thesis, our research is divided in six chapters: chapter 1 introduces the reader into the problem area and presents the issue for this master thesis; chapter 2 will present a short introduction of Romanian tourism, mentioning general information about Romania as a tourism destination and previous branding attempts, but also highlighting the potential that the country has to be promoted as a food tourism destination; chapter 3 will present the methodology of this research and the methods applied; in chapter 4 the reader will have the opportunity to explore the theoretical framework used for this thesis, focusing on the literature review that is tackling concepts such as: branding, image, branding through food tourism, tourists consumer behavior or food tourism; in chapter 5 the empirical data collected during this research is being analyzed and discussed. This is considered to be the most important part of the project, because it will give us answers to our research problem. In chapter 6 the conclusions are drawn and the answer of our research question is made visible. The last chapter will be followed by further research related to our topic.

2. TOURISM IN ROMANIA

In this chapter we present some data regarding the tourism in Romania, with focus on food tourism. This section has the role to shed light over Romania as a tourism destination, and the reasons why we chose it as the subject of our research. Thus in the next pages we present general information about Romania as a tourism destination, and data about the Romanian food.

2.1 GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT ROMANIA AS A TOURISM DESTINATION

Romania is the second biggest country in the southeastern part of Central Europe with a population of about 20 millions inhabitants and an area of around 238 sq.km (romaniatourism.com), surrounded by neighbors as Hungary, Ukraine, Republic of Moldova, the Black Sea, Bulgaria and Serbia.

According to Romania's Destination Management Organization (DMO), Tourism Romania (tourismromania.com), the country can be best described with three words: authentic, natural and cultural, but these aspects are just some of the general offerings of Romania, without making it different from other destinations. However, Romania is promoted as a destination rich in *history, arts and scenic beauty* (tourismromania.com). Romania's territory is divided into three main parts, almost equally spread: there is a third of the territory covered with the Carpathians Mountain, another third with hills and plateaus -used for vineyards-, and a last third of fertile plains used in agriculture. Moreover a quarter of the country surface is covered with forests, which are home for one of richest faunas in Europe, including bears, lynx, deer, chamois and wolves (tourismromania.com). Romania is also the place where the Danube River ends its journey across Europe in a delta, which is one of the largest and most bio-diverse wetlands in the world (tourismromania.com). Based on all these Romania is considered *the most beautiful country in Eastern Europe* (romania.travel.com).

Built up on the natural offering and not only, tourism in Romania -as it is also described on Tourism Romania's website (tourismromania.com)- knows diverse types, offering multiple attractions. From winter tourism to summer tourism, to cultural tourism, heritage tourism, rural tourism or balneary tourism, Romania might be considered as having plenty of potential to attract tourists of all kinds, and from everywhere. Yet, even though Romania has many attractions, statistically tourism is not among the main sectors that contribute to country's economy, like industry, wholesale, retail trade etc. (europa.eu), which can be translated, as tourism in Romania does not produce money, sending to reduce numbers of tourists. One of the possible reasons for this situation can be that the tourism sector in Romania has still to develop and improve. However, when it comes to numbers, it can be noticed that tourism has low levels, but the tendency is improving. In 2015 Romania was ranked 61 out of 184 countries in the world (WTTC, 2015); yet, from UNWTO (2015) database an increasing tendency in both domestic and international tourists can be also noticed. Domestic tourism helps a lot because it is shown that Romanians are among the top nations in Europe when it comes at domestic trips, and among the bottom line countries when it comes to outbound tourism (eu.europa.com, 2015). However, it is worth noticing that more and more international tourists choose to visit Romania, with the last statistics talking about two millions international tourists in Romania; this number implying a substantial two digit grow of 12% compared to the previous year -2014-, in a context of decline in tourist numbers in central and eastern Europe (UNWTO, 2015). One of the most important aspects linked to the arrival of international tourists in Romania is that they spend money in Romania; thus in 2014 the visitor exports (money spent by foreign visitors to a country) was RON 7,3 bn. (which equals EUR 1,6 bn (oanda.com). These numbers are expected to have a healthy grow in the coming years; thus, in 2025 it is anticipated to be more than 10 millions international tourists in Romania, who will spend RON 14.4bn (Eur 3.2 bn) (WTTC, 2015). When it comes to the favorite attractions for tourists visiting Romania, the foreign tourists choose to visit mainly Bucharest and its surroundings, and only very few of them choose to

travel across the country and visit other cities, mountains resorts, spa resorts, the coastline and the Danube Delta (The National Institute of Statistics, 2015).

Among the nations that visited Romania in 2014, the majority are Europeans - 76% of the foreign tourists - out of which the most of them were from Hungary (29,9%), Bulgaria (24,2%), Germany (9,4%), Italy (7,1%), Poland (6,2%) and Austria (4,0%) (The National Institute of Statistics, 2015). However, the data we have covers the years 2013 and 2014; there is no data available yet for 2015. As we mentioned also in the Introduction chapter, based on these data and on the fact that Danish tourists are not so many in Romania, turned our interest to research if Romanian traditional food would be a way to influence them come and visit Romania. Romanian traditional food is not well known abroad, but it seems to be liked once one tries it. However, until now there has not been a focus on food within Romania's destination branding strategies.

2.2 NATIONAL BRANDING OF ROMANIA

In order to understand why Romania needs a new branding strategy and also to understand why we consider that food could be a possible future brand to make the destination visible on the Danish market, we will present briefly in the next paragraphs what has been done so far and the struggles that Romania went through to create its own brand.

An important element that has contributed in shaping Romania as a country is its past history (Nicolescu et. al., 2007). Historical events, especially those over the last decades (e.g. communism, Romanian revolution from 1989), have had a high impact on molding the national identity of the country (Nicolescu et. al., 2007). The communist ideology in Romania – totalitarian regime that has denied human rights and that has subordinated the individual to the collective entity of the party/state - was hostile to true spiritual values, which it has attacked and pursued them permanently in order to destroy them (Gligor, 2010). Once with the Revolution from 1989 which ended with the liberation of Romania under the communist dictatorship, the country began a process of national redefinition (Kaneva & Popescu, 2011), which it can be also argued that this process is still ongoing if one analyzes the countries nation branding campaigns that have run so far as an attempt to escape from a 50 years communism experience. Light (2012:14) observes that 'Romanians are struggling to define themselves on their own terms, while also dealing with an externally-imposed stereotype' 'communist Romania' and/or 'Dracula Romania', while Ragalie (2014) believes that Romanian tourism is developing upon history, culture and struggle.

The struggle of building a national brand of Romania can be also observed by the failure of many attempts to run a campaign in order promote the country as a tourism destination for the international market, which some of them will be shortly presented in next part of this subchapter.

The first branding action was the campaign from 1995 'The Eternal and Fascinating Romania' a photo album which aim was to promote the country in a positive light. In the end it was a fiasco by generating negative visibility around embezzlement scandal, which surrounded

the campaign (Sepi, 2013). Another campaign was 'Dracula Park' (2001), which was supposed to be a large amusement park around the vampire story of Bram Stocker expecting to attract approximately one million of foreign tourists per year. The project raised a number of controversies among Romanians that did not identified with the Dracula's legend, and due to lack of funds and support from population, the project was dropped (Sepi, 2013). The year 2004 was the year for 'Romania, Always Surprising' campaign that had an aim to change the perception about Romania in Europe and US. The campaign was criticized by the WTO for not communicating the essence of the country, by lacking a clear image and the brand promoted sent mixed signals (Sepi, 2013). This campaign was followed in 2006 by 'Romania Fabulospirit', which focused on the country's people and their spiritual heritage, lifestyle and personality. The political instability from that time resulted in the resignation of the Minister in charge, generated the campaign's failure (Sepi, 2013). Another attempt for tourism brand was the campaign 'Romania, Land of Choice' from 2009-2010, who resorted to coopted famous personalities as unofficial 'ambassadors' (e.g. gymnast Nadia Comaneci, football player Gheorghe Hagi, tennis player Ilie Nastase) to promote Romania as a diverse and attractive tourism destination for foreign tourists; it failed again because it did not succeed to create a consensus inside the country (Sepi, 2013). Last but not least the campaign 'Explore the Carpathian Garden' (last campaign focused on the foreign market so far) which was first presented at the World Exhibition in Shanghai in 2010, also focused on creating positive image of the country in order to increase its attractiveness as a tourism destination (Sepi, 2013). One of the insights gained from this campaign was that tourists' impressions improve after visiting the country and one of the main issues being the lack of information about Romania as a tourism destination (Cretu, 2011). Like any other brands campaign presented before, this one did not managed to avoid criticisms. According to Mihaela Ivan (mihaelaivan.ro), who is a political consultant and researcher, the research conducted in 2013 and published under the name 'Graphics research study - Romanians' perception about the brand of country' showed that Romanians believe that the country lacks a strategy compatible with the national identity, whose consequence is the inability to create a national brand; they also expressed their dissatisfaction with the way Romania was promoted. Additionally, according to Popescu & Profiroiu (2013) the study that ranks the nation brands every year based on Anholt's index of national brand (2005 mentioned in Popescu & Profiroiu, 2013), ranked Romania on 41st in 2008, positioning in 2009 on the 37th place (the last from the EU member states) and again on the 41st in 2010. Moreover another report, 'Country Brand Index' places Romania on 92nd from 110 country surveyed in the year 2010 stating also that the country does not have a developed brand and that it lacks brand positioning in the mind of the tourists due to lack of knowledge about the country (Popescu & Profiroiu, 2013). Taking in consideration what we mentioned in this subchapter, Romania requires more consistent and integrated efforts for building a destination image in order to become competitive (Nicolescu et. al., 2007).

According to the Romanian National Authority of Tourism, food tourism could be a possible brand of Romania or even the next brand. As we mentioned in the previous subchapter,

Romania has started to get more and more involved in activities involving food (e.g. food festivals, food markets, food congress) and promoting traditional dishes. The Romanian cuisine is diverse and contains many customs and culinary traditions, specific foods that were born from the intersection of Romanian gastronomic culture with traditions of other nations with which the Romanian people came into contact throughout history. Food tourism is a growing phenomenon, because more than a third of tourist expenditure is designated to food according to a report of WTO and also makes it one of the main reasons for going on holidays (Gheorge et al., 2014). Razvan Filipescu (now ex-president of ANT) said two years ago that (translation from Romanian):

Gastronomy is an important part of rural tourism, and (…) is heavily promoted at fairs and festivals with this specific in Europe. Rural tourism has developed in recent years both internationally and in Romania, due to its special valences, including environmental conservation, preserving local traditions, cultural values through participation in local gastronomic pursuits. (…) Gastronomic routes are becoming very popular tourist products. They are a true system, a themed and complex tourist offers. The route provides information about other attractions in the area, promoting its economic development. According to a study made by the WTO, over 88% of its members consider that gastronomy is a key element in defining the brand and image of destination, and over 67% say that their country has its own gourmet brand. Regarding tourism products, the study carried out showed that the most important are gastro-economic events (79%) gourmet routes (62%), courses and cooking workshops (62%), visits to markets and local producers (53%) (agerpres.ro).

2.3 ROMANIAN TRADITIONAL FOOD

In this subchapter we will present some of the main aspects of the Romanian food, so the reader can get an overview of what it is about. Yet, even though food and wine usually are discussed together, we will not discuss Romanian wine, since we choose to focus on Romanian traditional food alone.

Romania's DMO -as we mentioned in the previous part- set focus on many different attractions for tourists, but no so much on the food tourism. There are voices in Romania and abroad who appreciate the deliciousness of the Romanian dishes, and there are food festivals around the world with Romanian food (Baker, 2014; O'Conner, 2015; Prepare to serve, 2015), but in spite of these there is not an official promotion made by the tourism authorities. However, there is argued that food and tourism go hand in hand, and that the importance of food tourism was acknowledged and has grown in the last couple of years (Hall et al., 2003; Hjalager, & Corigliano, 2000; Sava & Clesiu, 2014), so branding Romania as a food tourism destination should not be seen as new strategy within the tourism field, but something quite normal in this given context.

Romanian cuisine is acknowledged to have been influenced by other cultures such as Greeks, Russians, Bulgarians, Hungarians, Serbs, Germans and Austrians (Sava & Clesiu, 2014),

with the biggest influence coming from Ottomans (Teodoroiu, 2015). Following these influences, to which it should be added the Western and modern influences, the culinary landscape in Romania is more diverse, similar to other food destinations around the world. Thus, there are restaurants where the offer is general and depends on the wish of the cooks and staff; a hand of high class restaurants -mainly in the big cities, especially in Bucharest- with master chefs who creates signature dishes; fast food restaurants; restaurants with specific entirely Romanian; restaurants offering dishes specific to other cuisines such (Chinese, Italian, Mexican etc.) mainly found in the big cities. Additionally there are festivals dedicated to food of which the most important ones are put together by Sava & Clesiu (2014) in the table below:

Festival name	Location
Prejmer Pancakes Festival	Prejmer - Brasov
Mangalitsa Pork Festival	Baia Mare
Virsli Festival	Corvinilor Castel - Hunedoara
''Bradulet Cheese'' Festival	Bradulet - Arges
Figs Festival	Svinita - Mehedinti
Trout Festival	Ciocanesti - Suceava
''Banat Bread'' Festival	Tmisoara
Raciturilor Festival	Valea Bistritei – Gorj
Fishermen's Borsch Festival	Jurilovca - Tulcea

Table 1: Best known food festivals in Romania (Source: Sava & Clesiu, 2014).

Before we get into details about the Romanian traditional food, we must say that seasonality plays its role in the food that it is prepared and served in Romania (Teodoroiu, 2015). Thus starting from the spring time to the late autumn Romanians use for cooking mostly fresh products coming from local production and not only. During the winter season the diet is changed, focusing more on heavy dishes based on different kind of meats and vegetables cropped during autumn. Hence, Romanian traditional food is also ecologic in high levels, especially when traveling in the rural areas. Moreover, Romanian traditional food says a lot about its agrarian roots, and its tumultuous history (Baker, 2014). Pork, chicken and sometimes lamb, to which there are added side dishes based on fruits and vegetables, are central to country's food culture. There are many dishes that can be considered as Romanian traditional food, sometime cooked differently from a region to another. However, here we will introduce some of the most representative dishes, just for the reader that has no vast knowledge about the Romanian traditional food to get a glimpse of what its main dishes look like. Moreover, the dishes presented below are among the most discussed and appreciated by foreigners trying them. By reading the description of some of the main Romanian traditional recipes, the reader who has not tried yet Romanian dishes can gain an insight of what the Romanian traditional food is.

Thus there are some specific dishes set together under some generic names. This is the case of '*ciorba*', which includes soups (with meat or vegetables, tripe soup, calf foot or fish soup) that have a sour taste due to the lemon juice, sauerkraut juice, vinegar or the traditional

'*bors*' (fermented wheat bran), which are added to the soup. Among the most popular are '*ciorba de burta*',* which is in fact tripe soup made from cow's innards, flavored with garlic. It is the kind of *ciorba* Romanians can easily eat, while for foreigners it is sometime hard to be enjoyed, being considered by some of them as gross (Prepare to serve, 2015; twodanesontour.com, 2015).

As main dish, a popular one is called *sarmalute,* which is considered Romania's de facto traditional dish (Baker, 2015). *Sarmalute* are cabbage rolls stuffed with minced meat and rice. Another local main dish is *tochitura,* which is a pork stew topped with eggs and feta cheese; it is usually eaten with *mamaliga*. *Mamaliga* is the so called *polenta* – a corn mush. It is eaten most of the time by its own, as a replacement for bread or as side dish for stews, gravies or other similar dishes. One dish that is on the lips of all Romanians is called *mici;* in translation *small* they are small grilled rolls of minced pork or beef, eaten usually with mustard and bread, and very popular for picnic and parties, but *mici* can be also found as food street in the big cities of Romania.

Desserts vary in Romania from a region to another. However, *papanasi* is maybe one of the desserts linked the most to the local traditions. They are fried dough, sweetened curd cheese, jam and cream.

On the run it is very common to grab some *covrigi*. They are oven-baked bread rolls which taste and look pretty much like bagels or pretzels. They are sold plain, but in the recent times it is not uncommon to find versions sprinkled with sesame or poppy seeds. Most of the time in the same spots with *covrigi* and sometimes even sold in special spaces, *gogosi* is a sort of dessert to go; they are very similar to doughnuts, most of the time dusted with sugar.

Special sets of Romanian traditional dishes are those prepared usually with the occasion of holidays. Such dishes are *cozonac,* which is a kind of sweet sort of bread with nuts, poppy seeds and/or Turkish delight. Another dishes consumed during holidays are based on lamb – especially for Easter. There are *bors de miel* (lamb soup soured with fermented wheat bran), roast lamb and *drob de miel* a Romanian style haggis made of minced offal with spices, wrapped in a caul and roasted. For Easter, Romanians prepare also *pasca,* which is a sort of pie made of yeast dough sometime filled with sweet cottage cheese filling at the center, or a boiled egg, according to the region it is made in.

2.4 WHAT IS TRADITIONAL FOOD?

After all these information about the food in Romania, it is also interesting to take a look at what is actually seen as defining the traditional dishes and/or products. The aim of this short subchapter is to clarify what is our view over the term *traditional* in the context of food consumption in Romania.

Tradition and traditional are two terms widely used nowadays in relation to many aspects, one of them being food. However, even though there is a high use of the terms there is not an unanimously accepted definition of it (Amilien & Hegnes, 2013). However, one definition that we have found in the literature review, and that we consider to be close to our understanding and usage of *traditional* in the current research, is the one given by Verbeke et al. (2010, in

Almli et al., 2011), who define traditional foods as frequently consumed or associated to specific celebrations and/or seasons, transmitted from one generation to another, made in a specific way according to the gastronomic heritage, naturally processed, distinguished and known because of their sensory properties and associated to a certain local area, region or country. The difficulties in finding a unanimous definition for traditional food can be linked to the fact that it is a relatively new term, fact that did not affect its perception among the scholars. Thus traditional food implies some aspects that are accepted by many scholars. These aspects are linked to the meaning of traditional food as a whole product covering not only the production techniques and the food, but also the way it is and should be consumed (Amilien & Hegnes, 2013). Tradition as a concept is perceived as either a good or a bad meaning, depending on the subject of the discussion. Furthermore, what is for sure is that one of the most important dimensions of tradition is its temporal reference, beside the cultural and knowledge ones. This dimensions applies to traditional food as well, fact for which, in our paper, we will use the terms traditional food in relation to the Romanian cuisine, as referring to those dishes made and eaten accordingly to a tradition that last for many years and it has been transmitted from generation to generation. Furthermore, we refer to traditional food as opposed to modern food, traditional food covering thus the temporal and cultural dimensions mentioned by Amelien & Hegnes (2013) as being components of anything that is defined as traditional.

However, if one has a look at the Romanian legislation the discussion about what is *traditional* and what is not might get a bit difficult. This is because a traditional product is translated in the Romanian legislation as *a product that must be produced within the Romanian borders, obtained from traditional raw materials with no additives, that present a traditional composition, a traditional way of production and/or processing which reflects a traditional technological production process, which is clearly different from other similar products from the same category* (Order No. 724/2013 art. 2). However, producers benefit from funds given to them in order to encourage the production of traditional food and beverages; yet, the producers have to follow European Union lows on quality, and the final product must be certified as a traditional product (Teodoroiu, 2015). Following all these we can conclude this idea by underlining that there are registered a number of 485 products (Romanian legislation, 2015), although we have also found another source stating that there are 513 products, at the end of 2015 (economica.net, 2015), not to mention that Teodoroiu (2015) has a figure in its paper presenting a total of 4402 traditional products in Romania until the end of 2013; information which we believe to be wrong.

Yet, we consider all the specifications regarding traditional food from the Romanian legislation as being very technical, thus we would refer to *traditional* food in relation to Romania, only as an indication for the old Romanian dishes whose recipes have been transmitted from generation to generation. However, the sense we use for *traditional* does not refer to the historical aspect, but also at the current usage of it, since the Romanian traditional dishes are eaten in the daily basics in Romania.

As a consequence of this subchapter, it can be seen that Romania has potential to link the already known -or at least promoted- attractions to food, and so to create a stronger destination image for the potential tourists, especially the Danish tourists who are our part of our research focus. Moreover, food has been used as an explicit branding tool for different regions or nations for about 150 years back (Tellström, 2011). Thus Romania does not have to do anything new, but help and develop its image building strategies through food culture, branding that can be done both ways: either promoting a place through food or promoting the food through an already known place (Tellström, 2011).

3. Methodology

This chapter will outline the methodological process that we went through in order to fulfill the purpose of the research. Moreover it will also present the reasoning behind all our methods applied, which will allow the reader to have an understanding of the whole process. The structure of this section will include discussion about: the research foundation and design, the techniques and the approach for this research; research method and data collection; validity and reliability as quality tools for this research; research analysis; and methodology limitation and criticism.

3.1 Philosophy of science

In this subchapter we will focus on the research philosophy and the approach used in this master thesis, which has shaped the way we carried out our research. According to Teichmann & Evans (1999) philosophy of science is the point of departure for analyzing fundamental ideas and perspectives linked with reality, existence and knowledge. Hence, it is influenced by the paradigms accepted by the researches; paradigms which can be explained, according to Guba (1990:17), as '*set of beliefs that guides actions*'. In addition, these paradigms include the component of ontology, epistemology, methodology and methods (Scotland, 2012), which will be shortly explained in the following lines.

Ontology refers to the study of being, '*what is*'; in other words what constitutes the reality (Gray, 2014), while epistemology refers to the theory of knowledge, and tries to understand '*what it means to know*' (Gray, 2014) or '*what is the nature of the relationship between the knower (the inquirer) and the known (or knowable)?*' (Guba, 1990). According to Scotland (2012) every paradigm is built on its own ontological and epistemological assumptions and since assumptions are by nature speculative it is very difficult to prove or to contradict these paradigms. Moreover, different paradigms imply different ontological and epistemological perspectives, resulting in different assumptions about the reality and knowledge, which is reflected in the methodology and methods of their particular research approach (Scotland, 2012).

Methodology refers to the chosen strategy to be implemented in the research by determining the methods desires to be used in order to achieve the objectives of the research. It is focusing on why, what, from where, when and how the data is gathered and investigated

(Scotland, 2012). Methods, on the other hand, are techniques used to gather information, which can be both qualitative and quantitative (Scotland, 2012).

Crotty (1998 in Gray 2014) argues that there is an interrelationship between theoretical perspective of the researcher, the methodology and the methods used, and the researcher's understanding of epistemology. With other words, the designation of the methods used in the research would be influenced by the research methodology selected, which in turn, would be influenced by the theoretical perspective embraced by the research epistemological outlook (Gray, 2014). This means that in our research we also underwent a reasoning process and our epistemology and theoretical point of view determined the research methodology, which has been implemented in this thesis.

The way we approached and looked at our topic shows that we have been guided throughout the course of the research by a constructivist paradigm view. According to Guba (1990:27) constructivism is assuming that there is 'no true replica' of reality and its aim is to '*reconstruct the world, not to predict, control or reshape it'*. Moreover, he highlights that realities can be found in various mental constructions, which means that individuals can have different interpretations when looking at the same subject that is under investigation, based on their knowledge and understandings (Crotty, 1998). This was also the case in this research, and as suggested by Guba & Lincoln (1989) we tried to understand the respondents' opinions, reconstruct and analyze their answers in order to draw relevant conclusions for our project. The Danes who participated in our research have different experiences and perceptions about Romania, and what a reality represented for one participant meant something different for another, because each individual had its own set of beliefs when evaluating and perceiving things.

Objectivity in the constructivism paradigm is very hard to reach or how Guba (1990) argues impossible, because when a researcher undergoes an investigation he interacts with different people, which make the knowledge acquired in the mind of the researcher inevitable molded due to this interaction with the object of the research; and if the researcher wants to access the new reality, then he has to make use of subjective interaction, making the knowledge to be consider subjective (Guba, 1990); while in an objectivist epistemology, there is only one objective reality (Gray, 2014). However, there are opinions, which sustain the idea that objectivism does not reject subjectivity, but when researcher investigate people's own views they have to do it objectively (Bunge 1993 in Gray 2014).

A theoretical perspective linked to constructivism is interpretivism, which sees the reality individually constructed. Thus, each reality is subjective and differs from one individual to another (Scotland, 2012). Our thesis is also situated within the interpretivist approach. Our topic of study is linked among other aspects to the investigation of Danes perception towards Romania as a destination, or their motivation when selecting a destination, aspects that are not easily observed or measured; moreover, when different people may hold different interpretation of the same object (Scotland, 2012). We as researchers tried to investigate the participants' point of view by exploring their reality, which is based on their own interpretation, results that are

open to new interpretation based on our understanding. This shows that the social reality is socially constructed and subjective, rather than being based on objective facts (Gray 2014). Therefore, the results of this research are interpretive and can not be generalized for Denmark.

Since the methodology of this thesis is complex and involves a series of implemented methods, we have decided to structure them in several sub-chapters in the following.

3.2 RESEARCH FOUNDATION AND DESIGN

In order to capture our initial thoughts that we have had about the topic, we used a mind map (Annex C, p. 140). Through its definition a mind map is a diagram that connects information around a central subject; it is an efficient tool to make you think more creative and see solutions to your problems (Pinola, 2013). We have also used as inspiration the pentagon model presented in 'The Good Paper' by Rienecker & Jørgensen (2013). According to Rienecker & Jørgensen (2013, p.30), in order for a project/research to be acceptable, it needs to have five main elements, such as: research question (what is that we are asking?), purpose (why we are asking?), data materials and phenomena (to what data are we addressing the question?), theories concepts and methods (which tools are we going to approach?), and research design (how are we going to carry out the research?), which we also considered necessary and important for our thesis. We have a main research question, and the project's aim and purpose were presented in the '*Introduction*' chapter. A fundament for our research was represented by the courses we have studied during our Master program, but also our experience and knowledge about the two countries (Romania and Denmark) gained during the years. In addition, the fact that the writers are both Romanian brought much insight and understanding in relation to the Romanian culture and cuisine, which was also part of our motivation to undertake this project. The theories discussed were in relation to brand, destination image, image formation, tourist behavior, perception that were used to sustain our data collection and analysis of the results. Last but not least, we focused on primary and secondary data. The results were analyzed in a separate chapter and afterwards final conclusions were drawn.

In order to have a better overview of the methodology of this thesis, we made use of the '*research onion*' framework (fig. 2) introduced by Saunders et al. (2007). This framework compares each layer with the stages that a researcher goes through when planning the methodology for its research (Saunders et al. 2007). Each layer of the onion will be presented in more details in the following sub-chapters.
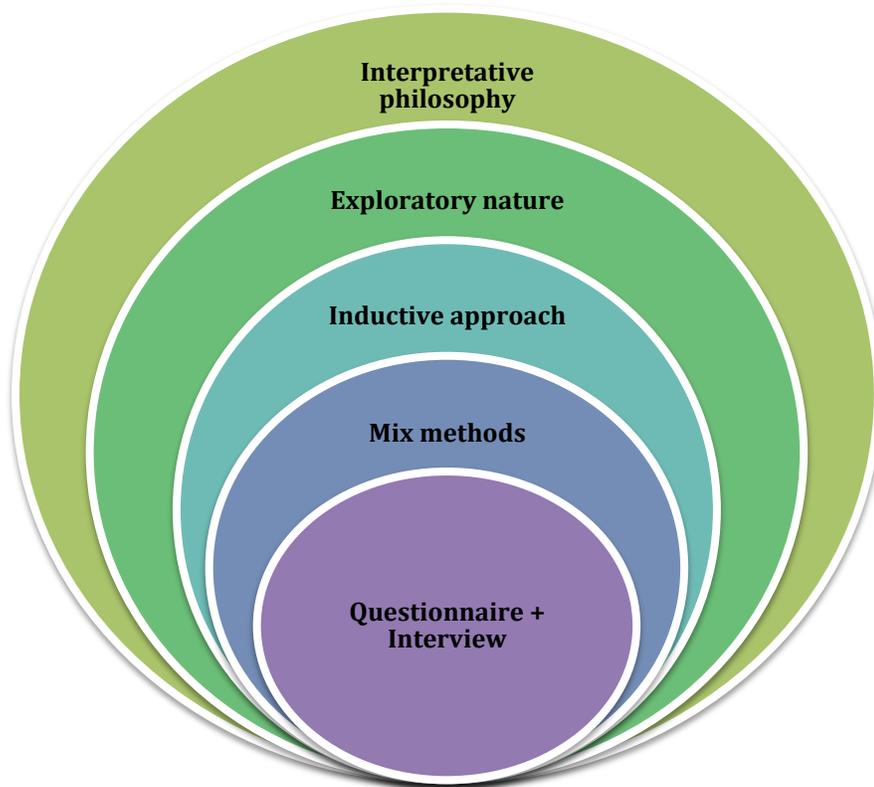
Fig. 1 Stages of methodology section

3.3 EXPLORATORY RESEARCH

This thesis is an exploratory research. The exploratory research gave us the opportunity to explore a topic that has not been addressed so much by other researchers, and as Brown (2006, p.43) states *Exploratory research tends to tackle new problems on which little or no previous research has been done*. Thus, researching Danes' perception about the destination image, but also motivation and traveling behavior for food was necessary to be studied in this case. We can say that we have started from the presumption that Romania has the potential to be branded as food destination and to attract international tourists interested to try Romanian cuisine, but we did not know to what extent it could be applied for the Danish market. This approach helped us investigate the issue more thoroughly and to have a better understanding of the topic. It has also determined the best methods to be used in this research. However, exploratory research can be broad in focus and rarely provides conclusive answers to particular research issues (isites.harvard.edu). Therefore it is needed that the purpose of this thesis to be clearly defined.

3.4 INDUCTIVE APPROACH

      The general reasoning that we have applied in this project was inductive. According to Thomas (2006) inductive reasoning refers to the approach that uses the primary data (e.g. first hand data collected on the field by the researcher) to extract concepts, themes or a model related to the evaluation objectives and which have emerged after the researcher's interpretation of this primary data.

      We have resorted to an inductive approach in our thesis, where we have been collecting relevant data for our topic, generated both by the secondary research and primary research. As we mentioned before, we have started looking into how branding Romania as food destination would influence Danish tourists to visit the destination, - based on our observations of the Romania's potential for food tourism and also of the Danes' increasing interest toward food in their country. For this we looked into concepts like branding, food tourism, perception or image. We have read many academic articles, journals, but also collecting first hand data from the target market regarding the topic. All the results from both primary and secondary data were subject to analyze. As the research unfolds we have identified some patterns that the respondents fell into. These patterns were structured in the form of themes, that we have explored and drew general conclusions.

      The advantages that we have discovered when using an inductive approach, was that it fit in our case in the conditions that we did not have all the complete information to answer our research question. Also, our experience with the topic was very limited and this reasoning helped us to draw the best conclusion we could base on the results of our research. The downside is that we can not ensure generalization for our conclusion using the inductive approach, because we have not discussed the subject of interest with all Danes; also in order to generalize we have to make the assumption that all Danes will have the same answers for the same questions, which in this case cannot be proven; therefore the results of our project are not universally applicable.

3.5 RESEARCH TECHNIQUES

      We have focused on both primary and secondary research techniques in order to collect the data necessary to conduct our research, and along with the reasoning behind our decision will be explained in the following sub-chapters.

3.5.1 PRIMARY RESEARCH

      This research implies gathering first-hand data directly by the person involved in the process of researching a subject (Driscoll, 2011). Thus, a researcher can resort to various data methods, like: interview, questionnaire, focus group, observation or experiments (Driscoll, 2011).

      There are advantages, but also disadvantages for a researcher that wants to get involved with primary research. Primary research is helpful especially when we want to learn about a

certain problem that has not been tackling in many published research, because it gives the possibility to collect data on our own in order to supplement what we already found in the existing literature (Driscoll, 2011). In addition, the information gathered can be very valuable and specific to the research topic, but it can also imply higher cost than other types of research and it can also be time-consuming (business.qld.gov.au).

It is recommended to undergo this type of research, after the secondary research is over, in order to see what information already existed and what it is need for the research to further investigate (Driscoll, 2011). This is also what we have done in this thesis and we decided to use both interviews and questionnaires, in order to enhance the quality of our evaluation. Additionally, we believe that both methods complement each other, where one's limitations are counterbalanced by the strengths of the other (Creswell, 2003).

3.5.2 SECONDARY RESEARCH

The secondary data is considered to an important method of collecting data and is referring to information already available from different sources such as: textbooks, books, newspaper, articles, journals, marketing research, which helps the research to better understand the problem under study (Crawford, 1997).

The secondary data in this thesis is a literature review on the branding, destination image, food tourism, and last but not least tourist behavior. We have started the desk research by consulting a wide range of published texts, available online, or at the library and starting to build our foundation in order to continue with our intended research.

There are many advantages in gathering this type of information. First of all, one can have easy access to all sorts of information and is very convenient to reach it, taking the example of the Internet, broadcasting media or libraries (knowthis.com). Second, based on our personal experience most of the data it is free of charge, so it does not imply high costs. Third, it could also help the researcher to clarify and to become more knowledgeable about the research topic (Crawford, 1997). However, there is also a downside with this type of technique. When it is resorted to secondary data, the researcher has to be aware of the potential sources of bias (Crawford, 1997); the researcher does not have so much control upon the information available and s/he should not take everything for granted, since it is very difficult to test the quality of this information (knowthis.com). Also the information can be also insufficient for what you are planning to use it.

3.6 MIXED RESEARCH METHODS

The thesis aim was to analyze how would branding Romania through food tourism influence the Danish tourists to visit the destination, and in order to achieve the objective of the research we decided to focus on a mixed research design, collecting both quantitative and qualitative data from the field. We believed that using mixed data could reinforce the results in this case, by strengthen each other and by minimizing the weaknesses of a single approach (Creswell, 2003, Kuada, 2012). Moreover O'Cathain et al.(2007, in Kuada, 2012, p.119) argues that *mixed methods research is more than mixing different methods; it is a purposeful and*

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powerful blend to increase the yield of empirical research, aspect that motivated our decision to focus on this type of research.

According to (Johnson & Christensen, 2008), qualitative data, like the interview for example, emphasizes on collecting words, images and object aiming to investigate and explore a certain subject. The downside of this method is that is very time-consuming, which involves in finding potential interviewees, recording useful data (e.g. audiotapes, notes) and it is dependent on the skills of the researcher, which in some cases can influence the results (Johnson & Christensen, 2008).

The quantitative methods, like the questionnaire for example, produce descriptive data and they are helpful to get an overview of the extent of the problem area (Harboe, 2010). The advantages of this method is that it is based on numbers, and the work of researcher consist in collecting and putting everything into a chart or figure, making the data more easy to read and understand. The disadvantage with this method is that *the figures rarely speaks for themselves and therefore the interpretation work is often the biggest challenge* (Harboe, 2010, p.46).

We have relied on collecting empirical data, by integrating both interview and questionnaire, because we believed that it would provide a richer data, but also because of the nature of the project with a topic that has not been researched before, we were able to enter in contact with more Danes. Both the questionnaire and the interview applied in this project are presented in the following sub-chapters.

3.6.1 QUANTITATIVE DATA COLLECTION: THE QUESTIONNAIRE

We have designed a questionnaire that was released between 2nd of April 2016 and 30th of April 206. We have targeted only Danish people and we've used different methods to distribute the questionnaire among them. On one side we have used various social platforms to reach the target group, such as Facebook and LinkedIn and spread the questionnaire, as Vriens et. al (2001) also stated that the Internet has a tremendous capability of spreading the questionnaire. The reasoning behind was that it gave us the possibility to reach a high number of people in a short amount of time; can be considered by some people more convenient, as it gives more freedom in choosing when and at what speed they want to fill the questionnaire, last but not least it was quicker to administer, since the results were collected and organized instantaneous by the survey tool. Firstly, we contacted all our Danish connections by directing them to a link which contained an online version of the questionnaire created on the web platform esurveycreator.com and asked them in turn to spread further the link to their Danish network. Secondly, we have made several posts on different Facebook groups (e.g. AAU university tourism related and social pages, personal and work related pages) urging Danes to fill out the questionnaire and again spread the message further to others that we could not reach. On the other side, we have gone on the field and tried to interact directly with Danes, in order to create a contact between them and us and to increase the number of respondents of our questionnaire. We have been standing in different spots in Copenhagen, like Central Station, Nørreport, Kongens Nytorv, which were chosen depending on the frequency of passengers passing through

these travel hubs. We were not very successful in attracting people to participate in our survey, so we decided instead of standing in the spots previously mentioned - due the fact that most people motivated their answer as being in a hurry – to go places like parks or in the proximity of the sea, where people were just relaxing, static and not in a hurry to do other activities. We have observed that this approach was more efficient and people were more cooperative.

