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## Gastrodiplomacy in tourism

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This conceptual paper articulates *gastrodiplomacy in tourism* as an area of study and policy. Gastrodiplomacy, the strategic use of cuisine in influencing perceptions of a nation, is positioned within the public diplomacy spectrum, and the intersections among food, tourism and diplomacy – in theory and practice – are investigated. The roles of food and tourism in nation branding are explored, leading to a detailed exposition on the multiple ways in which tourism is implicated in national gastrodiplomacy campaigns, as well as in grassroots “citizen diplomacy” involving food. The “ambassadorial” roles performed by people and the various “zones of contact” at which gastrodiplomacy in tourism is played out are identified as aspects of particular relevance for study. The paper calls for more integrated and holistic approaches to gastrodiplomacy in tourism, both in research and in policy, that address the tourism “foodscape” of a nation as a whole, as a realm of diplomatic potential.

**Keywords:** gastrodiplomacy; tourism; nation branding; people-to-people diplomacy

### Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to propose and demonstrate an understanding of food experiences within tourism as instances of people-to-people (P2P) diplomatic contact, playing a role within broader processes of public diplomacy. Furthermore, it seeks to elaborate upon some of the specific mechanisms and practices by which public diplomacy is performed in these contexts, and to propose implications for future research and action in the area of confluence of tourism, gastronomy and diplomacy that arise from the insights thus gained.

Food has historically linked people across cultural and geographical distances and divides, going back to the ancient trade routes based on goods such as spices, coffee and sugar. Tourism is another phenomenon that links peoples and nations, playing a role on a par with that of sports in the building of national identity (L’Etang, 2006). Wherever there is contact and interaction between nations, as in both food and tourism, there is diplomacy; not only traditional diplomacy – defined as the “art of conducting negotiations between governments” (Deutsch, 1966, p. 81) – but also diplomacy between governments and foreign publics, as well as at a grassroots level, between individuals and groups.

The diplomatic dimensions of both food and tourism have long been acknowledged and studied. The term “gastrodiplomacy” refers to concerted and sustained campaigns of public relations and investment by governments and states, often in collaboration with non-state actors, to increase the value and standing of their nation brand through food (Rockower, 2014). Furthermore, “gastrodiplomacy in tourism” is defined in this paper as *the realm*

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*of policies and practices by which both states and non-state actors seek to engender positive associations with a national brand among foreign publics, using the channels through which tourists or potential tourists come into contact with the national cuisine.* This is understood in terms of creating positive experiences around the national culinary brand to motivate travel to the country, as well as in terms of creating positive experiences of the national culinary brand during tourists' travel to the country.

In gastrodiploamacy, food is used to pursue diplomatic aims in government-to-public diplomacy. Many nations have implemented gastrodiploamacy campaigns during the past decade to increase their cultural influence abroad. Tourism is implicated in many ways in these campaigns, as will be discussed, but to date there has been no clear articulation of gastrodiploamacy in tourism as a coherent field of policy and study. This paper seeks to define this field and propose angles of focus for the development of the field in both theory and practice.

The paper is structured in five sections, bracketed by this introduction and a conclusion. The first section positions gastrodiploamacy in tourism within the diplomacy spectrum, delineating its scope and importance as a specific niche of public and cultural diplomacy, and expanding upon the shared roots and concerns of diplomacy, gastronomy and tourism. The subsequent two sections examine the interplay of food and tourism in the formation of national brands, and the gastrodiploamacy campaigns through which these brands are promoted. Two further sections explore two areas of focus for further study and development of the topic that emerge from the discussion of food, tourism and national brands: namely the various "ambassadorial" roles fulfilled by individuals in the context of gastrodiploamacy in tourism (the "people" dimension) and the "contact zones" at which gastrodiploamacy in tourism takes place (the "places" dimension). The paper concludes by offering thoughts on implications for future study and policy.

## **Gastrodiploamacy in the context of public diplomacy**

### ***Public and cultural diplomacies***

Traditional state diplomacy is conducted through channels of government-to-government (G2G) exchange. Public diplomacy, in contradistinction, involves communication between governments (as well as NGOs) and the general public (G2P), and increasingly also P2P interactions (Rockower, 2014). The term "public diplomacy" was introduced by Edmund Gullion in 1965. In his words,

Public diplomacy ... deals with the influence of public attitudes on the formation and execution of foreign policies. It encompasses dimensions of international relations beyond traditional diplomacy; the cultivation by governments of public opinions in other countries; the interaction of private groups and interests in one country with another; the reporting of foreign affairs and its impact on policy; communication between those whose job is communication, as diplomats and foreign correspondents; and the process of intercultural communications. (<https://uscpublicdiplomacy.org/printpdf/22179>)

Deibel and Robert (1976) distinguish between "tough-minded" and "tender minded" public diplomacy. The former seeks to persuade others to adopt one's point of view whereas the latter aims at mutual understanding.

Governments increasingly employ P2P approaches to diplomacy to pursue goals in diplomatic relations between countries. This mode of diplomacy is increasingly enabled by widespread easy access to communications technologies and platforms, and growing

contact between people across national divides, both virtually (via digital social fora and networks) and physically (through tourism) (Snow, 2009). P2P diplomacy does not aim to resolve conflict by approaching it head-on but rather concentrates on building understanding through contact between people, seeking to create feelings of common interests and experiences, so that intractable conflict is less likely to emerge. P2P diplomacy can happen within governmental public diplomacy, but can also occur without involvement of governmental or quasi-governmental entities, through “citizen diplomacy,” defined by the Center for Citizen Diplomacy as “the concept that every global citizen has the right, even the responsibility, to engage across cultures and create shared understanding through meaningful person-to-person interactions” (The Center for Citizen Diplomacy, n.d.).

