



Sociocultural and gastronomic revaluation of local products: *trumfa* in the Vall de Camprodon (Catalonia, Spain)

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ABSTRACT

Food products are used to protect and promote the local identity as a source of knowledge. In the Vall de Camprodon, *trumfa* (a variety of Kennebec potato) has been grown from ancient times as a subsistence product. In recent years, and thanks to the combined efforts of public and private stakeholders in the region, the *trumfa* has become one of the most iconic products of food tourism in the Vall de Camprodon. Using a qualitative design and from a local point of view, the article aims to analyse the revaluation processes of the *trumfa* in order to describe its role within the cultural and social development of a community. The results show that from a bottom-up strategy, *trumfa* does not only form part of the valley local identity, but has also become a factor that attracts tourism.

1. Introduction and theoretical framework

The (re)valuation of agricultural and livestock activities as a result of tourism has been a widely developed topic in recent decades, and it has an increasing impact on the planning of destinations that focus on food tourism (Dixit, 2019; Hall and Gössling, 2016). Gastronomy is a factor of cultural and tourist attraction (McKercher, 2020; Seyitoğlu and Ivanov, 2020) that plays a crucial role in local and regional development (Ellis et al., 2018; Rachão et al., 2019), not only from the financial and tourism point of view but also in environmental and social terms. The earliest definitions of food tourism were already offering a clear perspective on the different ways of obtaining value from food products and culinary identities.

In this regard, Hall and Sharples (2003) defined food tourism as the process whereby tourists are gastronomically motivated to visit a destination, typically in the form of visits to producers and production spaces, going to festivals and markets, or dining in cafes and restaurants. These are all examples of experiences that foster a relationship between the primary and tertiary sectors, and that showcase food tourism as a process through which a touristic value is attributed to food. Previous studies have widely examined these processes in the cases of wine (Gu et al., 2020; Hall et al., 2009; Ungureanu, 2015) and other products like

beer (Plummer et al., 2005) and tea (Cheng et al., 2012; Jolliffe and Aslam, 2009), and also in relation to foods such as cheese (Ermolaev et al., 2019; Folgado-Fernández et al., 2019; Fusté-Forné, 2020). These studies evidence the need to take into account local stakeholders' perspectives when planning sustainable relationships between agriculture and tourism.

The theoretical model of local territorial development was developed in the 1970s and 1980s to explain the imbalances caused by liberal policies. It is a bottom-up process that is based on endogenous, local resources and is orchestrated by small businesses and entrepreneurs (Albuquerque, 2008) to improve the level of well-being of a town or region (Díaz, 2017; Vargas Hernández, 2008). When the community leads this process of structural change, this is a case of endogenous local development (Vásquez, 2007). This local economic development becomes a collaborative process between public and private stakeholders, the purpose being to stimulate productive activity and generate employment, as well as to foster human, social and environmental development from a sustainable perspective (Albuquerque, 2008; Quintero Santos, 2008). Public administration is expected to take an innovative approach, i.e. incorporating non-bureaucratic institutional designs, encouraging operational efficiency and flexibility, and requiring effective vertical and horizontal coordination by the

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stakeholders involved (Orozco Alvarado and Núñez Martínez, 2013; Quintero Santos, 2008).

According to Arocena (2002), the identity dimension is decisive for the success of local development processes, i.e. a strong identity component that stimulates and supports the potential of community's initiatives. In this regard, knowledge of the past, symbols and beliefs, social and culturally constructed values, as well as of the shared future project that is engendered, all carry significant weight. And this future projection is assumed from the horizontal territorial logic, i.e. from private initiative and entrepreneurial creativity, thus recovering "everyday life" (Galilea, 1987). This idea draws on the confluence of interests between private operators and political agents, but without excluding the presence of community organisations (Mantero, 2003).

In 2004, the World Tourism Organisation (UNTWO) stated that tourism development should be based on the principles of sustainability: making responsible and optimal use of natural resources, respecting the sociocultural authenticity of its host communities and ensuring that the economic benefits are distributed in a balanced way and help to reduce poverty. Likewise, from this perspective, tourism activity intended to foster sustainable local development should not only cater for the aspirations of the local community, but also the expectations of tourists or consumers of touristic spaces (Orozco Alvarado and Núñez Martínez, 2013). The local food-based culture boosts the development and survival of family farms (Blake et al., 2010), and also raises the possibility of preparing dishes with added value: garden food that comes "from the farmer to the table" (McIlvaine-Newsad et al., 2004). Tourists have increasingly more knowledge, purchasing power and free time to travel (World Tourism Organization, 2012). Therefore, they seek authentic experiences that are typical of the host culture, such as cuisine, in order to learn about the natural and cultural identities of the places they visit (Dixit, 2019; Everett and Aitchison, 2008; Fusté-Forné, 2019; Tresserras and Medina, 2008). Currently, there is a demand for emotional experiences that include local content, knowledge, participation, tastes and identities together with nostalgia and pleasure (Crespi-Vallbona, 2020).