We have focused to have respondents from different age category, since we did not make a segmentation of the target group, though the people were randomly selected and not predetermined; thus it can be argued that some age categories are more predisposed to Internet (e.g. social media) than others, aspect that we believe that could have influenced the respondents from the online platform. The decision of not focusing on a specific group of people was influenced by two reasons: firstly, if we would have made a segmentation of potential Danish tourists that would be interested to travel to Romania because of food, we would have been probably directed to focus on foodies or people with an interest in food. The challenge with this would have been finding the right people to participate in our data collection. It would have been hard to identify who is a foodie or has an interest in food. Even though we could have gone to different places, which seem to be popular because of their gastronomic experience offerings (e.g. Torvehallerne, Papirøen, Kongs Nytorv) and talking with people, it would not mean that all people that eat at these places would be a foodie or interested in food. Their reasons to be there could be many. Secondly, targeting Danes in general and not taking into account age or their profile and so on, allows us to optimize our results and not exclude other segments that could bring many insights into this matter.

The questionnaire had 20 questions classified into close-ended questions, open-ended questions, filter questions and Likert questions. We designed the questionnaire based on the literature review and the theoretical frameworks that we considered relevant for our research in order to gain insights about the respondents' travel behavior and motives, how image of a destination influence their decision to travel, what are their perception about Romania as a destination or becoming a food destination, their interest in food, or trying new type of food, especially the traditional food found at a certain destination. The questionnaire was made directly in English and had a short pre-testing period, where we took the opportunity to make some corrections, which were suggested by the feedbacks subsequently received. In order to involve more Danes in this survey, we decided to translate the questionnaire in Danish language, which turned to be a wise decision, because we have experienced that people were more open to the idea of responding in their mother language, minimizing also the time spent filling the questionnaire. In the end, from both the English and Danish questionnaire, we were able to collect answers from 231 respondents, from which 67 participated in the online questionnaire and the rest were from face to face interaction. Though, one online participant was not considered relevant and it has not been taken in consideration. The results of the English and Danish questionnaire, both online and face-to-face can be accessed from the USB drive attached to this project. Moreover, the results from the face to face questionnaire gathered on the streets can be also found in Annex A, page 87, answers, which gave us a better overview over these

results, instead of going back and forth with the physical questionnaire that was extended on three pages.

3.6.2 QUALITATIVE DATA COLLECTION: THE INTERVIEW

Another important tool in the process of gathering information on the field was the interview. We have organized several interviews with Danes that have been traveling in Romania, and it was conducted in the same period as the questionnaire. The discussion with the persons that have been in Romania was focused on their overall experience in Romania related to food, their perception about the country before and after visit, but also about motivation and behavior when it comes to select a destination, and in what degree the food is a persuasive factor. In order to reach as many potential interviewees we have applied the snowballing sampling technique recruiting Danes from among our acquaintances, which have been to Romania and experienced the traditional Romanian food.

We have succeeded to organize 4 interviews: one on the 14th of April with two persons at a time, Anne and Rasmus, the second on the 20nd of April with Toni and Helle, the third one on the 22nd of April with Bo and the fourth on the 29th of April with Jens. The interviewees' profile was different from one another. We had interviews with both male and female, with ages between 30 and 55, and different occupations such as hotel receptionist, food/photo blogger or sale assistant. We have identified the interviewees according to two main criteria: one to be a Danish citizen, and the second to have traveled to Romania in order to find pleasure in spending an hour with us and discuss our topic of interest. Most of the interviews had a semi-structured composition, which means that we have prepared in advance a series of questions, that we considered necessary to ask, but new questions were also formulated depending of the result of what the interviewees said, which gave us a better flexibility to explore opinions of the interviewers more in depth in order to deplete the subject of interest. However, we maintained the focus on our topic and took control when the discussion digressed to irrelevant matters. We have departed in our interview from a more general approach of the topic to more particular questions about the topic. In addition, the interview with Toni and Helle was conducted via e-mail due to their location and impossibility to meet face to face. All the interviews were recorded and we made transcription for each of them, in order to turn the conducted interviews into valid data to be submitted to analysis. The transcriptions can be found in the Annex B, page 120 and all the recordings were saved and can be accessed from the USB drive which is attached to this project.

3.7 RESEARCH ETHICS

Research ethics was an important aspect that we took in consideration. We have paid a high attention and we tried to the extent possible to take in consideration and respect the ethical principles towards all the people we entered in contact with. We have given full autonomy to all respondents regarding their freedom of participation in this research. We have not pressured

anyone to answer questions that they din not wish to answer or influencing in any way their answers towards a certain outcome.

Anonymity was also important for us, and not only it made the respondents feel more comfortable to take part in our interviews and questionnaires, but also personal information were kept confidential and were not revealed without their agreement. Last but not least, we have not used any incentives in order to attract participants in our data collection process and everyone received equal treatment.

3.8 RESEARCH ANALYSIS

After the data collection process has ended, the entire information gathered through the questionnaire and interview were analyzed and discussed. The strategy applied in this section was to examine the results of the questionnaire together with the results of the interviews and see what ideas they bring up. Having an overview of both the results of the questionnaire and interview, we were able to go through them and see if we can find patterns that could help us conceptualize the data into specific categories that shared certain similarities. Furthermore, it gave us the possibility to identify several themes on which we built our analysis and discussion regarding our research questions, which can be accessed in details in the chapter 'Analysis and discussions'. The analysis is based on interpretation and the theoretical tools presented in the chapter three, which means that we do not focus only on what the respondents and participants in this research said, but we also make connection and links to the theories presented previously. We also make use of the recontextualisation, by extracting ideas from the original context from the interview and questionnaire, in order to introduce them into another context (Harbow, 2010) that could help us discuss and interpret the results and draw conclusions to our research question. The themes were structured in different subchapters as follows:

- Theme1: Romanian traditional food seen as an extra value for enhancing tourists' experiences;
- Theme 2: Romanian traditional food should be more appealing;
- Theme 3: The image of Romania influences Danes' decision to travel;
- Theme 4: Lack of knowledge about Romania as a tourist destination on the Danish market;
- Theme 5: Cheap is attractive;
- Theme 6: Danes are neophilic foodies.

These themes were structured in a specific order, taking the discussion from a specific to a generic point of view, and they are elaborated in the chapter five.

3.9 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY OF THE DATA COLLECTION

Reliability and validity are ways of demonstrating and communicating the rigour of the research process and the trustworthiness of research findings (Roberts et al., 2006, p.41). In other words, validity and reliability are two components that can be used to check the quality of the research (Harboe, 2011).

According to Harboe (2011) validity is referring to how well the stages of the research are connected to the problem that is under study; *it is about the closeness of what we believe we are measuring to what we intend to measure* (Roberts et al, 2006, p. 41).

Reliability on the other side, refers to the extent the methods used (e.g. questionnaire) provide solid and consistent results in different circumstances (Roberts et al., 2006). Hence, we should reflect about how reliable our data is and what are the probabilities to produce the same results if the exact same study would be carried out again (Harboe, 2011).

We have focused in this project on mixed methods research design, by using more than one method to gather information and to enhance the analysis (Kvale &, Birkmann 2009). Using the questionnaire and interview as direct methods to collect data, has increased the research validity, however we can not say there is enough to provide a conclusive research, as we did not checked the reliability of the methods we applied.

Lincoln and Guba (1985, p. 316) state that *since there can be no validity without reliability, a demonstration of the former [validity] is sufficient to establish the latter [reliability]*. Either way, it is hard for us to state that we achieved thoroughly validity and reliability and to what extent we will obtain the same result if we repeat the research. According to Veal (2006) only in natural science can be presumed similar results, while in social science is it very difficult to achieve, since it is changing continually, and necessitates a higher attention to general statements built upon qualitative research.

3.10 METHODOLOGY LIMITATIONS

This last section from the 'Methodology' chapter will present some of the obstacles we have encountered during our research. They will be discussed one by one and in no particular order.

We have encountered a series of limitation during our data collection process. Firstly, it was challenging to find participants that have traveled to Romania in order to invite them to participate in an interview; this was not only because our Danish network is very limited, but also because even though we have reached some Danes that have been in Romania through the snowballing technique, some of them motivated lack of time to participate in this research or they din not reply to our invitation. Secondly, we have observed that some of our questions in the questionnaire can be interpreted in different ways; this is also based on the feedback received from some of the respondents. Here our limitation was caused by linguistic misunderstandings, as either English or Danish is our mother language. We have explained and tried to correct this aspect with those whom we had a direct contact, and here we refer those respondents that we have approached on the street and had the chance to clarify what they did not understood. Unfortunately we can not say the same with those that have fill out the questionnaire on-line. Thirdly, we have conducted only one round of questionnaire and interviews during this research, therefore the aspects that could not be clarified or we missed to clarify on spot with the person in question have been interpreted based on our own understanding and reasoning. Nevertheless the repetitiveness of the questionnaire and interview in different rounds would probably increase the

validity and reliability of our thesis. Fourthly, the online questionnaire has limited the demographics of our respondents, as we have experienced that the majority who had participated in our questionnaire were Danes with age between 18-30, and we did not have a balance between age categories.

Studying perception of tourists towards a certain destination and their traveling behavior was challenging, both analyzing and measuring it. Additionally, we consider that our strong connection with Romania represented another limitation to this study, factor that has to be taken in consideration when evaluating the objectivity of the research. Last but not least, focusing on Romania as a whole destination rather than different regions from inside the country that can be themselves individual destinations could have influenced the perception of Danes towards Romania as a tourist destination, associating or confusing the image of the country with the image of the destination.

4. LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter we are carrying out a literature review aiming to offer an overview of the most important aspects discussed by scholars in relation to food tourism, tourist behavior and branding. We desire to focus on these three aspects because in our perception they play an important role in conducting and answering our research question; our research question pointing to destination branding, food tourism and tourist behavior.

4.1 FOOD TOURISM

This subchapter will present what food tourism means and what it implies. The information we will bring here is all based on the literature debating this subject.

The discussion about food tourism can be started by saying that food is no longer only a physical need, but more than that: food has become an important social event that helps interact with other people in social, cultural and political terms (Mak et al., 2012). Even in areas in which one doesn't consider food as an asset -as it happened in tourism for a long time-, the tendencies have changed. Thus, food and tourism are linked more and more (Hjalager & Corigliano, 2000). However, when it comes to tourism, food consumption plays different roles: from the obligatory tourist activity, to an important influencer of social distinctions, further to a way to experience other cultures. Moreover, food is the only tourist activity that involves all the five senses (visual, tactile, auditory and olfactory) (Mak et al., 2012), having thus the potential to intensify culinary experiences, and to offer something for all the senses of the tourists. Hence, it is more and more clear that food might play an important role in tourists' decision-making process when selecting a holiday destination (Cohen & Avieli, 2004; Mak et al., 2012), especially when thinking that tourists need sustenance (James & Halkier, 2014). Moreover, understanding the impact of food on tourists but also destinations, it might be relevant to mention that tourists spend up to a third of their money on food while visiting a destination (Mak et al., 2012), fact that influence, or in case it does not happen yet, should influence destinations to focus on the food/food related

offerings for the tourists. Nevertheless, food consumption in tourism has been neglected by scholars until recently (Hall et al., 2003; Cohen & Avieli, 2004); the reasons for that could be multiple, though one of them appears to top the others: food consumption in tourism has been seen for many years only as a supporting consumer experience (Quan & Wang, 2004). However, the situation seems to have been changed, making Hall et al. (2003) to note that food is finally gaining the recognition it deserves, but of course one may argue that is not the case off all destinations, as it is not the case of Romania either (as we focus on Romania's possible branding through food tourism).

In order to understand what is that makes food tourism important, we need to understand what it is. Thus, in the following subchapter we will bring together definitions given by scholars talking about food tourism.

4.1.1 WHAT IS FOOD TOURISM?

Hall et al. (2003) say that when trying to define food tourism it is important to make a difference between tourists who see food just as a part of their travel experience, and tourists whose activities and even destinations are chosen based on interest they have in food. Thus, food tourism is defined by the same authors (Hall et al., 2003) as "visitation to primary and secondary food producers, food festivals, restaurants and specific locations for which food tasting and/or experiencing the attributes of specialist food production region are the primary motivating factor for travel". Another definition for food tourism, but with the same substrate as the one from Hall et al. (2003), is found in Hall & Sharples (2003, cited in James & Halkier, 2014). They consider food tourism to be the desire to experience a particular type of food or the produce of a specific region. Moreover, in order for tourists to be called food tourists it is mandatory that they go to the location of production in order to consume the local products; hence food tourism means the consumption of the local food, and the consumption and production of place (Hall et al., 2003). From here, as well as from the Fig. 2, it can be understood that not any visit to restaurant is food tourism; it is food tourism only if the intention behind that visit is to taste a certain dish or product, to experience the offerings of a specific chef, etc. (Hall et al., 2003), because in this way the mentioned triggers for eating local food at a destination will turn the food and the experience in an attraction; otherwise just going at the restaurant pushed by the physiological need of eating would be just a need, even though one may realize that, after finishing the dinner, s/he liked the food. Moreover, from the Figure 2 it can be understand that there are not so many tourists traveling to a destination where nearly all their activities are food related.
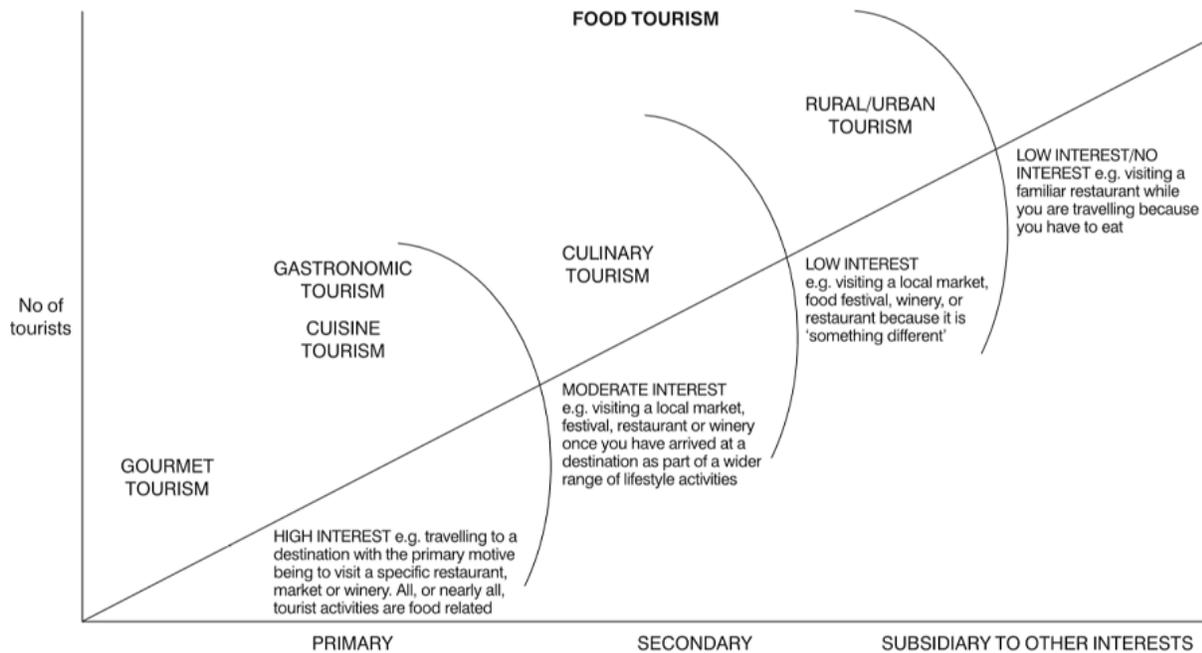
Fig. 2. Interest in food as a travel motivation (Source: Hall et al., 2003).

An interesting way to view food tourism is found at Mak et al. (2012) who without framing it as a definition say that food tourism is a unique form of eating which occurs in a foreign and unfamiliar context.

These are the definitions given to food tourism that we have found in different academic articles and books. Even though there are most likely more definitions for food tourism, based on the literature we have gone through, including authors like Hall (how is a well-known researcher within the field of food and wine tourism), these ones that we have just mentioned cover most of the important facts of the subject, fact that allows us to move to a further sub-chapter debating some of the dimensions of food tourism; attributes that appear to be important (due to the multitude of articles in literature debating them), and which offer us valuable information to work with in our project for the coming chapters.

4.1.2 FOOD TOURISM DIMENSIONS

Since the food has started playing an important role in tourism, there can be considered four dimensions of it: food as a tourist attraction/product; tourists' food attraction behavior/pattern, tourists' dining perspectives, and tourists' special interests in various food and beverages and related events/activities in destinations (Mak et al., 2012). The first of these four dimensions, the one underlying food's role as an attraction, implies two sub-aspects: one of food seen as an attraction, pulling tourists to destinations; and, one of food seen as an impediment, discouraging tourists to visit certain destinations. Hence, in the coming subchapter we are focusing on these two dimensions: food an attraction and food as impediment for tourists, known also as neophilia and neophobia.

4.1.2.1 Neophilia and neophobia

In food tourism neophilia (love of new/novelty) and neophobia (fear of new/novelty) are two dimensions related to risk (Hall et al., 2003). They, neophilia and neophobia are also related to personal traits; for example, there are neophilic traits within tourists with a better knowledge about a certain cuisine, while the neophobic traits are present at those who visit a place for the first time. Moreover, the relation of the two dimensions (neophobia and neophilia) with individual traits is made also by Plog (in Hall et al., 2003) who suggests that allocentrics (travelers that are said to be interested in adventure travel, looking for novel experiences) are usually neophilic tourists, while psychocentrics (travelers choosing trips close to home, at familiar destinations) are neophobic tourists. Moreover, Tuorila et al. (1994, in Hall et al., 2003) say that those having neophobic tendencies dislike novel looking, smelling and tasting food. Yet, due to the globalization and emergence of new cuisines food tourism has focused on food consumption as a neophilic attraction (Hall et al., 2003).

Most of the scholars and media have discussed food tourism more from the perspective of food as an attraction -in most of the cases-, while the focus on the impediment side of food at a destination is rarely debated (Cohen & Avieli, 2004), although this distinction has its importance due to the fact that in the context of tourists at a destination they are more exposed to potentially new dishes than when they are at home, because of the local food of the destination. To emphasize this aspect Cohen & Avieli (2004) suggest that eating at a destination can be more threatening and risky than other sort of interaction to the environment. However, this kind of encounter takes place in most of the cases at destinations belonging to the Third World, involving mainly tourists from the so called civilized countries (Cohen & Avieli, 2004). Generally, tourists -even though they are excited about a new trip- they have also some worries most of the time linked to the adaptive aspects of the trip, such as climate, health risk and the availability of safe and edible food and beverage (Cohen & Avieli, 2004). Thus, we have learned about tourists who carry with them along the trip food products familiar to them (Cohen & Avieli, 2004), so they hope they stay as safe as possible at least from the point of view of the new cuisines at destinations. However, another aspect to consider here is that under the excitement of a trip to a new destination, tourists are more adventurous and open to try new and strange local dishes; many of them because they have become familiar with exotic dishes from experiences where local cuisine open their views and fuse with local ones (Cohen & Avieli, 2004). But the same authors state that although tourists think that through experiencing fusion food feel acquainted with it, it will still be insufficient for them to deal with the actual encounter with the novelty of food at a destination (Cohen & Avieli, 2004). Moreover, it is not only the food that sometimes scares tourists at a destination; they also can develop a feeling of neophobia when they encounter unfamiliar culinary set-up or even threatening local culinary arrangements - which sometimes can be repulsive- before they even approach the menu (Cohen & Avieli, 2004). All these threats that have been presented here are feelings that some of the tourists have mainly because they fear that their trip will be interrupted; thus they are not necessary scared by the long

term consequences of e.g. food consumption at a destination, but rather by the immediately effect of it. It is so because tourists' time is supposed to be quality time that tourists want to spend in the best way possible. Regarding the neophobia tourists have towards food at a destination, an important and supporting role is held by the doctors as well; doctors being some of those who advise and warn their tourist patients of the dangers presented by the food at foreign destinations (Cohen & Avieli, 2004).

Even if tourists don't suffer from neophobia, they are afraid to try local food at destination because of disgust or because of unhygienic appearance (Cohen & Avieli, 2004). Moreover, tourists can also feel threaten by local eating habits, for example eating without utensils or with utensils very unfamiliar to them.

4.1.2.2 Symbolic versus obligatory

Closely linked to the above food dimensions of neophilia and neophobia, there is another dichotomy between the *symbolic* and *obligatory* nature of food tourism, which according to Mak et al. (2012) can shed some light over tourists' actions in regards to new foodstuff. Thus, the symbolic nature refers to the cultural aspect of the food experiences one has at destination, which enrich her/him with new knowledge and skills; many tourists consider that trying local food of a certain destination it is a way to get not only new knowledge on local food, but also knowledge on the local culture (Mak et al., 2012). On the other side the obligatory nature of food consumption at a destination refers to the fact that tourists beside the symbolic aspect of a trip they need also to feel the familiarity and comfort of home. In this context personal traits, like that of food neophobia (which translates as the fear of consuming new type of food) can affect the consumption of food in tourism (Mak et al., 2012). However, these sides both act like a fight in the tourist's' mind, a fight that is named by Mak et al. (2012) as the t*ourists' paradox*, defining the oscillation a tourist has between the two sides: symbolic and obligatory. This oscillation can be seen also as an oscillation between novelty and familiarity. Moreover, Hall et al. (2003) talking about this paradox identifies three levels within this paradox: pleasure versus displeasure, health versus illness, and life versus death. This is because one of the motivations for tourists is to get engaged in new experiences and explore new places (Mak et al., 2012). Yet, for most of the tourists there is also the need for an *environmental bubble* (Cohen & Avieli, 2004)*,* something to link them to their natural environment from their home places, this aspect being essential for them in order to enjoy the tourist experience (Mak et al., 2012). Thus, although food and dining at the destination might be some of the most important tourist attractions (Mak et al., 2012), many tourists need to feel safe when traveling, especially in the case of Western tourists traveling to destination from the developing countries or below that level, destinations which offers dishes not known to them (Mak et al., 2012).

4.1.2.3 Food as a sustaining or a peak experience

Founded on the articles written in the literature about food tourism in regards to neophobic and neophilic feelings of tourists, a way that help one to understand them can be through looking at the way tourists perceive food at a destination. It is thus interesting to learn

that tourists seem to focus on two aspects in regards to food when traveling; thus they see the food at a destination either as a sustaining consumer experience or as a peak touristic experience (Quan & Wang, 2004).The peak touristic experiences are opposed to the daily experiences, while the supporting experiences are linked to the identification of daily experiences. This separation depends on the daily routine of tourists in relation to food consumption, and it sends to two aspects: extension or contrast (Quan & Wang, 2004; Mak et al., 2012). Thus, if we follow Quan & Wang's (2012) idea that daily routine, while traveling, is linked to comfort, relaxation and ease, then food can be seen as an extension of the daily routine when it presents no novelty and no risks for tourists; while the contrast aspect is experiencing the opposite of this situation, where tourists are exposed to new experiences they haven't tried, experiences which some of them can perceive as risk.

However, Molz (cited in Mak et al. 2012) emphasizes that the interest and willingness to try other culture's food at a certain destination comes with risks as well. Still, an increased exposure to food at a destination, also the familiarity with other cuisines may decrease this risk (Mak et al., 2012). Moreover, with the presence of many different cuisines at destinations around the world, tourists have the chance to familiarize with other cuisines and so to reduce the risk that Molz is talking about (Mak et al., 2012); even for those arguing that the food of a different culture tastes and is prepared differently at it original place than in other places around the world, it is still an important fact, because it makes it possible for tourists to experience and gain superficially knowledge about the cuisine and culture of other.

Exposure to other cuisines than the one someone has grown up with, increase the preference for those foods, because familiarity increases with repeated exposure; and this is another way to reduce the perceived risk linked to it. However, risk is considered to be an inherent part of food tourism because it brings with it the exposure to unfamiliar ingredients, hygiene, health risks, culinary settings and different flavors (Mak et al., 2012). Beside these risks, there are also tourists who choose not to eat unfamiliar local food, being scared by the risk of being unaccustomed to its taste and/or flavor. Moreover, it is common for tourists at their first visit at a given destination to experience neophobia and associate consumption of local food as a risk, but repeated visits to the same destinations reduce these feelings and make tourists more open and willing to try the local food (Mak et al., 2012).

Apart from these, there is also known that the communication gap can interfere and cut short tourists' willingness to try local food. This is because in some places it is hard to identify on the menu what are the local dishes; or the description of the dishes or even the communication with the staff is far from going smoothly (Cohen & Avieli, 2004). Therefore beside the food itself at a destination, there are also other aspects to be considered in order to attract tourists to consume local food; one of these aspects is the tourist culinary establishment.

4.1.3 TOURIST CULINARY ESTABLISHMENTS

As we have mentioned already there are considerable number of threats or reasons for tourists to be reluctant to food consumption at a destination. Yet, one of the important aspects

that have enough influence to put off the desire of trying local food is the establishment that offers the food.

In order to reduce the degree of reluctance food tourists have at a destination, culinary establishments are considered a precondition (Cohen & Avieli, 2004) because of the following two reasons: to provide neophobic tourist with familiar food, and to make new foodstuff accessible to neophilic tourists. These establishments play also the role of a filter for the local cuisine, in order for it to suit tourists interests, and to become an attraction in this way. Moreover, local food becomes a local attraction for tourists only after it goes through a transformation process, which is multidirectional and multidimensional. With this scope, foreign dishes or influences are imported into the local dishes, fact that add to it an innovative and creative element (Cohen & Avieli, 2004).

According to Cohen & Avieli (2004) culinary establishments may develop in two ways: either a spontaneous process or through implantation from the outside of the establishments into a developing destinations. During the spontaneous process the development take place at a slow rhythm, and is done in three steps. The first step in the development is the transformation of a local place into a place of interest for e.g. backpackers, or generally those interested in tasting new and strange foodstuff. The next step is the one where the given establishments offer food for both locals and tourists. The third and last step is that where the establishments target tourists in general; less adventurous foreign tourists. Good examples of culinary establishments are restaurants in hotels. They usually are specialized on cuisine of some of the tourists countries of origin; to this the menu may include signature dishes, made by the chef following local recipes or using local ingredients, preparing so fusion dishes.

4.1.3.1 The importance of food establishments

In the context of tourist culinary establishments talk, it is also interesting to have a look at its relation to authenticity. Such establishments, or better said some of them, try to offer authentic dishes but in the same time they try to keep away those local ingredients that are repulsive for the tourists. Hence, in order to be able to talk about authenticity in this cases Cohen & Avieli (2004) suggest that it is important to look into tourists' perceptions of authenticity. Hence, according to Littrell et al. (cit in Cohen & Avieli, 2004), tourists are not looking for total authenticity, but they are looking for some aspects of it; thus, tourists would like to experience aspects linked to ethnic origins of the producer, production techniques, material used, the presentation of the dish etc (Cohen & Avieli, 2004), aspects that we will try to present in the following paragraph.

Preparation of food is important for tourists in regards to authenticity. Most of tourists would link an authentic dish by its authentic ingredients, though in some cases there is a conflict of cultures, when tourists can be reluctant to eat some ingredients that are considered taboo in their cultures, e.g. dog meat in China. In these situations the substitution of such ingredients with something else more close to tourists' culture would not affect the authenticity of the dish (Cohen & Avieli, 2004). Then the preparation of the food is usually done in the kitchen, which is

away from tourists' eyes. Nevertheless, the preparation of the food can play an important role for letting tourists experience authenticity as well; this if the kitchen is somehow open and accessible to tourists. In this way it may play a dual role: as an entertaining performance for tourists, but also a way to check the authenticity of the food (Cohen & Avieli, 2004). Moreover, the modern ways of cooking used instead of traditional cooking methods doesn't weaken the authentic feeling in the eyes of tourists (Cohen & Avieli, 2004). On the other side of the hard accessible world of kitchens, there is the presentation of the menu. Menu presentation is very important for tourists, and only then it is also important to locals. An expressive and interesting association of menus with geographical maps is made by Cohen & Avieli (2004). They see menu's role as being that of a mediator between establishment's offerings and its customers. However, usually menus are sometimes made especially to serve and reach directly tourists; meaning that menus are adapted to tourist's needs. But even though efforts are put to adapt menus to tourists, in some cases it is still difficult to translate the whole local culture for the tourists. For example at destinations with other type of alphabets menus can be translated into English; and not just translated mot a mot, but described in a way tourists not familiar to the local cuisine can understand it. Cohen & Avieli (2004) help us with an example coming from the Asian cuisine: a Thai dish as tom yam, can be translated and classified as hot soup. Other strategies that help in this kind of situations are drawings of the dish, or the presence of culinary brokers (Cohen & Avieli, 2004), who explain the menus. After the confrontation of menus comes the act of actually eating. This act it is important because each cuisine has its own taste (Cohen & Avieli, 2004), and it plays an important role in the authenticity of the place. Yet, in some cases, the taste of the authentic dishes can be a great impediment for tourists; some dishes are too spicy, too salty, too sweet etc. Therefore many of touristic culinary establishments put efforts to create for their tourists that comfort zone that we were talking before in our paper. Thus some culinary establishments offer the possibility for tourists to choose between different grades of intensity of local taste. Not the last, the local ways of serving and/or eating the local food may approach or keep away tourists, fact that is considered by some scholars as an irritant aspect rather than a sign of authenticity (Cohen & Avieli, 2004).

Culinary establishments' organization and decoration plays also a very important role in designing an authentic experience for the visitors. Thus a décor in tone with the offers fount in menus enhance the authentic experience of tourists (Cohen & Avieli, 2004).

4.1.4 TYPES OF FOOD TOURISTS

In this subchapter we will present few possible ways to divide tourists in relation to food. This will help us understand better the diversity of culinary experiences one can have at a given destination. Hence, based on the literature on food tourism there are a number of different ways tourists can be categorized based on their relation to food while traveling.

One of the classifications is made by Cohen & Avieli (2004) who talk about three types of tourists: recreational, experiential and experimental or existential tourists. According to Cohen & Avieli (2004) recreational tourists seek to relax and enjoy themselves at a destination. They

belong to the neophobic group of tourists, choosing instead new and authentic experiences, food of high quality that will be consumed in higher quantities than they use to do back home. On the other side, experiential tourists are willing to explore *the authentic life of the others* (Cohen & Avieli, 2004). This means that they will be very interested in local dishes and all the local habits in relation to food. If the first category of tourists described by Cohen & Avieli (2004) were focused on enjoyable culinary experiences, experiential tourists will seek more authentic experiences. Thus they will be willing to try unfamiliar products out of curiosity rather than enjoyment. However, even though experiential tourists are neophilic, they are said to be still reluctant to expose themselves totally to the local cuisine, they choose to eat local food in tourism-oriented establishments (Cohen & Avieli, 2004). The last category created by Cohen & Avieli (2004), existential or experiential tourists are those who frequently visit local culinary establishments and consume manly local dishes.

Hall et al. (2003) have identified four segments of tourists in relation to food consumption: gastronomes, indigenous foodies, tourists foodies and familiar foodies. Moreover, they are already linked to the two categories of neophilia and neophobia. Thus, gastronomes and indigenous foodies are neophilic, while touristic foodies and familiar foodies are part of the neophobic traits. The same authors, Hall et al., (2003), make also an analysis of the types of food tourists based on five phases of food tourism experience that they have identified, namely: eating at home (pre-travel), eating out (pre-travel), food at the destination, vacation experiences at the destination and food (post travel).

4.2 TOURIST BEHAVIOR

To study consumer behavior of individuals or groups means, according to Swarbrooke & Horner (1999, in Hall et al., 2003), to study why people buy the product they buy, or to find out why they make a certain decision. However, consumer behavior and decision making have been studied for a long time (Bray, 2008). At first, consumer's behavior and decision making process were based on the idea that it was all about the self interest of the individual (Bray, 2008). Yet, understanding consumer behavior is complicated and involves many aspects (Hansen, 2005) and a range of consumption activities beyond purchasing, such as: need of recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, building of purchase intention, the act of purchasing, consumption and disposal (Bray, 2008). However, food tourism consumer behavior, as well as food tourism in general, are said not to have been researched very much; at least not in the first decade of the twenty-first century, when were published most of the materials we use in this paper, e.g. Hall et al. (2003), Hsu (2008), Bray (2008) etc. The need to study consumer behavior in relation to food tourism is conveyed by Hall et al. (2003), but also by Hsu (2014) who say that it can offer important insights to stakeholders in the food tourism industry regarding who are their customers and what are the motives for them to visit them; in this way helping marketers and managers in the branch of food and tourism to develop strategies and target the right people to their businesses; even more they will know when to intervene in their decision-making process. In the same way can identification of the Danish tourists

behaviour help Romania's DMO design the right strategies for attracting them through Romanian traditional food.

However, food consumption studies try to understand the factors determining various food-related behaviors. These behaviors include most of the time liking, preference, choice and intake (Mak et al., 2012). Nevertheless, food consumption is also regarded as a complex behavior, with cultural, social, psychological and sensory acceptance factors all playing a role in decision-making process (Mak et al., 2012). Although, Kornelis et al. (2010 in Hsu, 2014) underline that food choice is a decision multifaceted that put together many behaviors -because it is a process that involves different factors that influence consumer choice-, it is argued by Mak et al. (2012) that all the factors influencing food consumption behavior can be classified into three big groups: the individual, the food and the environment. Yet, Rozin (2006, in Mak et al. 2012) adds that between these three categories there are other factors related to individual that can be essential in explaining the variations in food consumption. Likewise the factors influencing the preferences of food consumption at a destination, Mak et al. (2012) adapted the already mentioned structure to a three category model underlying three groups of factors that affect the food consumption at a destination: the tourist, the destination and the food at the destination. The same authors go further and identify five categories of factors influencing tourist food consumption behavior at a destination: cultural and religious influence, socio-demographic factors, food-related personality traits, exposure and past experience (Mak et al., 2012).

Based on literature, other aspects influencing tourist behavior are linked to the fact that the purchase and consumption of some goods and services have a hedonistic base (Hall et al., 2003), meaning that the actions a tourists take are not necessary seeking to solve a problem, but they have their roots in sources as are for example: fun, amusement, arousal, fantasy, sensorial stimulation and enjoyment. In this context, it has been difficult to distinguish between consumption of experiences and experience of consumption (Pitkänen, 2002, in Hall et al, 2003). Furthermore, this idea sends to the idea that eating out is an experiential consumption; it is not like any other meal one has for reducing the hunger. Yet, this experiential side of eating is argued (Hall et al., 2003) to be characteristic to tourists' life, because according to the same authors there is a difference in the experience between dining out as a tourist, and dining out for other reasons. Moreover, the same authors (Hall et al., 2003) offer the example of a parallel situation where tourists perception of a restaurant differ from the perception of the other dinners at the same restaurant, and this situation only because the experiential nature of the situation. Here is where we will focus a bit on tourist behavior.

Moreover, even though it is accepted that a tourist is generally a consumer (Hsu, 2008), there are also opinions that think a bit differently in relation to this aspect. Thus, although he agrees that consumer behavior and tourist behavior are very similar, Moutinho (2007) argues that there are also some unique features, which differentiate them. According to him the main unique aspects that differentiate the behavior of a tourist from other types of consumer behaviors in general, are referred to the result of a buying transaction. For example, in the case of a daily consumer transaction, the consumer receives something of value as a return for the investment

s/he made, while in the case of a touristic experience, Moutinho (2012) argues that a buying decision is an investment with no tangible return. Moreover, a purchase in regards to traveling is usually prepared and planned over a large period of time.

However, we will think of tourist behavior to be similar to consumer behavior in general, because according to for example Yuan et al. (2008), consumer behavior covers all the actions consumers take to obtain, use and dispose of products and services, and we argue that the same does a tourist: obtain, use and dispose of products and service while at a destination. Yet, in order to explain better what is consumer behavior, Moutinho (2007) offer a pretty complex definition saying that consumer behavior is the process of obtaining and organizing the information regarding a purchase decision and of using and evaluating products and services. Another way to look at consumer behavior is as it explores the behavior of groups of consumers, and the behavior of consumers in the economy (Hsu, 2014). Furthermore, Engel et al. (1986) define it as the acts of individuals directly involved in obtaining, using and disposing of economic goods and services, which includes also the decision-making process preceding those acts.

However, there are many different models present in the literature. Yet, in the following paragraphs, we will approach only a couple of them that we find to serve better our research.

4.2.1 MODELS ON TOURIST BEHAVIOR

In this subchapter we are going to present four models in relation to tourist behavior: the three component attitude model, adapted model of food tourist behavior, consumer behavior in relation to food, and the tourist consumer behavior. However, the two models (the three component attitude model and the adapted model of food tourist behavior) can be considered as interrelated due to their close relation. The consumer behavior in relation to food is added to this subchapter not to be used directly, but to be regarded as an important one in discussions regarding food consumption in general, without focus on tourism though; yet it can bring some insights in relation to the big picture of factor influencing food consumption. The last model mentioned in this discussion contains many aspects in relation to tourist consumer behavior, and we decided to have it here because it may help to get a better understanding of the factors influencing tourists' behavior, and even though it draw a draft of tourist behavior in general, we see this model as a good tool to explain Danish tourists behavior in relation to food consumption in Romania.