Cultural diplomacy is a form of public diplomacy understood as “an actor’s attempt to manage the international environment through making its cultural resources and achievements known overseas and/or facilitating cultural transmissions abroad” (Cull, 2008). It draws on “soft power” resources, a term introduced by Nye (2004) to describe the use of power to attract others to adopt one’s values, as opposed to “hard power,” which uses threat of force – be it economic, military or political – to influence others’ behaviour. It would be an oversimplification to state that soft power is intrinsically benign, as “soft” resources can also support cultural imperialism and ideological indoctrination. Both governmental and non-governmental actors can contribute to the soft power of a country (Snow, 2009), which is developed over multiple stages and many different channels of communication (Kondo, 2008).

P2P diplomacy relies on the “contact hypothesis” (Allport, 1954), a concept from criminology and conflict studies that proposes that animosity is fuelled by separation and lack of familiarity, and that bringing people together to participate in shared experiences can therefore contribute to de-escalation of hostility and dismantling of prejudices. Food is a strong catalyst for bringing people together, a meal together providing pleasurable and unforced contact between equals (Brewer & Gaertner, 2004; cited in Chapple-Sokol, 2013).

### ***Conceptualizing gastrodiplomacy***

The theme of food, with its various links to diplomacy, incorporates qualities of cultural diplomacy. It is also eminently hybrid in nature, as the various themes of this paper will demonstrate.

Gastrodiplomacy is “a form of public diplomacy that combines cultural diplomacy, culinary diplomacy and nation branding to make foreign culture tangible to the taste and touch” (Rockower, 2012), entailing the use of food in nation branding (Wilson, 2013), a space of convergence of culinary culture and foreign policy. While the term gastrodiplomacy may be recent, food has been used towards diplomatic ends throughout history (Nirwandy & Awang, 2014). Rockower (2012) distinguishes between gastrodiplomacy and culinary diplomacy. Culinary diplomacy seeks to increase bilateral ties by strengthening relationships through food and dining experiences for visiting dignitaries (heads of state, ambassadors, etc.), whereas gastrodiplomacy involves food’s role in public diplomacy, which exposes broad public audiences, not only the elites targeted by traditional diplomacy, to a nation’s food culture to “enhance the edible nation brand” (Rockower, 2014, p. 14). Gastrodiplomacy is specifically *not* about international promotion and communication of food products for primarily economic motives (though it may involve promotional aspects, such promotion is done in support of spreading cultural influence). It is also distinct from “food diplomacy” involving food aid and relief, which uses food as an economic and

humanitarian instrument in the context of development diplomacy rather than cultural diplomacy (Rockower, 2014). Additionally, gastrodiploacy is different from the role of food in “place branding.” While both make strategic use of culinary culture to build image, the former is concerned with influencing foreign publics’ perception of a nation (or sometimes sub-national region), whereas the latter has to do with the differentiation of a place within a market, to “gain advantage for its firms, organizations, people, products and services” (Hall, 2008). Thus, while these two principles may have some relation, this paper is concerned with diplomatic rather than economic aims, and thus does not delve deeply into place branding.

Gastrodiploacy builds on food as a common dimension of the lives and cultures of all people. It can be considered a “tender-minded” type of public diplomacy, in that it does not exert influence by advocating directly, but rather more obliquely by striking emotional connections (Osipova, 2014). Gastrodiploacy has been used most effectively by “middle power” nations, which are not superpowers in terms of cultural, military or economic influence, but which nonetheless have a presence and influence on the international stage, such as Thailand, Taiwan, Korea and Peru. However, major powers such as the USA and Japan have also used food as a diplomatic tool. Rockower (2014) foresees two trends for future development: “gastrodiploacy polyilateralism,” in which states collaborate with non-state actors in diplomacy, and “gastrodiploacy paradiploacy,” in which sub-state actors conduct international diplomacy.

Food is a powerful tool in achieving diplomatic goals, not only in lieu of hard power for middle powers, but also as a supplement for hard power superpowers and as legitimation for sub-national powers. Gastrodiploacy is therefore not just a niche of diplomacy, but spans across the diplomatic spectrum. Food is an ideal tool for public diplomacy, because of its intrinsic potential to engage “hearts and minds” (Chapple-Sokol, 2013). Having situated gastrodiploacy within the field of public diplomacy, the subsequent sections of this paper will investigate different modes of diplomacy through food in the context of tourism.

### **Food and national branding for tourism**

The place of cuisine as cultural heritage was secured with UNESCO’s listing of the Gastronomic Meal of the French as Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2010, citing its power in bringing people together ([www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/RL/gastronomic-meal-of-the-french-00437](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/RL/gastronomic-meal-of-the-french-00437)). Other national or regional cuisines have been listed since then, including traditional Mexican cuisine (2010), the Mediterranean diet (Italy, Spain, Greece and Morocco in 2010; Portugal, Cyprus and Croatia in 2013), Turkish coffee and the Washoku dietary cultures of Japan (both in 2013). Ancient wine-making techniques in Georgia (2013), traditions of preparing kimchi in both South Korea (2013) and North Korea (2015) have been inscribed, as well as religious feasts in Ethiopia and Macedonia (2013) and several traditions around cultivation and agriculture. The idea of a “national cuisine” valorizes a subset of a country’s foods, raising them to the level of bearers of national identity (Albala, 2007, p. 118–138; Chen, 2011; Smith, 2012).