In the context of the sociocultural theory, which reveals the influence of cultural and social environments on individual and collective learning processes (Vygotsky, 1978), this study innovatively addresses these processes for the case of *trumfa*. Touristically, sociocultural variables such as feeling of community belonging and specific cultural identity and values are drivers of revalorization of local traditions and rituals. This was analysed by Crespi-Vallbona and Richards (2007) for the case of local festivals and traditional festivities in the case of Catalonia. In particular, the process of gastronomic and tourist revaluation of local products cannot happen in isolation from the role that these products play in the cultural and social development of the community. This is highlighted by previous studies such as the one by Guadarrama et al. (2019) that analyses the potential of tourism for the appreciation of local products in opposition to the current trend towards the globalisation of food and the potential loss and declining competitiveness of local products in the market. This potential must be supported by a unique culinary identity that can serve as the basis for its appreciation (Fox, 2007; Sims, 2009). More recently, authors like Ellis et al. (2018) have stated that this relationship between food and tourism is especially significant with regard to the value of authenticity. Both authenticity and local identity are essential components of tourist experiences, as highlighted by Crespi-Vallbona and Mascarilla-Miró (2020) for wine and food pairing, and its management and marketing are crucial to the sustainable development of local food-based tourism.

Valuation of the local culinary identity is therefore a key starting point (for example, through social awareness campaigns) prior to inclusion of local food in tourist attractions (for example, on restaurant menus). These initiatives, along with others such as holding fairs and organising tours, are designed to qualify and enhance a local food product, and all exemplify rural entrepreneurship (Lane et al., 2016), creativity (Rachao et al., 2020) and innovation in food production (Liu et al., 2017), which justifies a bottom-up valuation strategy, i.e. driven

by the people and developed without the support of a strategic plan. As a result, a foodscape is generated in which the local region is symbolically associated with a certain food product (Adema, 2007). This paper contributes to theory and practice by analysing all these processes for the case of *trumfa*, which fills a research gap in the understanding of the intersections between local development and food tourism through the sustainability of culture and its social context.

In this sense, the aim of this research is to analyse what steps, from a local and endogenous perspective, have been taken to recover the *trumfa* and foster its touristic value. This includes addressing the topic from the perspectives of production (*trumfa* farmers) and the preparation of dishes for consumption (restaurants), which also receive political support, and which has played a key role in protection and promoting this product. This qualitative study is the first step towards the analysis of *trumfa* as an attraction and an experience where the primary and tertiary sectors work together to create ways to showcase local foodstuffs; in short, to promote the value of the primary sector as a source of tourist and leisure attraction. The analysis focuses on three key aspects: the creativity, entrepreneurship and innovation of the producers, the gastronomic valorization process and the bottom-up valuation process.

1.1. Study area

The Vall de Camprodon (Fig. 1) is an area of 392 km² and 4405 inhabitants in the north-east of Catalonia (Spain), separated from France by a natural pass and featured by scattered towns (Noguer-Juncà, 2016).

Until the late 19th century, the area's main economy was livestock, basically ovine, complemented with small subsistence farms. Since the 1880s, thanks to the popularization of the hygienist movement among the bourgeoisie, the area began to be frequented by visitors seeking the pure air and fresh water of the mountains. The number of visitors grew constantly over the following decades, and nowadays tourism is the main, and almost exclusive, economic sector (Noguer-Juncà, 2019).

Economic change to the tertiary sector and the introduction of modern agricultural machinery have had a major impact on the exponential growth of forestry and on farming, which is nowadays based on extensive breeding of beef cattle and potato crops, known as *trumfes* (Noguer-Juncà and Pedrosa, 2020). *Trumfa* is the Kennebec variety of potato that grows in this valley. It grows slowly and remains underground for months, gathering nutrients and organoleptic qualities due to the altitude and harsh climate. Its producers are organized, since the end of 20th century, within the *Cooperativa Ramadera de Molló* (Molló Livestock Cooperative) and use a homogeneous *trumfa* observing regulated production methods that include both conventional and organic farming, as agreed by the producers and supervised by the Plant Health Service of the Government of Catalonia's Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries, Food and Environment. The aforementioned regulations warrant that only certified seeds are used, that harvesting is hygienic, that crop rotation is applied to minimize the possibility of infestations and phytosanitary products, and that bagging has traceability guarantees.