4.2.1.1 Three-component attitude model

Yuan et al. (2008) suggest that behaviors are determined by people's states of mind or feelings towards a subject. Thus, there it is believed that attitudes are the most significant to understand consumer behavior (Kim et al. 2011). Attitudes have the potential to offer important information to marketers due to the fact that attitudes convey the summary of a consumer's evaluation of a product or service. Although attitudes play an important role in determining consumer's behavior, psychologist haven not agree on a single definition for attitude (Yuan et al., 2008). However, one of the definitions found at Krech & Crutchfield (1948, in Yuan et al., 2008) sees attitude as an enduring organization of emotional, perceptual and cognitive processes.

Following this definition, attitude can be perceived as being composed by three components: the cognitive or knowledge component, the affective or emotional component, and the conative or behavioral-tendency component (Yuan et al., 2008), which has given the classic three-component attitude model presented below in Fig.3.
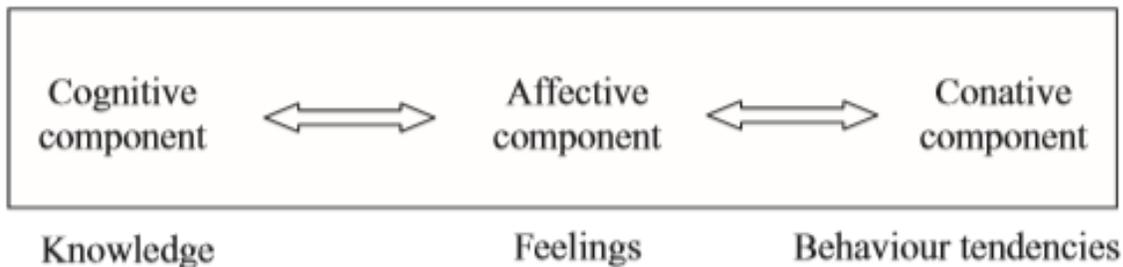
Fig. 3: Three-component attitude model (Source: Yuan et al. 2008).

In this model, the cognitive component represents a person's knowledge or beliefs about an object, beliefs and/or knowledge which were obtained by own experiences or information gathered from external sources; based on these sources of knowledge, the object is assessed broadly. Then, the affective component consists in a person's emotions and feelings. With their help a consumer evaluate whether an object is favorable or unfavorable; playing thus an important role in the final behavior of a consumer because they make the link between beliefs with behavior and becoming an essential aspect of an attitude (Yuan et al., 2008). The last aspect of the attitude model, the conation is seen as the moment when the consumer will have acted in a certain way towards the object.

4.2.1.2 Adapted model of food tourist behavior

In relation to food tourism and based on the attitude model, there can be sketched a model of food tourist behavior. Thus, we have found a model of wine tourist behavior at Yuan et al. (2008). Yet, we believe that such a model can be adapted to food tourism as well. We consider that this adaptation can be done because in most of the cases food and wine are analyzed and conceptualized together (Hall et al., 2003).Thus, both the original model of wine tourist behavior and our adapted food tourism tourist behavior are based on the widely accepted five stages of tourism experience: pre-visit (anticipation), travel to, destination/on-site visit, travel from and post-visit (reminiscence) (Yuan et al., 2008). Hence, our adapted model presented in the Fig.4, as well as the original model of wine tourist behavior, has three main stages: post visit, satisfaction and intention to revisit, which are the coordinates for the three aspects (cognitive, affective and conative) composing the attitude model. Moreover, the model marks also the temporal aspects of the tourist experience: pre-visit, on-site and post-visit.
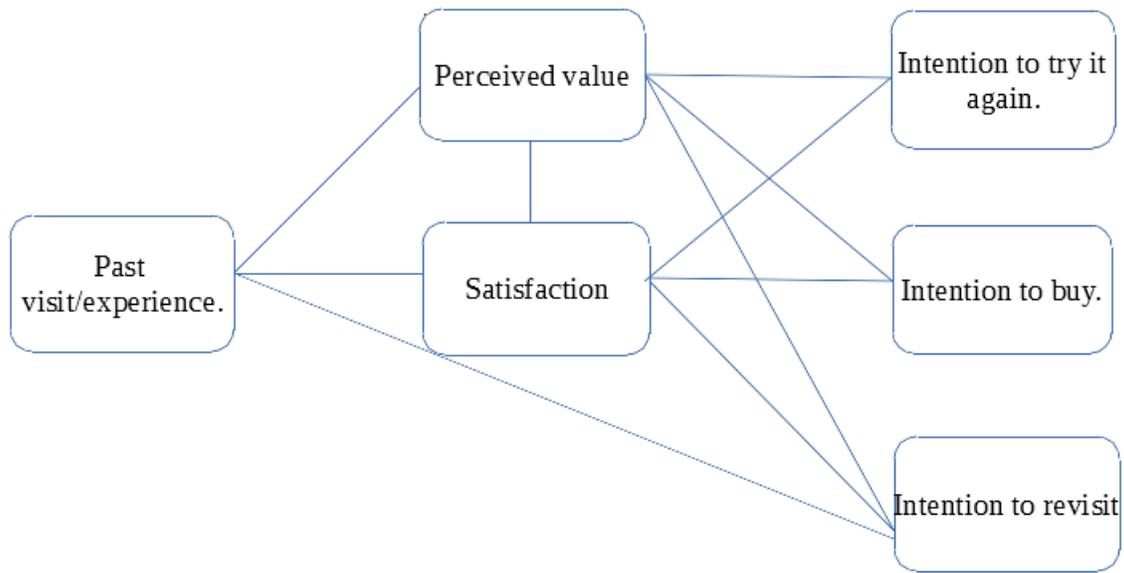
Fig. 4: Adapted model of food tourist behavior.

Thus, based on our adapted model of food tourism behavior, tourists once they visit a destination and experience the traditional food there, they come to the moment of truth where they decided whether they are satisfied or not with it; this evaluation will thus influence the attitude for the post visit stage, where the tourist in cause will either decide to revisit and consume again the food of that specific destination (moreover share the good experience within his/hers network), or -following a negative experience- there will not be a return to the destination for its food, moreover s/he might even spread a negative word about the food at that destination, with others s/he interact.

4.2.1.3 Consumer behavior model in relation to food

Another model related to consumer behavior in relation to food is the one developed by Steenkamp (1997), presented in the Fig.5. Steenkamp's model is created especially for dealing with food consumption, though not in relation to consumption of food at a destination, therefore we mention this model as good to know, within the literature review section, because we consider that it can bring some light upon the way and the factors that influence consumers' food behaviour. Thus, the present model divides the food purchase decision into four steps (Hsu, 2014). Thus, at a first stage is where there is a difference between what they want and what they encounter. The second stage is the one where consumers search for information. The third and last stage in Steenkamp's model is the one where consumers evaluate the alternatives. According to Hus (2014), the evaluation is based on produce quality, price, brand, freshness and guaranty.

The decision-making process according to Steenkamp's model is influenced by three variables: properties of the food, factors related to the consumer, and environmental factors (Hus,

2014). It is so because when one tries to reduce his/hers hunger the result depends on the type of food s/he eats, because even though the quantities are the same the properties of the food can be different. Then, it depends also from person to person, and personal characteristics, among which age and weight are important when it comes to food consumption (Hsu, 2014), because, for example, at early ages there are type of foodstuff that are rejected, while later the area of interest in relation to food becomes more broader. The same goes in relation to weight; obese eat more than the others. Environmental factors are those related to three groups: economic, cultural and marketing. Economic factors are linked to income and price of food, and in the end they influence the purchase of food. Cultural factors are related to the ethnic groups and their traditional rules regarding food consumption. The last of these three groups of factors, marketing factors, are linked to the ways food are promoted and available on the market.
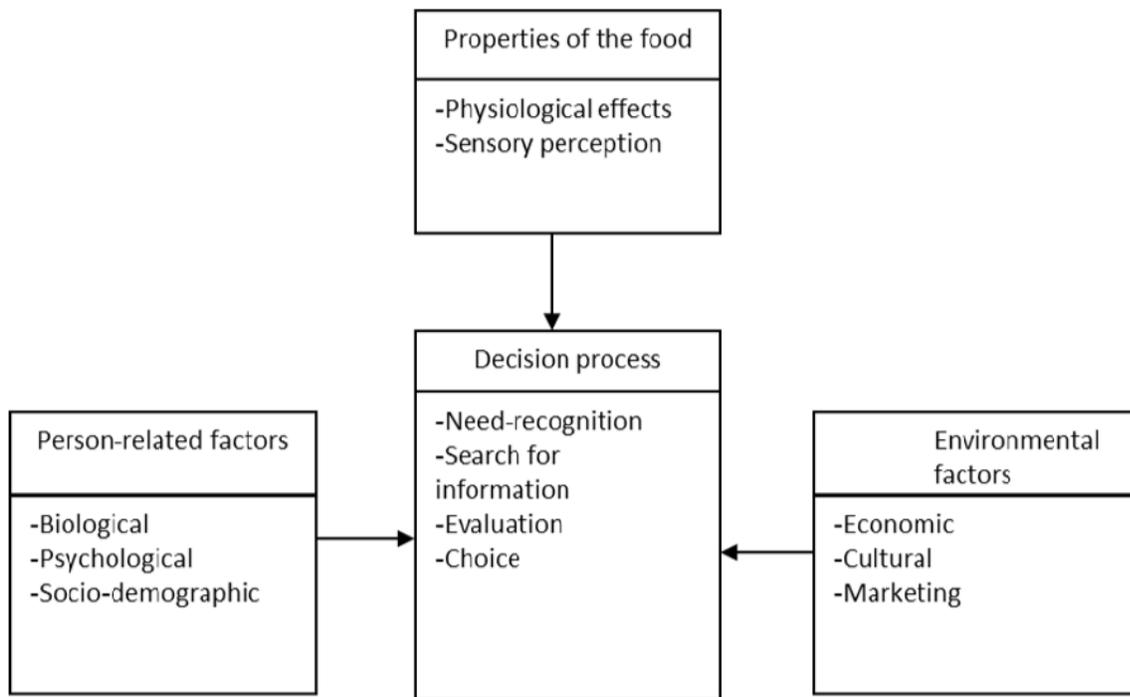
Fig. 5: Consumer behavior model in relation to food (Source: Steenkamp, 1997, in Hsu, 2014).

4.2.1.4 Tourist consumer behavior

However, there are many aspects to consider when looking into the characteristics of the tourist consumer behavior. On of the important aspects to consider are the forces outside the individual, because they seem to influence in a high degree travel decisions (Moutinho, 2007). Furthermore, the analysis of tourist consumer behavior must also take into consideration the internal processes of the tourist. However, the most important influences on tourist consumer behavior are shown in Fig. 6 below.
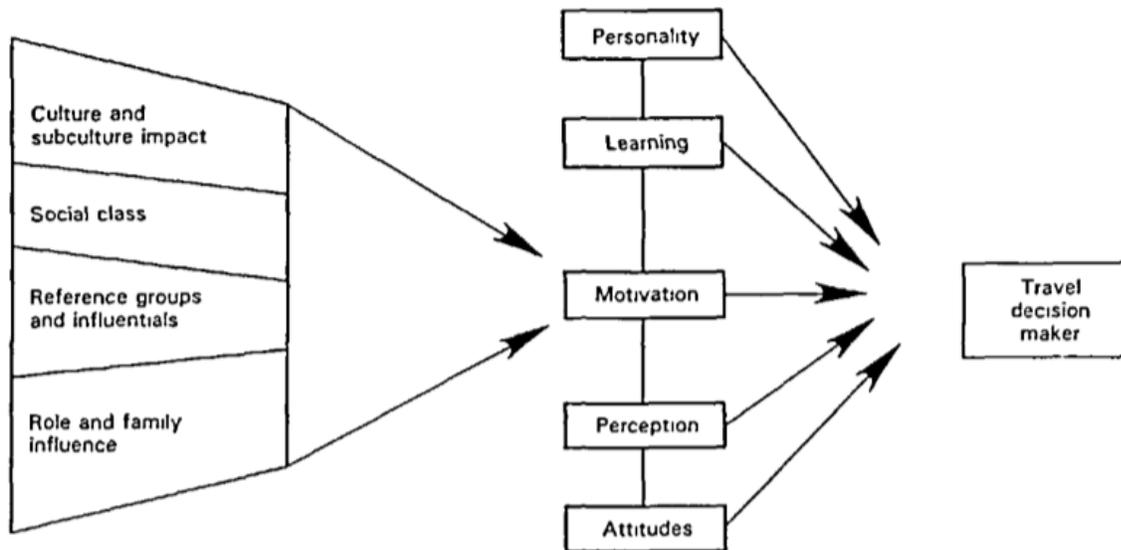

Fig. 6: The most important influences on tourist consumer behavior (Source: Moutinho, 2007).

As it can be deduced from Fig. 6, external aspects (e.g. cultural influences, social class, reference groups and family) are those to play an important role over the decision process; the external factors being the ones to influence the internal ones, and in the end the decision; idea that comes close enough to the one we mentioned at the beginning of this chapter it is argued that at the base of the consumer behavior stays complex internal and external aspects (Hall & Mitchell, 2003).

As it can be seen from the Fig. 6, there are four main external aspects that influence in a high degree the internal aspects: culture and subculture impact, social class, reference groups, and family influence. Culture covers all the values, ideas, attitudes, symbols and artifacts created by a society. All of these elements have an influence in shaping consumers' behavior, in a natural way; most of the time individual not even being aware of its influence (Moutinho, 2007). Moreover, within a society there are present different social classes, translated as group of individuals who share the same values, lifestyles and behaviors. The classification of social classes is a complex process, and the way it is done depends on the researches (Moutinho, 2007); but this aspect is not of interest for our paper. However, the members of each social class tend to follow the standards of behavior characteristic to each class. Moreover, within these groups are

persons or group of persons who stands as reference for the others, in this way influencing others' beliefs, attitudes and choices (Moutinho, 2007). As examples of such reference groups can be mentioned: family, religious and ethnic groups, neighborhood etc.; out of which family plays a very important role within a culture because of the values and expectations that are developed and assimilated there by the individuals.

On short these are the four main groups of external factors influencing critically the internal factors, before an individual makes decisions. The internal factors we are referring to are: personality, learning, motivation, perceptions and attitude. However, we will further focus on motivation alone not only because motivation seems to be able to explain much of the consumer behavior in tourism (Uysal et al., 2008), but also because motivation is of fundamental importance for looking into consumer behavior, due to the fact that it put together the needs and the wants of the tourists to the destination choice understanding (Gilbert, 1993, in Hjalager & Richards, 2002).

4.3 MOTIVATION

Hjalager & Richards (2002) say that gastronomy has not been considered as an aspect of motivation for tourists, although tourism motivations have known a big interest from the side of scholars. However, the appreciation and importance of food and food tourism as it is learned from scholars, DMOs and stakeholders, make the gastronomy role as a motivation for tourists to rise as well.

There are opinions according to which tourism motivation is driven by social factors, which are linked to the need for optimal arousal (Moutinho, 2007), or that tourist motivations are subjective and personal (Sava & Clesiu, 2014). However, there are many voices that say that the reasons for traveling can be as many as the tourists (Gyimothy, 2000; Hjalager & Richards, 2002; Moutinho, 2007). Yet, the multitude of reasons can be grouped in two categories: need for balance and harmony, and need for novelty and unexpected (Moutinho, 2007). Though, there are many other ways to organize tourism motivations. Moutinho (2007) offers a suggestion that has made us reflect upon in relation to our research's subject; he says that motivations can be general or/and specific; with the general ones referring to the fact that people travel usually for many reasons, many times not even being aware of them; while the specific motivations are linked to - among others- knowledge, influence from friends and family, personal experiences, and media. If the general motivations regard many reasons e.g. to see particular sights and monuments, or to rest or recover from work; the specific motivations are determined by personal experiences, knowledge, word of mouth, after-effects of past visits etc. Because of these specific motivations to which it can be added the fact that tourists have become searchers (Dichter, in Moutinho, 2007), it has been drawn the conclusion that many branding strategies in tourism are *speaking a language of the past* (Moutinho, 2007), in a context where tourists are looking to encounter with different cultures. Here is where food tourism emerges as niches, which fit the needs and wants of many of those driven to traveling by specific motivations.

As it was argued before, the number of tourism motivators can be as many as tourists. However, tourists' motivations to consume food at a destination have not been studied too much. Therefore, further in this subchapter we will focus on food as a motivator, and we will make use of the papers of Hjalager & Richards (2002) and Kim & Eves (2012) that handle the relation between food and tourist motivations; being two of the limited number of articles on this subject that we have discovered in the academic literature.

Hjalager & Richards (2002) suggest that a good way to look into the motivations for leisure tourism -of which food tourism is a part of- is to consider the typology of McIntosh et al. (1995) which consist of four categories: physical motivators, physical motivators, interpersonal motivators, and status and prestige motivators. All these four categories is taken individually and applied to food tourism.

Physical motivators

Tourists might feel motivated to travel to a certain destination by the thoughts of the physical activities they will get engaged with at a destination. McIntosh (1995, in Kim & Eves, 2012) refers to these physical motivators as to refreshment of a person's body and mind, physical rest, desire for recreation, participation in leisure activities, to which Kim & Eves (2012) adds exciting experience, escape from the routine, sensory appeal and health concern. However, among the range of physical attractions, Fields (2002) sees food to have its own place, idea supported also by Lupton (1996, in Kim & Eves, 2012) who considers eating experiences as events that bring excitement in people's lives. This is because food is an attraction that involves all the five senses (Kim et al., 2010), so the sensory perceptions are important not only in appreciation of the food (Fields, 2002), but it is also one of the primary motivations for travel (Boniface, 2003, in Kim & Eves, 2012). Usually when one thinks of physical attractions while traveling, they include the sort of activities one doesn't do in the daily routine, like total relaxation, change of climate and even experiencing new cuisines (Fields, 2002). Moreover, there are destinations that offer food products and/or gastronomy that is assumed to have positive impact on tourists' health and physical condition. The focus on health as a reason for traveling has become more and more important (Cornell, 2006, in Kim & Eves, 2012), but food has been considered as well to be in a close relation to health through nutrition and food safety consideration (Mooney & Walboun, 2001, in Kim & Eves, 2012). Kim & Eves (2012) argue that testing local food in the natural environment is beneficial for one's health; moreover, local food being made with local ingredients is seen as fresh and better for health.
One more aspect to be considered under the physical motivators is the one linking traveling to changing diets, eating patterns, or settings of a meal, which can all be seen as important factors for traveling (Fields, 2002).

Cultural motivators

In general it is accepted that cultural experiences in tourism is linked to gaining knowledge and authentic experience (Kim & Eves, 2012). Food is considered by many one of

the most important elements of culture in any society (Fields, 2002); with Synott (1993, in Kim & Eves, 2012) saying that the culture of a place can be experienced by trying the rural specialties as local food and beverage. Thus, cultural motivators are important push factors for the development of food tourism, because when enjoying new cuisines experience a new culture as well. Moreover, culture and authenticity are linked together, and authenticity has been identified in many cases as one important driver for tourism; food is a way to experience authenticity and culture in the same time (Fields, 2002). Moreover, all the differences linked to consumption of food and beverages at a destination e.g. ingredients, methods of preparation, cooking, are expressions of authentic and traditional culture (Kim & Evens, 2012).

Interpersonal motivators

Interpersonal motivators are linked to togetherness, due to the fact that there are motivators that act as a desire to meet new people, spend time to family, visit family and relatives etc.; because one of tourism's functions is to reinforce unity among family members (Wang, 1999, in Kim & Evens, 2012). However, eating while in holiday may also have a social importance (Kim & Evens, 2012), an importance that attracts people to destinations. Thus, in the context where most tourism happens in groups rather than individually (Hjalager & Richards, 2002) meals can be seen as possibilities to strengthen relationships, or even to build up new relations, because food and drinks have the power to ease and increase social interactions (Hjalager & Richards, 2002).

Status and prestige motivators

Food tourism has gain the fame as being a type of tourism which is linked to status and prestige; this is because as Fields (2002) argues, choosing a particular destination with good name for its cuisine says a lot about the taste of the tourists, and it gives them a certain status. Moreover, eating good food in a luxurious place can be a way to be distinguished in the crowd in terms of social status (Kim & Eves, 2012). In this context there are some destinations around the world that owe their success to their appreciated cuisine and wine. Another mode for gaining prestige through food tourism is -according to Fields (2002)- by eating like a local, which even though might seem like a paradox with the meaning of prestige (due fact that eating like a local reduces the chances that others see you, which is one of the ideas status and prestige are based on) but it contributes to the distinctiveness of choices, through the selection and uniqueness of choices.

However, consumers' motivation explanation has been based on the internal and external factors (Fields, 2002; Kim et al., 2010). Usually these two factors are represented in tourism research by the push and pull factors, and the push and pull theory is one the best theories to analyze tourist motivation (Kim et al., 2010; Uysal et al., 2008). Moreover, it is argued that food tourism can be considered as matching both factors, because on one side food tourism push people away from the familiar dishes, products and eating patterns, while on the other side, food

tourism pulls people to novel and exciting dishes (Fields, 2002). Given its importance, in the following sub-chapter we will present shortly the push and pull theory.

4.3.1 PUSH AND PULL THEORY

Push factors are motivational needs that emerge because of an imbalance in the motivational system, creating thus a desire to travel (Kim et al., 2002). Some of the push factors are: desires as escape, relaxation, prestige, health, social interaction, and togetherness. On the other side, the pull factors are those needs that are aroused by a destination's attractiveness; they are those, which attract tourists at a destination (Uysal et al., 2008). Thus, one might say that tourists are pushed by motivation variables into making travel decisions, and are pulled by destination's attributes (Kim et al, 2012); or that tourists are pushed by internal and pulled by external forces (Uysal et al., 2011).

These two factors focus on two different decisions made at different moments, each of them answering at two different questions: whether to go? And, where to go? Nevertheless, the two factors are argued to be closely linked to each other, without possibility they work independently (Uysal et al., 2011). Furthermore, Iso-Ahola (1982, in Uysal et al, 2011) argues that people travel because of two main reasons: escaping and seeking; escaping from everyday environments, and seeking psychological rewards by traveling to a new destination/environment. Thus, the two dimensions -escape/seek- are analogous with those of the push and pull factors within travel behavior; moreover they are analogous also with Plog's psychocentric/allocentric model of motivation. Plog's model refers to psychocentric tourist as those seeking the safety and relaxation of well-developed destinations, while allocentric tourists prefer new and not well-developed destinations (Uysal et al., 2011). According to Uysal et al. (2011), Plog's model helps explain who prefers what destinations based on tourists' psychographic characteristics.

Furthermore, it is said that it is easier to define and measure the pull factors due to the fact they are more tangible (Uysal et al., 2011); yet, in order for a need to be fulfilled it is needed that there is an interaction between the two factors, push and pull, and this aspect it is essential in this equation argues the same authors (Uysal et al., 2011).

All in all, push and pull factors have an important impact on overall travel (Uysal et al., 2011), with push factors giving the start of the whole process. Thus, in the context where an individual needs and wants to escape from the everyday life -because s/he wants to either learn about a specific culture, or s/he is looking for adventure or any other reasons- all these desires push the individual to search for destinations which will satisfy these wants. At this point comes the role of destinations, which should pull tourists through the attributes destinations choose to promote themselves. Thus, the attributes used for branding are important because if they don not match the desire of the potential tourists, then all these attributes mean nothing. At this point it is important to emphasize one more aspect, that of attraction versus attractiveness. Even though the two terms are related and they both speak of the level of interest one has towards a destination, attraction is directly linked to the offering of the destination and the way it fit tourists'

expectations. Attractiveness is linked to attraction: attractiveness includes the attraction factor of a destination, plus all the logistical necessities of actually taking vacation.

To motivation and to the push and pull theory, it is argued that lifestyle, attitudes and values are very important when drawing an image of consumers, because they play a critical role in decision making process of consumers (Hall & Mitchell, 2003). However, there are already two market segments that are very interested in food and wine tourism: social aware & visible achiever tourists (Hall & Mitchell, 2003). Under the socially aware group we found well educated people, of circa forty years old, who are learning a living instead of making a living; people who are interested in new and innovative activities, and who seek education and knowledge. Visible achievers are wealth creators, with traditional values about home, work and society, looking for quality and value for money, and work in finance, politics or economy (Hall & Mitchell, 2003).

4.4 BRANDING

In a world where the phenomenon of globalization is highly increasing, and where destination accessibility seems not to be an obstacle anymore, the competition among destinations is fiercer than ever. Tourists have the opportunity to choose from a large pool of touristic destinations, which offers similar features such as: beautiful landscape, accommodation at a high standard, hospitable people etc. (Qu et. al., 2011:465). But what triggers the mind of the tourists to choose one destination in the detriment of another, when the offering is similar? It has become more critical than ever, for destinations to create their own unique identity that could help positioning themselves at the top of the list of tourist's decision (Morgan et al., 2002:336). Some of the touristic destinations have realized, that in order to be selected by the tourists, they have to differentiate themselves from one another, and to offer unique experience to their guests (Ibidem). In response to this, some destinations have already developed destination brand, as strategic tools in combating competitiveness (García et. al., 2012:646), while others are still trying to figure it out. In this interpretation the concept of destination branding seems to be crucial for destination to be distinguished and to stand out from the other options available for the target group.

According to the literature, the term 'brand' is defined as a '*name, logo, symbol etc. that identifies a product and distinguishes it from others*' (Keller et al. 2008:). Moreover, it also represents 'the core values and ideology of the organization' (Gilmore 2002:285). But the most widely accepted definition of branding in literature belongs to David Aaker (1991) which argues that the primary role of a brand is: '*to identify the goods or services of either one seller or a group of sellers, and to differentiate those goods or services from those of competitors*' (Aaker cited in Blain et al., 2005:329).

The concept of branding is not only applicable to products and/or services, but it can also be applied to destinations as well (Schaar, 2013:3), although the latter, is a relatively recent studied phenomenon (Blain et. al., 2005:328). As we mentioned before, on a market that gives signs of saturation due to the presence of multitude of destinations similar in product offerings,

differentiation seems to be the only way to survive, allowing to create a strong brand, which can reduce the threat of substitution (Ibidem).

In an attempt to provide a more complex definition of destination branding, Ritchie and Ritchie (1998, cities in Blain et al. 2005:329) define it as '*a name, symbol, logo, word mark or other graphic that both identifies and differentiates the destination; furthermore, it conveys the promise of a memorable travel experience that is uniquely associated with the destination; it also serves to consolidate and reinforce the recollection of pleasurable memories of the destination experience*'. Thus, an effective destination branding has to give travelers a promise of quality and memorable experiences. The term 'promise' can be a tricky one to use, as it can be interpreted as guarantee of unforgettably positive experiences, which is a difficult thing to do, due to the unpredictability that the tourism products fall into; and in case it is not delivered, then the traveler would be dissatisfied.

In other words, a destination brand closes the gap between the destination assets and the perception of potential tourists. Nevertheless, an appreciated brand is a commitment to meet tourists' expectations that generally know what to expect from a specific brand (Blain et al. 2005:330).

When discussing the concept of destination branding, we need to look at two functions; one is 'identification' and the other is 'differentiation'. Identification gives an explication to tourists about the source of products. If for a general product it is very easy to identify the physical offering, when we are referring to a destination as a product, things are a bit different. A destination has both tangible (e.g. historical sites, nature: mountains, beaches) and non-tangible (e.g. culture, history, traditions) characteristics and the complexity of the place to be a brand allows the generalization of the identity to become inevitable (Qu et. al., 2011:466). While differentiation, refers to how the brand distinguished itself from the competition based on its meaning and loyalty given by the visitors. It is important to comprehend which associations with the given brand are advantageous over the competition, as it will help the tourists to positively evaluate the brand (Keller, 2008 in Qu et. al., 2011:466).

4.4.1 DESTINATION IMAGE

It is argued in the academic literature available (Cai, 2002, Nandan, 2005) that brand identity and brand image are important elements to be taken in consideration when we refer to the destination success. According to Qu et al. (2011:466), the brand identity is created by the destination marketers (e.g. DMO), which reflects all the features and activities that set apart a destination from another destination that is in competition with it; while the brand image is created by the tourists, and it is basically their perception about the destination and the holistic impression made by the destination (Blain et al., 2005:330). According to Lin et. al. (2011) brand identity is a conceptual notion and in order to be understood, one should probably look from the supply-side perspective. Hence, '*before knowing how we are perceived, we must know who we are*' (Kapferer, 2004 cited in Lin et., al., 2011:34). However, Qu et. al., (2011) stated the brand identity is reinforced by the marketers based on their information about the tourists' brand image

perception about the destination, becoming fundamental for brand successfulness, to establish an emotional connection between the tourists and the destination (e.g. destination attributes) (Morgan et al., 2002:338).

According to Garcia (2012:650) there are discussions among researchers about the relationship that exists between the term 'brand' and the term 'image'. Different views can be observed: one where it is sustain the idea that destination image is not branding, but rather a component part that helps creating it; while others see a causal relationship, where either the brand comes first, either the image, that determines how a brand can be identified.

Destination image is an important factor that weights in the tourists' decision-making process in choosing a destination (Garcia et al., 2012:647); therefore, it is important to create a positive image in the mind of the tourists in order to gain competitive advantage and to make sure the that the destination will be selected (Ibidem); but one should not forget that the images portrayed have to be based on reality (Kotler & Gertner, 2002). Furthermore, images have great potential to influence the tourists' opinions and perceptions of a destination and offer them a preview of the destination (Fakeye & Crompton, 1991). This being said, it is argued that in the end tourists will be those to determine how a destination is viewed by the world (Kotler et.al., 1993).

The image that the tourists have towards the destination can be both beneficial and detrimental for the country (Kotler & Gertner, 2002). Qu et al. (2011:465) argues that a positive destination image can be obtainable by highlighting flattering and distinctive band associations, in order to influence the potential tourists' evaluation regarding the brand and the brand selected. These brand associations have been classified in three categories: attributes, benefits and attitudes (Qu et al. 2011). It is argued that the attributes are referring to all the descriptive features that a brand has to offer to the tourists and can be distinguished from other brands. On the other side, the benefits are linked to the perception of the tourists upon the value that these attributes can bring to his experience, basically what the brand can do for them. Last but not least, the brand attitudes are the expression of tourists' evaluation and constitute an important factor to the decision-making process (Qu et al. 2011:467).

A challenge in shaping the destination image is that tourists are in the end individuals, which makes them fall into the matter of subjectivism attitude. Different tourists can have different images of the same destination; one can see it as a perfect place for relaxation, while others can see it as something dull, with not so many things to do (Kotler et. al., 1993:141). Thus, what for some tourists a positive image towards a destination might represent, for others it could have a negative representation (Ibidem).

4.4.2 THE COUNTRY IMAGE

An important asset that can have a strong influence on the tourists' behavior in selecting a destination for their travel is the image of the country (Kotler & Gertner, 2002). Associations of the country image with the destination brand make tourists to evaluate their choice, and generate purchasing decisions towards destinations that have positive image and that can bring

value to their experience (Kotler & Gertner, 2002:250). According to Kotler & Gertner (2002), when people want in general to buy generic products, they tend to look after specific labels and countries that are known for their reputation in manufacturing high quality products (e.g. Germany, Japan etc.). We can argue that in a similar way, so do tourists when they have to select the future destination to travel, because they would probably have to go under the same process of evaluating their options and selecting the next destination to travel.

The country image can be perceived as: '*the sum of beliefs and impressions people hold about places. Images represent a simplification of a large number of associations and pieces of information connected with a place. They are a product of the mind trying to process and pick out essential information from huge amounts of data about a place*' (Kotler & Gertner, 2002:251). In other words, '*the perception of a country determines the way the world sees it and treats it*' (Ind, 2003:64).

Kotler & Gertner (2002) argue that the country image might have the power to influence the perceptions of travelers towards a destination, implicitly their final decision; where the final decision can be either selecting a destination due to positive images that has reflected in the mind of the tourists, either saying no to a destination because of the negative portrayal that one might have towards it. The negative perception of a country can also be a result of stereotyping (McGarty et al., 2002). Stereotyping refers to categorizing groups of people by generalizing and making assumption about how they are like, (McGarty et al., 2002); moreover they tend to have negative implications (McGarty et al., 2002).

There are many stereotypes surrounding a country's image, but this does not necessarily mean that there are also accurate (O'Shaughnessy & O'Shaughnessy, 2000). Hence, a country's stereotype can linger behind reality (Gilmore, 2002:283). Nevertheless, it is argued that stereotyping has its own role in portraying the overall image of a country (Ibidem). According to Kotler & Gertner (2002:250) '*even when a country does not consciously manage its name as a brand, people still have images of countries that can be activated by simply voicing the names*'.

According to Häubl (1996) country stereotype have an influence on the purchasing behavior, which may indicate that tourists will tend to evaluate products depending on the perception that they have upon the country image (Kotler & Gertner, 2002). This behavior can manifest differently, from tourist to tourist, because people perceive and process information differently; thus also their stereotypes will differ as well (Clausen, 2009).

O'Shaughnessy & O'Shaughnessy (2000) argues that a country stereotype does not necessarily have to be negative, but instead it can be either positive or negative. Hence, most stereotypes have a negative connotation and seem to be more common (McLeod, 2008). Positive stereotypes are convenient and it can be an important tool in tourism, because inevitable they contribute to the creation of destination image in the mind of the tourists. Moreover, it is argued that images can last long in their mind, and in the same time it can be very difficult to change it (Kotler & Gertner, 2002:251).

4.4.3 IMAGE FORMATION PROCESS

The destination image is very powerful, and it is basically a subjective interpretation of the reality understood by the tourists; it has developed based on the rationality and emotionality of the tourists (Ferreira Lopes, 2011:307). Thus, destination image turns out to be an important aspect when it comes to select a destination, as soon as the tourists decide to travel (Gartner, 1993). A strong awareness of the destination in the mind of the tourists is crucial, as there are more chances that after the elimination process of several destinations, to remain viable for selection (Gartner, 1993). It is argued that the destination image can be considered a pull factor, which explains the importance of understanding how these images are created (Gartner, 1993).

'*Before image can be used to influence behavior, it is important to understand what influences image*' (Brokaw, 1990:32 cited in Baloglu & McCleary, 1999). In addition, Baloglu & McCleary (1999) believe that identifying the factors influencing image formation, it would help determine the target market and choosing which image would be best to be projected on each particular market segment. Hence the tourists would be more receptive to the message (McCartney et. al., 2008).

The following figure shows a general framework based on which can be understood how destination image is developed. According Baloglu & McCleary (1999) this framework is the work of previous researchers that have tackled image formation (e.g. Brokaw 1990; Burgess 1978; Mercer, 1971, Fakeye and Crompton 1991; Goodall, 1990 etc.).
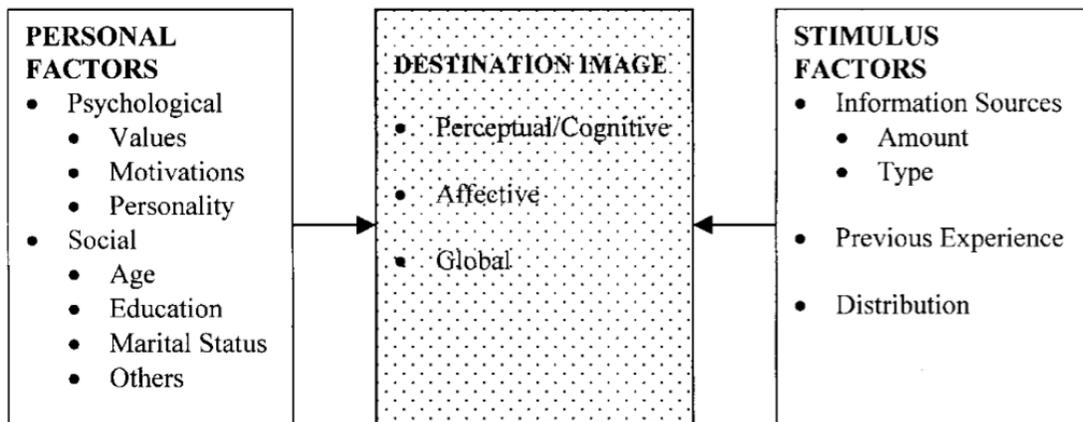
Fig.7 A general Framework of Destination Image Formation (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999:870)

This particular framework sustains the idea that image formation is caused by two major components: personal factors and stimulus factors. Personal factors represent the characteristics of the perceiver, while the stimulus factors are closely linked to various information sources, or/and personal experience (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999). When these two factors are combined forms different assessments of the image: cognitive, where is based on the knowledge the tourists have on the destination, and the affective is linked to the tourists' feelings towards the

destination; while together, the cognitive and affective evaluation creates the global image of the destination (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999).

In comparison, Gartner (1993) believes that destination images are formed by three interrelated elements: cognitive, affective and conative.