Nation branding is the projection of a nation’s self-image to the world, and can be an effective “force multiplier” (Rockower, 2012, p. 4) for middle power countries (Rockower, 2014). DeSoucey (2010) introduced the term “gastronationalism” to refer to the use of food “production, distribution and consumption” to build a feeling of attachment to a nation, forming a “national brand.” Gastrodiploacy can thus be seen as “edible nation branding” (Haug, 2014) that enables members of the public to encounter foreign cultures through food, even without travelling abroad. The association of food with a national brand

influences opinions of that brand. For instance, 55.71% of respondents in a study on national cuisines' ability to influence public opinion on a nation's image reported having changed their opinion about a country after tasting its cuisine, and 84% considered visiting a country based on its national cuisine (Ruddy, 2014).

A nation's brand is in part reflected in its tourist image, or destination image, which is a composite of distinctive characteristics of that place as experienced by tourists (Gartner, 1994; Hall, 2010; Kiryluk & Glińska, 2015; Kotler & Gertner, 2002; Martins, 2015; Qu, Kim, & Im, 2011). A striking and articulate tourism image is fundamental in motivating tourists' decisions to visit a destination (Joppe, Martin, & Waalen, 2001; Holloway, 1998). Because a country's culinary culture provides a tangible demonstration of its history and distinctive culture (Rand, Heath, & Alberts, 2003; Riley, 2000), food is a prominent component of destination image marketing (Dogan & Petkovic, 2016; Edwards, Fernandes, Fox, & Vaughan, 2000; Fields, 2002; Fusté-Forné & Berno, 2016; Quan & Wang, 2004; Scarpato, 2002) as well as a tourism product in its own right (Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983; Mahachi-Chatibura, 2016). Pictures of food feature prominently in many countries' tourism promotion, conveying rich and nuanced messages about a country's cultural values and identity (Çalışkan, 2013; Fox, 2007; Frochot, 2003; Lin, Pearson, & Cai, 2011; Mahachi-Chatibura, 2016). Attesting to growing acknowledgment of the diplomatic significance of the national food brand, the 2015 Michelin star rankings for the Red Guide to France were made at the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, rather than a commercial space as in previous years (Fabricant, 2015).

Food is an obligatory rather than discretionary aspect of travel, as no person can avoid eating (Richards, 2002). Beyond fulfilling a biological need, food can be a primary motivation for travelling to a particular destination (Boyne, Williams, & Hall, 2002; Chang, Kivela, & Mak, 2010; Henderson, 2004; Karim, 2006; Molz, 2007; Richards, 2002; Rimmington & Yuskel, 1998; Sánchez-Cañizares & López-Guzmán, 2012; Tsai & Wang, 2017). The term "culinary tourism" was coined by Long (2004) to denote travel for which food is a significant motivating factor. Besides eating, this can include other modes of participation in the "foodways" of foreign cultures, such as the preparation and presentation of local cuisines. Beyond their experience value, gastronomic adventures in tourism can also contribute to one's prestige and "cultural capital" (Bourdieu, 1984; Heldke, 2003).

The "exposure effect" (Obermiller, 1985; Pliner, 1982) describes how preference for a particular food increases the more one consumes it, and it has been demonstrated that people are more inclined to consume a local cuisine during their travels if they have had past experience of that cuisine (Mak, Lumbers, & Eves, 2012, p. 184; Ryu & Jang, 2006). The expansion of ethnic restaurants abroad in many countries' gastrodiploacy campaigns, as will be discussed later, can be seen as endeavours to spread positive associations through the exposure effect. The exposure effect draws on the contact hypothesis, through which increased contact and familiarity encourage acceptance and even desire for further contact. This principle is borne out in various studies, such as a survey of Hong Kong residents that determined that significant majorities (from 64% to 72%) gained a more favourable impression of Korea after being exposed to aspects of that country's culture such as Korean television dramas and movies, pop music and food (Kim, Agrusa, Chon, & Cho, 2008, p. 177). This phenomenon is a projection of the general struggle of diplomacy – the overcoming of differences to gain mutual appreciation, in which the ways in which people come together are not left to chance but are intentionally designed and strategized, for the achievement of particular goals.

### **National gastrodiplomacy campaigns and tourism: some case studies**

In recent years, national governments around the world increasingly promote their national food brands through multifaceted gastrodiplomacy campaigns, in which the attractive, emotional and sensory aspects of food as an instrument of soft power are mobilized in concerted policy initiatives. This section discusses a number of such campaigns by countries and sub-state entities, focusing on the ways in which they engage tourism, both in encouraging travel to the country and in establishing a sort of “ersatz tourism” in exporting national food experiences abroad for foreign publics.

#### *National gastrodiplomacy campaigns*

East Asian nations have been particularly active in implementing gastrodiplomacy campaigns. Thailand is considered a pioneer in this regard. The soft power potential of Thai food became increasingly apparent with the rapidly growing popularity of Thai food beginning in the 1990s, with the number of Thai restaurants in the USA alone increasing from around 500 in 1990 to over 2000 by 2002 (The Economist, 2002). The Thai government’s 2002 “Global Thai Program” aimed to increase the number of Thai restaurants abroad from 5500 to 8000 by the following year. The subsequent “Thai Kitchen to the World” programme was designed to inform domestic and foreign publics about Thai food and its history, including granting “Thailand’s Brand” certificates to restaurants fulfilling criteria set by the Thai Ministry of Commerce.

In Korea, the US\$ 77 million “Global Hansik” (hansik translates as “Korean food”) campaign, was launched in 2009, and the Korean Food Foundation founded in 2010, tasked with creating the “infrastructure for globalizing Korean cuisine,” using instruments such as a restaurant recommendation scheme, food promotion, education programmes and chef training courses (<https://www.hansik.org/en/article.do?cmd=html&menu=PEN6010100&lang=en>). This “Kimchi Diplomacy” (Rushford, 2003) contributes to a broad governmental programme of promotion of Korean cultural exports (such as K-pop and taekwondo). In 2010 Taiwan’s President Ma Ying-jeo declared gastrodiplomacy a “policy priority” and allocated US\$ 34.2 million to the “All in Good Taste: Savor the Flavors of Taiwan” campaign. This so-called “dim sum diplomacy” sought to differentiate Taiwanese cuisine from that of mainland China and to counter Taiwan’s image as primarily a low-cost manufacturing hub (Booth, 2010). Taiwan has also used outbound tourism strategically, for instance in sending Taiwanese chefs to cooking competitions and supporting the establishment of Taiwanese restaurants abroad (Chapple-Sokol, 2013).