From the commercial perspective, since 2006, the *Associació Cultural i Gastronòmica Cuines de la Vall de Camprodon* (Kitchens of Vall de Camprodon Cultural and Gastronomic Association) has held the *Trumfa Gastronomic Season* in the last two weeks of September, offering thematic menus linked to this tuber. Since 2011, it has also been running the *Ens Mengem la Vall* (We Eat the Valley) education programme that includes visits to the producers, the development of pedagogical materials and the holding of conferences and workshops to promote the area's agri-food products at the local level, to teach about health and eating habits and to foster social links among producers, consumers and restaurants. Since 2017, other areas in this region have also been implementing the same experience in the form of a project called *Territori Educador. Ens mengem Les Valls* (Educating Territory. We Eat the Valleys). Hence, it is evident that these programmes, as well as others like the holding of food fairs, are aimed at the qualification and

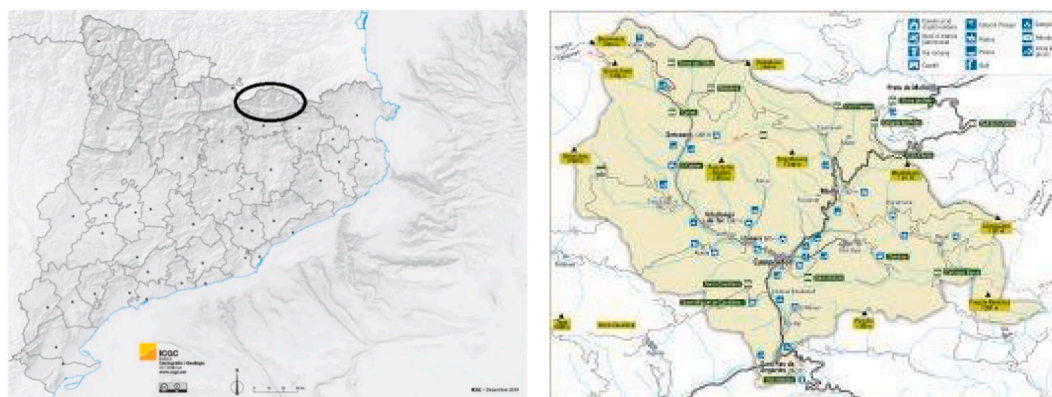


Fig. 1. Location of the Vall de Camprodon. Source: Institut Cartogràfic de Catalunya (2019) and Mancomunitat Intermunicipal de la Vall de Camprodon (2020).

appreciation of the *trumfa* as a local gastronomic product.

2. Materials and methods

2.1. Study design

The main aim of this paper is to analyse the process throughout the *trumfa* of the Vall de Camprodon has been protected and promoted as a local food tourism attraction. The need to adopt an exploratory approach led the researchers to use a qualitative design to evaluate public and private perspectives. Qualitative analysis, based on semi-structured interviews, was chosen due to its suitability for capturing in-depth details about phenomena that cannot be conveyed in quantitative data (Bryman, 2015) and to analyse the situation from a local perspective (Bartunek and Seo, 2002). That is, the qualitative approach is appropriate since this research aims to obtain the perspectives of local stakeholders. Thus, the chosen methodological design allowed the researchers to achieve an interpretive paradigm where the respondents could easily express their perspectives. In this sense, credibility and validity in this qualitative research are achieved through the description of the interviewee speeches (Tracy, 2010), which are presented in the next section.

2.2. Participants

Using a non-probability purposive sampling, seventeen semi-structured interviews were conducted with four types of stakeholders (Table 1):

- The six local producers, all of whom are owners of smallholdings that are more than a century old.
- Eight of the nine restaurant owners that are members of the Kitchens of Vall de Camprodon Cultural and Gastronomic Association. One restaurant did not agree to participate in the research.
- Two majors of municipalities where an annual *trumfa* fair is held.
- Additionally, to achieve a holistic research, a specialist from the Plant Health Service of the Government of Catalonia's Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries, Food and Environment was interviewed in order to contextualize *trumfa* production.

2.3. Interview guide development

The interviews consisted of open questions that emerged from the existing academic literature about the local development of food tourism in rural areas and the role of gastronomy in local identity. Specifically, the interview with the local producers was based on three blocks of questions: (a) the past, the present and the challenges of the cultivation of *trumfa*; (b) the cooperation with the restaurateurs and the

Table 1
Profile of the interviewees.