- Cognitive image refers to evaluation if the '*known attributes of the product*' or .it can also be described as '*the sum of beliefs and attitudes of an object leading to some internally accepted picture of its attributes*' (Gartner, 1993:193). Destination image is in this case evaluated based on the destination attributes, which drive the tourists to visit (Ferreira Lopes, 2011). In addition, because the tourists do not have the possibility to pre-test the destination (e.g. attributes), the images will often be constructed in perception rather than reality (Gartner, 1993).
- The affective part is in close relation with the motivation that the tourists have for a particular destination that they want to visit (Gartner, 1993). It is about the feelings and emotions transmitted by the destination (Ferreira Lopes, 2011).
- The conative image is the action component; it is the moment when the decision is made (Gartner, 1993).

In the present research, we want to focus on both the cognitive and affective component, since it is argued that together they form the overall image of the destination (Ferreira Lopes, 2011). Moreover it is asserted that the cognitive component of the image formation is considered to be more observable and measurable than the affective one (Walmsley and Young, 1998), which implies that challenges in measuring the affective aspect of image formation might occur in our project.

4.4.3.1. Organic and induced images

As a result of a cognitive process, destination image is impacted by several sources of information (e.g. media, reference groups) that act as stimulus factors and which influence the perception of the tourists (Ferreira Lopes, 2011, Beerli & Martin, 2004). The information sources that the tourists are exposed to, together with other factors, determine certain destination that are considered possible alternative choices (Beerli & Martin, 2004).

There are two stages of image formation: one before visiting a destination, where the secondary image is created, and the other after the visit, where primary image are formed (Beerli & Martin, 2004).

Gunn (1972 in Gartner, 1993) argues that the secondary images, which are formed before the tourists visit the destination, are divided in their turn in induced and organic images. The latter are created in the mind of tourists through their consumption of non-tourism sources of information like documentaries, reports, movies, or social media (Busby, et. al, 2013). On the other side, the induced images are formed through assimilation of formal and external sources of information, such as destination promotion or advertising (Rajesh, 2013). In addition, Kim & Richardson (2003) believe that the induced images are a subsequent of marketers' activities that

have the purpose to develop, promote and advertise the destination. Furthermore, the induced images appear when tourists start to collect the information about the destination in order to plan their holiday (Kim & Richardson, 2003). In other words, the tourists develop organic images of a set of possible destinations from various informal sources, followed by the motivation to travel. Then, they get involved in an active search for information and recourse to specific information source. After this stage the tourists develop induced images of possible destinations, which can be the same or slightly different from their organic images (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999).

Gartner (1993) state that the quantity and the sort of the information source given influence the creation of the cognitive component of destination image, but not the affective one. This means that the cognitive component development '*is presented as a function of the variety (amount) and type of information sources to which tourists are exposed*' (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999:874).

The image formation process is interlinked process with the destination selection process. At all stages in the selection phase, the touristic images help decide which destination are subject for further evaluation, and which are cut from further consideration (Gartner, 1993). Understanding how the image of a destination is formed in the mind of tourists can help destination promoters in developing suitable images for selected target markets (Gartner, 1993). All in all, destination image is very important factor, which can be critical for the success or failure of tourism marketing activities to promote a destination.

4.4.4 BRANDING THROUGH FOOD TOURISM

The increasing competition between tourism destinations registered over the last years, has generated a wave of developing more appealing attractions in order to grab the tourists' attention and to slightly differentiate on the market. In this direction, several destinations have focused on food as a strategy in reinforcing their tourism marketing (e.g. 'Taste of Wales' initiative, 'Niagara cuisine', Singapore etc.) (Lin et. al., 2011). Directly or indirectly, food seems to be connected with certain tourism destinations, which make some researchers believe that food can be used of a source of promotion and branding a destination (Frochot, 2003; Boyne and Hall, 2004 in Lin et. al., 2011). However we argue that the success of the marketing strategies focused on food it is also in close relation with how the image of the destination is perceived.

Hashimoto and Telfer (2006 in Lin et. al., 2011) in their paper '*Selling Canadian culinary tourism: Branding the global and the regional product*' analyzed the relationship between Canadian identity and the cuisine in order to determine some strategies for the country's food tourism. The result showed that the food of a specific place (e.g. traditional food) is crucial for the success of the tourism destination. Moreover, the '*food identity*' helps ensure a sustainable competitiveness of a destination, where identifying what makes it unique and different from other similar destinations is what creates the 'identity' (Lin et. al., 2011). Another example of a destination where food tourism is a core product is Taiwan. According to Lin et. al (2011), the Taiwan Tourism Bureau has published in 2008 the Annual Survey Report on Visitors' Expenditure and Trends in Taiwan which stated that the main reason for their inbound

tourism registered in the country was food, not only to try traditional cuisine, but also food from all over the world. Even though, the same researchers, in the same paper, argue that the biggest challenge for Taiwan is to create a consistent food identity that can be used as a strategy to promote the country as a food tourism destination.

Kivela & John (2003:3) express that '*our sensory perceptions play a major psychological and physiological role in our appraisal and appreciation of food as they do for other experiences at a destination*'. Thus, food and also the food establishments as part of the destination attraction, bring a significant contribution to the destination, influencing tourists' behavior and the general satisfaction with the destination (Lin et. al., 2011). Moreover local restaurants can be part of the destination image possess by the tourists, and can be also a reason for them to return in the same place, if they generate a good and positive experience (Lin et. al., 2011). However, depending on the food experience that the tourists had, restaurants' reputation impact how the tourists perceive the destination, which may strengthen or weaken the destination identity (Blaalid & Karadas, 2011:49). Food can be also perceived as a symbol for a specific place; hence it can help the destination to reinforce its brand (Bessière, 1998). Furthermore, food tourism has the potential to increase the sustainability and the authenticity of a destination (Lin et. al., 2011).

Some countries around the world have already started to get involved with food tourism and there are good examples of places that have promoted various gastronomic activities, such as food festivals, food markets/fairs etc. (e.g. Denmark: 'Fresh Food Festival', 'Copenhagen Cooking & Food Festival'; UK: 'Great British Food Festival', 'Zurich meets London', 'The International Food and Drink Event'; France: 'Fête de la Gastronomie', Germany: 'Dusseldorf Gourmet Festival') (Tomescu & Botezat, 2014). Even though Romania cannot compete with countries that have build a name in the food tourism industry (e.g. Spain, France), it seems though that it has started slowly to interact with this area. An important step for the country in this direction, was the organization of the first '*International Congress of Culinary Traditions*' between 13th and 16th of March 2014, attended by thirty-six countries from Europe, North America, Latin America, Asia and Africa (e.g. France, Israel, Canada, US, Mexico, China, Macedonia, Greece, Azerbaijan) where they had to prepare, in addition to traditional menus from the countries they represent, a specific Romanian menu (business24.ro). In addition, several gastronomic events took place in seven regions of Romania in the year of 2014, such as international festival of '*Pomana Porcului*' (Covasna), '*Pancake Festival*' (Brasov), '*Vinvest Timisoara*' (Timisoara), '*GastroPan Exposition'* (Brasov) or '*International Championship of Outdoor Cooking'* (Arad) (turism.gov.ro).

The Romanian cuisine has been influenced by various cultures that it came across throughout its history, such as: Hungarian, Russian, Austrian, French or Turkish, incorporating different characteristics, which resulted in a gastronomy based on a range of local resources adapted to Romanian habits (Tomescu & Botezat, 2014). However, according to Tomescu & Botezat (2014) the Romanian cuisine is practically unknown or promoted abroad.

5. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter reveals the findings from our field research, which are subject to analysis based on which the results will be interpreted and described in regards to what we already known about the research problem from the literature review. The analysis and the discussion of our results are under the spectrum of our philosophy of science presented in the methodology section, and which has guided our research. The interpretivist approach applied looks at a subjective reality, which can differ from one individual to another. Therefore also the interpretation of the Danes participants' answers received during the questionnaire and interview is taking into account that these are personal and can not be automatically generalized. Furthermore, their views on the project's topic, which are subject to internal interpretations, are in turn understood and interpreted by us, based on our internal frame of reasoning. These interpretations, which are linked also with ideas and concepts discussed in the Literature review chapter, will generate new understanding of the matter, that will help us formulate our conclusion for the present research.

We decided to present and discuss our finding under the same chapter. This is because we believe that writing the findings and their discussion together help the reader understand easily the ideas, eliminating the risk of forgetting the links by going back and forth with the reading. Moreover, the results from both questionnaire and interviews bring up mostly the same ideas; this is why we decide to analyze them under the same theme. Thus, based on the results of the interviews and questionnaires we have formed the following six themes:

- Romanian traditional food seen as an extra value for enhancing tourists' experiences;
- Romanian traditional food should be more appealing;
- The image of Romania influences Danes' decision to travel;
- Lack of knowledge about Romania as a tourist destination on the Danish market;
- Cheap is attractive;
- Danes are neophilic foodies.

These themes were formed after we went through all the results of the interviews and questionnaires, and identified the ideas that stood up through repetition in different contexts and at different persons, being able to conceptualize the data into specific categories that shared certain similarities. The order of discussing the themes has a certain logic. We want to organize the discussion from specific to general that is why we have decided to go with the first theme. Talking about the role of traditional food is directly linked with our research questions and we consider necessary and important to start with it. Moreover, it gives a base for developing and broadening of our discussion. The next themes followed a natural course, where discussions about perceptions of Romania proceed, ending with a general discussion of all themes in the form of sub-conclusions of this chapter.

Each of these six themes is discussed one by one in the following paragraphs.

**5.1 ROMANIAN TRADITIONAL FOOD SEEN AS AN EXTRA VALUE FOR ENHANCING TOURISTS'
EXPERIENCES**

The starting point for our research's analysis section is the main research question *Would branding Romania as a food tourism destination attract more Danish tourists?* At a first check of the data collection it can be seen that at least in regard to the research question there are differences between the answers we gathered through the use of questionnaire and the answers received from the interviews. Thus, one of the results of our questionnaire shows that Danes believe the Romanian traditional food could play an important role in branding Romania as a tourist destination for the Danish market (Annex A, p. 87). Hence, 202 respondents, representing 87% of all the participants, chose *yes* at the question *Do you think that branding Romania through food tourism will be a good strategy to attract Danish tourists?* (results from the questionnaire, Annex A, p. 87, question 18). The result for this question can be better understood and linked to the answer to the question 10 which shows that 93% of the respondents see food as an asset for a destination, in general. This is because looking at the overall answers to our survey (Annex A, p. 87) the main impression is that most of the participants are fond of food, and this might had influenced also their answers to some of the questions about food in our questionnaire. However, when asking them if they had any knowledge about Romanian traditional food, only 6% from all the respondents said they had some knowledge about Romanian cuisine (Annex A, p. 87, question 16), result that makes us think about the importance and relevance of the above mentioned result showing that 87% of them believe in food as a good strategy for Romania in attracting more Danes to visit it.

However, from the participants in interviews it can be understood that they enjoyed Romanian traditional food, and they appreciated it as tasting good; for example, Anne and Rasmus said that their experience with the Romanian traditional food were ok (interview with Anne and Rasmus, Annex B, p. 120), Helle and Toni said that the food in the restaurants they ate at had a good quality (interview with Helle and Toni, Annex B, p.120); Jens said also that *the food was good, else I would have remember if something was bad* (interview with Jens, Annex B, p.120); Bo said that Romanian traditional food tasted good, and that throughout the whole holiday he had in Romania, he had only culinary experiences as good as he would had in any other places at other destinations, and this *was actually surprising a little bit* (interview with Bo, Annex B, p. 120). Beside the direct reference to the good taste and overall experience with the Romanian traditional cuisine, Bo's comment seems to indicate that there are preconceptions towards the Romanian traditional food, maybe being expected that the Romanian traditional food does not taste good; tourists may have preconceptions even though they do not know anything or almost anything about Romanian traditional food before traveling, as it can also be learned from the answers to our questionnaire according to which 93% of the respondents knew nothing about Romanian traditional food (question 16).

In spite of these positive reactions from the interviewees, based on their own experiences, they still can not see Romanian traditional food as a good strategy to branding Romania for the Danish market; or at least not alone. Based on the interviews we had it was

suggested the idea that Romanian traditional food should not be used alone in branding Romania for the Danish market, although the food might be appealing for Danes. However, it seems that they do not believe, in general, that a destination can promote itself as a food destination (interview with Bo, Annex B, p. 120; interview with Anne and Rasmus, Annex B, p. 120). Since we have examples of authors researching food's impact on tourism destinations, and destinations that have used food tourism as a main strategy for developing tourism in their areas (Hjalager & Corigliano, 2000), we believe that the interviewees from our data collection do not see food as a strong enough driver for travelling, and that food alone can not be so important, especially in the case of Romania. Yet, they believe the Romanian traditional food has to play the role of an added value to other attractions like nature, history and culture. Hence, Bo (Interview Bo, Annex B, p.120) says that Romanian food is good, but Danes are looking into gourmet experiences, and from this point of view the Romanian traditional food cannot be the main attraction for the Danish tourists in Romania; but it can play the role of an add-on to the destination for sure, because in general food is one of the important experiences tourists remember about a destination. This seems to be true at least in the case of our research because, apart from Jens who could not remember any name of Romanian dishes he ate (Interview with Jens, Annex B, p.120), all the others participants in both interviews and questionnaire remembered some Romanian dishes they tried. Moreover from the interviews it is induced the idea that one of the problems with the Romanian traditional cuisine is that it has nothing to do with Michelin level, as an example and suggestion of high level cuisine and gourmet style, but it is rather seen as *food for workers* (Interview with Anne and Rasmus, Annex B, p. 120). Toni and Helle trying to argue that Romanian traditional food might not play an important role for Romania in attracting Danes to visit the country say: *not the food alone, but the whole experience might. People travel for many reasons. We went to Romania for the mountains and the possibilities for some good walking, but the fact that the food was fine, just makes it an even better experience* (Interview with Toni and Helle, Annex B, p. 120). This answer goes hand in hand with similar ideas mentioned by other interviewees and mentioned above (Interview with Bo; Interview with Anne and Rasmus). Putting our attention on the travel motivation triggered by food, and considering Hall's (2003) model of Interest in food as a travel motivation mentioned in the Literature chapter (p. 42), we can portray that the Danes, who participated in this research, do not see food as a major motivation to travel to Romania, at least it is not the primary driver that influences or would influence their travel behavior. Furthermore they can be grouped according to Hall's (2003) model under the category of *Rural/Urban tourism* that have a *low interest* in food, which means that they try the traditional food because *it is something different*.

As already mentioned above, the most of the participants in our questionnaire said that Romanian traditional food can be used to attract Danes to visit the country, there were also few participants who felt the need to comment our yes-no question (questionnaire, Annex A, p. 87, question 18), and so they gave to this question answers like *maybe;* or, *food it is always a part of the experiences at a destination, but it can not stand alone!;* or *I think it is needed more for that.* There were yet negative answers found in the questionnaires, of which one stands out because it

says that Romanian traditional food cannot work as a branding strategy for the Danish marked because it is difficult to overcome Danes' preconceptions regarding the Eastern Europe cuisine (Questionnaire online, question 18, answer 21, attached to this project in the USB device). We are not very sure what the respondent meant with this answer, but we have learned from both the questionnaires and interviews that Danes do not have neophobic feelings (neophobia is one of the dimensions of food tourism discussed among others by Cohen & Avieli, (2004); Mak et al., (2012) and presented by us in Chapter 4.1.2.1) when it comes to food in general; moreover, there are interviewees who argued that the Romanian traditional food is similar to Danish traditional food. Thus, Anne and Rasmus (interview with Anne and Rasmus, Annex B, p. 120) say that *even though the Romanian food is a lot different than the Danish food, it is yet comparable, so people would still find it similar, in comparison with experiences they can have in destinations as Vietnam, China etc.* Bo (interview with Bo, Annex B, p. 120), referring also to the similarity of Romanian traditional food with the Danish one, says that *it is not like going to China or similar destination*, but it has many similarities. Based on these reactions it can be interpreted that the Romanian traditional food can be liked and accessible to Danes because there are not big differences in the way it is made, or in regards to the ingredients used, so even the Danish neophobic tourists have nothing to worry if they want to try it.

Based on the above ideas, supported by the literature (Hall et al., 2003; Cohen & Avieli, 2004; Mak et al., 2012) it can be implied that indeed it can be a good idea to use the Romanian traditional food as an extra value for the already existing attractions about Romania as are the nature, the history and the culture of the country. However, on the other side it is interested to learn the perceptions of the Danish tourists, who see food as an attraction, but not one important enough to build up a branding strategy around it. This idea is even more interesting if one thinks of it in relation with the answers the same participants gave during our field research, saying they did liked the Romanian traditional food; moreover, it is also interesting to assess this input, because there are not only the participants in our empirical data that enjoyed the Romanian traditional food, but as we mentioned in the introduction as well, Romanian traditional cuisine is appreciated by many others especially in Europe and United States of America. Moreover most of the ideas expressed by the respondents in our empirical data collection are somehow in line with the remark made by Hall et al. (2003) who noticed that usually food -at least around 13 years ago- was not considered as an attraction in itself, but it was seen more like a part of a package; being linked to accommodation or with other activities; therefore food seems to be seen more as a need.

Moreover, there might be something about understanding the meaning of *food tourism.* As we mentioned in our literature review (Chapter 4.1), food tourism is being considered as the memorable eating and drinking experiences at a foreign destination, which influence travel motivations and behaviors (Hsu, 2014; Mak et al., 2012). So if it is to compare this food tourism definition with the input from the participants in our survey, it might be noticed that there can be linked many aspects. For example, while travelling in Romania Bo, as well as Anne and Rasmus had memorable culinary experiences; the act of eating happened away from their own places of

living, and they would even try Romanian dishes if they would travel back again in Romania, as at least Jens, Bo and Anne and Rasmus said (Annex B, p. 120); moreover, Jens even know exactly what he wants to try: potato cake at a popular place in Bucharest (interview with Jens, Annex B, p.120). Based on this analysis, we can say that Romanian cuisine has many necessary characteristics to turn the destination into a food tourism destination as well. The only aspect missing is the capability to change travel motivations, at least not those regarding food tourism, because as it is revealed by our field research, the respondents will not travel back to Romania for food only, but will consider it in combination with other attractions. This last idea might be better understood through Moutinho's (2007) tourist consumer behavior model that was presented in the literature review section of our research (Chapter 4.2.1.4). Thus, looking at this matter in a big picture, it can be seen that Danes' tourist behaviour regarding consumption of the Romanian traditional food, in most of the cases, is influenced by what Moutinho regards as external factors as are for example family, culture, and media (Moutinho, 2007). This might be a reason for Danes traveling usually to the same destinations, not considering new ones as Romania; or the impact news from media or social networks have on many of them, and make them perceive Romania as a dangerous, poor or unappealing destination, as it results from some of the answers in our survey. Thus, these external factors influence Danes' motivations, perceptions and attitudes upon a destination, as in our case is Romania; and as it is revealed throughout our questionnaire, at least, there can be noticed a red thread that support Danes decision not to visit Romania. It starts thus from the point where Danes enjoy traveling, but although many of the Danes are willing to travel for culture, food, history and nature, Romania is not on their list, although it offers most of the attractions Danes are looking for; in addition, when it comes to the reasons for not traveling to Romania beside the lack of promotion of the destination, feelings linked to Romania's image in media, or influences of their social network seems to affect their decisions. Thus Danes attitude towards Romania is influenced negatively in most of the cases by the knowledge they have, because according to Yuan et al. (2008) the attitude of tourists is closely linked to knowledge and decision process. Moreover, attitude is one of the internal factors that is influenced by the external ones, that in the end leads to tourism decisions in Moutinho's (2007) model (Chapter 4.2.1.4), linked that can be done in the case of Danish tourists traveling to Romania, with focus to consumption of the Romanian traditional food.

Furthermore, the fact that Romanian traditional cuisine is not considered to be ready to attract alone Danish tourists, it might also say something about the typology of tourists that participated in our research. If we use Cohen & Avieli (2004) model identifying three types of tourists: recreational, experiential and existential. Based on this classification and on the answers from our survey, we can say that Danes fit into the experiential group. It is so because, experiential tourists according to the two scholars, Cohen & Avieli (2004) are the tourists interested in trying new things out of curiosity rather than enjoyment, and even though they might be considered as neophilic, they are not ready to expose themselves totally to the local cuisine. As a base for this classification stand the example of Jens, who said he usually try new

things out of curiosity, and he did the same in Romania (interview with Jens, Annex B, p. 120). Moreover, Anne and Rasmus said they tried many different Romanian traditional dishes, even tripe soup (which is not a big attraction for foreign tourists in Romania), but they also chose not to try products they did not know what were and looked suspicious, as they describe the lightly smoked pig fat they received for breakfast at a hostess in Romania (twodanesontour.com).

5.2 ROMANIAN TRADITIONAL FOOD SHOULD BE MORE APPEALING

Having a look at the results of our survey, we can see that a lot of focus has been put by the participants on the way Romanian traditional food looks, and its consistency. Thus, through the questionnaire we found 12 persons who had tried Romanian traditional food, beside the six Danes with who we obtained information through interviews. Although the answers were not all very detailed, among the reactions of the Danes participating in our questionnaire, following the consumption of the Romanian food we can bring examples like: *it was ok, but a bit too much meat,* or *it was quite delicious, kind of heavy dishes with a lot of gravy* (results from questionnaire, Annex A, p. 87). From the interviews we had also some interesting remarks to the Romanian traditional food; Anne and Rasmus in the interview with us said that the culinary experiences they had in Romania were ok, excepting one (interview with Anne and Rasmus, Annex B, p.120), the same idea is reinforced by their blog post (twodanesontour.com). Yet, even though Anne and Rasmus liked the Romanian traditional food, they argued that still the food looks like *food for workers* (interview with Anne and Rasmus, Annex B, p. 120), and that if Romania wants to attract tourists, particularly Danes, for food, then the food must be special, *something to get people talk about it* (interview with Anne and Rasmus, Annex B, p. 120). Furthermore, Bo, underlying the good experience he had while eating Romanian food, says that *food in Romania was a good observation for us, because it surprised us a bit* (interview with Bo, Annex B, p. 120). Bo describes also the Romanian traditional food, but he focuses on another aspect than Anne and Rasmus did; hence Bo said that Romanian traditional food is actually *central European food* (interview with Bo, Annex B, p. 120); he continues saying that he discovered a lot of similarities between the Romanian traditional food and the food in Southern Germany, Czech Republic, Hungary or Turkey (this insight fits also perfectly with the description we made in the Chapter 2 to the Romanian traditional food). This idea can be interpreted as a sign of differentiation of the Danish cuisine from the Romanian cuisine; a difference that may affect the role of Romanian traditional food in attracting Danes to Romania, through similarities the two cuisines might have. Furthermore, Bo emphasises that the differentiation is not related to the ingredients only, but also in the way it is prepared, and regarding the esthetics of the dishes, Bo saying that *Danes are now into top gourmet food* (interview with Bo, Annex B, p. 120), which is not something they can find in Romania; at least not when it comes to Romanian traditional dishes. The same interviewee argues further that *the Michelin level is the one people are driven now when they dine out or travel...so that is something people travel for* (interview with Bo, Annex B, p. 120). Unfortunately, Romania has no Michelin or similar ranked restaurants no matter the type of cuisine, and if it is to follow Bo's

idea it means that restaurants in Romania have to find a way to reinvent themselves, to come with something new, something similar to what happened not long ago in Denmark, when Rene Redzepi and Claus Meyer set the basics of what today is known all around the world as The Nordic Cuisine. This can refer to ingredients, style of cooking, and not the least esthetics, and we would like to debate a bit more the aspect of esthetics in food tourism. It is so because we have indications that it plays an important role in attracting tourists. The first one who stated that food should look in a certain way was Bo, who -referring to the type of food tourists like- said that *(food) should be ready for Facebook* (interview with Bo, Annex B, p. 120). This statement can be interpreted as a direct link to the fact that there are tourists, Danes as well, who travel for status, and as we mentioned in the literature review section, food consumption and food tourism can be seen also as a way to show off; it has to do with the status and prestige motivators (McIntosh et al. 1995). Romanian traditional food has not much to offer for someone looking for status while trying it; base on our survey, it is said that Romanian traditional food it is heavy, unattractive, contains a lot of meat etc., characteristics that are not exactly what people are looking for when wanting to show off; moreover they have not much to do with the luxurious environments and special ingredients that Fields (2002) talks about when he rapports food tourism to status and prestige travel motivators. The only positive aspect it can be linked to the distinctiveness of choices, characteristic that the same author is talking about. Thus, according to Fields (2002) one can gain prestige while eating traditional food even though it is not something luxurious, because that fact that s/he tries some type of food that is sort of different and not very popular at other destinations it is enough to contribute to the prestige of someone. So, this might be one of the chances Romanian traditional food has when it comes to Danish tourists: being a travel motivator linked to prestige and distinctiveness needs of tourists.

It is still interesting to look at sort of paradox into the results of our survey: on one side the participants in the interview say that it is important that the food looks good and fits to the gourmet level in order to attract tourists. On the other side from the question eight of our questionnaire it is suggested that only almost 2% of the respondents consider food as a way to show off, and that they are willing to try Romanian traditional food. However, it might be relevant to interpret this paradox with the help of social media statistics who says that pictures of food are among the most popular on Instagram, which is an online photo/video-sharing service through which its users can share pictures and/or videos (Hemmingsen, 2016). Moreover, 87% of the Danes participating in our questionnaire answered that they see food as an attraction rather than a physiological need when at a destination. From here we can also imply that food playing the role of an attraction, it has to be attractive, appealing, ready for Facebook for tourists to get pulled by it. Thus, it can be interpreted that tourists in general, and Danes in particular, are looking to food as a way to get recognition within their network, therefore any destination who wants to attract them, as we analyzing here the case of Romania, has to think of a way to improve the image of traditional food, and give it a more modern look, maybe using some twists other cuisines has succeeded with.

5.3 THE IMAGE OF ROMANIA INFLUENCES DANES' DECISION TO TRAVEL

The literature review revealed that tourists consider the destination image an important factor when selecting a destination, which means that the image most likely will influence their perceptions and their attitudes towards the destination. In this context, Romania does not seem to be an exception from the rule, as it is disclosed in the results of the questionnaire and reinforced by the participants in the interviews. Generally speaking, 84% from the total of respondents to the questionnaire said that the image of the destination is important and it influences their decisions to travel; and when it comes to the reasons why they have not traveled to Romania, common responses are linked to the image of the country, such as: ''because I see Romania as a poor country; because I associate Romanian with war and poverty; Romania does not have a very good name, and so it is not so attractive; the country has a bad image in Denmark due to criminality; unsafe; I tend to see Romania as a second class country, and that is in general with Eastern Europe. I have always thought it was miles behind in development than Western Europe (except Prague of course)'' (questionnaire results, Annex A, p. 87). Based on these statements we can interpret that the image of Romania as a country is associated or it is confused with the images of the destination. Referring to what Kotler & Gertner (2002) said about the country image, it seems that the image of Romania is influencing the Danes perception regarding the country becoming a potential destination and hold them away from traveling to Romania. Moreover its geographic location and the comparison with other countries like Poland or Russia, put Romania in a unattractive category in terms of tourism, according to some participants in the questionnaire: ''Romania is seen as an east country comparable with Russia and Poland where everything is boring, cold and difficult; I tend to see Romania as a second class country, and that is in general with Eastern Europe (…) miles behind in development (…); what I know is unfortunately linked to poverty and the east-bloc''.

Even though they do not share the same view about Romania, Anne Marie and Rasmus believe that the media has a big contribution in shaping a negative image of the country, which inevitably impacts how people see Romania: ''People talk about Romania based on what appears on media. So Romania has a bad image. (…) and it is so hard to change that; to change that around; or (…) when we talk with our friends about our plans to visit Romania, they were like 'wow! How can you go there? People there will going to rob you, steal all your stuff!' I think that Danes have the idea of East Europe of being a region where people steal from you; many gypsies; and that there is nothing nice'' (interview with Anne and Rasmus, Annex B, p. 120). Moreover Bo also believes that ''Romania has got a hard time in media'' (interview with Bo, Annex B, p. 120), which underlines that some of the Danes' perceptions have been influenced by the way Romania has been portrayed by the media (e.g. written press, online press) creating an organic image of the country, which prevents them to consider Romania as a potential destination. The results show that safety is an aspect, which concerns some Danes when thinking of Romania as a destination, especially in this case of one respondent in the questionnaire who travels alone: ''I travel usually alone; so I do not want to risk and travel alone there'' (results questionnaire, Annex A, p. 120). Under an interpretivist approach we understand that for

someone who have not been to Romania or who has not experienced Romania on their own, it is easier to get influenced by the mass media representations of the country and to believe that what it is said is true, because they can not confirm the validity of information at the moment of receiving it; and, since the reality is considered to be socially constructed, then also the meaning given by people is subjective and it is based on their own frame of references. Furthermore, Bo says in the interview ''we did not have any problems. But it can be that people think that Romania is not a safe place. There is no difference between traveling in Romania and any other countries in Europe, safety wise. The problems are not the facts; the problems are the conceptions of the people'' (interview with Bo, Annex B, p. 120).

The attitude and reticence of Danes tourists to visit Romania could be understood from the perspective of the Three Component Attitude Model elaborated by Yuan et al. (2008). In the case of Romania - linked to the topic of this project, even though the participants in our research do not believe that branding based solely on the traditional food will help attracting Danes, it can still be recognized and verified the characteristics of the Three Component Attitude Model which was described in the literature review section (Chapter 4). Findings of our research show that Danes are mainly kept away from visiting Romania, for various reasons such as lack of promotion, destination image, and negative country image (e.g. poor country, unsafe, high level of criminality). These aspects have the power to influence the people's states of mind and feelings, as Yuan et al. (2008) argue, creating a negative perception of Romania. Even though most of the respondents in our survey have not been in Romania, their knowledge about assessing the country seems to be based only on external sources like mass media, which was also mentioned before, influencing their perception, attitudes and tourist behavior in a negative way in this particular case. Following this negative perception, people might feel like there is not the right destination to visit and as a consequence they choose to visit another destination that builds up favorable feelings for traveling to that specific destination. Moreover, we can further argue that the age of the respondents can also have a role in this context, as around 71% of the respondents have the aged between 18-30. This could mean that teenagers tend to be more easily influenced by the mass media, as they are more exposed to it in the virtual world more precisely. But this does not mean that all had negative perceptions or that from the rest of the respondents belonging to different age categories did not shared the same negative perceptions about Romania.

Deconstructing the framework of destination image formation presented in the Literature chapter (p. 48) and adapted to our results regarding the negative perception of Romania held by some Danes, we can identify in our particular case the elements presented in the mentioned model. Therefore, the stimulus factors that contribute to developing the destination image are the mass media and previous experiences as emerged from the results of the field research. The latter together with personal factors (e.g. motivation, values) of the person in question are considered to lead to the cognitive and affective evaluation of the destination image. In other words, the image of the country in the mind of the respondents who participated in the questionnaire and interview, was shaped by the information spread in the mass media in

combination with some personal factors, like age or even sexuality (*I, as a LGBT person, will be nervous for my safety, if I went with my girlfriend*), generating an overall negative image of Romania. Hence, this influences their purchasing behavior deciding not to travel or consider Romania as a destination.

We have stated in the literature review, that destination image is a subjective interpretation of the reality perceived by the tourists and that due to their individuality they can have different images of the same destination. This we have also noticed when looking into our results from both questionnaire and interviews. On one hand, focusing on the 219 respondents that have not been to Romania before, we have noticed that while some perceived Romania as ''unpleasant and primitive; a bit behind other countries and poor; or Romania does not have a very good name, and so it is not so attractive'' (results from the questionnaire, Annex A, p. 87)*,* there are others who hold a more positive perception and attitude towards Romania: ''I have not considered Romania as a big travel destination, but I am open to try it sometimes; I have always wanted to travel to Romania, but I have not had the chance yet; I think it is underrated, and has a lot to offer; great destination with a unique culture; beautiful nature and open people'' (results from the questionnaire, Annex A, p. 87). Thus, the fact that some Danes have a negative perception of Romania does not mean that it is a general feeling, as we have shown above and that the destination images it is just a matter of subjectivism attitude. On the other side, the people that have been to Romania have a totally different image of Romania. Having a first-hand experience, the perception about the image of the country of the Danes that have been to Romania is more credible, because they have personally seen with their own eyes what the destination offers, how the people are and experience the Romanian culture. Nevertheless, in this case the image of the country will be influenced depending on how the experience was evaluated, such as good or bad. Moreover, if the Danes who have been to Romania, and had a good experience, talk about it and recommend the country to others, can also contribute in changing the negative perception held by some Danes.

None of the interviewees seems to have had any perception or expectation about Romania before traveling according to their answers, and their decision to travel to this country was in some cases spontaneous, like in the case of Anne and Rasmus, and in other cases because they had some friends or because of other people's recommendations, like in the case of Bo, respectively Jens. This lack of perception could be also linked with the fact that the participants did not know so much about Romania. To support the above, we are sharing bits of the interviews we had were we discussed the perception before traveling to Romania:

We: What was your perception about the country before traveling?
Toni and Helle: we didn't really have any (e.g. perceptions) - we didn't know much about it (interview with Toni and Helle, Annex B, p. 87)

We: Do you think that the media or other persons influenced your perception about Romania, before traveling there?

Bo: No! Neither media, nor people. The only influence was the historical things that happened in Romania. (…) Moreover, we have been traveling to so many places in the world, so we know that there is nothing just black and white. So it did not influence us [e.g. media] (interview with Bo, Annex B, p. 120)

We: What was your perception about the country? Expectations?
Anne and Rasmuss: I was focusing on the Delta, I read a lot about that. We never made it out there. We didn't have any expectations; (interview with Anne and Rasmus, Annex B, p. 87)

We: Did you have a certain perception about Romania before travelling?
Jens: I did not expect to see anything in particular. I am not the type that reads a lot of books when I travel. I don't prepare; it was kind of an adventure; (interview with Jens, Annex B, p. 120).

Basically, we state that - after we interpreted the answers from the interview - the Danes were not aware of what type of image was engraved in their subconscious or at least did not seemed to be preoccupied so much with this aspect. Could it be that the desire to travel to Romania was bigger than the image of Romania? It appears like they knew Romania as a country, they decided to travel there from various reasons, but the destination image did not seemed to be one of the factors that weighted in their decision to travel. However once at the destination it began to take shape, and because of their experience was a positive one, then automatically the destination image became a positive one: ''it was amazing (…) we experienced in Romania that nobody tried to steal from us; but everybody tried to be nice with us, to help us...we met so many nice people'' (interview with Anne and Rasmus, Annex B, p. 120); ''we were very pleasantly surprised. We had a fantastic time'' (interview with Toni and Helle, Annex B, p. 120); ''we were just blown away, because some of the cities are incredible fantastic; I mean you don't get any better in Czech Republic or Germany, they are up to that level'' (interview with Bo, Annex B, p. 120), ''it was very beautiful'' (interview with Jens, Annex B, p. 120).

Good experiences that generated positive images of Romania as a destination have been also experienced by few respondents that participated in the questionnaire and who have been to Romania. Some of the answers to the question *what are your perceptions of Romania* were: ''much more than people think. They have fantastic scenery, cozy villages and lovely food; cheap, beautiful nature, interesting history; One of my most memorable experiences from the trip was actually going to a very fancy restaurant (…) felt like being a king for one day'' (results from the questionnaire, Annex A, p. 120). This is reinforcing the idea that if one has a good experience, then s/he will hold a positive image of the destination, which is actually desirable for any destination to achieve in order to attract as many tourists as possible at the destination; moreover there are high chances that the tourists who have been to Romania will want to return or/and to recommend the destination to their network: ''I would like to visit again Romania (…).

From all the East European countries you have traveled so far -five so far- Romania is our favorite'' (Anne and Rasmus, Annex B, p. 120); ''We recommend it to people we know, because we had such a good experience, when we went there'' (Toni and Helle, Annex A, p. 87); ''*I am looking forward for a next trip to Romania because I feel I missed out a lot*'' (Jens, Annex B, p. 120).

Summarizing what we have discussed in this theme, we notice that there are two stages for image formation regarding the Romania as a destination: one before traveling and the other after traveling. The image created before traveling goes through a cognitive process, where Danes evaluates what they know about the destination attributes based on their beliefs and perceptions. They developed organic images influenced by mass media (e.g. written press, online press), but also about other people's opinions. The affective process comes in place, where is evaluating the feelings and emotions that Romania as a destination arouses inside of the tourists based also on their knowledge of the destination gained by now. This has an effect on the motivation to travel or not to Romania, influencing the outcome of the decision making process. In addition, the image of Romania does not look to be induced, as there are many respondents to the questionnaire and participants in the interviews who said that they had neither seen any promotional material advertising Romania as a destination, nor had much knowledge about it: *I miss knowledge about the country; I have not heard much about Romania as a destination* (see results of the questionnaire in Annex); *we have not seen any* (e.g. promotional campaigns) (Anne and Rasmus, 48:00); *I don't remember any promotion of Romania* (Bo, 36:37); *you do not hear much about Romania* (Jens, 18:38). This makes us believe that the promotional materials about Romania as a destination are inexistent for the Danish market and that it is something to take in consideration, but also that in this case the majority of Danes who have traveled to Romania did not prepare for the trip, and a reason could be maybe the lack of expectation from the destination. Therefore a suggestion for the country in this case would be to actually starting a promotion campaign in Denmark and focus the marketing strategy towards building a positive image of the destination. An alternative could also be to involve different Danes bloggers or Danes that have been to Romania and try to create promotional video based on their experienced and to start talking about their good experience on a larger scale.