In South America, Peru initiated the “Cocina Peruana del Mundo” (Peruvian Cuisine for the World) campaign in 2006. This campaign is conducted through collaboration between Peru’s Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Peruvian Society for Gastronomy (APEGA) and several private partners. The Chief for Public Diplomacy of the Peruvian Embassy in the US had ambitions of making Peruvian cuisine as well-known as Thai (Nicholls, 2006), accompanied by an application for inscription of Peruvian cuisine on the UNESCO list of Intangible Cultural Heritage (Wilson, 2013).

France is a country for which the culinary arts have always played a central role in the formation of national identity. In 2010, the “Gastronomic meal of the French” became the first culinary heritage asset to be inscribed in UNESCO’s Intangible Cultural Heritage list. In 2013, the French government launched the “Network of Cities of Gastronomy” (Réseau des Cités de la Gastronomie) campaign, to create a living establishment dedicated to culinary cultures in France and around the world (<http://www.repasgastronomiquedesfrancais>).

[org/reseaudecites-de-la-gastronomie/](http://reseaudecites-de-la-gastronomie/)). Within this campaign, the *Mission française du patrimoine et des cultures alimentaires* (MFPCA, or French Mission for Food Culture and Heritage) declared four “Cities of Gastronomy” across France, in which to create cultural spaces with facilities devoted to encouraging innovation and education in and through gastronomy. This initiative draws upon the credentials of French cuisine as the inaugural culinary World Heritage to establish France as a leader in the exploration of food-related themes of relevance beyond France, to countries around the world. This project will consist of ongoing programmes of activities in four cities, each of which will address a central theme: Dijon (wine and vineyards), Lyon (health and nutrition), Paris and Rungis (food supply in urban areas) and Tours (connections between food and social life) (<http://frenchfoodintheus.org/758>). French President François Hollande declared that this initiative was aimed at using the leverage afforded by French cuisine as culinary world heritage, to promote knowledge and appreciation of French cultural values and practices (<http://www.repasgastronomiquedesfrancais.org/>).

### ***Spurring tourism through gastrodiploamacy campaigns***

Many gastrodiploamacy campaigns have among their objectives the increasing of tourism to their respective countries, tending to strive for two aims relative to tourism. Firstly, they seek to create food experiences in foreign countries that will motivate members of those local publics to desire to visit the country in question. Secondly, many also seek to establish their country as a culinary destination by creating specific events and attractions. One of the stated objectives of “Thai Kitchen to the World” has been to encourage Thai restaurants abroad to serve as tourist information centres. There are indications that this role has been successful. The period since the beginning of Global Thai has coincided with a 200% increase in tourists to Thailand between 2002 and 2016, with more than one in three visitors to Thailand mentioning food as an important motivation for their visit (Scharf, 2016). Similarly, tourist arrivals to Korea rose by 70% from 2009 to 2015, driven in part by the growing popularity of Korean culture abroad (Scharf, 2016).

The gastrodiploamacy efforts of Korea, Peru and Taiwan also aim at proliferation of restaurants abroad serving their national cuisine. “Global Hansik” aimed to quadruple the number of Korean restaurants outside Korea to 40 thousand by 2017 and make the national cuisine one of world’s top five (Choi, 2012; Kim Hyun-cheol, 2008). The South Korean gastrodiploamacy campaign looks to Thai, Chinese and Japanese cuisines in striving to make Korean the next Asian global food, expressly aiming at spurring tourism (in addition to encouraging exports and cultural dissemination) (Choi, 2012; Moskin, 2009). In a testament to the success of Peru’s efforts, the capital city of Lima alone has three of the world’s top 30 restaurants (<http://www.theworlds50best.com/list/1-50-winners#t1-10>) and was named as the fastest growing destination city in the Americas by international overnight visitors (2009–2016) (Hedrick-Wong & Choong, 2016).

Some gastrodiploamacy campaigns also involve events and attractions to establish their countries’ credentials as culinary destinations. This includes aspects seeking to address the general tourism market as well as those seeking to appeal to “elite” culinary tourist niches. For instance, Taiwan’s gastrodiploamacy efforts have included domestic events aimed at attracting culinary-oriented inbound tourism broadly defined, also hosting international gourmet festivals targeting a narrower, more discerning audience (Chapple-Sokol, 2013). Likewise, the Korean Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism has devised tourism products that involve tourists in the preparation of traditional Korean food, while also promoting



food-related conferences and meetings in Korea, such as the General Meeting of the World Association of Chefs' Societies, held in Daejeon in 2012 (UNWTO, 2012). And in a self-referential manifestation of gastrodiploacy in tourism, in 2016 Lima, Peru hosted the United Nations World Tourism Association (UNWTO) Gastronomy and Tourism Forum, with over 2500 participants.

Tourism development is certainly an important component of France's "Cities of Gastronomy" campaign. Attractions are being developed in prominent sites in each of the four cities to house activities and facilities. Dijon's International Gastronomy Exhibition Centre, for instance, opened in 2016 in an historic hospital building in the city. President Hollande predicted Dijon's destiny as "a great European and world destination" through this and other "City of Gastronomy and Wine"-related projects (<http://www.repasgastronomiquedesfrancais.org/>). In seeking to further reify France's leadership among acknowledged culinary world heritage cultures, the MFPCA is planning to stage an annual Festival of World Culinary cultures, to showcase UNESCO-listed gastronomic heritage from around the world. This event is intended to attract the full range of stakeholders in the culinary value chain from cultures around the world: farmers, producers, chefs, sommeliers, butchers, etc. (<http://www.grad-dijon.fr/onlinemedia/Upload/citegastroweb.pdf>).