Interviewee	Type of stakeholders	Organization	Years of experience of the organization	Gender	Age
E1	Producer	Masia La Riba	+3 generations	Male	36
E2	Producer	Mas El Collell	+3 generations	Female	60
E3	Producer	Masia El Sayol	+3 generations	Male	55
E4	Producer	Mas Marxant	+3 generations	Female	50
E5	Producer	Masia Can Illa	+4 generations	Male	70
E6	Producer	Masia El Carol	+4 generations	Male	65
E7	Restaurateur	Fonda Rigà	+ de 50 years	Male	48
E8	Restaurateur	El Pont 9	+ de 20 years	Male	44
E9	Restaurateur	Can Jepet	+ de 50 years	Male	48
E10	Restaurateur	Can Tiranda	+ de 50 years	Male	55
E11	Restaurateur	El Pirineu	+ de 30 years	Female	44
E12	Restaurateur	Costabona	+ de 20 years	Male	42
E13	Restaurateur	Can Jordi	+ de 15 years	Female	54
E14	Restaurateur	Calitxó	+ de 50 years	Female	49
E15	Politician	Major of Vilallonga de Ter		Female	35
E16	Politician	Major of Molló		Male	38
E17	Public administration specialist	Plant Health Service of the Government of Catalonia's Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries, Food and Environment		Female	45

Source: the authors.

public administration; and (c) the evaluation of the educational project of the *trumfa*. The interview with the restaurateurs was focused on two blocks of questions: (a) the activities to protect and promote the *trumfa*; and (b) the collaboration with the local producers and the public administration. And, finally, the interview with the political leaders was based on two blocks of questions: (a) the evolution of food events focused on *trumfa*; and (b) the synergies with producers and restaurateurs in the creation of gastronomic experiences. It is worth to mention that the interview with the public administration specialist was useful to get technical information about the *trumfa*.

2.4. Data collection and analysis

When the participants agreed to participate, semi-structured interviews were scheduled. The interviews were conducted between December 2020 and February 2021 until reaching the entire universe, except for the one restaurant that did not wish to participate in the research. Due to the pandemic of Covid-19, the interviews were remote and recorded, with the prior consent of the participants. The interviews were conducted by the first author of the research. All the interviews were carried out in Catalan and they lasted between thirty and 50 min.

Data analysis also was carried out in Catalan, and the quotations presented in this paper have been translated from the original language into English. After data collection, all of the interviews were transcribed. As part of the analysis of the interviewees' responses, a process of codification and categorization into thematic topics was conducted by the first author of this paper, and later discussed and agreed with the other authors of the paper. According to Marks and Yardley (2004) by using thematic analysis, the researchers can understand widely the theme analysed. From the data analysis three key aspects were identified: a) creativity, entrepreneurship and innovation of the producers; b) the gastronomic valuation process; and c) the bottom-up development.

3. Results and discussion

Results are presented and detailed below, and structured in three sections: creativity, entrepreneurship and innovation of the producers; the gastronomic valorization process; and the bottom-up development.

3.1. Creativity, entrepreneurship and innovation of the producers

Cooperation and synergies established between agricultural and tourism sectors allowed to develop *trumfa* growing as a sustainable activity and kept many family farms alive (Blake et al., 2010). In turn, this has reinforced the identity and local dimension of the destination (Arocena, 2002), in this case, the *Vall de Camprodon*.

According to the producers, *trumfa* has been a subsistence product of the area since ancient times and, although its cultivation suffered a

decrease during the 1980s and 1990s, it is currently recovering. However, nowadays *trumfa* production (Fig. 2) is much lower than in the first half of the twentieth century. This is confirmed, for example, by one of the interviewees who mentioned that “my grandparents made 1 wagon of *trumfes* (10,000 kilos) and now we only plant about 500 kilos of seed, which means 4000 kilos of *trumfes*” (E1). Furthermore, E2 pointed out that, in the family farm, the *Álava* potato variety was cultivated but it was stopped being produced since it was not so tasty “and people did not want it”. Also, E4 stands out that “the grandfather of my husband could buy the family’s house with the one-year sales of *trumfes* ... it was in the decade of 1950”. It is thus evident that *trumfa* is not only a gastronomic product linked to the area for several generations, but it also continues to be an identity food of the valley. All these farms have survived during several generations, and their persistence and resistance in the area demonstrates their close relationship with the land, and their ability to innovate and constantly redirect their businesses, for example in relation to tourism experiences. This significant relationship among local identity, food and tourism is also supported by Ellis et al. (2018).