The primary image, which was build after the traveling in Romania is very much different than the most images that are held by the respondents who have not been to Romania before, because it is created on reality rather than based on their perception. This makes the image after traveling important for the future of the destination, because once the tourist is at site he can actually compare and evaluate what he knew before about the destination with what he found. Even more a good experience will always impact and create a positive image of the destination in the mind of the tourists, which will influence their further behavior, like intention to revisit. This is also emphasized in the ''Adapted model of food tourist behavior'' (p. 36), which is referring to the influence that the type of experience (e.g. good, bad) that a tourist has on further behavior, consisting in intention to try it again, intention to buy or intention to revisit. Based on the results of the interviews we had face to face, all of the interviewees past

experiences from Romania in a very positive manner. All were satisfied not only with the landscape, but also with the food and people they have met. Last but not least they have expressed their desire to come back to Romania, and to recommend the trip to their network.

No matter what strategies for branding are implemented, if the destination does not have a positive image or the promotional materials are not trying to imprint a positive image, then the brand strategy is predisposed to fail, and that is why we consider a positive image an important factor in the success of branding Romania.

5.4 LACK OF KNOWLEDGE ABOUT ROMANIA AS A TOURIST DESTINATION ON THE DANISH MARKET

From the previous discussed theme, we have found out that Danes' perceptions of Romania as a tourist destination, are mixed, with a negative predominance lingering. However, what was interesting to see is that from 219 of respondents that participated in the questionnaire, 92 of respondents stated as reasons for not traveling to Romania that they ''have not thought about it; I do not know; I do not know much about Romania, so there was no reason to consider visiting it'' (results from the questionnaire, Annex A, p. 87)*,* or with other words they ''lack information about the country'' (results from the questionnaire, Annex A, p. 87). For the destination these results are not good, because it means that the prospect tourists have not even considered to travel to Romania, moreover it show the weakness which relies in the international marketing strategies of the country, which seems to be at this point inexistent. When we asked Bo what he thinks about why some Danes answered in the questionnaire ''*I don't know*'' when it comes to reasons for which they have not visited Romania, his reply was that ''this is actually the worst case scenario, because it means that people don't even think about Romania. Yet, there is also a margin in this kind of surveys, where people don't want to say the real reasons, because they are very negative. It still can come down to the same thing: visibility'' (interview with Bo, Annex B, p. 120). The results of this question can be interpreted in different ways, like also Bo said. If under the interpretivism philosophy people perceive the reality in different ways, as a result of various mental construction that they hold, so can their answers be interpreted in their turn by us, based on our understanding. On one side, it might be that people hold a negative attitude regarding Romania, and for that reason they do not consider Romania as a destination, or maybe they do not want to acknowledge that they have prejudices; and on the other side, people simply did not have any information or consideration of Romania as a destination due to lack of promotion and visibility of the Romanian brand as a destination. Ideally, it should have been suitable to do a follow up on those answers, in order to find out what exactly the respondents meant by saying *I do not know* and to present a more concrete outcome, but the interpretation in this case remains purely speculative. However, even though they lack information about the country, some of the respondents have identified the destination offerings, such as ''mountains, historical sites, different type of culture'' (results from the questionnaire, Annex A, p. 87), which can be also interpreted that the image of Romania as a destination is not distinguishing itself from other destinations (e.g. East European countries), and that people tend to perceive that

every country offers basically the same things ''food, architecture, culture, language etc. like many other countries'' (results from the questionnaire, Annex A, p. 87).

The lack of promotion and knowledge about Romania is sustained also by the interviewees we got the chance to talk with. Jens for example says that ''you do not hear much about Romania. When I was in Romania, I think I search for information on Google; it was easy enough to find information, but there were no promotional information about Romania'' (interview with Jens, Annex B, p. 120). This statement is reinforced also by Anne and Rasmus ''we have not seen any campaigns'' (interview with Anne and Rasmuss, Annex B, p.120). Moreover Bo states that: ''I do not remember any promotion of Romania! I have seen countries like Kazakhstan, Armenia, Uzbekistan; all theses countries you would have never thought about, but I have never seen anything about Romania'' (interview with Bo, Annex B, p. 120).

In order for Romania to change its image as a destination in the mind of Danes, and for them to become aware of the possibility to travel to Romania, the country has to start building its brand identity and start a consistent promotion on the Danish market, aspect that transpires through the results of the questionnaire: ''not a country that has marketed itself enough in my eyes'' (Annex A, p. 87). Furthermore, the food aspect has to be integrated in their material promotion strategy, as it was suggested by the majority of Danes that have participated in this research. Even though there are Danes that believe the fact that Romania can not brand itself only through food, based on our interpretation of the overall answers we received in the base of the questionnaire and interview, food could help Romania to increase the role of traditional food and to achieve destination development. In addition, the message spread through promotional material should contain positive elements about the image of Romania, and why is relevant for tourists to visit the destination. In addition, the image induced has to be different and distinctive from the other similar destinations (e.g. Bulgaria, Slovenia, Hungary, Czech Republic) in order to position the brand in the mind of Danes and eliminate the threat of substitution, avoiding Danes to select other destinations in the detriment of Romania: ''it should start with tourists knowledge about destinations. What do people know about Romania? Nothing! So what does it take for Romania to be over other destinations? To get started basically. Promoting the cultural highlights. This is so obvious for everyone coming to Romania. Promoting, promoting, promoting'' (interview with Bo, Annex B, p. 120).

There have been many attempts for branding Romania, but none of them succeed or got any attention in the international public eye (Sepi, 2013). There were criticisms linked to the lack of message and a clear image that was supposed to be transmitted; additionally the Romanians did not support some of the campaign and the political corruption and instability was also an obstacle for these to succeed. Promoting Romanian food as an attraction for the destination could be possible if we look into the results of both interviews and questionnaire. The results from question no. 5 in the questionnaire regarding what attracts the respondents at a destination place food second in the order of their priorities; also the majority sees food as an attraction while at destination. Furthermore, the Danes who traveled to Romania had good things to say about the traditional food and here are some examples:

''usually food is what people remember, especially if the culinary experience is positive and surprising, as it was for us also in Romania; (…) my wife and I had the feeling that while dining out we got experiences as good as we would have got in any other place, and that was actually surprising a little bit'' (interview with Bo, Annex A, p. 87);

''it was good, else I would have remembered a bad experience'' (interview with Jens, Annex B, p. 120);

''it was something I could relate with; it was good'' (interview with Anne and Rasmus, annex B, p. 120);

''I think that the most of the traditional is very good; delicious food; I remember it being quite delicious'' (results from the questionnaire, Annex A, p. 87).

They were also some Danes that have tried traditional food and did not like it, but in the end it is a matter of preference, and no traditional cuisine can satisfy all taste, like we expect to be also the case in the Romanian traditional cuisine. Moreover, from our personal experience we can say that there are types of Romanian dishes that need to be eaten in a certain combination, and if there is no one to explain how to eat it, then of course one will be disappointed.

The positive feedback received for the food reinforced the idea that food can be a strategy to promote Romania, but as Anne and Rasmus (Annex B, p. 120) said it needs to have a story. Storytelling is important for the tourists, because it can create memorable experiences and make people talk about them: ''Romania needs a good story. As we said it is important what people say when they come back from a holiday in Romania. It is also important what people like us who have blogs write about their experiences in Romania'' (interview with Anne and Rasmus, Annex B, p. 120). This is also because stories creates connections (e.g. with a place, other people, culture) and makes the experience more emotional, because the tourists have the possibility to immerse in a 'new world' and to discover new culture. Moreover, when people talk about these stories like Anne and Rasmus do on their blog, they capture and share their experience in order for others to have a glimpse on what the destination has to offer, but it could also be for them to go back relieve it, more so if it was a good story to begin with. We need also to point out that these stories that are shared with other people are subjective and it does not mean that the reconstruction of the reality is generally valid. However, the promotional material of Romania as a destination should consider not to limit the tourists' imagination and determine their experience, but preferably they should help them discover on their own and to create their own stories.

Another aspect that was revealed mostly in the interviews than in the questionnaire was that given the condition that Romania is practically unknown on the Danish market, the destination should target at the beginning the group tourists that buy packages from travel agents, because there are high chances for people to hear about the opportunity; moreover if the experience is satisfying, then other people will find out about it as well, because people are going to talk about it: ''I think that it has to start through selling the destination through travel agencies.

(…) I know also that most of the people like to do things that other people do, so it has to become a common thing to travel to Romania, so more and more people would choose to travel there'' (interview with Jens, Annex B, p. 120). ''*People traveling in groups would transmit the experience to the travel agency, and then the national agency will promote it even more, as it was the case some years ago with Bulgaria*'' (interview with Anne and Rasmus, Annex B, p. 120). The last statement shows Bulgaria as a precedent that targeting groups can work for an Eastern Europe destination, which make us wonder if Bulgaria has a better image in Denmark. As a country it is hard to tell, but as a destination could be if we look into the statistics that shows how many Danes have been traveling in the last couple of years to 'Sunny beach'. Anne and Rasmus believe that it is because ''there have been Danes who traveled to Bulgaria and who had good experiences'' (interview with Anne and Rasmus, Annex B, p. 120), and also because ''it was accessible; the trip was there, because the agencies offered trips to Bulgaria'' (interview with Anne and Rasmus, Annex B, p. 120); therefore the interpretation that it would work also for Romania as a destination. Similar to Bulgaria, it was the case of Prague if it is to examine what Jens said in the interview: ''it was very modern to travel for example to Prague; there were many trips arranged through agencies, and then people heard about it, and then they talked about it, and so on...and even though you don't want to go through travel agencies, you hear about it, and then you can arrange the trip individually. It might work the same for Romania; I mean it has to start somewhere'' (interview with Jens, Annex B, p. 120). However, we would like to underline, that it might be that there are not so many Danes who travel through travel agencies, and so it would be a challenge for Romania to attract this type of group. In order to be prepare for this certain situation, Romania should also consider other alternative ways to make the destination visible and to position itself in the mind of the Danes, and one could be partnerships with travel blogs, implicitly with food bloggers, like Anne and Rasmus suggested: ''if right now is one blog writing about Romania, what if there would be 50?'' (interview with Anne and Rasmus, Annex B, p. 41:44).

Summarizing, there are very few Danes we have encountered during our research and who have been to Romania, noting that Romania as a destination is not visible for Danes. The lack of promotion and the lack of knowledge, make Danes be unaware of the possibility to travel to Romania. It can also be that having no interest or purpose to visit Romania whatsoever, they ignore and block all the information about this particular destination.

It is required a strong and consistent promotion campaign to change the negative perceptions of Danes into positives ones, in order to consider Romania as on option, and with group tourists will be easier and faster. ''If I would be the Ministry of Tourism in Romania I would focus on group tourism. Romania has almost everything there, ready for tourists; (...) It is easy to travel in Romania; we realized that during our trip, and as soon as people realize that there is not difficult for individual traveling either'' (interview with Bo, Annex B, p. 120). In addition, the example of Bulgaria mentioned in the previous paragraph gives hopes that the fate of Romanian tourism can change for the better, and that more and more Danes would start traveling to Romania; but not before the Romanian Destination Management getting involved

and creating a brand strategy that could generate competitive advantage and to establish its position in the mind of the tourists on the Danish market.

5.5 CHEAP IS ATTRACTIVE

Another theme resulted from the interviews we conducted identify an advantage that Romania might have in attracting tourist: *everything is cheaper in comparison with other destinations with the same offerings* (Jens, 29:48). The idea of Romania as a cheap destination is suggested and debated more in details in our interviews. However, in the answers to the questionnaires are also found links to the aspect of affordability that Romania has attached to its image, although it is interesting to notice that some of the perception of Romania as a cheap destination come from Danes who have not been in Romania yet. Furthermore, it is also interesting the way the participants in interviews treat the discussion about this subject is slightly different than the ideas obtained from the questionnaire about the same subject. Thus, the participants in interviews, almost all of them discusses the aspect of Romania being an affordable destination; moreover, they did so without having being asked directly a question about this aspect, fact that make us think that a cheap destination is a factor many tourists consider and it also influences travel decisions. Respondents to the questionnaire talk about Romania as a cheap destination only when it comes to their opinion about Romania unverified in most of the cases, answering questions regarding their perception about the country and making suggestions about branding strategies.

As we have just mentioned, the discussion about Romania seen as a cheap destination was wrapped up around the discussion regarding the aspects Romania has to focus when branding itself for the Danish market. In this regard Jens says that *Romania is much cheaper* (29:48) in comparison to other destinations. Furthermore, Anne and Rasmus say that *it is an advantage that Romania is cheap (28:02),* while Bo says that *the very good thing about Romania is that is very cheap* (41:47). The implication of being a cheap destination can play an important role in general in tourism all over the world, because as Bo says *that is what people travel for, cheap prices* (41:47). From this statement we understand that Danes although are considered to be affluent, they still like cheap prices, not only in the daily life but also on holiday. According to Jens, the cheap prices in Eastern Europe was one of the main aspects Danish tourists talked about years ago when the tourism in this part of Europe begun (29:48).

The fact that Romania is considered to be a cheap destination has implications in at least two aspects: tourist behavior, and destination image of Romania.

5.5.1 THE INFLUENCE OF BEING A CHEAP DESTINATION ON TOURIST BEHAVIOR

As we mentioned before a cheap destination may have impact on many tourists, no matter of their nationality. Anne and Rasmus got to visit Romania after they decided to make a holiday in a cheap destination which will allow them to have a new experience but also to save money for another holiday already planned (interview with Anne and Rasmus, Annex B, p. 120), and so they decided to travel to Romania. Thus, in Anne and Rasmus' case the fact that a destination is cheap can play an important role in influencing their travel behavior, acting as a

pull factor toward a destination. Moreover, even in the case of food tourism cheap prices at a destination might influence tourists' decisions. Furthermore, Mak et al.(2012) classification of factors influencing food consumption to a destination can make things more clear. Thus, cheap prices can be considered in the group of environmental factors that, together with the individual and food, influences the food consumption at a destination. Mak et al. (2012) argue that tourist, the destination and the food at a destination impact tourist behavior in regards to food consumption at a destination. In both cases cheap prices can be an important factor linked to the destination/environment category of factors and not in the least an advantage in comparison with other destinations. So, the cheaper the destination and its food offering, the better for Romania as a destination, of course if they manage to promote the country better than it has been done so far.

5.5.2 ROMANIA PERCEIVED AS A CHEAP DESTINATION

In the literature review section it was mentioned that the brand image of the destination is important for the success of a destination (Cai 2002, Nandan, 2005), and this applies to Romania as well in the present research. On one side, the fact that is cheap can play an important role in attracting more tourists, while, on the other side, it can act as a positive characteristic for Romania, in rapport to other characteristics which might be negative such as criminality, gypsies etc., characteristics that are in general discussed in media, but which were also mentioned by the participants in our survey. Moreover, the fact that the participants in our survey consider Romania as cheap it is important because the brand image of a destination is created by the tourists and is based on their experiences (Blain et al., 2005), so it is a valuable asset for Romania as a destination in regards to attracting more Danish tourists. However, we also learned that destination image is not exactly branding (Garcia, 2012), but it can play the role of the step before it, where Romania's DMO noticing the influence of the low cost destination image has among tourists, can include this aspect into its branding strategies, as it is also suggested by some of the respondents to our questionnaire (results from questionnaire, Annex A, p. 87, question 20). However, *cheap* can have a negative meaning as well, not only a positive one. Usually it can be a positive element of a destination, but considering the stereotypes that Romania has in the eyes of the tourists (among the answers to the questionnaire one can see that Romania is considered by some as a poor country, it has high criminality, or that is unsafe etc.), it might make sense to consider both meanings of the term. However, in the case of interviews where participants had the chance to explain themselves and the ideas regarding Romania seen as a cheap destination, it was easy to understand that they refer to the term as an asset; yet, in the case of the questionnaire it is difficult to interpret whether the participants used it with a positive or with a negative sense. Following the results from the questionnaire, it can be argued that they see cheap as a positive aspect as well, due to the fact that they mentioned in the same answers other positive factors about Romania's destination image as: beautiful nature, interesting history etc. Moreover, in the context of the discussion about destination stereotypes, we know already that they influence tourism of a country (Gertner, 2002); because even though a country does not promote itself in a particular way, for some tourist the name of the country alone may create a certain image. Thus,

in the case of Romania, even though there might be many negative stereotypes among tourists, the fact that is considered cheap, if taken as a positive aspect, can result in constructive input in country's tourism. Therefore, it can be a good idea if Romania's DMO can include this image of cheap destination to its destination branding, in an effort to enhance the number of Danish tourists in Romania. Being a cheap destination is important and influences tourism at the destination, including food tourism, as it is the interest of our thesis.

5.6 DANES ARE NEOPHILIC FOODIES

Manly based on the last part of our questionnaire, but also sustained by some input obtained from the participants in our interviews, we are able in this section to build up a profile of the Danish tourists in relation to food consumption at a destination. Hence, as a first aspect to remember is that Danes seem to be very interested in consuming food, the food locals eat, and for 87% of them food represents an attraction when traveling (results from the questionnaire, Annex A, p. 87, and the results from the online questionnaire attached to this project in the USB device), and according to the results of our questionnaire food is second only to nature when it comes to the pull factors towards a destination (question 5 questionnaire, Annex A, p. 87). This information helps drawing a *foodie* image Danes might have. The interviews we had with Danes also sent to characteristics of Danish tourist behavior influenced by food consumption, with Danes loving eating out as much a possible, and trying traditional food (Annex B, p. 120). This image, if can be proved right at a general scale, can be a positive thing for travel destination in order to promote their traditional food, and why not Romania can do the same, because even though as we analyzed and concluded above that Danes see Romanian traditional food as an add-on, it can help Romanian tourism in general. Moreover, Danes look forward to trying new types of food, as 96% of those participating in our questionnaire answered; while 49% of them answered that they constantly try new types of food (results from the questionnaire, Annex A, p. 87, and the results from the online questionnaire attached to this project in the USB device). In addition, when trying food, Danes are not held back by the fact that certain types of food are not known to them, on the contrary they enjoy new culinary experiences especially if they imply consumption of ethnic food at a destination, though the smell and the taste of the food is important in the way that the dishes have to taste and smell good (results from the questionnaire, Annex A, p. 87, and the results from the online questionnaire attached to this project in the USB device). However, based on these answers we can draw the conclusion that Danes are more the neophilic type of tourists, rather than neophobic one. As we have seen previously, they present themselves as a nation of tourists who like food in general, but they are also open to try new foods, no matter if they had any previous experiences with it. This can imply that the times are gone when Danes used to travel with rugbrød in their baggage (Interview with Jens, Annex B, p. 120). Thus food tourism can be seen as a type of tourism that fit to Danish market, because on one side Danes live in an environment where topics linked to food are a daily presence, and on the other side they are not very picky when it comes to food, being ready to try almost everything (Interview with Anne and Rasmus, Annex B, p. 120). Based on these two aspects one

can say that food tourism is a good much for the Danish traveler, beside the traditional "3S" travel destinations (sun, sand and sea).

For Danes consuming traditional food at a destination is also an important way to experience authenticity of that destination, and to gather information about it; more, traditional food consumed at a destination is seen as a good way to meet new people and to create a network (results from the questionnaire, Annex A, p. 87, and the results from the online questionnaire attached to this project in the USB device). In the end, following all these steps of the importance of traditional foods and the way it has to fit best Danes' tastes, even though all these requirements are met, Danes are divided when it comes of taking pictures of dishes they eat and sharing them within their network; however, most of the answers -33%- pointed towards the attitude of taking picture and share them on social networks (results from the questionnaire, Annex A, p. 87, and the results from the online questionnaire attached to this project in the USB device).

Based on all the information we have gathered about Danes through our survey, we have identified some patterns that can help designing a frame for Danes food consumption behavior in relation to Romanian traditional food. Thus, Danes are pushed to try Romanian traditional food by internal factors as curiosity and interest in food. Driven by these internal motivators, Danes try Romanian food, but in order to consume it at the destination it is needed that there are some more important and bigger motivators to visit the country. If they do not know much about Romania, they do not travel there, being stopped to do so by many external factors as stereotypes about Romania and its country image. However, even if they go over this aspect they try Romanian food pushed by the desire to experience local authenticity and culture through food. Yet, the home culinary environment influences them to aspire for high class culinary experiences, which lead to refusal to consider Romanian traditional food as a strong enough motivational factor for them to visit Romania, because they see that Romanian traditional food misses style and modernism. In all this behavior description we are able to identify a couple of crucial moments, which influence Danes' food consumption behavior in relation to Romanian traditional food. One of them is the internal motivators, the other is the quality of the food and the third one, which seem to be more important than all the others is the external factors, namely the image of the country and stereotypes about Romania. In other words, if Romania would be better promoted to the Danish market, and the Romanian traditional food would know a transformation, matching the standards of the well-known food tourism destinations of the world (France, Italy etc.), or even more than that, the Danes might come to visit Romania even for food alone.

Now, looking over these characteristics of the Danes participating in our questionnaire in relation to food consumption behavior when traveling, we believe that is safe to say that they are neophilic foodies. This conclusion can sound encouraging for developing tourism destinations, which consider promoting their traditional food among other local attractions. It is especially important to destinations offering the attractions Danes are looking for like sun, sand,

sea, nature, culture and history (results from the questionnaire, Annex A, p. 87, and the results from the online questionnaire attached to this project in the USB device).

5.7 SUB-CONCLUSION FOR THE ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION CHAPTER

The chapter has revealed that there are few contradictions in the results that we have gather during our project and which were discussed in the six themes that have emerged from the analysis. These contradictions were related to our main topic, which is to see if is possible for Romania to brand itself as a tourist destination through food tourism in order to attract Danish tourists. The overall attitude of the Danes who participated in the research towards traditional food is favorable, where the majority said that traditional food plays an important role in situ, and they see food as an attraction, which can contribute to enhance their experience. However there are different opinions regarding how food would work as a branding strategy for Romania in order to attract more Dane tourists. The results of the questionnaire revealed that food is a good branding strategy to promote Romania for the Danish market, while the Danes who participated in the interview revealed that even though the food was good, still would not be a strong motivational factor to pull Danes to travel or the only element for the country to promote itself; but instead it is considered as an added value to the Romanian tourism offering and an enhancement of the overall experience. Moreover, we have interpreted from the results of the interviews that Romania has so many things to offer to tourists, that the they would not travel there only for food, but also to experience more about the Romanian culture, history and nature; anyhow food remains still part of this experience.

Another contradictory aspect can be observed when looking at the results of the questionnaire is that the majority of Danes that have participated in the questionnaire agreed that food would be a good strategy to attract Danes in Romania, but in spite of that they also said that they do not know anything about the Romanian cuisine, so their answer is questionable and makes us wonder how reliable their opinions can be. These contradictions mentioned before suggested that both category of Danes, the ones who had visit Romania and the ones who had not, created their image of Romania based on different realities: one that was tested belonging to the Danes who have been to Romania, and which reality is based on their own experience, and the other unproven belonging to the Danes that have not been to Romania, and whose reality was created based on various personal and stimulus factors influencing the way they perceive the destination. Moreover, these perceptions appears to be presented in a negative light, which was interpreted as sufficient reason why some Danes have not travel to Romania. Even though the Danes who have not visited Romania consider food as a good strategy to promote Romania, it is hard to tell if this could also mean that they would consider to travel to Romania in the future, and there was no sign to guarantee that food would be enough to make these Danes change their perception and influencing their decision making. Though an aspect could weighted in their decision-making process, and this is the fact that the country is considered also to be a cheap destination, which can influence tourists behavior before and during traveling, like the selection

process of the destination or food consumption at destination. Of course as we mentioned in the discussion session, there are two sides of the coin, but many Danes involved in the study mentioned the term 'cheap' as being a positive factor rather than a negative one. Here will be a good opportunity for Romania to establish partnerships with Danish travel agencies in order to create tourist packages for Danes and to take advantage of the cheap factors that characterized the destination. The latter will benefit both parties; on one side Romania will have the opportunity to host Danes tourists, and on the other side the Danish travel agencies will have the opportunity to diversify their offer and to remain appealing to their Danish customers by cheap alternatives to travel.

The 'leitmotif' of the research query if food tourism would work as a branding strategy for Romania and if this would influence more Danes to travel there, seems to be destination image. Even though, Danes are interested in food and the feedback of those who have already tried Romanian traditional food is positive, the perception of the country's image appears to be an obstacle that stands in the way of Danes traveling to Romania; and here we refer to those Danes that have not traveled to Romania, considering that those who had they overcame this barrier. The majority of Danes who participated in our research and who have not visited Romania, have negative perceptions about the country, and it looks like that weighs more than their desire to visit the country only for food. Moreover the perception of Romania as a country seems to overlap with the destination image, making even harder for someone to make a distinction between this two aspects. Additionally, the fact that Romania lacks promotion and visibility on the Danish market, explain why Danes have not traveled there. The last two viewpoints are understood by us in the way that if Romania would have a strong and consistent promotion in Denmark, then it could help change and persuade more Danes to travel, because it would be an opportunity to present the country in a positive light and raise awareness about the existence of the destination. This is something that could lead to image enhancement too.

6. CONCLUSIONS

Food tourism has known a great importance and development in the last twenty years; from an almost nonexistent field - with tourists not seeing food as an attraction of a destination and with scholars not researching it - to a branch of tourism that influences and motivates more and more tourists to travel; furthermore, it has also been seen by many destinations as a key strategy in destination development and competitive advantage (Hsu, 2008; Mak et al, 2012; Clesiu, 2014). In this context we begun writing this thesis, willing to research if food tourism can be a good branding strategy that could influence Danish tourists to travel to Romania. As we stated in our introduction, the interest in this subject was driven by the fact that the numbers of the Danish tourists in Romania is low and does not show visible improvement. Moreover, Romania's branding strategy does not include the element of food, although there are many opinions saying that Romanian traditional food is very good. Furthermore, food tourism in

Romania is unknown, practically, but also theoretically, with only a few academic articles written in the recent years tackling the subject of traditional food's importance for Romanian tourism. Considering these, we believe that our research might bring some new and interesting insights related to this topic, not only for Romania as a destination, but also for the actors involved in the travel business, such as travel agencies and other businesses within travel industry.

The main question of our project was *How would branding Romania as a food tourism destination influence more Danish tourists to visit the destination?* After we have analyzed the results of our interview and questionnaire, we can conclude that food can not be the only strategy to brand Romania in order to attract more Danes, given that the destination lacks awareness and it is not seen in a good light by some Danes. However, this answer is subject of interpretations. It is so because the Danes we have interacted with suggested that Romanian traditional food can play an important role in branding Romania to the Danish market, yet not the food not alone, but rather together with other attractions, Romanian traditional food seen mainly as an add-on value to the tourism of Romania. This means that a touristic package created by Romania's DMO (including attractions like exploring the nature of the country, visiting historical sites or having cultural experiences through different activities) can get more value and attract more Danes if Romanian traditional food is included as well. The fact that the Danes participating in our survey do not consider Romanian traditional food as a potential main motivation for them to visit Romania is not related to a low interest in food consumption among the Danes, but it has more to do with the characteristics of the Romanian traditional food and the image of the country. The lack of promotion and visibility on the Danish market, has impacted the Danes' level of awareness of Romania as a destination and if would appear the desire to travel to Romania. If so then food would not be the first attraction that the Danes will want to discover first, but it would still be important as an enhancement of their experience. Even though the Danes who have tried it consider Romanian traditional food similar to the Danish traditional food, it still misses some essential aspects. Thus, it is argued that Romanian traditional food is not modern enough, in the sense that Romanian traditional cuisine is still founded in large portions and dishes based on meat. This aspect stands out as important, because based on our research, the Danes we talked with consider that for a destination like Romania in order to become attractive through food for the Danish market it is needed that the food production knows a moment zero; a turning point that revolutionizes the way Romanians look and make their traditional food. Based on such a moment, Romanian traditional food can get a new face, more modern, similar to the level of food standards that Danes are used in Denmark or in other West European destinations. Furthermore, this idea can say a lot about how Danes see food tourism and can be seen as a suggestion for the other destinations in the Baltic Region of Europe and Eastern Europe at least, who don't have a very fancy cuisine, but would still want to promote it to the Danish market.

However, this conclusion of Romanian food not being modern enough to attract tourists might say something that not all the cuisines have the potential to attract tourists; or said in another way food tourism is also influenced by the trends. In our case, we live in an era with

focus on artistic dishes, gourmet style and Michelin restaurants. In this context any other offering seems to have hard times to enter in the tourists to do list; at least based on the results of our research.

Moreover, it is also interesting to think about Danish tourists' view regarding the Romanian traditional food, seen as not very attractive, compared to the good references about the same cuisine that we are mentioning in the introduction of our paper. It seems like a paradox and it might raise questions like: how a cuisine that is appreciated by many can not be considered good to support a tourism branding strategy for Romania? Or, is food tourism about food alone only?

Another interesting input, which emerged from the project that could also help Romania as a destination to become visible on the Danish market is to create touristic packages to be sold by the Danish travel agency for Danes. This would not only benefit the country by increasing its visibility and the number of inbound tourists, but also the Danish travel agencies which will have a new and diverse offer that could attract more customers. Furthermore, advertising tourist packages for Romania could be considered as a good value for money, since Romania is perceived as a cheap destination by the majority of Danes that have participated in this research, aspect that could increase the attractiveness of the destination and make more Danes buy these tourist packages.

Our research shed some light over subjects like food tourism (particularly in regards to Romania), Danish travel behavior, and Danes' behavior in regards to food consumption at a destination and branding strategies. Moreover, our research can be seen as a part of the literature in regards to food tourism, especially focusing on Romanian market, which can be added to the anyway scarce collection of scientific papers on the subject. This last aspect is important because it is proved that food can help destinations to improve their image and attractiveness, thus Romania focusing on food tourism, especially in taking the traditional food at a level that stands out and excites people can bring competitive advantages in regards to other destinations and attract not only Danes but also tourists from many other destinations.

Based on the above answer to the research's main question, one can say that this opens up an opportunity for further research. Thus we think that it would be interesting to do a research to see if branding Romania through a modernized traditional food would attract Danish tourists, as some respondents suggested. Moreover, it might worth to look into how a modernized Romanian cuisine, as the Danes we interviewed suggest it, can still reflect traditional characteristics of the food. Furthermore it would be interesting to investigate how a gourmet cuisine, at a level the Danes and probably the Western tourists are used with, would be able to shadow Romania's negative image in the mind of many Danes and not only; and we are not talking about Romania's destination image, but the influence of Romania's image as a country, aspect that might be also investigated in a separate research.

Food is an essential part of the everyday life and more than that it is the least a need in any circumstances, including traveling. However, as we have also shown through our research food can be more than just a need when it comes to traveling; and even though it is linked in

most of the cases with authenticity and cultural aspects, food has to do with more than that; among many other aspects food drives feelings of exploration, curiosity, escape, excitement, prestige, past experiences, and meeting new people. Food can be in the same time 'scary' for some of the tourists, which makes it important that there are options for those in cause to enjoy dishes more known and friendly to them. Food in tourism has been revealed as a rich source of experiences, thus once with the understanding of its importance in theory, tourists have discovered it as well through their own experiences and their comment and wishes in regards to food tourism are listened and important for DMO's of many destinations. It is to be seen whether Romania's DMO will focus on food tourism as well, and if it would find a way to raise the standards of its cuisine and food presentation at a level that would be appealing for many international tourists, including also the Danish tourists and their expectations in regards to food.

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Annex A: Questionnaire's results

1. Age
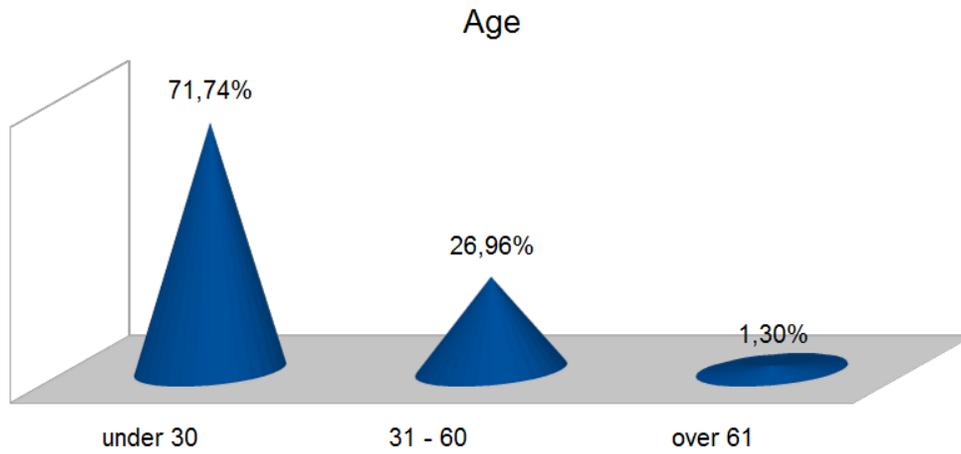
2. Gender

3. How often do you travel abroad?

How often do you travel abroad?

1 – 2	47,50%
3 – 4	38,40%
4 – 5	10,50%
>6	3,60%
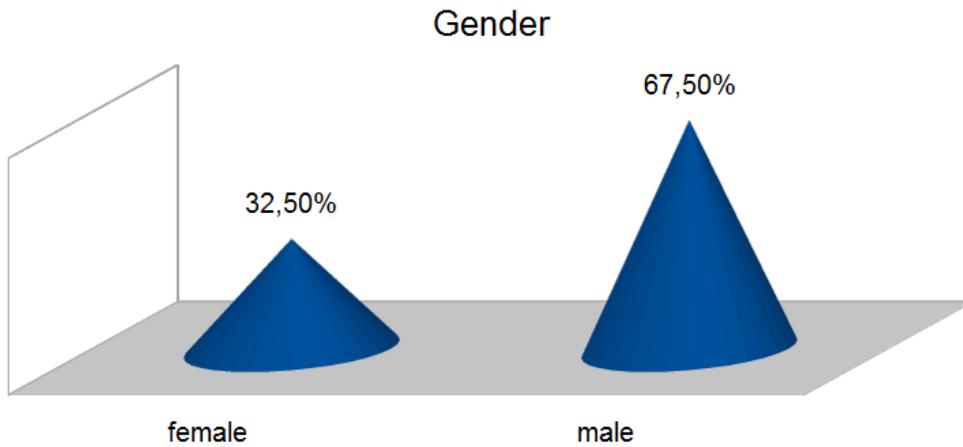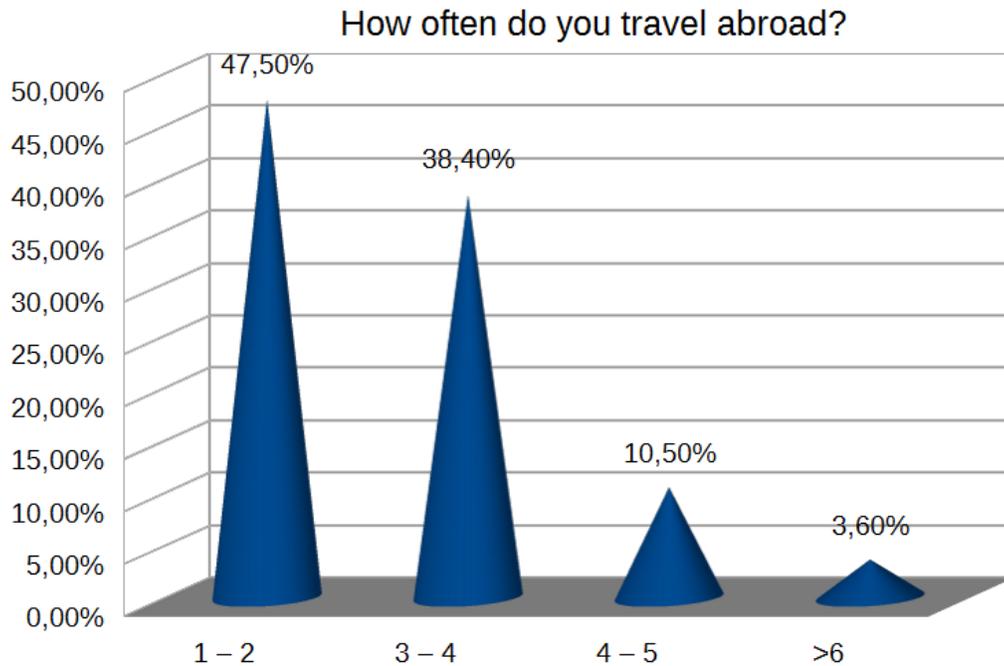
4. What are your main reasons for traveling?