### ***Tourism and food as strategic instruments gastrodiploacy***

While there are certain commonalities in the explicit goals for tourism sought by various nations in their gastrodiploacy campaigns, tourism is not merely a beneficiary of such campaigns. It is also an instrument, playing a different role and taking a different position relative to each of the campaigns, by virtue of the different nature of the interplay between tourism, food and other factors in the respective national brands.

Thailand's pioneering role in gastrodiploacy campaigns, and the integration of tourism therein, may be attributed in part to its long-established and generally positive image and a high level of recognizability in terms of both its cuisine and its reputation as a tourism destination. Other countries may have followed in Thailand's footsteps in instituting such campaigns, but each of these subsequent campaigns has taken its own form due to each nation's cultural, political and historical particularities. For the Korean government, the spread of the national cuisine is a cultural mission. As expressed by former Head of the Korean Ministry of Food, Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, *hansik* is seen as "the root of the country's philosophy and traditional culture that bears our culture, spirit, and a 5,000-year history" (Wisdom, 2015). Under "Global *Hansik*," the Korean Tourism Organization has taken advantage of the popularity of Korean pop culture in Asia by engaging Korean celebrities to promote Korean food and tourism destinations in tandem. In this example, the strong brand represented by Korea's popular culture icons is used to raise the recognition and positive associations of the country's tourism and food.

In contrast, the Peruvian gastrodiploacy efforts contribute to attempts to alleviate negative perceptions of the country formed during the period of internal conflict instigated by the Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path) communist militant group from 1980 until 1992, establishing an image of Peru as a dangerous and unstable destination. The "Cocina Peruana del Mundo" campaign has been instrumental in repairing this image, encouraging visitation to the country through the attraction of its cuisine, to the extent that Peru has been voted by the World Travel Award (2016) as the World's Leading Culinary Destination for the past five years (<https://www.worldtravelawards.com/award-worlds-leading-culinary-destination-2016>). In this example, food is used as a catalyst for tourism, and together

food and tourism contribute to exposing foreign publics to the present reality of Peru to counteract preconceptions from negative historical associations.

For Taiwan, the diplomatic challenge is to use culinary culture to differentiate itself from a larger nation state, the People's Republic of China (PRC), while avoiding the especially precarious question of the island state's political status and relationship with the Chinese mainland. This perception of differentiation among foreign publics is bolstered by the spreading of Taiwanese (as distinct from Chinese) restaurants and chefs worldwide: actively promoting an impression of cultural distinctness, avoiding having to express a position on political independence.

France, as one of the world's most established and broadly respected gastronomic cultures, has been seeking to leverage these credentials to use food as an area in which it can credibly assume a global leadership role and as a viable conduit through which it can exercise influence in the world. The Festival of World Culinary Cultures and the themes of the "Cities of Gastronomy" are indicative of the use of food-related events and attractions to develop such a role, beyond the inward-looking perspective of lauding the virtues of France's own national cuisine, to the reaching-out perspective of using these virtues as a foundation upon which to serve as a host and facilitator of global discussions, education and experiences around food.

Just as tourism can be seen as both beneficiary and instrument of gastrodiplo-macy campaigns, it is also both beneficiary and instrument of the positive national brands towards which such campaigns strive. Some measures of gastrodiplo-macy campaigns, such as proliferating and quality-controlling restaurants overseas, encouraging export of ingredients and food products and sending chefs abroad, are ways of reaching foreign publics who may be reluctant to travel (Rockower, 2012), creating sites and situations of "ersatz tourism," in which patrons are immersed in a foreign culinary culture without leaving their own country. This ersatz tourism can also contribute to tourism-as-such, by building up familiarity and favourable associations with the national cuisine among foreign publics, who may become more inclined to visit the country. Other sites are strategically established within the country to attract certain types of tourists. All of these examples must be understood in terms of their contribution to developing the national brand through food in the context of tourism.

### **Food "Ambassadorship" in tourism**

While gastrodiplo-macy campaigns involve broad policy and grand ambitions, gastrodiplo-macy in tourism is actually instantiated in countless individual interactions between people. Individual hearts and minds are engaged through senses and palettes in a myriad of social and cultural encounters. This section explores some of the ways in which both tourists and hosts perform roles of cultural "ambassadorship," both explicit and implicit, in the context of food-centred contact in tourism.

### ***P2P diplomacy in national gastrodiplo-macy initiatives***

National gastrodiplo-macy initiatives often mobilize a special class of tourists, expatriates and even non-nationals, who serve as culinary emissaries. Some such ambassadorial roles are explicit, as in the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT, 2016) North America naming Chef Andy Ricker as the inaugural "Amazing Thailand Culinary Ambassador," tasked with promoting Thai cuisine in North America, in order, as the Director of the TAT New York office expressed, to "inspire more US travellers to visit and experience

the authenticity of Thai cuisine first hand” (<http://www.tatnews.org/tourism-authority-thailand-announces-first-culinary-ambassador/>).

Under the US Diplomatic Culinary Partnership, initiated by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in 2012 (Sietsema, 2012), an American Chef Corps of more than 20 American restaurant chefs were sent as unpaid voluntary “culinary ambassadors,” to perform a range of functions in promoting American food culture abroad, in official diplomatic contexts as well as through channels aimed at the general public of foreign nations (Birdsall, 2012).