The entire production of *trumfes* is sold to the Cooperative, founded at the end of the 20th century or directly to individuals, who visit the producers' homes or attend *trumfa* events that are held in various municipalities of the valley, as discussed later in the paper. E5 explains that “we sell half of the production through the Cooperative and the other half by ourself, directly to people”. The Cooperative has an assembly operation and the price per kilo is decided among the producers, who are not allowed to sell *trumfes* at a lower price than the agreed by the Cooperative. In this sense, all producers use the same type of seed, assuming that production will be different depending on the specific portion of land where *trumfes* grow, as explained by E5, who stated that “all producers use the same type of seed, but in some places like Molló it grows more and in other areas such as Llanars it grows less”. It is important to note, from an ethical point of view, that producers are committed to only sell their *trumfes*, as explained by the interviewee 3 who said that “when we run out of *trumfes* we cannot go to the supermarket and buy potatoes for 30 cents and sell them for 1 euro saying that are from our fields ...”. This issue is further explored below and confirms the necessity to validate the importance of *trumfa* in this territory, as



Fig. 2. *Trumfa* production and commercialization. Source: Plant Health Service. Departament d'Agricultura, Ramaderia, Pesca, Alimentació i Medi Natural, Catalan Government (2021).

locals expect to be known for the quality of this potato and the delicacy of *trumfa* dishes. In that sense, there is an implicit objective for all the involved stakeholders in this geographical area to be symbolically associated to *trumfa* and to create a unique *trumfa* foodscape, as Adema (2007) stated.

The sale of *trumfa* through the Cooperative is described by the E6, which in addition to being a producer is the president of the Cooperative. The interviewee stated that “my son Marc, according to the number of orders, contacts the producers. We keep rotating, and if a producer does not have or does not want to sell the *trumfes* at the set price, which is difficult since we agreed before, nothing happens”. It is worth to mention that all producers are satisfied with the activity of the Cooperative, as E2 pointed out: “the work of the Cooperative is very good” since it allows not only to integrate the production of *trumfes* in a common framework, but also to create synergies with the territory and local people.

For example, since 2011, the valorization of the *trumfa* by local producers has been acknowledged by the educational project of the public-school Doctor Robert. Thus, the E5 explained that “the students come to see when we plant and when we collect, they come every year, this 2020 not because of the pandemic” and the E6 reported that “it is a very good idea for children who know how the products of the land grow”. This promotes the tradition of *trumfa* among future generations, and emphasizes the values of the local product from a perspective of healthy and sustainable eating.

In line with this, there is a disparity of opinions among the producers in relation to the future cultivation of this tuber in the region. Some of them indicated that it will be safeguarded since it is a product that is grown when there are no other agricultural and farming tasks, as noted by E1. The participant highlighted that “you have *trumfa* in September, when you do not have work in the land”. Also, E6 mentioned that “I believe that the crop will not disappear because it arrives in September–October when we have no work in the fields and then look, it comes in the right moment”. The E3 also pointed out that it will be maintained due to the growing interest of consumers in local and kilometer 0 products. Specifically, the participant reported that “the *trumfa* will stand because the local product is meaningful. If we do well, it can have a good future”. The interest between the production of *trumfa* and its tourist and gastronomic attraction is revealed, which is particularly developed by the restaurateurs. The *trumfa* foodscape in *Vall de Camprodon* becomes real as an authentic, local and identity product (Adema, 2007; Crespi-Vallbona and Mascarilla-Miró, 2020; Guadarrama et al., 2019).

On the contrary, some producers indicated that the cultivation of *trumfa* will not be maintained for long since it is a product highly dependent on the weather and requires expensive and poorly paid labor. This is highlighted by, for example, interviewees 2 and 5, who pointed out that “it requires a lot of work and if a hailstorm arrives or a lot of water or a drought, and it is over, it is better to have cattle” and “the cultivation of *trumfa* in large quantities has a future on plain lands that can mechanize the whole process. We have a mechanized part and one that we make by hand, and it is hard and they pay us a very low price”, respectively. In this sense, it is worth mentioning that some producers anticipated a decline for the entire primary sector, not only for the cultivation of *trumfes*, as evidenced by E4 who alerted that “most crops, whether fruit or meat or whatever, will be lost because the agricultural work is very badly paid and intermediaries pay little”. Therefore, the socio-cultural revaluation of local products is also a way to ensure the continuity of the productions of the primary sector which, in turn, are the main source for the development of food tourism. This is a reason why rural and gastronomic tourism becomes essential in this peripheral area as economic drivers (Díaz, 2017; Vargas Hernández, 2008). Furthermore, this leadership “from below”, from the local entrepreneurial and business community in the promotion and revaluation of the *trumfa*, has already been highlighted by previous research (Albuquerque, 2008; Vargas Hernández, 2008), as a determinant of

sustainability and to improve the well-being of a region.