1. holiday
2. new experiences, spending time with family, sun
3. holiday and relaxation
4. holiday and family visit
5. have fun, relax and have good time with family
6. -
7. sun and warm weather
8. discover new places and meet new people
9. I have family and friends abroad
10. experience different cultures
11. holiday and new experiences
12. holiday
13. holiday
14. adventure, warm and culture
15. holiday, experiences and relaxation
16. family

17. experiences
18. travel in general
19. experiences
20. holiday
21. holiday
22. holiday
23. family, holiday, visit
24. holiday
25. holiday
26. work
27. warm and experiences
28. holiday
28. experience new places in the world
29. relaxation and new experiences
30. enjoyment
31. holiday
32. holiday
33. new experiences
34. holiday and courses
35. holiday and study
36. family and study
37. -
38. holiday
39. experiences
40. fun
41. relaxation, new cultures and new experiences
42. experiences and pleasure
43. holiday
44. summer holiday
45. spend time with friends and new experiences
46. holiday, relaxation and training
47. holiday
48. holiday, experiences
49. holiday
50. pleasure and business 70/30
51. experiences, culture, art, sun, food
52. enjoyment
53. experiences, country's history, different cultures
54. pleasure
55. enjoyment, explore new cultures

56. work

57. explore other cultures, nature, meet people, travel to countries where I know local; work.

58. holiday

59. tourism

60. gree time

61. holiday

62. holiday

63. experiences

64. experiences

65. holiday

66. free time

67. experiences and relaxation

68. relaxation

69. relaxation

70. holiday

71. holiday, relaxation, and experiences

72. holiday

73. holiday

74. holiday

75. relaxation

76. holiday

77. holiday

78. experiences

79. -

80. relaxation

81. explore the world and relax

82. experience new countries

83. holiday

84. often pleasure but always work and pleasure

85. vacation

86. fun experiences, better weather

87. new experiences and curiousity

89. experiences and relaxation

90. holidays with family

91. holiday

92. away from Denmark

93. film producing and explore

94. holiday

95. wanderlust and discover other cultures

96. relax in the sun
97. experiences
98. relaxation and holiday
99. holiday
100. experience and visit family
101. holiday
102. family
103. holiday
104. to get out of the daily routine
105. holiday and relaxation
106. spend time with family
107. holiday
108. holiday, work
109. holiday
110. go out and explore something
111. holiday, shopping and culinary experiences
112. holiday
113. holiday
114. holiday
115. business
116. holiday
117. holiday
118. family and friends
119. visit family or holiday
120. work, holiday
121. relaxation
122. experiences in other countries, history
123. holiday
124. holiday
125. visit family
126. holiday or work
127. visit family
128. holiday
129. holiday
130. holiday
131. good weather and sun
132. work and holiday
133. work, holiday
134. holiday
135. work and holiday

136. holiday
137. holiday and visit friends
138. new experiences
139. holiday
140. explore the local culture
141. enjoyment
142. enjoyment
143. work
144. holiday
145. holiday
146. holiday
147. holiday and relaxation
148. relaxation and exploring new places; holiday
149. work
150. spend time with family
151. because it is cool
152. explore and relaxation
153. family
154. relaxation and sun
155. travel to discover other cultures
156. holiday
157. explore other cultures
158. experiences and discover other cultures
159. holiday
160. holiday
161. holiday
162. holiday
163. enjoyment
164. holiday

5. What attract you a destination?

What attracts you to a destination?

25,52%   food
17,33%   sightseeing
24,00%   history of the place
27,43%   nature
5,71%   other
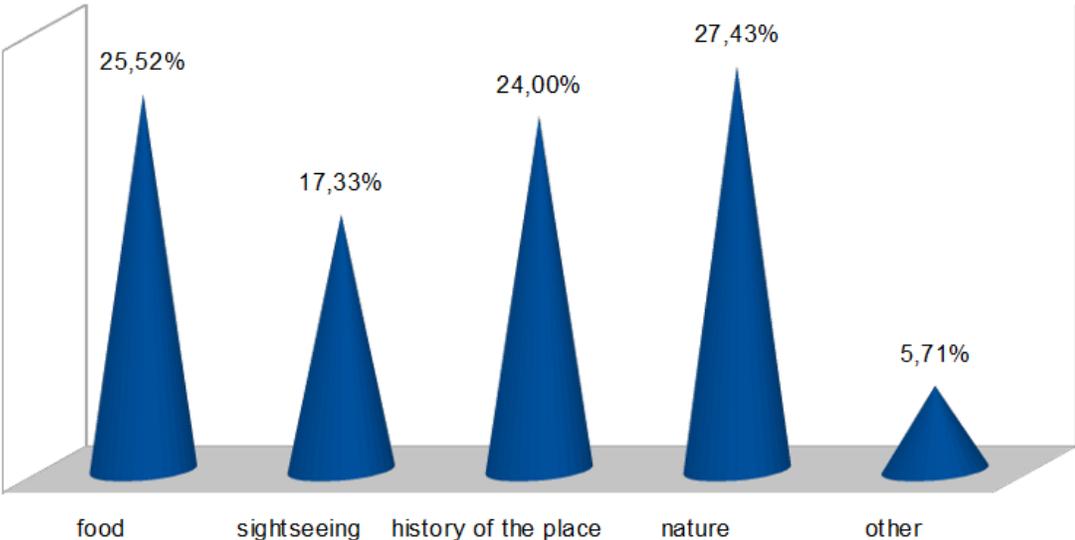
6. Does the image of a destination influence your decision to travel?

Does the image of the destination influence your decision to travel?

83,91%   yes
16,09%   no
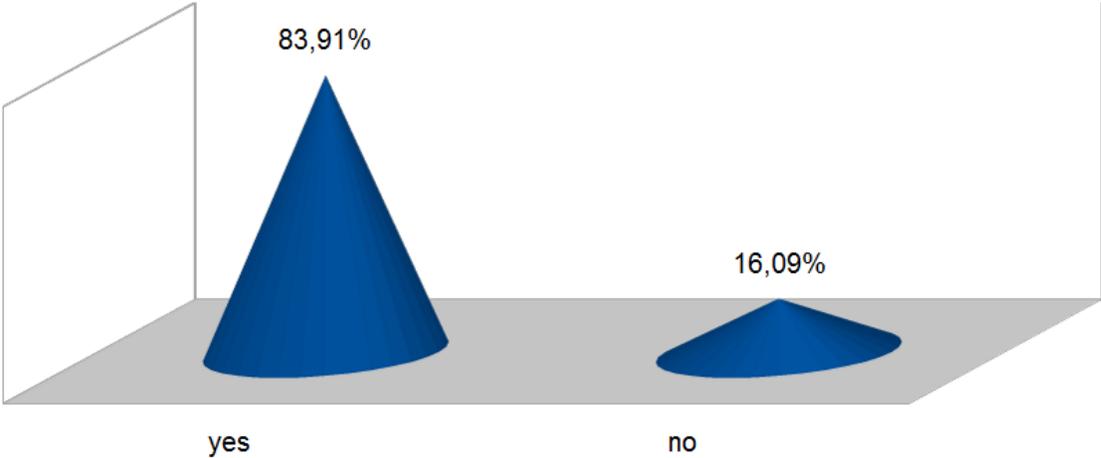
7. When you travel, do you consider trying the local food of a destination?

When you travel do you consider trying the local food of a destination?
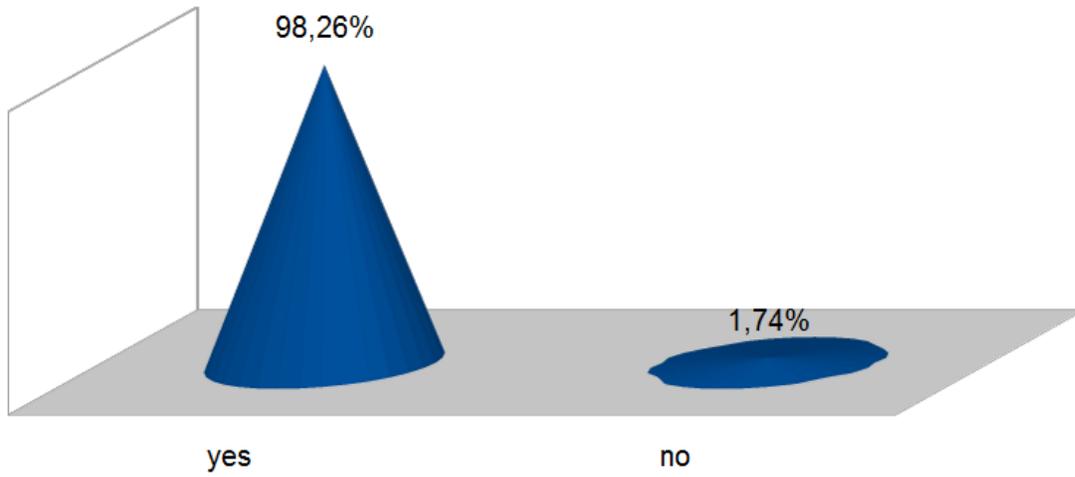
98,26%

1,74%

yes

no

8. I try local food at a destination because:
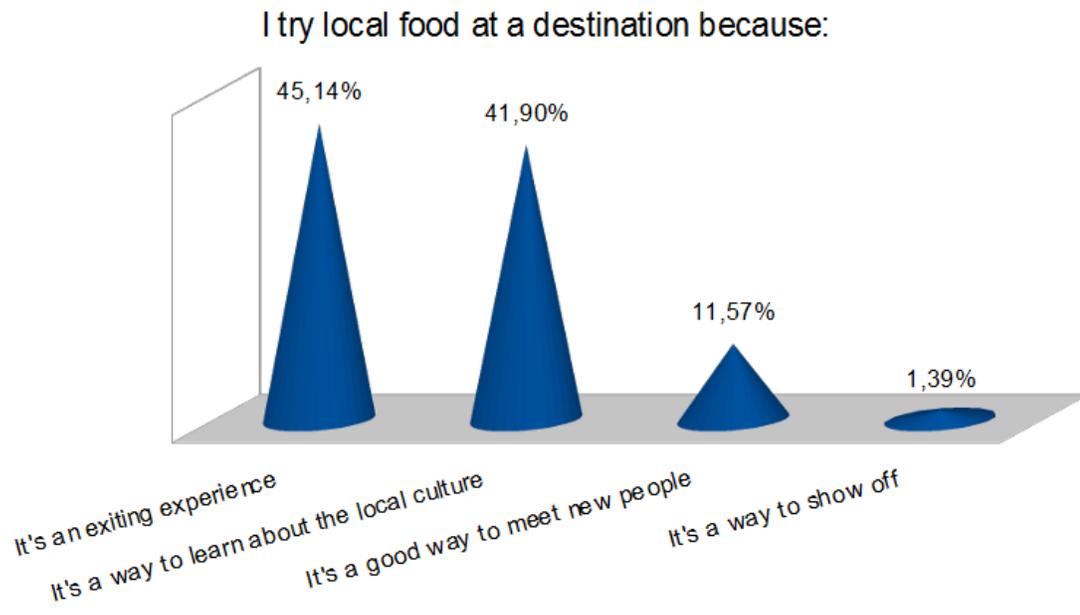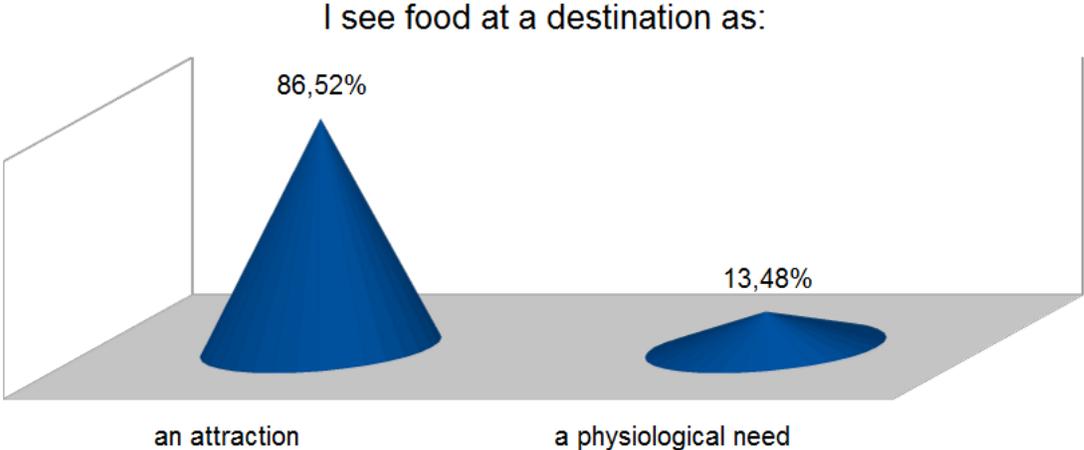
I try local food at a destination because:

45,14%

41,90%

11,57%

1,39%

It's an exiting experience

It's a way to learn about the local culture

It's a good way to meet new people

It's a way to show off

9. I see food at a destination as:

I see food at a destination as:

86,52%

13,48%

an attraction · a physiological need

10. Do you think that food is an asset for a tourism destination?

Do you think that food is an asset for a tourism destination?

93,91%

6,09%

yes · no

11. Do you look forward to try new types of food?

Do you look forward to try new types of food?

96,52%

3,48%

yes   no
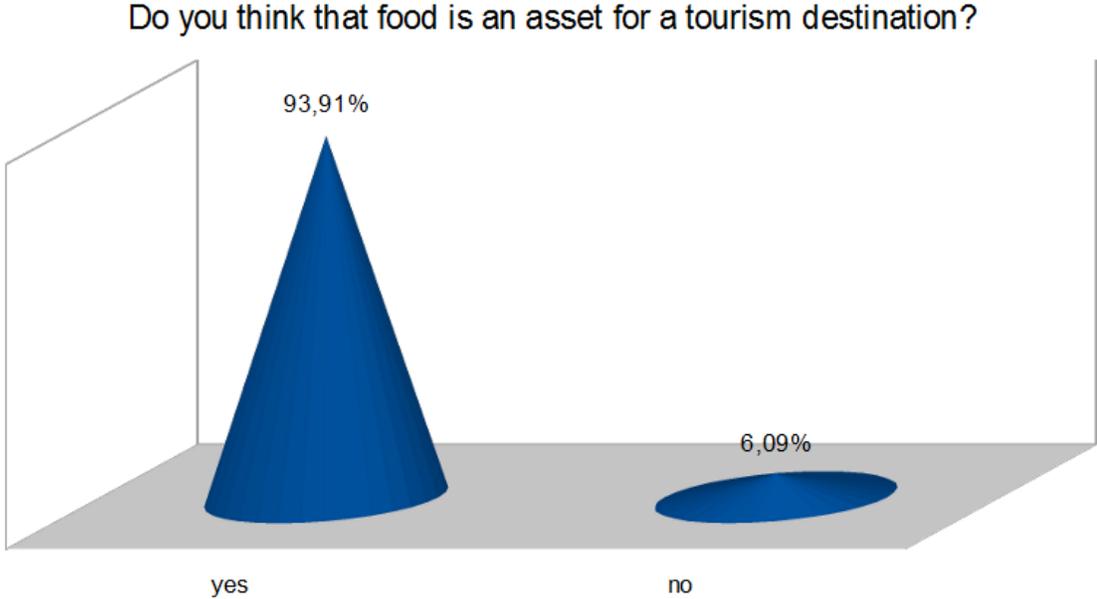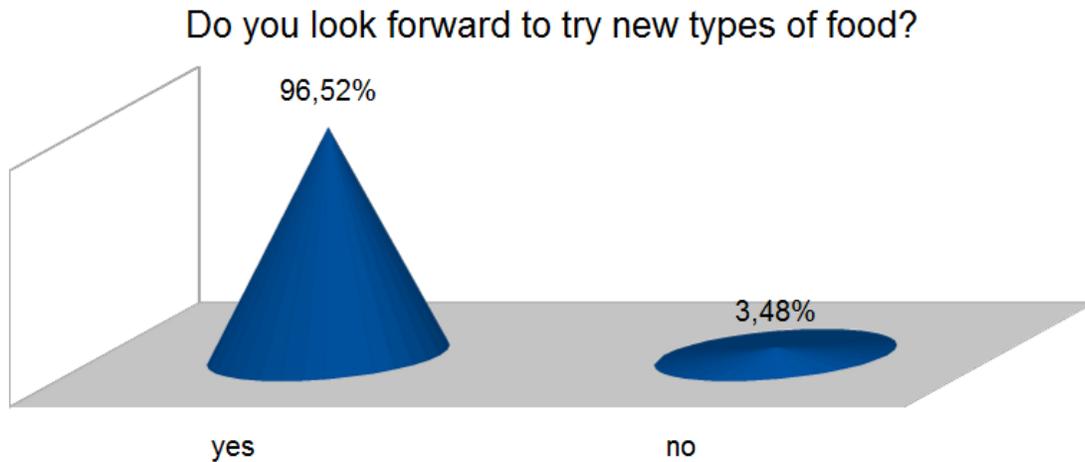
12. Have you traveled to Romania?

1. I have not had the chance.
2. I have just never thought about it.
3. Yes. Road trip in Europe (1 day in Bucharest)
4. never had possibility.
5. because I normally travel to places with beach and pool.
6. because it is not my first priority to travel to Romania
7. because I see Romania as a poor country.
8. -
9. I have not had the possibility yet.
10. to be honest: I have not thought of it.
11. there was always other destinations I really wanted to visit.
12. have not had the possibility to visit it. Beside, I miss the information about Romania e.g. what is to do/see there.
13. I do not know
14. because I associate Romanian with war and poverty.

15. time
16. it has not ever been actual for me.
17. -
18. -
19. have not had the possibility yet.
20. I have never thought about it.
21. I have not thought about it; maybe one day…
22. I have not considered Romania as a big travel destination, but I am open to try it sometime.
23. no knowledge of places in Romania.
24. I was at ski as a kid.
25. I have not considered it.
26. has not been relevant
27. -
28. other destinations have been more attractive.
28. there are other destinations I want to visit before Romania.
29. I have not considered it; it might be because I do not have much knowledge about it.
30. -
31. I do not know
33. Romania is not the country that I have considered so far.
32. in the 10 grade I visited a volleyball club, and I lived with a Romanian family
34. I have not heard so much about it.
35. I have not thought about it.
36. I have not considered it.
37. I do not know much about it, apart from Dracula.
38. there have always been other places I wanted to travel to.
39. -
40. I do not know the country.
41. there are other destinations that are more important for me.
42. I have not had the chance yet, but there is on the to do list.
43. I have not thought about it.
44. I have always wanted to travel to Romania, but I have not had the chance yet.
45. I have not thought about it.
46. I have not had the chance but, I would like to do that.
47. I have not thought about it
48. -
49. I have not really heard about tourism in Romania
50. I have never considered that
51. I do not know too much about the country.
52. I have not had the chance.

53. There are other destinations that have attracted me.
54. It has not been a priority.
55. -
56. -
57. I do not know much about Romania, so there was no reason to consider visiting it.
58. I have not got the chance yet, but I would like to.
59. I do not know much about the country.
60. No reason; I do not know the country.
61. it is not so tropical.
62. it has just not happened so far.
63. I do not know much about Romania.
64. no special reason.
65. -
66. I have not thought about it.
67. I have not thought about it yet
68. I have never considered it, but maybe on day it will happen.
69. Other destinations are more attractive.
70. No enough knowledge about Romania. Travel to the same places due to old habits.
71. I do not know many who have traveled to Romania, and I am not a first mover.
72. I have not considered Romania as a travel destination.
73. I do not know much about the country.
74. I do not know why, but I would like to.
75. enjoy the culture, see something new
76. I do not know why, but I want to visit it in the future.
77. -
78. -
79. I do not know
80. I have never heard anything about it.
81. no special reason; I have just not thought about it.
82. -
83. -
84. I do not know
85. never thought about it.
86. never thought of going
87. -
89. I does not sound so attractive, because I do not know the country to well.
90. Romania does not have a very good name, and so it is not so attractive.
91. -
92. -
93. priorities and considerations

94. I have not seen travel offices offering holidays there.

95. there were other places that were more interesting than Romania.

96. -

97. not attractive enough

98. I have not heard a lot about Romania

99. I do not know much about Romania

100. there is not as interesting as other destinations

101. I have not felt like visiting it!

102. because the world is big and it takes time to travel to all the destinations, but I want to visit it in the future.

103. there were other places I wanted to visit before visiting Romania.

104. other destinations attracted me more than Romania.

105. I do not know what Romania has to offer when it comes to tourism.

106. I have been in other neighboring countries, but not Romania.

107. I do not travel so much.

108. I have not got the chance yet, but I would like to.

109. Romania is not a destination that people talks about it.

110. there is not known as a destination.

111. I have not thought about it.

112. I am student, so I do not travel so much.

113. I do not know why!

114. -

115. it has just happened so.

116. -

117. -

118. I do not know

119. -

120. -

121. -

122. I do not know it.

123. I have not thought about it.

124. -

125. -

126. I have never thought to travel to Romania.

127. I do not know much about Romania, and what I know is unfortunately linked to poverty and the east-bloc.

128. I do not know the country too well.

129. I miss knowledge about the country.

130. -

131. -

132. I do not know too much about Romania as a tourist destination.

133. I do not know anyone who lives in Romania; I do not know anything about Romanian culture or cuisine.

134. I do not travel so often.

135. because there have to be some destinations left, to be considered other times.

136. I travel usually alone; so I do not want to risk and travel alone there.

137. I have not consider it; beside I have not heard much about Romania as a destination.

138. -

139. I have not thought about it

140. I do not know why.

141. I do not know why.

142. I have not got the chance

143. I do not know

144. I have not thought about it

145. I have not thought about it.

146. I have not considered it

147. because I have not heard too much about the destination.

148. Romania is seen as an east country comparable with Russia and Poland where everything is boring, cold and difficult.

149. -

150. because the travel agencies do not have offers to Romania. Beside, I do not know why it is worth visiting a country like Romania...lack of information.

151. I have not thought about it.

152. -

153. I have not got the chance.

154. I have not traveled in eastern Europe

155. -

156. for a football match.

157. I do not know

158. I have not thought about it. There where other destinations prioritized.

159. Have not thought of it.

160. -

161. I have not been there yet, but it is a possible destination for the future.

162. Priorities. I want first to see Brazil, Mexico and other southern countries.

163. the name of the country does not say much to me.

164. I have not been there yet.

13. What do you think Romania has to offer tourism wise?

1. I do not know enough about Romania

2. nature, culture
3. beautiful nature
4. traditional food
5. I do not know
6. -
7.- good food and beautiful nature
8. history, beautiful nature, culture
9. I know that there is beautiful nature
10. probably heaps of beautiful nature; a much more different type of culture
11. I do not know.
12. nature
13. many exciting things.
14. culture and historic attractions
15. culture, food, nature
16. nature
17. exciting culture
18. I do not know
19. -
20. history
21. I do not know
22. nature
23. -
24. nature, hiking
25. culture, nature
26. -
27. I do not know
28. nature, adventure, trekking, culture
28. beautiful nature, handball
29. -
30-
31. nature
32. nature, churches, history, architecture
33. beautiful nature, history, architecture
34. culture, history, beautiful nature
35. I do not know
36. I do not know, food?
37. sea, mountains and nature
38. beautiful nature, history
39. cheap
40. -

41. culture and new food experiences

42. culture

43. I have no clue

44. culture and nature

45. -

46-

47. culture and food

48. -

49. history and nature

50. authentic history

51. history and nature

52. I do not know

53. a different culture and food experiences

54. history

55. history, culture and food

56. culture, history and nature

57. history, culture and food

58. nature and local food

59.-

60. a different culture and history than Denmark

61. beautiful nature

62. -

63. history, culture

64. I know very little about Romania

65. beautiful nature

66. I do not know

67. culture

68. -

69. -

70. architecture

71. something different than the west europe offers. Another history and culture background.

72. history, culture

73. history, nature, culture

74. fantastic food and culture

75. -

76. history and beautiful nature

77. old culture

78. exciting new culture

79. -

80. different culture
81. -
82. -
83. football
84. -
85. -
86. great beaches and a lot of parties
87. beautiful nature
89. maybe some nature or history
90. -
91. history, food, culture
92. -
93. exciting museums, culture and music
94. -
95. exciting culture and history
96. I do not know
97. -
98. -
99. food, beautiful constructions etc.
100. culture
101. -
102. beautiful culture, folklore and language
103. culture, history, nature and food
104. -
105. -
106. history
107. -
108. culture and history
109. beaches
110. exciting new culture
111. many things, but Danes have not heard of them
112. culture and nature
113. -
114. history and culture
115. no clue
116. -
117. I do not know
118. history and beautiful constructions
119. culture
120. a lot of exciting history

121. climate
122. definitely a lot of things
123. culture
124. history, food, attractions
125. I do not know
126. I do not know
127. Nature and beautiful villages; peace; beautiful cultural life in Bucharest
128. I do not know
129. -
130. nature
131. I do not know
132. food and cozy small towns
133. history, cheap prices, nature, culture
134. culture and nature
135. culture and nature
136. exciting history, nature and food
137. nature, culture and discovery
138. -
139. beautiful nature
140. -
141. -
142. I do not know
143. -
144. a different culture
145. cheap holiday
146. history
147. I have no idea
148. very beautiful nature and landscapes
149. -
150. exciting history
151. no idea
152. history and culture
153. no idea
154. food and history
155. I do not know
156. party, nature and cheap
157. nature, culture and food
158. I do not know
159. interesting culture
160. -

161. cheap prices
162. attractions in the big cities, as in Budapest and Prague
163. something similar to Prague
164. no idea

14. What is your perception of Romania as a travel destination?

1. it is ok.
2. cheap with great nature
3. Romania has a bad reputation in Denmark because there are many Rumanian who travel in Denmark and commit crimes.
4. food
5. I have not heard that much about it.
6. I do not know
7. -
8. different experiences.
9. beautiful nature and open people.
10. I believe Romania has some amazing sights.
11. different culture
12. -
13. -
14. culture and history
15. history, culture and landscape
16. kind people and good prices
17. different
18. no expectations
19. -
20. exciting and different
21. -
22. I do not have big expectations
23. -
24. beautiful landscapes, not very friendly people
25. -
26. -
27. -
28. I do not have
28. beautiful architecture and history
29. exciting, new
30. service, food, culture
31. have not thought about it

32. nature, history, architecture

33. experience the nature, history and attractions of the country,

34. -

35. different

36. exciting, new, different

37. a bit behind other countries and poor.

38. I do not have expectations.

39. -

40. -

41. welcoming population, exciting history and cultures

42. different atmosphere in regards to culture, traditions, architecture, and exciting people

43. big churches, meat dishes

44. an exciting country with a lot of potential

45.-

46. -

47.- different and exciting

48.-

49.- I do not have any

50. unpleasant and primitive

51. -

52. -

53. culture and history

54. to be welcomed

55. very exciting! A bit scary but full of experiences.

56. nature and history

57. explore another culture with all it has to offer.

58. reasonable people and beautiful nature

59. -

60. different culture and history than Denmark

61. beautiful nature

62. I do not know

63. very different than Denmark

64. rich and beautiful culture

65. beautiful nature

66. I do not know

67. I do not know

68. -

69. -

70. -

71. culture and architecture

72. -
73. poor county on the way up
74. a lot of history
75. -
76. a beautiful country with a mixed history
77. -
78. new experiences
79. I do not know
80. new, exciting, unknown
81. do not have many thoughts about it.
82.-
83. football
84. I have none.
85. -
86. party place, great beaches
87. -
89. -
90. -
91. -
92. -
93. historic country, and an exciting part of EU.
94. -
95. historic buildings with a lot of history
96. beautiful cultural attractions
97. -
98.-
99. -
100. it might be exciting to know their culture
101. -
102. I do not have any expectations, I just want to discover it.
103. I do not know so much about Romania
104. -
105. there is nothing special to see in comparison to other countries
106. The image of the past, and the culture
107. -
108. many cultural and gastronomic experiences
109. a lot more different than Denmark
110. different routine and better weather
111. they are more restricted
112. culture

113. -

114. cheap, beautiful, new culture

115. I do not know anything

116. -

117. I am thinking that Romania is like the other East European countries, old traditions and not very modern food.

118. great destinations

119. great buildings and beautiful nature

120. I do not know anything

121. I do not know anything

122. I do not know anything

123. -

124. -

125. -

126. exciting country

127. that it is a cheap destination with a different culture.

128. -

129. -

130-

131. -

132. -

133 that it is beautiful and cheap

134. -

135.-

136. I do not know

137. -

138. -

139. -

140. -

141. -

142. I do not have any expectations

143. maybe: poverty

144. -

145. -

146. history

147. -

148. I do not know

149. -

150. I do not have expectations because I do not know the country

151. beautiful nature and tourist attractions

152. -
153. no idea
154. nice people and high service levels
155. -
156. culture, cheap and nice people
157. beautiful nature and a different culture
158. different than Denmark. Pleasurable surprises.
159. -
160. -
161. cheap
162. -
163. I do not know!
164. no idea

15. What would influence your decision to visit Romania?
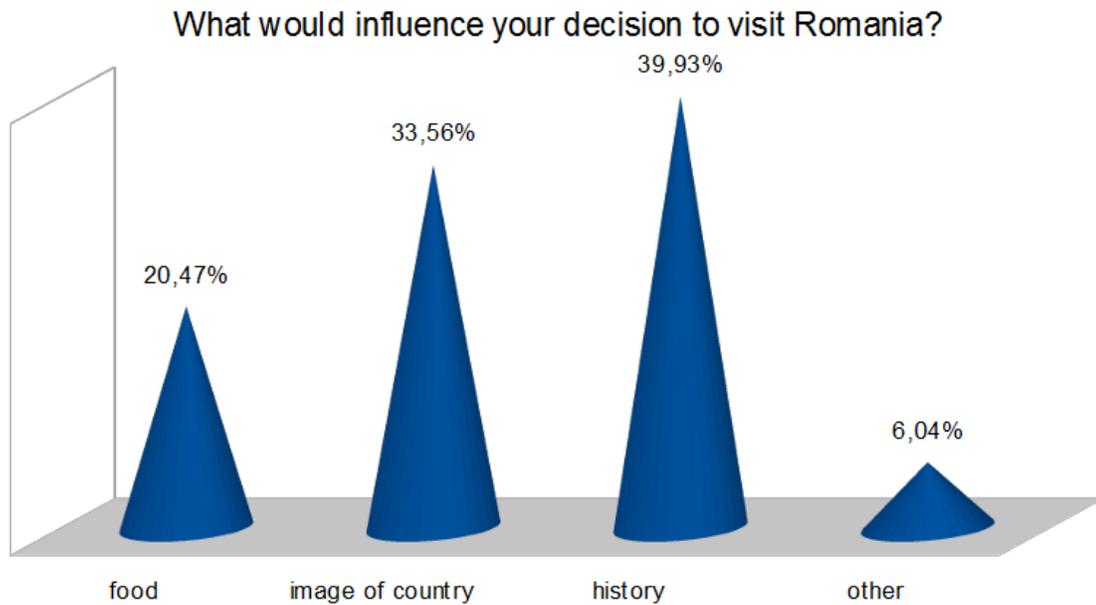
What would influence your decision to visit Romania?

39,93%

33,56%

20,47%

6,04%

food   image of country   history   other

16. Do you know anything about the Romanian cuisine?

Do you know anything about Romanian cuisine?

93,04%

6,96%

yes   no

17. Have you tried Romanian dishes?

Have you tried Romanian dishes?

94,79%

5,21%

yes   no
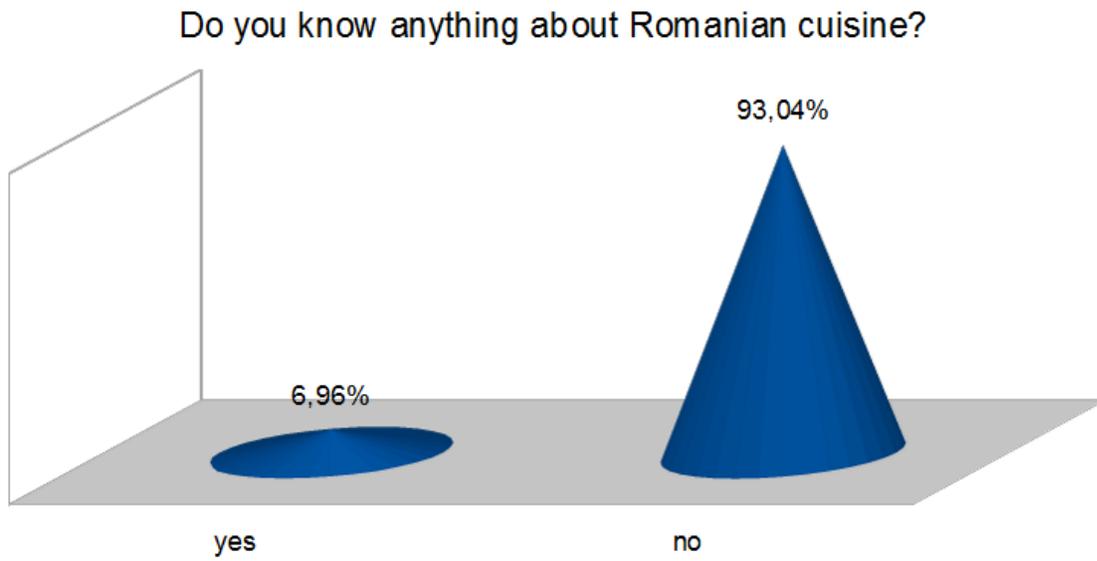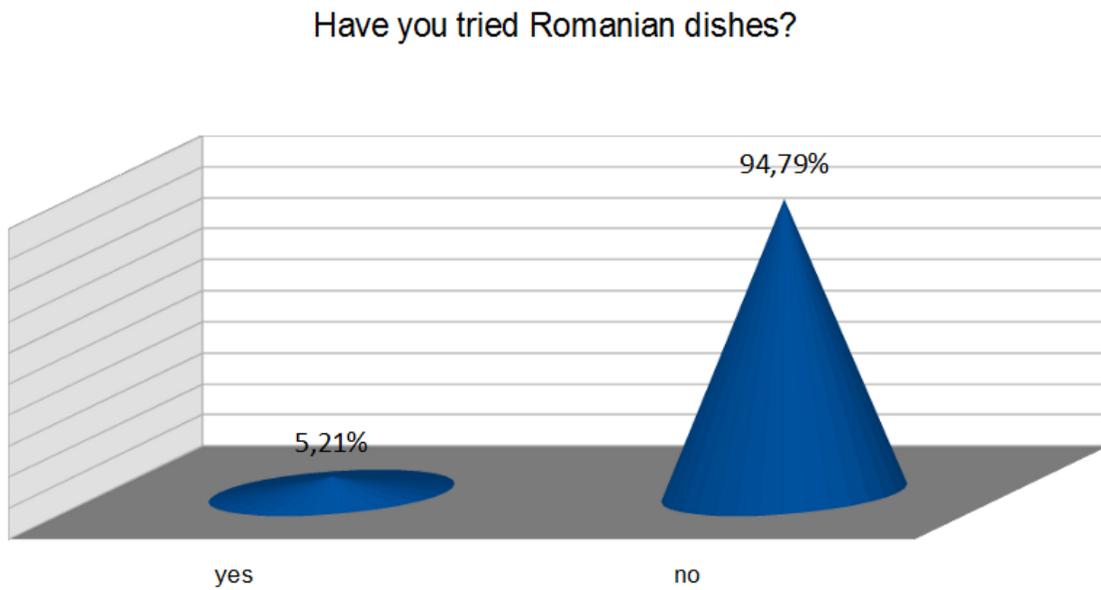
18. Do you think that branding Romania through food tourism will be a good strategy for the Danish tourists?

Do you think that branding Romania through
food tourism will be a good strategy to attract Danish tourists?

87,83%

12,17%

yes

no
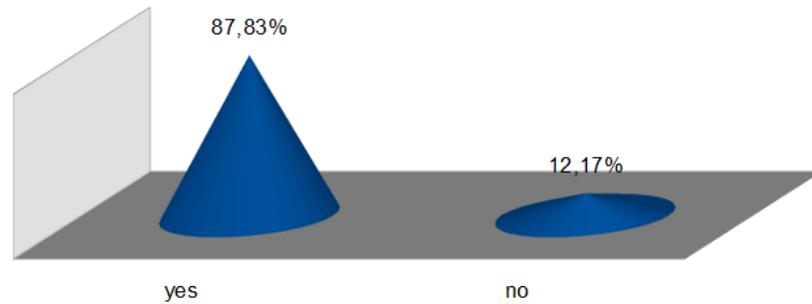
19. Please indicate the degree with witch you agree/disagree with each of the following statements by ticking the box which best corresponds to your answer.