These ambassadors interface with foreign publics in a variety of ways, for example touring Pakistan with a local chef while shooting a miniseries, teaching classes on nutritious cooking and food entrepreneurship, preparing traditional American food for foreign audiences and collaborating with Israeli and Palestinian chefs to cook a meal (U.S. Department of State: Diplomacy in Action, 2015; <https://2009-2017.state.gov/secretary/remarks/2015/04/240965.htm>).

The ambassadorial nature of other roles is more implicit. The “Global Hansik” campaign, for instance, financially supports Korean students to study culinary arts abroad and participate in food fairs (Moskin, 2009). China has sought to raise awareness among Chinese chefs in Latin America of their role as representatives of their nation’s culture. In 2010, a team of Chinese master chefs was sent to Chile to give two days of training to 60 Chinese chefs working in that country, with a similar programme in Costa Rica following (Flannery, 2011). The Peruvian Embassy in the US has also worked with top chefs and investors to expand Peruvian cuisine in that country (Nicholls, 2006). Taiwan’s gastro-diplomacy initiative has sent Taiwanese chefs to cooking competitions abroad (Ichijo & Ranta, 2016) and sent Chef Hou Chun-sheng, winner of the 2011 Taipei International Beef Noodle Festival, on a two-week US tour, during which he cooked for thousands of Google employees at their California company headquarters (<http://www.taiwannews.com.tw/en/news/1837039>), among many other activities.

Despite, or perhaps because of the reputation of French cuisine, those charged with promoting French values through its food have at times been termed as arrogant or pretentious (<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/feb/01/french-food-chefs-promotion>; <http://culinarydiplomacy.com/blog/2015/02/23/french-culinary-nationalism/>) and thus, one could argue, potentially counterproductive to the aim of spreading positive associations with France. As an example of a more productive performance of ambassadorial roles around food, on 19 March, 2015 a coordinated menu of French traditional fare was served to guests at the homes of French ambassadors around the world, with French restaurants in over 150 countries worldwide simultaneously serving similar menus, adapted to local specialties, to their patrons. This “Goût de France/Good France” event, chaired by star chef Alain Ducasse, aimed to provide foreign publics with an experience that embodies essential French values of “conviviality and respect for our planet and its resources. And, most importantly pleasure” (<http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/french-foreign-policy/tourism/events/article/gout-de-france-good-france-a>).

Recent innovations bring gastrodiplomacy to places beyond the accustomed contexts and situations in which food has traditionally been brought to foreign publics. In the 2012 “Turkish Coffee Truck” initiative, for instance, a group of Turkish volunteers travelled to five US cities with the goal of raising interest in Turkish culture while enhancing relations between the two nations, under the title “Turkish Coffee: The Taste of Friendship for 500 Years.” The project was sponsored by a coffee company, the American-Turkish Business Association and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Turkey, and received extensive media coverage.

Similarly, among the successful actions of the Global Hansik programme were the bibimbap backpackers, young Koreans who prepared bibimbap (a popular rice-based dish from Korea) for people at various locations on different continents. Global Hansik also collaborated with private operators to integrate taco trucks selling the Korean taco, a Korean/American hybrid of bulgogi wrapped in a tortilla, into the promotion of “Kimchi Diplomacy” in metropolitan areas in the USA (Gelt, 2009; Rockower, 2012). A “Kimchi Bus” Project was launched in 2011, supported by the Korean government and private sector partners. The bus travelled to 34 countries, from the United States to Argentina to Italy, cooking traditional Korean food and promoting the national dish (and UNESCO intangible cultural heritage) kimchi (Kimchi Bus: Travel Food Truck, n.d.), which plays a pivotal role in the South Korean national food brand. As already mentioned, gastrodiplomacy should not be confused with food promotion with purely economic goals. While some of the examples discussed above may aim to encourage tourism, among their goals, they all have in common that they are driven by governmental programmes that seek to influence foreign publics’ impressions of their nation and culture.

A report of the Advisory Committee on Cultural Diplomacy, “Cultural Diplomacy: The Linchpin of Public Diplomacy” (2005), found a need for more exchange of creative artists, actors and other creative professionals in the interest of cultural diplomacy (Brown, 2009). Chefs certainly must also be considered among this list. The above examples represent P2P diplomacy within government-sponsored gastrodiplomacy efforts. That is, while the instigators of the diplomatic overtures are governmental (often in partnership with private sector entities, demonstrating what Rockower (2014) would term “gastrodiplomacy polyilateralism”), and the aims have to do with the influencing of perceptions of a national brand, contact is made not through governmental channels and media of dissemination and information, but rather through enlisting individuals to create positive situations of contact and exchange around the national cuisine with members of foreign publics.

### ***Citizen P2P gastrodiplomacy***

Looking beyond P2P initiatives integrated into national gastrodiplomacy campaigns reveals many examples of citizen-led P2P diplomacy. Meal sharing, for instance, is an emerging trend supported by apps that connect tourists with local hosts offering home-cooked meals. An example is the social networking platform EatWith ([www.eatwith.com](http://www.eatwith.com)), which enables travellers to over 500 cities worldwide to share meals prepared by local hosts. Similar platforms include mealsharing.com, withlocals.com, feastly.com and cookeing.com, the latter inspired by the French table d’hôtes tradition, allowing hosts to “share their meal, based on cuisine from their origins,” with tourists and local people alike (Cookeing, n.d.). These platforms are similar to the accommodation booking network Airbnb, which challenges accepted norms of the formal accommodation sector. Such person-to-person food sharing platforms are “disruptive innovations” (Guttentag, 2015) that transform a market by offering a fundamentally different value proposition and operating model.