3.2. The gastronomic valorization process

Following Adema's understanding of food landscapes (2007), *Vall de Camprodon* shapes a foodscape where the territory is symbolically recognized by a unique food product: the *trumfa*. This gastrotourist valorization of *trumfa* of the *Vall de Camprodon* was developed since 2006 through a gastronomic campaign whose star product was this tuber. All the restaurateurs agreed to point out that the initiative was born with the aim to develop an autochthonous cuisine based on genuine products of the region, as reported by E8, “the potato is part of the economic, social and gastronomic history of our area”, and E10 who stated that “from the first year we joined the *Trumfa Gastronomic Season* because it is a product widely used in our culinary style”. The process of selecting the products that would communicate the gastronomic identity of the valley is explained by E13: “once the Association was created, we decided to define our star products [...] we chose *trumfa* and foal, and created two gastronomic campaigns to market them. The culinary season of *trumfa* is in September and it starts precisely with *trumfa* fair in Molló, and from here on, there are three weeks of promotion of the dishes we make with *trumfes*”. It is thus evident that gastronomy plays a crucial role in the economic, environmental, social and tourist development of the territory, as previous research also highlighted (Rachão et al., 2019). In that sense, the sociocultural and gastronomic revaluation of *trumfa* is linked to the identity dimension (Arocena, 2002) and represents the area of *Vall de Camprodon*. The recognition of the value of *trumfa* as a natural and cultural identity of this place is similar as other local products analysed by many academics, such as wine, beer, tea or cheese (aforementioned in the introduction and theoretical framework). *Trumfa* reveals the expected authenticity that visitors look for when discovering a place and its food (Crespi-Vallbona and Mascarilla-Miró, 2020). For all these stakeholders involved in the *trumfa* revalorization process, it represents a feeling of proud, a particular hallmark of sociocultural identity.

In this sense, the interviewed restaurateurs mentioned that *trumfa* has been always cooked in food establishments of the region (Fig. 3), but it is much more prominent during the *Trumfa Gastronomic Season*. In culinary terms, this tuber is used in main courses (purees and creams, stuffed with meat or fish, gratinated, stewed, etc.) and as a garnish (roasted, baked, etc.), as mentioned by E1 who reported that “while we use *trumfes* as a garnish, it is also the base of some of our more popular courses”. It should be noted that no interviewee mentioned that *trumfes* are offered fried, possibly because it is assimilated to a fast-food proposal that does not fit with the philosophy of the Association's restaurateurs, as illustrated by most of the participants who reported that “we don't like to serve them fried” (E10). This aspect shows the specific bet for these stakeholders for the elaborated cuisine instead of fast food or globalised food, supporting Guadarrama et al. (2019) statements.

In addition, restaurateurs acknowledged a close collaboration with producers as “essential” (E9), “excellent” (E12), “very good (E14), “very positive (E7), among other positive evaluations. Thus, there is a growing development of synergies between the primary and tourism sectors to enhance local gastronomic products. This mutual interest is well defined by the E8 who explained that “we need unique and quality producers and the producer has its own customers and can sell their products at much more competitive prices”. It should be noted that none of the interviewees alluded to the use of non-indigenous *trumfes*, a problem and challenge mentioned by some producers.

On the other hand, restaurateurs must meet demands of customers who are eager for tourist and culinary experiences that allow them to know the territory and explore its identity and local symbols (Crespi-Vallbona, 2020). Thus, restaurateurs mentioned that the profile of regular visitors to the *Vall de Camprodon* region is mainly formed by families, hiking couples and tourists who reside in the city of Barcelona or in its metropolitan area and who decide to visit this area in order to