19.1 Experience of local food at its original place is exciting.

Experience of local food at its original place is exciting

67,11%

29,78%

2,22%

0,89%

strongly disagree

disagree

agree

strongly agree
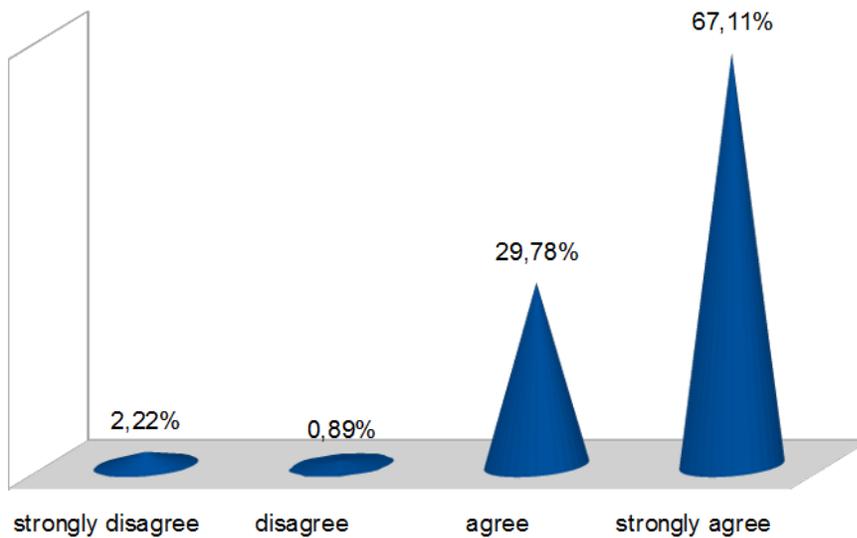
19.2 I like attending food event/festivals/markets

I like attending food events/festivals/markets
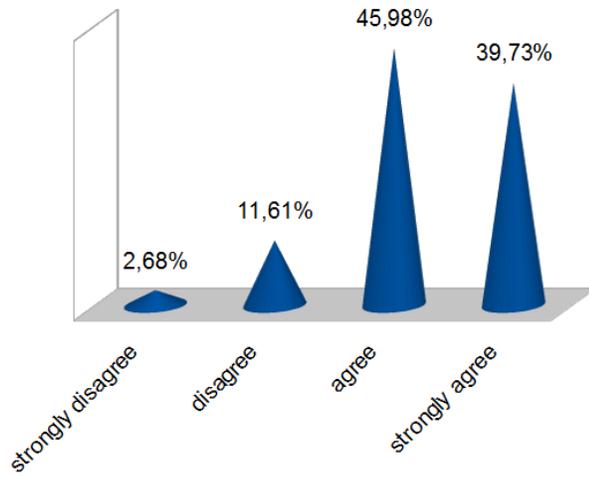
19.3 I am constantly sampling new and different food.

I am constantly sampling new and different food
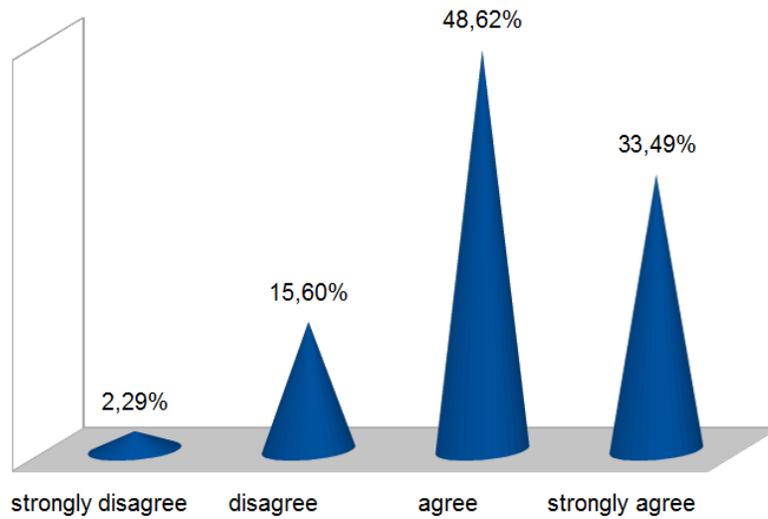
19.4 I do not trust new food.

I don't trust new food

47,75%   40,99%

5,41%   5,86%

strongly disagree   disagree   agree   strongly agree

19.5 I like food from different countries.

I like food from different countries

53,33%

36,44%

7,11%   3,11%

strongly disagree   disagree   agree   strongly agree
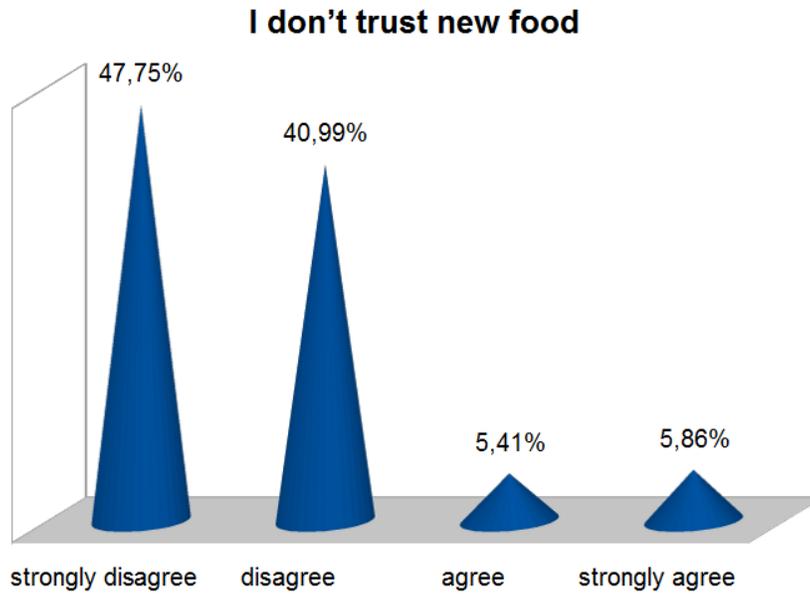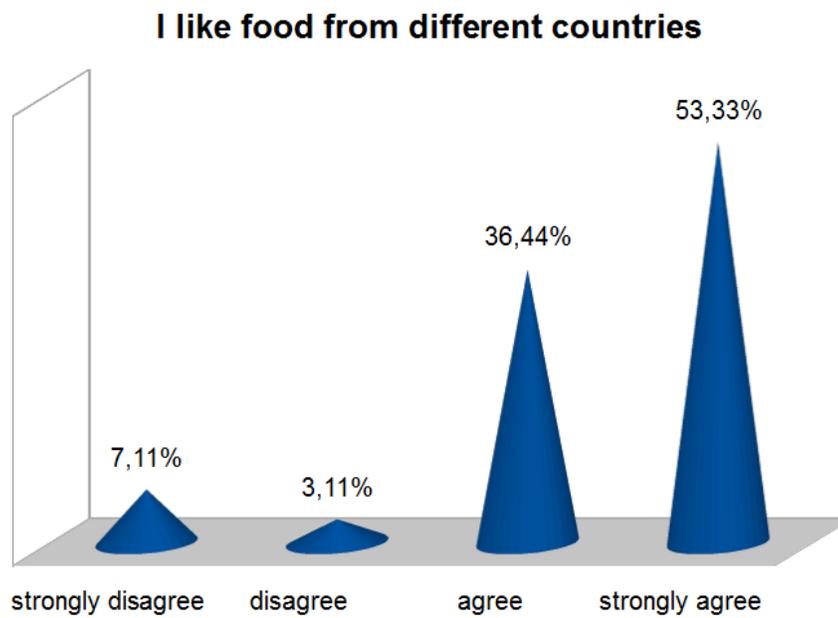
19.6 Ethnic food looks weird to try.
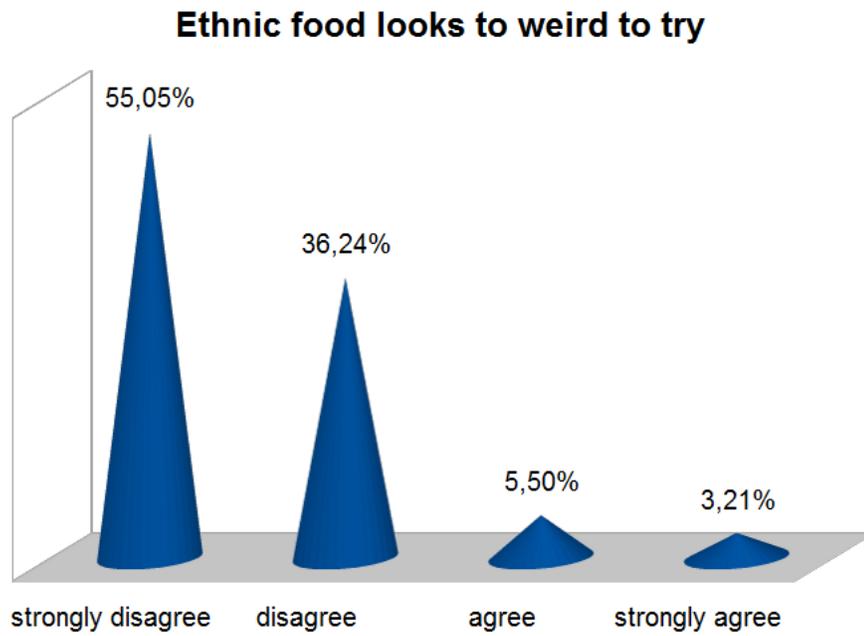
Ethnic food looks to weird to try

55,05% strongly disagree
36,24% disagree
5,50% agree
3,21% strongly agree

19.7 I am afraid of eating dishes I have never tried before.

I am afraid of eating dishes I have never tried before

57,58% strongly disagree
35,06% disagree
3,90% agree
3,46% strongly agree

19.8 I like eating almost everything.
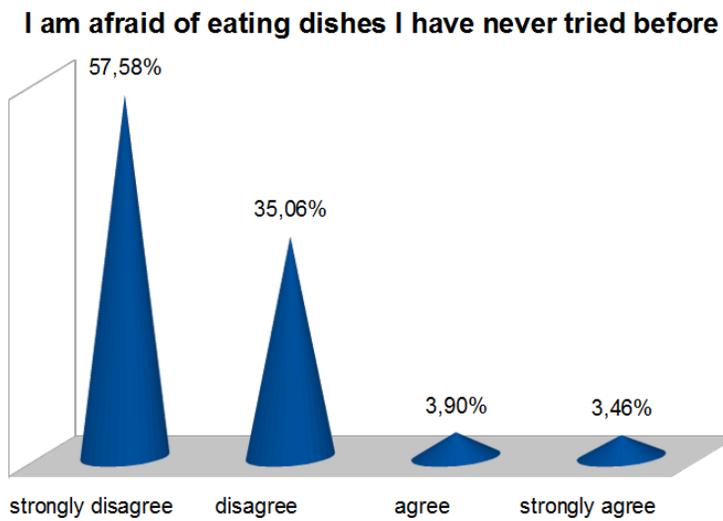
I like eating almost everything

19.9 Tasting local food at its original place is an authentic experience.
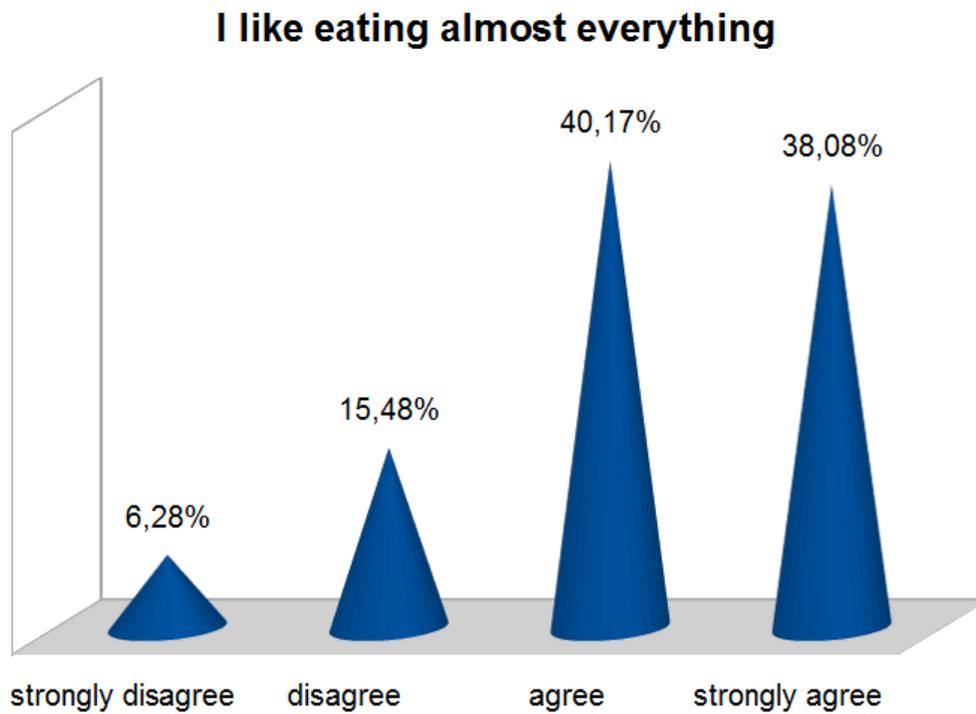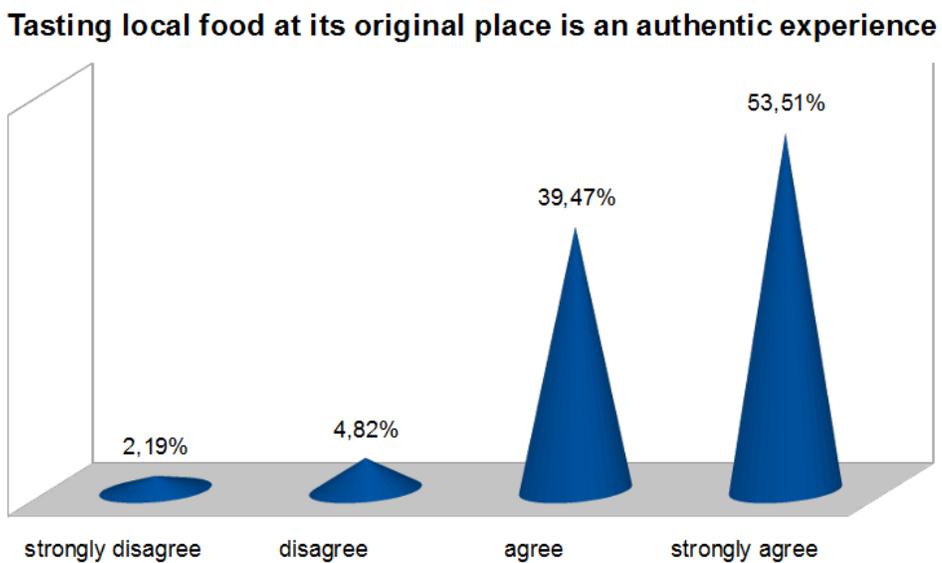
Tasting local food at its original place is an authentic experience

19.10 Tasting local food keeps me healthy.
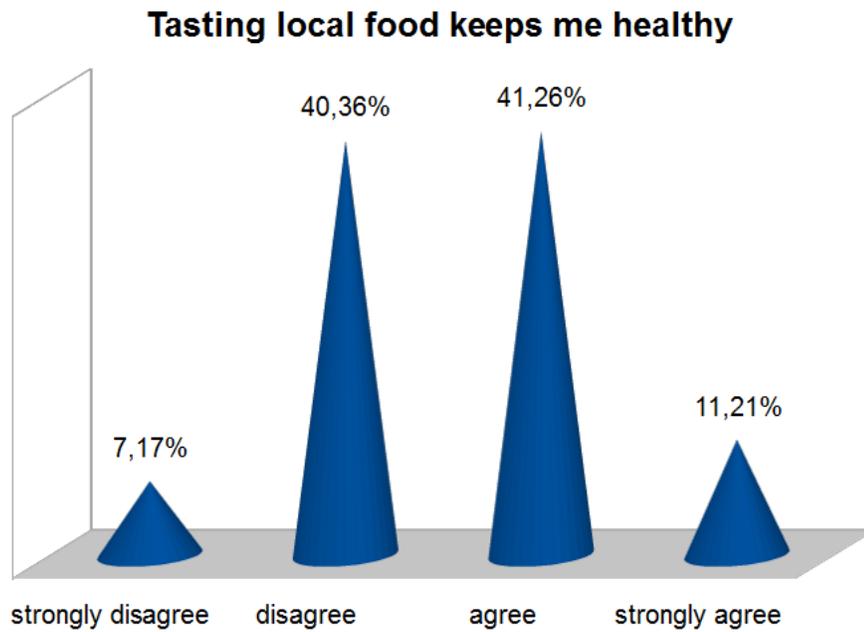
Tasting local food keeps me healthy

40,36%   41,26%

7,17%   11,21%

strongly disagree   disagree   agree   strongly agree

19.11 Tasting local food gives me an opportunity to increase my knowledge about different cultures.

Tasting local food gives me an opportunity to increase my knowledge about different cultures

47,30%

31,98%

16,22%

4,50%

strongly disagree   disagree   agree   strongly agree

19.12 Tasting local food enables me to meet new people with the same interest.
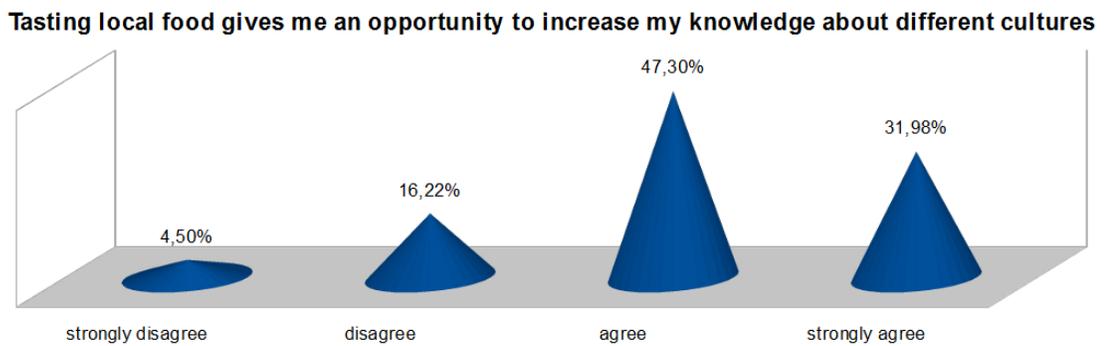
Tasting local food enables me to meet new people with the same interest

19.13 I like to take pictures of local food and show them to my friends/network.
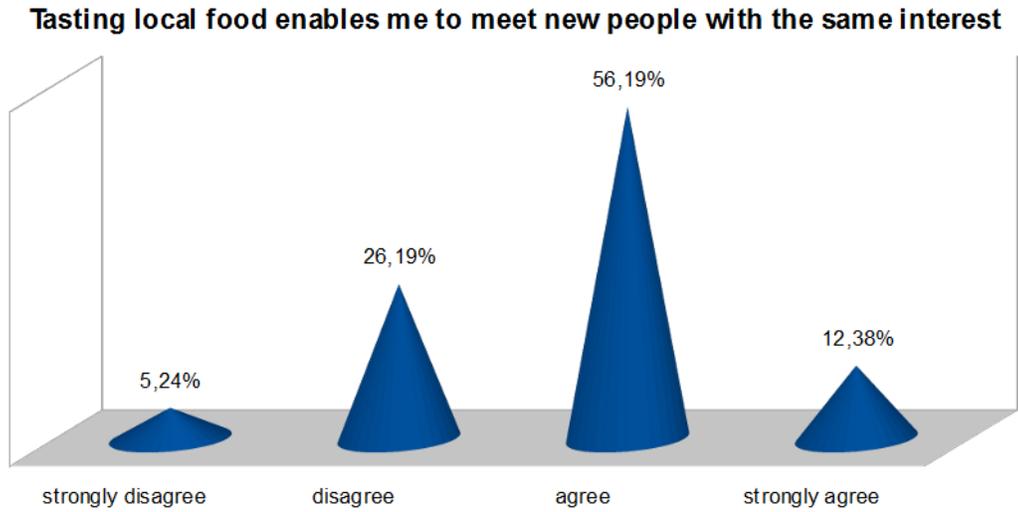
I like to take pictures of local food and show them to my friends/network

19.14 I like to talk about my culinary experiences.
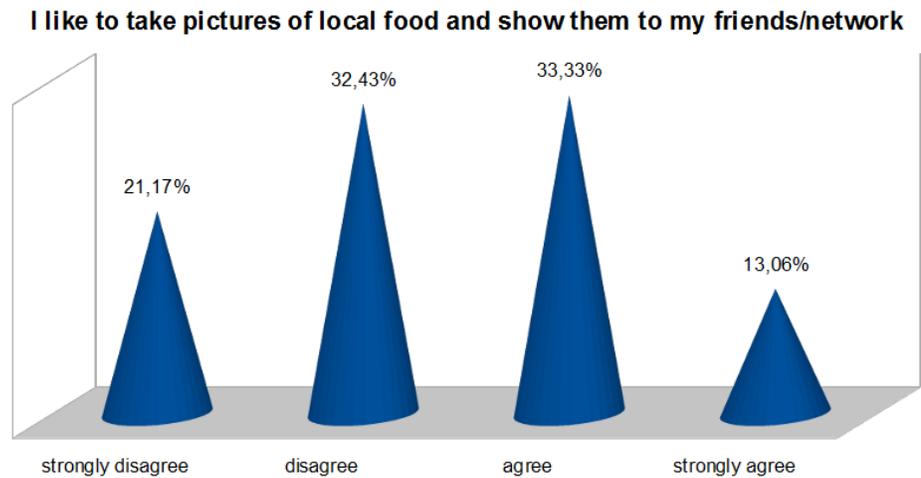
I like to talk about my culinary experiences

19.15 It is important to me that local food smells nice.
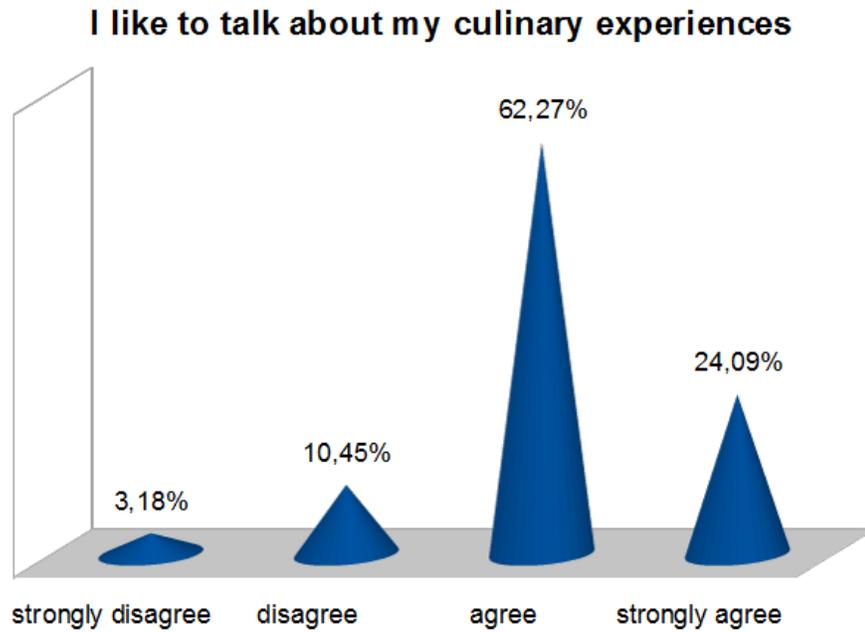
It is important to me that local food smells nice

19.16 It is important to me that local food taste good.

It is important to me that local food taste good

57,46%

38,60%

1,32%   2,63%

strongly disagree   disagree   agree   strongly agree
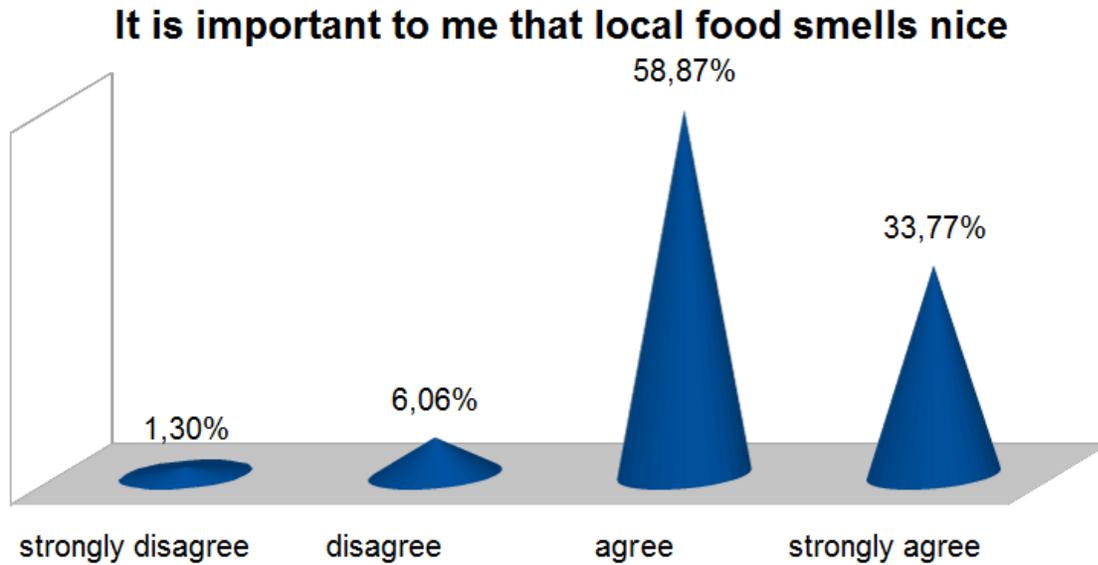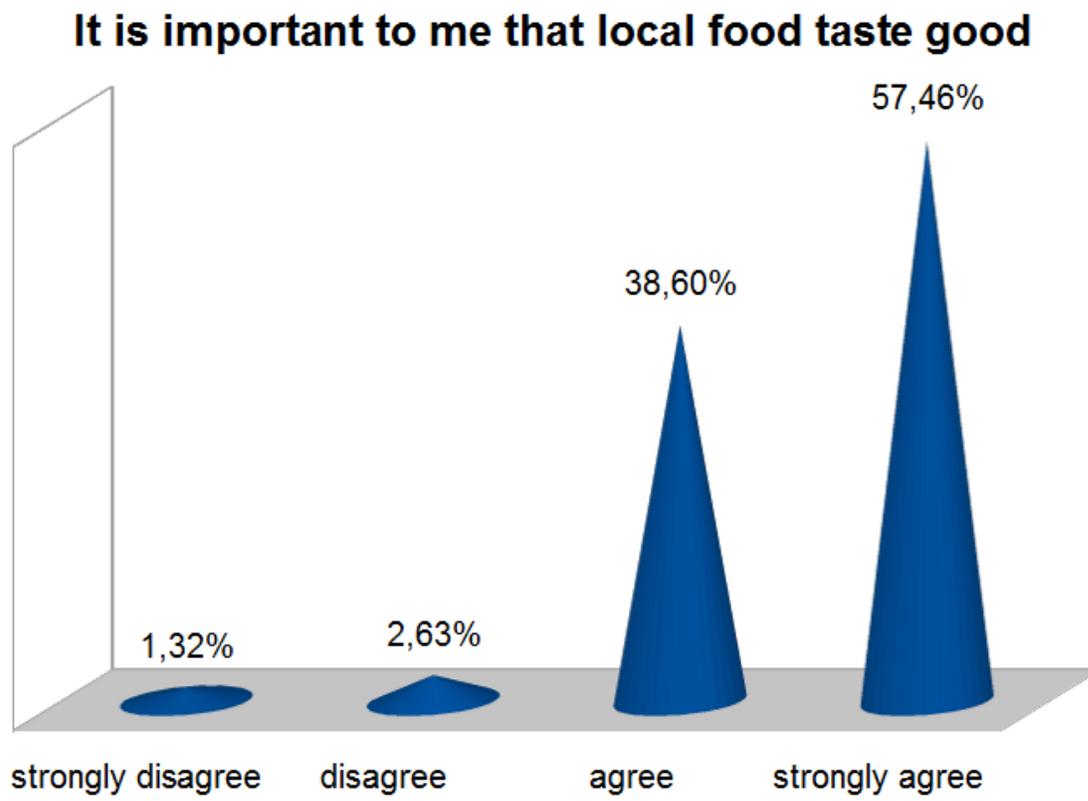
Annex B: Interviews' transcripts

1. Transcript interview with Anne Marie and Rasmus

WE=Cristina & Robert
AR= Anne Marie & Rasmus

00:30 we: introduction of the subject (presenting again the subject of our dissertation).

02:35 we: why did you chose to visit Romania?

02:40 AR: we had never been to Eastern Europe. We had been to Hungary and Czech Rep., but the rest of Eastern Europe was blank. Moreover, we planned to take the two and a half months leave in the winter time, so we decided to take a cheap vacation in the summer, so we do not spend a lot of money before going on holiday for two and a half months. Usually we'd go for far away destinations as Mexico, Malaysia, Madagascar...spend a lot of money on flight tickets...and suddenly we decided to travel close to home and do something we have never done before. Then we start looking for tickets; we found some very cheap tickets to Bulgaria...and then I started looking for hospitality clubs, people we could stay at for little money/gratis. We read about the routes as well. Through the hospitality club I found a women in Transnistria and I said it would be so interesting to go there. So we thought how can we get Bulgaria to Transnistria? And we so it goes through Romania and Moldova. However, we left home and made the route on the way, based on what we wanted to see and where we could stay.

04:45 WE: so your decision was not made on any promotional videos, brochures or other informational sources.

04:52 AR: no, it was something like: I have not been there I want go.

05:00 WE: what your perception about the country? Expectations?

05:15 AR: I was focusing on the delta, I read a lot about that. We never made it out there. We did not have any expectations.

06:05 WE: what about after visiting Romania, did you feel that Romania offered you a good experience?

06:13 AR: yeah! It was amazing! Especially Transylvania! Not only the Dracula, but the small villages, the horse wagons. Transylvania was the big eye opener.

07:00 WE: what attracts you at a destination?

07:03 AR: the adventure to visit places I have never been visited before. We didn't know who have been in Romania. The closest link to Romania is a brandy bottle my father has home. It is also about the way we travel: I like to go to places where I have no expectations and everything is just surprising for me! We discovered things on the way e.g. Suceava and all the churches in Moldova...we're wooow!

08:45 WE: where did you start your tour in Romania? Bucharest?

08:47 AR: we came by train from Bulgaria.

09:00 WE: did you go directly to Transylvania?

09:02 AR: no, we stopped first in Bucharest! We stayed there with a girl from the hospitality club, who hosted us in the students dormitory, and even though the conditions were luxurious, she was very nice and welcoming.

09:43 WE: How important is food when you travel?

09:47 AR: most of the time when we travel we say: we'll rather sleep in a cheap place, but eat in a nice place. It doesn't have to be fancy food, but we like going somewhere and have local food.

10:20 WE: so you do like to try local food when traveling?

10:22 AR: sure. Usually never cook when traveling! We eat out three times a day! In Denmark we do not eat out because it is too expensive, but when we travel we like to try local food.

11:30 WE: did you know about Romanian food before traveling?

11:34 AR: not at all. The persons we stayed with in Romania took us to some restaurants and recommended certain dishes to us. I remember that one of this person gave us to try some Romanian bread, saying: *you should try this! This is Romanian food*. It was something with salt and poppy seeds on it.

12:20 WE: so you discovered local food on spot, not by main research before the travel?

12:40 AR: yes. We experiencing it on the spot. We looked at the menus and decide.

13:00 WE: did you choose known dishes or you also tried unfamiliar dishes?

13:04 AR: sometimes we chose what we like but usually we go for the unfamiliar ones. In Romania Rasmus tried *sarmalute*, and I (Anne Marie) chose salmon because I know it, and being hungry that day I wanted to something I knew I could eat.

13:30 WE: we explain *sarmalute*!

14:10 AR: we are looking for restaurants with traditional food. Even in Denmark it is hard to restaurants with traditional danish food.

15:30 WE: was it easier in Romania to find places offering traditional Romanian food?

15:39 AR: I don't know, because I do not know if what we got was traditional food. When we got *sarmalute*, it was stated that it is traditional, but we couldn't be sure.

17:05 WE: How would you rate the Romanian food? Did you like it? We remember we read on your blog about the culinary experience had in Romania!

17:22 AR: we ate the same soup in two different places and it was good in one, and awful in another. I had another dish that was not properly cooked, in the same restaurant with the bad soup. We went to McDonald's after that bad experience. That was the only bad experience when we couldn't eat the food, all the other experiences were ok.

19:30 WE: How was the quality of the food in Romania, in general?

19:45 AR: it is not like Michelin, it is not like being to Noma. It is traditional food for workers. Romania is still a working country and so people need the kind of food to kill their hunger. We didn't try to get higher level of food!

20:40 WE: we do not have a high level of cuisine, apart from the traditional one.

21:00 AR: if you want people to come to eat Romanian food, you need something like a Michelin star restaurant. Look at the example of Noma and the food tourism in Denmark. If you want people to go there for the food, you would need something special; something to get people to talk about. It would be a long process for Romania to attract tourist for food.

22:25 WE: Do Danes need a trigger like a Michelin level experience?

22:30 AR: yes. People who look for food they would need that. For example, people who really want food they would go to France.

22:51 WE: we had the same experience in Denmark related to traditional food: heavy food, for workers.

23:45 AR: people who would need heavy traditional food would go to an all inclusive hotel.

The tourist you want to attract to Romania are the adventurous ones. They would try the food no matter what.

24:40 AR: I am not sure you can attract tourists to Romania just through food. It is needed more than that something...that can be recognized; a package saying that *in Romania you can get all these*! Something similar to Israel's promotion.

26:00 WE: are Danes looking for out of ordinary experiences? Because it is quite different than other destination Danes use to visit?

26:40 AR: people who are looking for all inclusive destinations are nothing to Romania, and you don't need or want them either. They are the ones seeking experiences, they need to be sure they get a safe experience in Romania.

Anne Marie give the example of some friends who visited Bulgaria.

27:50 AR: Romania has to have something like a package where tourist are picked up to the airport, they are taken to the hotel etc.

28:00 WE: so you suggest that Romania should focus on group tourism at the beginning?

28:02 AR: yes. Furthermore it is an advantage that Romania is cheap, and so the packages can be sold to the Danish tourist at a fairly cheap price, even though the transaction is made through travel agencies.

28:35 WE: then it comes into the discussion the word of mouth, that will influence others to Romania as well.

30:15 AR: People like us will find Romania anyway. They won't find it because of the food, or one thing in particular. They will find it because of a package!

30:40 WE: do you think that Romanian traditional dishes will still count in that package?

30:44 AR: yes. Even though the Romanian food is a lot different that the Danish food it is so comparable, so people would still find it similar, in comparison with experiences they can have in destinations as Vietnam, China etc. For example in my diary I wrote after eating Romanian *mici*, that it is something similar to the Danish *frikadeller*, because it was something I could relate with. They would definitely like the food, but I think it is difficult to make them come just for the food.

32:10 AR: it is difficult to persuade people to go at a destination and try the food just from a photo.

33:23 WE: Can Romanian food be an essential attraction of Romania? (Here's made a link to Greek food and Greece's tourism).

33:33 AR: Greece has gotten their touristic image after many years of tourism, and then Greek restaurants have started opening everywhere, so people know something about Greek food, where right now there is not knowledge of the Romanian food. So it is needed that people come and eat Romanian dishes and that they spread the experience with other people.

35:00 WE: why do you think there are not more and more Danes traveling to Romania? Do you think they do not like it?

35:10 AR: I think they like it. However, when we talk with our friends about our plans to visit Romania, they were like "wow! How can you go there? People there will going to rub you, steal all your stuff!". I think that Danes have the idea of East Europe of being a region where people steal from you; many gypsies; and that there is nothing nice.

36:24 AR: We experienced in Romania that nobody try to steal from us; everybody tried to be nice with us, to help us...we met so many nice people, and we had no problems at all. When we said this to our friends they said "is this real?". People talk about Romania based on what appears on media. So Romania has a bad image. Yet, we thought Romania is great.

37:00 WE: So you think that media has a great impact ´?

37:05 AR: Yes, and it is so hard to change that; to change that around.

37:50 WE: Coming back to Romanian food, do you think that if someone would open a Romanian restaurant in Copenhagen, Danes would be willing to try their offering?

37:56 AR: I think that is difficult for someone to open a Romanian restaurant in Copenhagen in this context. A better idea would be to start with a food truck in Papirøen, because people who go there are more open to try new and exotic dishes.

38:20 WE: do not then still matter the image of Romania? Do you think that even a food truck with Romanian food would attract foodies?