In the New York-based “Ambassador Program,” people who came to the US from other cultures order dishes from their home culture at local ethnic restaurants and explain them to participants (I Want More, n.d.). Chefs for Peace is an NGO founded in 2001 in Jerusalem by well-known chef Kevork Alemian and three other chefs with the mission of working towards peace using their shared culinary heritage to bring people together in the kitchen and around the dining table ([chefsforpeace.weebly.com](http://chefsforpeace.weebly.com)). The organization’s team of around 20 high-profile Jewish, Muslim and Christian chefs host diverse food-related events around the world. As Nabil Aho, Head Chef Instructor at the Pontifical Institute

in Jerusalem put it, “We use the same ingredients. If you can’t work together in the kitchen, then where can you?” (Franks, 2008).

These are all instances of “gastrodiplomacy paradiplomacy” (Rockower, 2014) in tourism, instigated by entities other than states without a direct connection to governmental nation branding, and all intersecting with tourism (while also appealing to locals).

The impetus for some of these examples (such as the bibimbap backpackers and the Turkish Coffee Truck) originate in governmental gastrodiplomacy campaigns and serve broader official agendas, whereas others (such as meal sharing and the Ambassador Program) are driven by individuals and groups with often idealistic motives. Some are implemented in order to encourage inbound tourism and others make strategic use of out-bound tourism. All are examples of P2P gastrodiplomacy in tourism, indicating the complex and multifaceted nature of this area.

The increasing prevalence of P2P gastrodiplomacy is enabled by democratization of access to communications technologies and platforms, as well as increasing physical and virtual contact between people. These same factors fuel increase in travel by private individuals and transform how people travel and gain access to information and networks in planning their travels. These affordances are appropriated by sub-state actors, even individuals, to re-define their roles in the tourism and food “ecosystem.” Chefs become outgoing ambassadors touring foreign countries to engage in diplomacy using the instrument of food. Members of so-called “host” communities become hosts in a literal sense. These examples, as well, illustrate that both tourists and hosts can, under different circumstances, be seen as fulfilling quasi-ambassadorial roles in gastrodiplomacy in tourism.

### **Contact zones of gastrodiplomacy**

As important as the people who perform acts of gastrodiplomacy are the sites at which these interpersonal contacts around food take place, which can be seen as constituting a network of “contact zones” of gastrodiplomacy, drawing on Pratt’s (1991) concept of contact zones as places at which members of different cultures meet and attempt to come to terms with one another.

Eating at ethnic restaurants in one’s home country can be viewed as a sort of ersatz tourism (Molz, 2004), and also as a step in a longer process of coming to understand, appreciate and participate in another culture. Many gastrodiplomacy programmes support the establishment and quality control of restaurants serving national cuisine abroad. These restaurants become sites of gastrodiplomacy where customers’ impressions of the national culture are influenced. Thailand’s use of Thai restaurants abroad as cultural outposts is an explicit component of that country’s gastrodiplomacy campaign, and research in the US indeed found that customers saw their patronage of Thai restaurants as a way of learning about this culture (Sukalakamala & Boyce, 2007).

Due to the “exposure effect” (Obermiller, 1985; Pliner, 1982) as discussed above, availability of an ethnic cuisine in one’s home country can contribute to one’s desire to consume that food in one’s travels to that country. In this way, supporting proliferation of ethnic restaurants abroad is a form of “gastrodiplomacy polyilateralism.” The efforts of gastrodiplomacy campaigns to multiply the numbers of restaurants while controlling the quality of the foods they serve are the quantitative and qualitative faces of initiatives to increase the reach and effectiveness of these contact zones of foreign publics with the national cuisine.

At least in the case of Chinese restaurants, the role of ethnic restaurants as sites of intercultural contact was established long before the recent proliferation of gastrodiplomacy campaigns. The spread of Chinese restaurants throughout the USA, beginning in the late

nineteenth century, was largely responsible for increasing familiarity and interaction of the American public with Chinese culture and people (Barbas, 2003). Even today, most Americans' first interactions with Chinese people and food will be at Chinese restaurants in the USA. Restaurants serving the national cuisine abroad have been supported and promoted by nations with extreme challenges in generating a positive image, such as the Baltimore Afghani restaurant opened by the brother of Afghanistan's former interim leader Hamid Karzai, and the several Korean restaurants established abroad by the North Korean Workers' Party (The Economist, 2002).

Another contact zone in which tourists are presented with culinary representations of a country is in airplanes, particularly those of national carriers. In the constrained and captive environment of the airline cabin, the food on offer, along with the comfort of the facilities and quality of the entertainment, is an important factor in building impressions. Airlines often offer menus designed by high-profile chefs of their respective countries or regions, as in Air France working with Michelin star chefs to promote French cuisine on board (Airline Trends, 2016; <http://www.airlinetrends.com/category/inflight-catering/>). In a four-year programme beginning in 2013, Japan's ANA Airlines has featured the cuisines of three different Japanese prefectures every month on its flights as well as in its airport lounges, in an effort to encourage tourism to the country and to raise awareness of the culture and culinary offerings of Japan's diverse regions ("Tastes of Japan by ANA," n.d.). Korean Airlines prioritizes fresh and seasonal Korean ingredients in its food offerings (The Japan Times, 2016).

Airlines have also expanded their so-called "experiential marketing" by demonstrating and serving their inflight fare at selected earthbound venues. Examples include Korean Air's stationing a chef to serve their inflight bibimbap to the attendees of the 2012 MATA travel industry Fair in Kuala Lumpur (Korean Air, 2014) and initiatives of airlines such as Air France and Austrian Airlines that disperse representatives by foot, bicycle and food truck to distribute samples of their gastronomic offerings in cities including New York and Washington (Meece, 2011). Though arguably an area in which financial and diplomatic goals intertwine, such programmes further the overall aims of gastrodiploacy in tourism, in building familiarity and positive associations with a national cuisine and encouraging travel to the country using its national carrier.