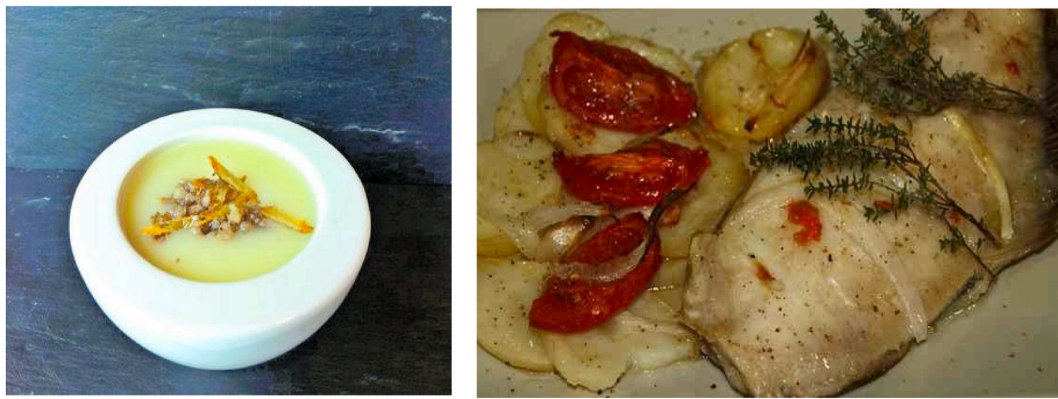


Fig. 3. Dishes cooked with *trumfa*. Source: Association Cuines de la Vall de Camprodon.

disconnect, play sports, taste traditional cuisine, and learn about local history. Not surprisingly, almost half of the homes in this geographical enclave are second homes (Noguer-Juncà, 2019).

3.3. The bottom-up development

Despite the bottom-up process explained above, both producers and restaurateurs advised that the participation of Public Administration is absolutely necessary. Thus, all producers agreed that authorities should establish more rigorous control systems to prevent restaurants and businesses from selling potatoes that are not grown in the region with the *trumfa* from Vall de Camprodon quality label. That is, public administration must establish measures to avoid intrusion that can damage the product's valorization by customers. For example, E3 alerted that "restaurants hold the *Trumfa Gastronomic Week*, and some mentioned that it is *trumfa* from the valley and it is really not and they do not buy from the Cooperative or directly from the producers". Also, the E1 pointed out that "some restaurants cheat, they buy a sack and then all the potatoes they use are marketed as *trumfa* from the valley". In a similar line, E4 stated that "the problem is that everyone sells Ripollès products and no one buys from us. Some restaurants and stores say that they sell products with the Ripollès origin label, there should be more control and ensure that it is true. They [the Plant Health Service of the Departament d'Agricultura, Ramaderia, Pesca, Alimentació i Medi Natural of the Catalan Government] control our production regularly, and they come to revise the land, the pesticides, etc.". In that sense, all the interviewees agreed in the necessary implication of the public administration to guarantee the effective coordination among all the involved stakeholders and the compliance of the rules. This is also supported by other researchers, related to the bottom-up governance and the key role of public administration (Orozco Alvarado and Núñez Martínez, 2013; Quintero Santos, 2008).

Also, E2 demanded a greater collaboration from the public administration with the Cooperative and producers in the commercialization of the product since "if it is a year of high production and we cannot sell to individuals or to the Cooperative, we have to manage to sell everything because if March arrives, we don't know what to do with the *trumfes* and we have to throw or give them away".

Restaurateurs also considered the collaboration of the public administration as the main challenge for the future, especially for marketing purposes. This does not only refer to the promotion of gastronomic campaigns, but to the added value of the primary sector. Most of the participants reported that public administrations should develop more firmly this type of local based projects that, as E9 explained, "help and promote the work that producers do to keep the land and the rural economy of the territory alive". At this point, it should be noted that E13 warned that it is necessary for producers to develop a collaborative marketing plan, since "as far as I know, no one takes care

of promoting it [*trumfa*] or opening new sale options". And he added that "I think production is more at stake than promotion; it would be necessary that producers, through the Cooperative, follow the code of conduct that they approved to give security and identity to the final product". For example, it would be advisable to apply for a European quality label which further supports the cultural and geographical values of *trumfa* from Vall de Camprodon.

In addition, food fairs focused on *trumfa* are organized in two different municipalities: Molló and Vilallonga de Ter. Its political leaders highlighted that the initiative to organize the aforementioned events was born in the mid-2000s with two objectives, which are to help producers and restaurateurs to promote this product and to stimulate and diversify the tourism experiences of the region. The interviewees made a very positive assessment of the evolution of the fairs, as indicated by E16, who mentioned that "synergies have been created between local agents and the promotion of this product has been improved". These food fairs and festivals also represent sociocultural elements to identify a community and make locals to be proud of them (Crespi-Vallbona and Richards, 2007).

The representatives of the public administration pointed out that during the first editions of the events they had to invest more resources in marketing than nowadays, as illustrated by the E15 who explained that "now the fair has already more recognition [...], the first years we invited chefs and famous people to do more promotion and be more visible". It should be noted that the public promotion of the fair is currently carried out through both offline (national radio spots, advertisements on regional television, posters and brochures, etc.) and online channels (municipal website, social media, etc.).