38:36 AR: I think people who go there usually are people who are open to try it, because those kind of people are not thinking that someone from Romania rubbed someone in Jutland or something like that.

39:10 AR: (the discussion goes back to opening a restaurant in Copenhagen) I think that it would be hard to open even a Danish restaurant not only a Romanian one.

40:00 WE: we explain the dimensions of neophilia and neophobia, and our perception that some Danes might embrace the neophobic attitude.

40:35 AR: I think that for some people it would be like that: a Romanian food! What is that? We have never heard of it! So, lets try something familiar.

40:49 AR: Romania needs a good story. As we said it is important what people say when they come back from a holiday in Romania. It is also important what people like us who have blogs write about their experiences in Romania.

41:37 WE: do you think that some partnerships with Danish bloggers would help?

41:44 AR: Yes. Because if right now is one blog writing about Romania, what if there would be 50?

41:55 AR: If people are writing about Romanian and you are looking at Romanian food, and all the bloggers writing that the food is so good. Moreover, people traveling in groups would transmit the experience to the travel agency, and then the national agency will promote it even more, as it was the case some years ago with Bulgaria. Because when the travel agency see they can send a lot of people at one place, they would like to send even more next time.

43:45 WE: I see you gave a lot of examples of Bulgaria, does it mean that Bulgaria has a better image than Romania in Denmark?

43:59 AR: not as an East European country because people from Bulgaria have rubbed Danes on Jutland as well; but because there have traveled to Bulgaria Danes who had good experiences.

45:04 WE: do you think that Romania does something wrong in attracting tourists, at least in comparison to Bulgaria with which we are at the same level?

45:06 AR: it is because it was accessible; because the trip was there, because the agencies offered trips to Bulgaria.

45:22 WE: so it was Bulgaria who promoted their tourism, or it was the experiences Danes have had there that help their tourism?

45:35 AR: I don't know who it happened, but it happened. But once 500-1000 people have been there the snowball was rolling. Moreover, it is easy to sent groups, and it will help more the tourism in Romania. For example Star Tours, if they would send a group in Romania and the tourists will be satisfied, than they will spread the news within their company with the other brunches. But it is important to start this actions. It will take a lot of work and a lot of money! You'll need to get travel agencies to promote Romania, telling them that they will receive a good product at a cheap price. It is difficult, because one can not expect locals to invest money and then to lose them, but it has to be a state project, and I am not sure in what degree Romanian Government is ready for that.

47:25 WE: there where some campaigns to promote Romania, but they have failed and we do not know whether it was Government's foul or not (we explain a couple of them).

48:00 AR: if we have seen those campaigns, we would have remember them, but we have not seen any.

48:45 WE: we explain a bit about commercial promotion of Romania abroad.

49:23 AR: I am very bad at remembering destination promotion, but it is one that is stuck in my mind, something with a lady...I don't know it is about Tunisia or Egypt. And one more I remember is the one for Philippines...very good campaign, something with *it is more fun in the Philippines*.

50:10 WE: who do you think they target with that slogan?

50:13 AR: I don't know. But Philippines is so easy to promote, because everything is beautiful and wow! For me wow in Romania is the countryside in Transylvania, because it remembers me about how our grandparents lived and act. We have lost a lot of this traditions. Do

you know the storks? We used to have a lot but now there are almost none left in Denmark. So for people in Denmark storks are very dear, and when happen to see one of them people are wow! I have seen a stork! I have seen a stork! The same reaction we had when we saw storks in Romania! For us it was so precious to see storks. Romania is still a farming country.

53:20 WE: what type of tourists does Romania suit to?

53:24 AR: it suits to active people, because there people can go hiking, go to Dracula, history, nature, birds...but I think they would choose France or New York for food.

55:44 WE: can it be that the information offered through blogs and social media are more accessible and used by the young generation?

55:50 AR: it depends, because I use different links to share my posts and so they reach different segments of tourists. The people who ask directly questions to our blog are families and people in their fortys-fiftys. We have 300 followers on Facebook, and they are probably our age, and even if they don't react immediately, they will still keep in mind the destinations we write about.

59: 20 WE: when trying traditional food, is it important for you to be in a traditional establishment as well, or it doesn't really matter?

59:30 AR: sure it does!

59:45 WE: can you link it with your experience in Romania? I remember on your blog that we mentioned a traditional Romanian breakfast.

1:00:20 AR: we had an experience in Transylvania...sitting in the garden, enjoying the sun! I would have never had that food in a restaurant.

1:00:44 WE: I remember also from your blog post that you didn't try the piece of pork fat (*sunca*), which is actually very traditional product in Romania.

1:01:11 AR: the places where we paid to stay the host didn't speak any English. So they just served the food and then they left. I think that this is an important aspect, because if there was someone to explain us that this pig fat should be eaten in this way, then we would have definitely tried it.

1:02:13 WE: we give a similar example!

1:04:10 AR: that is why we believe that a guide would help a lot, because s/he can explain and translate for the group.

We went to this restaurant (Carul cu Bere) and to an old church next to it which were very beautiful.

Also in Brasov we had a nice meal, at this restaurant where one could see the chef outside grilling the meat.

1:07:03 WE: would you come back to Brasov?

1:07:10 AR: of course. From all the East European countries you have traveled so far - five so far- Romania is our favorite; especially Transylvania. Would I go to Bucharest again? Probably no, because we are not a fan of big cities, we like more the small cities.

I would like to visit again Romania and go into the Delta, and some areas with animals.

1:11:10 AR: A lot of people are ignorant about destinations; if they don't see a purpose on the moment they just skip all the info about them.

2. Transcript interview with Bo

WE: Cristina & Robert
BO: Bo Brandsborg

00:52 WE: Why did you choose to travel to Romania?

00:54 BO: Actually I have been to Romania twice! The first time it was a family holiday, and the second time it was because of friends getting married.

01:06 WE: When you heard that the wedding was in Romania, were you excited about visiting it again? Or it was something like: oh, it is Romania I know it? And, did you set your focus on the wedding only or also on touristic attractions?

01:23 BO: from the beginning we planned the whole thing, with the wedding first and the road trip afterwards. So definitely I thought from the beginning at the touristic part of it.

02:45 WE: When did you go for the first time in Romania?

02:50 BO: that was it 1992 or 1993, I ca not remember exactly.

03:00 WE: Did you find any changes in Romania since the first trip there?

03:05 BO: We were not in the same places, except from Poiana Brasov; but I would still say "yes", because we have been in Brasov both times and I would definitely see a difference in the city. Now it is very westernized comparison to our first trip. But I cannot say more because this time we didn't go to Bucharest, where we mainly stayed during our first visit and so I cannot compare that city.

03:40 WE: What would you say that attracted you at this country (Romania)?

03:57 BO: My wife and I were discussing that this was a gigantic trip for us, because even though we planned from home to go there and do that and that, when we drove around and saw many things that we hadn't considered before, we were just blown away by them, because some of the cities are incredible fantastic; I mean you don't get any better in Czech republic or Germany, they are up to that level, so we were blown away by the cities mainly. I mean the historic part of the cities there.

04:41 WE: Do you think that your experience was influenced by the fact that you had a local guide?

04:47 BO: Of course! But even if we would have been alone there just walking around the historical cities we would have had the same experience. These cities have so big potential as touristic destinations.

05:27 WE: from our previous interviews we got the idea that group tourism can be a good start for international tourism in Romania. This is why we were curious about your experience, visiting the country with local companions, who might influence your decisions and choices.

06:05 BO: Of course that made it easy for us! But I would still say -since is still Europe and with relatively English speaking population- that it might also work for individual tourism.

Nowadays people travel across Europe for city breaks, and I cant see why the same thing wont work for Romania as well! So, it somehow influenced the fact that we were together with the Romanian friends, but we still thought that we would have the same experience if we would had traveled alone; we actually said that we would like to travel back to Sibiu, and we dont see why it wont be possible, because we met many locals speaking English, especially among the youngsters.

07:19 WE: What was your perception about Romania before and after travelling there?

07:24 BO: for me and for many people from West I think that there would be heard about the historical facts that happened not many years ago; since we were very impressed about the cities, it shows that we didn't expect that; we thought they would be more dull, not so welcoming...I won't say boring, but more like normal cities...but in our minds it wasn't normal, it was quite fantastic.

08:34 WE: What was so captivating in the Romanian cities?

08:50 BO: the buildings and the architecture first of all. With the old buildings and architecture this is exactly what people travel for...so I would say also in our case that was the big eyes opener basically. People wise...again we had our Romanian friends next to us, but I have the feeling that we'd have managed even without them because of the people speaking English. So human wise it was also very positive trip as such, but definitely the most important eye opener for us was the architecture, with the extremely well-preserved cities.

09:46 WE: Do you think that your perception about Romania, before traveling there, was influenced by the media or other persons?

10:02 BO: No! Neither media nor people. The only influence was the historical things that happened in Romania.

10:19 WE: What about the image that media is portraying for Romania?

10:23 BO: Romania has got a hard time in media; why don't need to say why because everybody knows that...but of course we know some Romanians and so you had never thought about what media says. Moreover, we have been traveling to so many places in the world, so we know that there is nothing just black and white. So it didn't influence us, but I guess it does influence many people.

11:13 WE: Did you have any knowledge about Romania and its traditional food before visiting it? What else beside the cities did you like in Romania?

11:30 BO: for me personally food is not so important when I travel. But still the food in Romania was a good observation for us, because the food also surprised us a little bit. It was a surprise that we could see the influences from other cultures on the Romanian food.

12:45 WE: How would you describe the food?

12:51 BO: I would describe it as what it actually is: middle European food. I see a lot of similarities in Southern part of Germany, Czech Rep., maybe Hungary...the Turkish influence that is very clear anyways!

13:10 WE: Do you think that Romanian traditional food is also appealing for Danes?

13:23 BO: Well it is hard to say, because right now Danes are very much into top gourmet food. I actually think that if Danes would travel to Romania, the Romanian traditional food won't be the main attraction for them; they would rather be attracted by the environment, cities and sights. But I have a hard time thinking that in case of Romania...or any other destination in the world...the tourists will visit them only because of food. But very often food can be an add-on, because usually food is what people remember, especially if the culinary experience is positive and surprising, as it was for us also in Romania. I am not saying that food is not important, but the way I see it is that people tries often wine rather than food.

16:40 WE: do you remember the Romanian food in a certain way? Was it too good? Too bad? Can you remember any dish you ate in Romania?

16:50 BO: What I remember mostly are "ciorba" the Romanian soups that you can eat in a bread-bowl, which can make people like it and remember it. Nowadays it might be a bit touristic, but still people will remember it. I have difficulties in remembering the right Romanian names of the food...however I still remember the "mici"...and what I remember about that is how easily I can related them to something I already knew from the Turkish-Greek cuisines. Another thing is that my wife and I had the feeling that while dining out we got experiences as good as we would have got in any other place, and that was actually surprising a little bit.

18:53 WE: did you use to eat out mainly in traditional Romanian restaurants?

19:10 BO: in most of the cases it was the case of the traditional restaurants. When we got time we tried to find traditional restaurants. One can say we even search for the traditional Romanian restaurants; there was one actually in Poiana Brasov that we searched for, which is the most known restaurant in the area...I was there also during my first time in Romania, but I didn't realize it until the time I was there.

20:03 WE: would you say that Danes could find similarities between the Romanian traditional cuisine and Danish traditional cuisine?

20:20 BO: Yeah...maybe...the whole middle Europe use as one of the main product, meat...and that is also a product we use to consume in Denmark as well; but of course the traditional Danish cuisine hasn't been touch by this southern influences, from Balkans. So in a way I would say *yes* but I would also say that if I would be a German, then I would recognize many culinary similarities with Romanian cuisine.

21:07 WE: do you think it is a positive connection between German food and Romanian food?

21:15 BO: yes...and there also similarities of German cuisine with the Danish cuisine! I think that it is important because people like reminders of old times...what they used to eat, what they used to see...I don't see any negativity in it.

22:43 – 24:22 discussion about different aspects of food, but not interesting to your research.

22:23 BO: unfortunately the Michelin level is the one people are driven now when they dine out or travel...so that is something people travel for.

25:05 BO: it might be thus a good idea that places -Romania as well- to start branding itself as gourmet places, the same was the situation in Copenhagen. People want something modernized, not very traditional.

25:55 BO: of course what they should do is to attract people (cooks) from outside Romania and rethink the traditional dishes, but it has to be in a completely new set-up...it has to be ready for Facebook!

26:22 WE: would you say that the restaurants enhanced your experience, or they didn't contribute to your experience?

26:33 BO: they definitely did! This is actually one of the reasons we chose them.

27:32 WE: so you are the kind of person who don't really consider the culinary aspect when traveling, but it is something that comes along the trip.

27:41 BO: that is right, but it doesn't mean that food is not important...is not like I just go and eat out in McDonald's! I like real food...real and nice good food! But we don't travel because of food. Moreover, I believe people go for gourmet food...really nice places...we never do that...we are kind of reverse of that...when we visit a destination we'll never try to find out the best restaurants there...we want just relaxed, laid-back, everyday kind of food.

29:05 WE: when you travel, do you choose something new or you just go for something local?

29:26 BO: both! If you go to a new place, we don't go after new food, because it is everything new.

29:56 WE: when we say food that you know we refer to pizza, tapas...types of food that are present at all destinations.

30:01 BO: no, we almost never do that. We never go for easy solution. The recognition is not important for us; not at all.

31:00 WE: would you say that from the Romanian cuisine it might be some dishes/products that are not for everybody?

31:10 BO: I am sure there are choices. I do remember some of the Romanian soups with chicken legs inside...not everybody would go for that. Yet it is not like going to China or similar destination.

31:50 WE explain the idea of neophilic-neophobic behavior.

32:07 BO: if it is to consider these two groups we wont fit into the neophobic one for sure.

32:27 WE: what about Danish tourist, in general, are they more open or more conservative when it comes to new food?

32:40 BO: it is very hard to generalize because maybe the line goes down in the middle. I do feel a tendency that the most of the Danes are the same way we are. If you look at the multitude of Michelin restaurants in Copenhagen, I think they are doing money not because of the Danes but because of the foreign tourists.

33:45 WE: what about the tourist behaviour, do you think Danes are having the same behavior as you do when traveling, or your are different than the majority?

34:01 BO: I would say that most people I know, most of them are doing the same. I cant think of anyone doing it differently. Danes are not very picky about their food, but they are not very bored either?

34:47 WE: would you say that there is a tendency that Danes consider traveling to destinations that are not overcrowded by tourists, as is Spain, Italy etc.?

35:00 BO: definitely! There are lots of only agencies specialized in sending people to smaller destinations!

36:22 WE: from your experience with Romania, what do you think about the way the country promoted itself?

36:37 BO: I do not remember any promotion of Romania! I have seen countries like Kazakhstan, Armenia, Uzbekistan...all theses countries you would have never thought about, but I have never seen anything about Romania.

37:20 WE: do you think that using the same strategy as the already mentioned destinations -with short videos- will be a way for Romania to promote itself?

37:30 BO: Yes, definitely, but it also depends on what they want to promote about themselves.

37:54 WE: what type of tourists would you say that is more convenient for Romania to attract?

38:00 BO: as I see it now, it would be cultural tourists, who travel for visiting historical places, cultural places. And that would fit best to small groups. If I would be the ministry of tourism in Romania I would focus on that now...the group tourism. Romania has almost everything there, ready for tourists...of course after group tourism, than they can attract individual tourists as well. It is easy to travel in Romania; we realized that during our trip...and as soon as people realize that there is not difficult for individual traveling either.

39:41 WE: Do you think that media at this moment is an obstacle for Romania to promote itself as a tourist destination?

39:51 BO: I think that there would be needed a bigger investment for Romania to cover the negative image...there are two countries with a bad reputation: Romania and Lithuania. Of course it wont be impossible, but it will cost a little bit more.

40:38 WE: which country have you travel in Eastern Europe?

40: 50 BO: Poland and Romania.

41:40 WE: behind our question, lays another question: what does Romania need to overcome other East European countries, tourism wise?

41:47 BO: it should be started with tourists knowledge about destinations! What do people know about Romania? Nothing! So what does it take for Romania to be over other destinations?...to get started basically! Promoting the cultural highlights. This is so obvious for everyone coming to Romania. Promoting, promoting, promoting….

The very good think about Romania, is that it is very cheap! That is what people like to travel for: cheap prices.

44:02 WE: what can be the reasons behind the fact that Danes are the last among all the nations in Scandinavia, when it comes to visiting Romania?

45:55 BO: I don't know. I can see why tourists from Germany are more, because there are the historical facts. A general feeling can be that Danes are more introvert than the other nations in northern Europe.

46:55 WE: Do you consider Romania as a safe place to travel to?

47:05 BO: personally yeah! We didn't have any problem! But it can be that people think that Romania is not a safe place. There is not difference between traveling in Romania and any other countries in Europe, safety wise. The problem are not the facts; the problem are the conceptions of the people. But the problem with safety is not linked to tourists who travel for cultural experiences, but for the main stream tourism -like those traveling to Greece in groups.

49:02 WE: Why do you think that many respondents to our questionnaires answered *I don't know* when it comes to reasons for which they have not visited Romania.

49:55 BO: That is actually the worst case scenario, because it means that people don't even think about Romania. Yet, there is also a margin in this kind of surveys, where people don't want to say the real reasons, because they are very negative. It still can come down to the same thing: visibility! It has to be an option for Romania to make itself visible.

51:40 WE: would it be a good or bad initiative to open a Romanian restaurant in Copenhagen? Would it help?

51:48 BO: I dont think it will work because when you look at the ethnic restaurants in Copenhagen, a part of them opened as a result of the flow of immigrants; he other part the other restaurants they were open only after Danes traveled to destinations like Italy, Spain, Greece and they people wanted in Denmark the same food they experienced during their holidays.

Moreover, just in Copenhagen...one restaurant...it wont help!

57:08 BO: you can compare to what is going on in other places in the World, at least in Europe: people travel for new stuff. Even though Romanian food is new as well, the same can be said about Danish traditional food...but nothing happened until Noma started rethinking, re-branding, doing things in modern way. You can actually compare that to Romania now.

59:50 WE: would you say that the small online agencies promoting organizing trips to Romania, focus on older tourists?

59:55 BO: that is true! Because young tourists are not interested in culture anyhow. So it can be true, and apply to people over 40 years old...but that is good because they are those with money.

Even for small groups, the tourists wont come by itself, there will still be needed some branding.

3. Interview with Helle and Toni (by email)

Questions related to your experience in Romania:
l.Why did you choose to visit Romania? What attracted you to Romania as a destination?

We wanted to visit Romania because we had read something about the Transylvanian alps, and we like to do some hiking on our holidays. And Toni, being an old horror-movie fan, could also get to see some Dracula-sights.

2. What was your perception about the country before traveling?
   We didn't really have any - we didn't know much about it.

3. How much the perception was based on your experience and how much on external factors like media, other people's opinion/experiences?
   We got most of our knowledge from books, searching the internet and one of Helles work-colleagues who had visited. She went with a friend who was from Romania.

4. Did the image of Romania as a travel destination changed after the visit?
   Yes - We were very pleasantly surprised. We had a fantastic time.

5. Did you have any knowledge about Romanian traditional food before visiting Romania?
   Non at all.

6. If not, did you read about Romanian traditional food before visiting the destination or at the destination?
   We only read what guidebook could tell us - so we got to know the Romanian kitchen when we got there

7. Did you tried Romanian traditional food?
   Yes - we always like to try out the local food

8. If yes, did the Romanian food leveled up to your expectations?
   It did - especially the restaurants we tried were good.

9. How would you rate the Romanian traditional food?
   As a good eastern European kitchen - the wine were good too.

L0. How satisfied were you with the quality of the food in Romania?
   Overall we thought the quality was good.

11. Does culinary establishments enhance your experience when trying traditional food? How would you relate it to your Romanian experience?

It is always a plus if the food is good, it enhances the experience of the country you visit, and so it was with Romania.

12. Do you think that Romanian traditional food could play an important role in attracting more Danes?

Hmmm, not the food alone, but the whole experience might. People travel for many reasons. We went to Romania for the mountains and the possibilities for some good walking, but the fact that the food was fine, just makes it an even better experience.

General questions:

13. When traveling, how important is for you to experience a different   culture   at   a destination?
It is important. That is a vital part of traveling.

14. How important is for you to taste the traditional food of a destination?

It depend on why we are traveling to a place, but it is always a plus if the food is good.

15. Would you consider yourself a foodie/someone who is knowledgeable about cuisine and food?

Not a hard core foodie, but we are quite interested in food and drink.

16. Do you think that food can be an asset for tourism destinations?
Yes. Italy has the pizza and the pasta, Germany the sausages and so on… Some dishes become a part of the destination. Like "smørrebrød" in Denmark ;-)

17. When you travel to a destination, how important is that you dine out?

It is often part of the way we travel, but if it is a hiking holiday the food agenda might be less important.

18. Would you say that Danish people have an interest towards food? If yes how   is   it manifested?

We think that it is very hard to judge in general, but we are sure some people will travel for the food- experience.

19. Would you say that Danes are starting to look into destinations that are not that overcrowded by tourists? If yes, could Romania be one of them?

We are - but if it is so in general, we don't know. Yes, Romania could easily be somewhere new to visit. We recommend it to people we know, because we had such a good experience, when we went.

4. Transcript interview with Jens
WE: Cristina & Robert
J: Jens

1:15 WE: why did you choose to visit Romania?

1:18 J: Because I had been traveling a lot earlier in Eastern Europe, and I liked every place I was in, and I thought that Bucharest would be as interesting as other places are. I did not know about it actually, and because I had thought many times to fly to Bucharest, but there were no direct flights, when first were introduced direct flights I said that it was time to do it. Simply I liked to visit Bucharest by pure curiosity! I like to visit new places...places with no many tourists...I did not expect anything really, I just came with the open mind to see what is this about...I heard about Bucharest from a colleague, at a music course; she lived in Bucharest for a while, and she liked it...she was quite excited about it. She said that in summer is like in Paris, so I expected that...to be very beautiful...it was very beautiful, I mean there were not all the places like Paris, but many places were very beautiful.

3:16 WE: Did you have a certain perception about Romania before traveling there?

3:21 J: I didn't expect to see anything in particular...I am not the type that reads a lot of books when I travel...I do not prepare...it was kind of an adventure (Bucharest).

3:55 WE: so basically when you travel to a destination you don't document yourself before, you do it after. ...I did not go there for a particular reason; I went there only because it is a new place.

4:13 WE: may I go back to something you said previously: you said that you decided to go to Romania because you like traveling to places with no many tourists! So, does this mean that you were aware that Romania doesn't have many tourists?

4:32 J: Yes. I know only this girl I have talked about who have been to Bucharest; she was very excited, so I thought that Bucharest is as exciting as the rest of the other Eastern European capitals.

4:50 WE: When did you travel to Romania?

4:55 J: In 2011, five years ago.

5:01 WE: Alone?

5:05 J: No! As a couple.

5:07 WE: do you remember anything that attracted you at Bucharest? Anything that you enjoyed?

5:18 J: We found some interesting things to see...we went to the Atheneum, which is very beautiful and it was one of the highlights of the trip. There was also Muzeul Satului. It is pretty much about the atmosphere of the city. When I travel I am really interesting in sights…for me traveling is more about the atmosphere of the place; getting an idea about how is life here, how are people...and I like the atmosphere there, though I could see that not everyone there was doing well. I must say something it was kind of annoying was that at the hotel they tried to place prostitutes to guests.

There was also this neighborhood, Lipscani...that is a very nice area.

8:56 WE: how long did you stay there?

8:58 J: One week.

9:01 WE: only in Bucharest?

9:02 J: yes... And you sound just as surprised as anyone else, because in the last day when the driver took us to the airport, people asked us: why did you stayed only here in Bucharest?

9:37 J: I am looking forward for a next trip on Romania because I feel I miss out a lot; but it was also plenty to do and see in Bucharest too.

10:05 WE: did you try any Romanian food?

10:09 J: I remember cafes, places I had a beer at...not exactly food that I ate.

10:38 WE: do you remember if you at least enjoyed the food in general?

10:44 J: yes, it was good, else I would have remembered a bad experience...I remember one restaurant, and I think it was in that area, Lipscani...I guess it was famous! We were seating at the balcony, and suddenly the waiters started dancing...it was very nice.

I remember it was good, but I still do not remember what we ate there.

11:38 WE: you do not remember the name of the dishes, or if you ate Romanian traditional food in general?

11:48 J: I forgot the name of the food but I liked it! However, when I will go back, it wont be for the food; it will be for the nature...but the drinks were excellent; the food was ok as well, I just cant remember it.

12:31 WE: if you would go back again, would you try the food again?

12:35 J: Yes, I am not afraid of the food; and, I would definitely go to a cafe I heard it has very good chocolate...and a very good potato cake!

12:58 WE: how important is food for you when traveling?

13:09 J: I would never go anywhere just for the food. I am not that much into food.

13:20 WE: but does food influence you destination choice?

13:28 J: if food goes to weird, yes; but for that to happen one must travel far! Moreover, if I do not like the traditional food I can always try something known.

14:02 WE: at the time you ate Romanian food, did it recall any similarities to the Danish traditional food?

14:13 J: As far as I remember I recall it being a bit heavy, but I might be wrong because I have tried traditional food at all destinations I have been. Actually, I did not go for food in Bucharest; it was something nice to try, but I didn't eat only Romanian food.

15:15 WE: was that because you had some neophobic feelings?

15:40 J: no! If I would go there I would try it again.

16:18 J: I am always curious when I travel! I want to see what they eat at a destination; it is a part of me.

16:30 WE: even though you do not travel for food, you still like to try the traditional food at the destinations!

16:36 J: yeah!

16:47 WE: do you think that the establishment and the atmosphere of the place where you try traditional food contribute to your overall experience?

17:00 J: yes. That is even as important as the food is.

17:09 WE: would it compliment the food?

17:44 J: that is actually something that you, locals, know! Because for example the restaurant I told you about, it had a nice atmosphere, and I would like to go again there because I enjoy it, but I don't know whether the atmosphere was traditional or not!

18:31 WE: do you think that there is a lack of information regarding traditional food in Romania, and in general about Romania?

18:38 J: you don't hear much about Romania. When I was in Romania, I think I search for information on Google...it was easy enough to find information, but there were no promotional information about Romania.

19:29 WE: how did you friends/network reacted when they heard you traveled to Romania?

19:41 J: Back then I had a neighborhood, he was Romanian...I told him I was in Romania and I had a good time there, and he said *wow! That might have been a great disappointment for you!*

20:26 WE: do you think that Romania has a bad image, reputation?

20:34 J: Not the people I know, but there might be some who think so!

20:40 WE: why do you think there are not so many Danes traveling to Romania?

20:55 J: there are many Danes who use to travel through travel agencies, and I think Romania is not sold through many travel agencies in Denmark. Here might be the problem! For me is not a problem because I like to arrange myself the trips, but for those who travel from agencies is a problem that they don't find Romania as a possible destination. I think Danes might be interested in Romania, why not?

21:51 WE: so there are many Danes traveling through agencies?

21:55 J: I think so! It was very modern to travel for example to Prague; there were many trips arranged through agencies, and then people heard about it, and then they talked about it, and so on...and even though you dont want to go through travel agencies, you hear about it, and then you can arrange the trip individually!...it might work the same for Romania...I mean it has to start somewhere.

22:41 WE:...and one option can be through travel agencies?

22:48 J: Yes, I think so, because it becomes an traveling offer people will go there, especially for the nature...or perhaps a couple of days in Bucharest and then go and see the nature.

23:13 WE: you said you have been to some other countries in Eastern Europe; where would you place Romania as a travel destination in comparison to them?

23:34 J: Well, it is hard to evaluate in this way, because I was there at different times; but I can evaluate in regards to whether I would like to go back to those places, and I thin Bucharest is not on the list of the places I would like to revisit..because I would like to see more of Romania.

25:14 WE: we asked this question because we know that, even though it has the same things to offer as Romania, Bulgaria is better known destination among Danes. Why do you think is that?

25:20 J: I think that it has to start through selling the destination through travel agencies. It is so because I know I like to do things that other people do not like to do, and I know also that most of the people like to do things that other people do, so it has to become a common thing to travel to Romania, so more and more people would choose to travel there.

26:00 WE: so you are saying that Romania will attract more Danes only if it is a known destination, rather than being an unknown one. We are thinking that our generation like to do travel and try exotic and unknown destinations, and we think that Romania is rather an unknown and exotic destination for many, rather than a known one.

26:47 J: and of course Romania has to advertise...find the things that would attract more people! I know many people who choose to travel to Western destinations because the options they have to have fun...and from this point of view Romania, Bucharest might not be the best place...so Romania has to find out what people want...maybe nature...not sure about the food.

28:06 WE: how should Romania promote itself for the Danish market? What do you think the Danes travel for?

28:30 J: I think if one is into sightseeing there are many places to see; the prices are always important, it is cheap in Bucharest...cultural things are many in Bucharest...even if you are into shopping, I think there is something to do there.

29:36 WE: what about price? Do you think price matters for the Danes when they travel?

29:48 J: yes I think it does...Romania is much cheaper. I remember when people started first to travel to Eastern Europe, they talked about prices, because it was cheaper. It is not that cheap anymore, but it is still cheap and that is important for a lot of people.

30:33 WE: from your experience can you say that you have found a destination where the traditional food enhanced your experience?

31:04 J: probably Italy! That is a personal taste! Italian food is common, and I like it.

31:59 WE: you think that if Danes would have the possibility to experience Romanian food before traveling will they still like to try it at the destination.

32:24 J: I ma not sure. Even if you would try it here in Copenhagen, I would not say: Oh I am going to Romania. It was once a Czech restaurant in Copenhagen, and I was there after I

visited Prague, but after tasting the food I could not say: wow, I am going to Prague. I think it would be the same for Romania. If I would try Romanian food here it would be: ok, I know a bit about Romania, maybe I would try it there as well.

33:37 WE: but would you say that food wont be alone a strategy to sell Romania, but would it be a bonus for the nature and other attractions in Romania?

34:18 J: for lots of people it might be interesting if there would be included into a package; whether if they tried before, I dont think it would matter.

35:12 WE: do you like eating out when in Denmark?

35:13 J: yes.

35:21 WE: do you think that if the Romanian cuisine would change, should it change in the way the food is presented in the restaurants around Copenhagen e.g. small portions, fancy, with a twist?

35:55 J: for me it does not have to be fancy, I would rather have good food than fancy. But I would say *yes* because people get used with that. If you want to have Danes to Romania, we do not use to eat that food anymore.

36:38 WE: how would you describe Danes' food habits?

36:42 J: I think a lot of people eat food that is not Danish, because we are surrounded by many other influences. We love Italian, Chinese...and that is why the food is not very different when you travel, because you can find these cuisines everywhere.

38:15 J: In '50-'60 started people to travel, and at the beginning Danes used to take the *rugbrød* with them because they like it and they could not find it at other destinations. But now people are changed...they are more open and curious.

39:15 WE: it is interesting because we made the link of Romanian cuisine with the Danish cuisine, because the food is pretty close in our perception. So if Danes like their traditional food, then they easily like Romanian traditional food as well. It might though be that the older people in Denmark stick to the traditional food.

40:55 J: I think for the young people wont be very interesting, because they do not care about the traditional danish food either...but for those over 40 can be ok.

41:25 WE: would you then say that Romania would fit more to those over 40, or the age does not matter?

41:39 J: like everywhere else it should be offered something to all the ages, but if you refer only to Romanian traditional dishes, then the older generations of Danish tourist might be a target.

42:00-45:29 - discussion about tourists in Denmark and their food behavior.

45:30 WE: you said you have not seen any promotional video about Romania?

45:31 J: no! And this one reason that I thought it is special to go there, because it is nothing that you hear about!

46:20 WE: why do Danes travel so much to Spain, Italy etc.?

46:29 J: they go for the beaches and sun, so if Romania has something similar then Danes might be interested in traveling there as well.

47:20 WE: do you think it has also something to do with the safe/security of the place? Image of Romania?

47:47 J: I have not thought about that! Maybe...Although I did not have any problems in Romania. If I think better I believe there are Danes associating Romania with criminality.

48:27 WE: did you have any negative experiences while traveling in Romania?

48:33 J: only the "offers" (linked to the prostitutes mentioned at the beginning at the interview) I had in the hotel.

49:39 J: one other thing, I saw in Romania, in Bucharest there were so many wild dogs...one time we felt threaten, but nothing happened in the end.

51:52 WE: did you feel that while being in Bucharest you could manage everything by yourself, tourist wise?

52:07 J: Language!...you need to find young people! We managed somehow...I got where I wanted, everything was ok.

Annex C: Mind-map

Annex D: Romanian tourism statistics

D.1. Statistics for 2013

The most arrivals of foreign tourists by country of origin and by tourism area, in 2013, are as follows:

- number -

	Total	Bucharest and County capital cities, Tulcea city excluded	Other localities and tourist routes	Mountain resorts	Spa resorts	Riviera resorts, Constanța city excluded	Danube Delta Area, Tulcea city included
Total foreign tourists	**1714538**	**1308260**	**192854**	**126945**	**32149**	**31540**	**22790**
Germany	228592	173760	24698	14930	2947	6111	6146
Italy	181894	148933	21768	7232	1066	1672	1223
France	118649	95518	11279	7021	698	2423	1710
Hungary	99261	55060	30879	3809	8996	371	146
Israel	96615	74062	4238	15996	1632	484	203
Great Britain	92756	79050	6832	5228	300	977	369
USA	91625	78680	6563	4338	443	1313	288
Spain	66375	48328	8954	7293	266	537	997
Poland	64152	40855	8701	7782	610	3130	3074
Austria	58765	45453	6695	4503	651	756	707
Netherlands	47378	37918	5807	2664	271	478	240
Bulgaria	43751	31315	4874	6559	161	434	408
Greece	39360	35098	1876	1726	84	434	142
Turkey	38375	29005	6819	1247	100	1073	131
Republic of Moldova	33668	15690	3705	5612	7467	1118	76
Belgium	30299	24958	2498	1608	285	782	168
Russian Federation	29302	20031	2884	3800	278	2247	62
Czech Republic	22246	15942	3498	1696	777	173	160
Switzerland	20556	17199	1566	1026	156	317	292
Ukraine	17227	11557	2554	2419	257	331	109
Japan	16974	13244	1134	2343	39	138	76
Sweden	15049	12502	1054	750	229	388	126
Norway	14242	8156	1269	548	48	356	3865
Canada	13967	11129	1435	825	167	389	22
Serbia	13959	11834	785	717	436	62	125
China	13329	10488	616	1003	541	539	142
Slovakia	11678	9306	1576	441	243	80	32
Denmark	11004	7307	2190	457	105	435	510
Albania	10884	3882	3808	639	1896	505	154
Portugal	10145	7692	1200	576	24	181	472
Other countries	162461	134308	11099	12157	976	3306	615

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D.2. Statistics for 2014

The most arrivals of foreign tourists by country of origin and by tourism area, in 2014, are as follows:

	Total	Bucharest and County capital cities, Tulcea city excluded	Other localities and tourist routes	Mountain resorts	Spa resorts	Riviera resorts, Constanța city excluded	Danube Delta Area, Tulcea city included
Total foreign tourists	**1911817**	**1485908**	**215526**	**132014**	**33562**	**31325**	**13482**
Germany	**234451**	183387	26112	13015	2778	5155	4004
Italy	**184514**	150641	23815	6835	978	1442	803
Israel	**139425**	108072	6090	21939	2283	895	146
France	**123779**	101874	12130	5640	774	2516	845
USA	**113420**	96007	8656	3839	482	4229	207
Great Britain	**110601**	94401	8484	5579	497	1265	375
Hungary	**106481**	58774	33287	4817	8820	541	242
Spain	**79091**	58035	11712	8040	243	438	623
Poland	**71479**	47414	11787	8500	624	2180	974
Austria	**60907**	48672	6886	3640	541	580	588
Netherlands	**50924**	40694	6099	2923	347	657	204
Bulgaria	**47442**	34031	3872	8544	203	443	349
Turkey	**42266**	33271	6636	1368	172	720	99
Republic of Moldova	**41512**	20052	3689	6662	10282	723	104
Greece	**40748**	36913	2062	1303	87	264	119
Belgium	**29651**	23495	3302	1557	217	912	168
Russian Federation	**27967**	22420	1620	2216	439	1244	28
Ukraine	**22515**	15965	3374	2379	414	274	109
Czech Republic	**22132**	18026	2231	1308	181	315	71
China	**19008**	15127	1373	1387	518	430	173
Switzerland	**18577**	15034	1678	1029	190	395	251
Japan	**18221**	15010	1395	1601	33	59	123
Canada	**18143**	14562	2042	826	239	399	75
Sweden	**15959**	13233	1445	749	134	357	41
Serbia	**14916**	12771	1063	535	327	84	136
Norway	**13686**	8800	1894	385	77	573	1957
Other countries	**244002**	199227	22792	15398	1682	4235	668