Finally, in this bottom-up process, public agents showed discrepancies with respect to the collaboration between public administrations, producers and restaurateurs in the organization of culinary and gastronomic events. While E16 reported a positive assessment since fairs "spread a greater dialogue between agents", E15 explained that "restaurants played a very important role in the first years, they made us tapas with *trumfa*, but later we ended up changing the tapas for a potato omelette contest since the fair took place during weekends and restaurants had a lot of work and they could not participate as planned. And now what we do is that all the restaurants in town prepare a special menu for that day and we promote them on the web, in brochures, etc."

A future challenge to be addressed is precisely public-private collaboration. In this sense, E16 mentioned that "it will be necessary to innovate with new actions to attract visitors" and E15 reported that "we will participate in the fair as long as we have producers in town". Therefore, political collaboration with producers and restaurateurs will play a key role in the future implementation of *trumfa* in the activities and experiences that promote its recovery and valorization. As previous literature has already reported (Quintero Santos, 2008; Orozco Alvarado and Núñez Martínez, 2013), public-private collaborations between

primary and tourism sectors foster multiple benefits, such as the protection and promotion of agricultural activities, and the strengthening of local gastronomic identity and tourist competitiveness.

4. Conclusions

The analysis of data obtained from the interviews confirms the relevance of *trumfa* as an element of social, cultural and economic (re)valorization in the local environment of Vall de Camprodon. This is a territory where *trumfa* has a unique symbolism as part of local foodscapes. Also, it is evident that the recovery of *trumfa* as a local product has followed a bottom-up process. First, it has arisen from the initiative of local producers; later it has also included the participation of restaurateurs and local people to promote its culinary uses and values; and finally, it has become part of destination attractiveness with the participation of the public administration. It is observed that the intervention of the public administration is required to guarantee the quality of the product and the establishment of a fair sale price, an issue widely addressed in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations to ensure not only the survival of local products but also their long-term development.

The *trumfa* is a traditional food product that forms part of the identity of the Vall de Camprodon, and whose production and consumption have been recovered thanks to the commitment and entrepreneurship of the local population. The unique nature of this potato means it can be used as a tourist product, thus fostering an increase in its gastronomic value and innovative cuisine, and involving the local population in its promotion and projection. This whole process has been supported and consolidated by the public administration, and such bottom-up collaborative synergies (producers, entrepreneurs, etc.) have boosted the endogenous development of the territory and offer guarantees for its success and sustainability. In this sense, future research should expand the analysis of the public and private promotion of this tuber as a tourist attraction.

Results can be useful for policy-makers and local authorities of the region to identify the strengths and the weaknesses of the synergies between public and private sectors in the revaluation processes of the *trumfa*. Findings suggest that public sector has to develop the commercialization of the food product and to create a strategic plan to guarantee the protection and the promotion of the *trumfa*, as one of the main intangible heritages of the Vall de Camprodon. Findings also indicate that public bodies should help the producers and the restaurateurs to give prestige to the *trumfa*'s cultivation. Departing from its social and cultural values, local stakeholders develop the gastronomic and tourist attraction of *trumfa*.

This paper contributes to the literature by evidencing how the authenticity and local identity of a food product (in this case, the *trumfa*), as well as the support of the local population through community programmes, means that this kind of attachment to the regional identity can enable a rural, mountain area to survive against economic and cultural globalization. Furthermore, this research contributes to understand that food tourism is an essential partner for the agricultural sector. Rural areas must maintain such attractions to ensure the economic, demographic and cultural continuity of their communities. At the same time, they can be used as examples of how ancestral and local products offer added value to the tourism industry. Future research could also address the gastronomic valorization of other products, foods and beverages, from the region.

Implications

This research is relevant to further understand the relationships between gastronomy and tourism from the valorization of local products. The *trumfa*, a variety of Kennebec potato, is a traditional food product that forms part of the identity of the Vall de Camprodon. This research discusses its sociocultural and gastronomic revaluation in this rural and

mountain area located in the north side of Catalonia, north eastern Spain. The unique cultural and natural values of this product foster its protection and promotion, and its gastronomic appreciation. In recent years, *trumfa* production and consumption have been recovered thanks to the commitment of local people. Producers, restaurateurs and representatives of the public administrations acknowledged the potential of *trumfa* as a product that evidences the authenticity of the territory, and enhances the collaboration between stakeholders. Also, this is especially relevant when tourism value is awarded to *trumfa* as part of local food tourism experiences.

Author statement

The authors designed, implemented and wrote the research.

Declaration of competing interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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