The interactions through which diplomacy unfolds in ethnic restaurants are examples of the P2P nature of gastrodiploacy. Ethnic restaurants become diplomatic sites (Neumann, 2013) that enable and frame these interchanges. Beyond conventional restaurants, various innovative programmes have emerged, furthering the aims of gastrodiploacy, as exemplified by the Turkish coffee truck, bibimbap backpackers, and the Malaysian government's staging of traditional Malaysian night markets in London's Trafalgar Square, Santa Monica, California and New York's Meatpacking District (Laudan, 2011). These insertions bring national cuisine into public spaces of foreign cities and create gastrodiploacy contact zones. In meal-sharing programmes such as eatwith.com, private homes become potential contact zones of person-to-person citizen gastrodiploacy in tourism as well. The various conference venues and schools established by national gastrodiploacy campaigns to attract elite gastronomic tourists and professionals must also be added to this list.

The places discussed above – from ethnic restaurants abroad to the public spaces of foreign cities to the aircraft that transport tourists to a destination to the homes and venues of the destination itself – can be seen as components of a network of contact zones of gastrodiploacy in tourism, each playing its own role in disseminating a national image.

There are many other contact zones, though, that have received less attention in gastrodiplomacy policy. For all the effort given to promoting food experiences at national cuisine restaurants abroad, enticing tourists to visit the country and hosting food-related events, there is still much potential for national gastrodiplomacy campaigns to address the broader tourist experience of the national cuisine whilst inside the country – including the vast myriad of sites at which tourists come into contact with local food and people – the restaurants, homes, food fairs, festivals, cooking schools, shops and markets of the destination. These places form the family of socio-spatial contexts where person-to-person interactions of gastrodiplomacy in tourism are enacted, and each of these is an area of potential study and future expansion of gastrodiplomacy efforts.

### **Conclusion and implications**

This paper proposes “gastrodiplomacy in tourism” as an area of study and practice at the junction of diplomacy, food and tourism. Gastrodiplomacy in tourism is defined as *the realm of policies and practices by which both states and non-state actors seek to engender positive associations with a national brand among foreign publics, using the channels through which tourists or potential tourists come into contact with the national cuisine.*

This is an area in which issues and concepts of diplomacy studies, gastronomic studies and tourism studies overlap and interact, and within which new issues and forms arise. Delineating the area of gastrodiplomacy in tourism as a coherent and relevant field of concepts, practices and issues, this paper argues that this is an area that has not previously received concerted attention or clear articulation either from a scholarly or an applied perspective, making it worthy of study and action in its own right. It further proposes the two topics of the people (as “ambassadors”) and places (as “contact zones”) of gastrodiplomacy as essential factors in the study and practice of this field.

In gastrodiplomacy in tourism, diplomacy, food, and tourism are intertwined in creating and sustaining a national brand, such that each of these dimensions can only be appreciated and understood in view of its relationship with the other two: that is, gastrodiplomacy campaigns [diplomacy] contribute to establishment and cuisine quality control of ethnic restaurants abroad [food], encouraging positive associations among patrons [diplomacy], which motivate travel to the country [tourism], where tourists patronize restaurants and other culinary sites [food], at which they gain a deeper knowledge and engagement with the culture [diplomacy], spurring repeat visits to ethnic restaurants abroad [food] and the nation itself [tourism], contributing to Nye’s third dimension of public diplomacy, “developing relations in the long term” [diplomacy] (2004). Similar narratives could be told about the dynamics of the ambassadorial peregrinations of chefs, the peer-to-peer economy of food sharing, and other manifestations of gastrodiplomacy in tourism discussed in this paper.

As “contact zones” of gastrodiplomacy, ethnic restaurants abroad play complex roles, preparing people for tourism, making them more likely to visit, more likely to try the local food, and more likely to gain an appreciation for the culture, based on the “contact hypothesis” that increasing contact breeds increasing acceptance. In airplanes, the destination culinary experience can be foreshadowed and the national food brand communicated through in-flight food experiences. A consolidated strategy for gastrodiplomacy in tourism would extend this way of thinking to other contexts within which tourists encounter the national cuisine and would seek an overall comprehension of the roles and potentials of these various sites, and the people within them, in the tourist experience of the national

culinary brand, from the point of first contact at a restaurant in a tourist's home country (already an area of intense activity in gastrodiplo­macy campaigns) to the on-site experience of the national foodscape while visiting the destination (a rich area for potential future study and policy). An understanding of different “ambassadorial” roles performed by people in the overall gastrodiplo­macy in tourism network is of equal importance.

While some countries – notably Korea – have integrated some isolated elements of in-country gastronomic experiences in the context of tourism into their gastrodiplo­macy campaigns, a holistic approach to the tourism “foodscape” as an integrated and cohesive national programme of policy has yet to be fully developed by any country. The development of such a national policy on gastrodiplo­macy in tourism would be of great benefit in influencing tourists' experience of the national brand, because of the far more numerous channels and longer timeframe available to engage foreign publics through gastrodiplo­macy when they visit, compared to the short, limited contact achieved through “export” gastrodiplo­macy measures such as ethnic restaurants abroad and initiatives such as the bibimbap backpackers and Turkish coffee truck. Tourists are immersed in the home culture and have already established sufficient positive associations with the nation to desire to undertake the time and expense to pay a visit.

Thus, campaigns of gastrodiplo­macy in tourism can and should be all the more ambitious in their aims and more resourceful in their methods, taking into account the full range of places at which tourists come into contact with the national culinary brand. While there are examples of campaigns by countries seeking to provide tourists with information on their culinary offerings, such as the website established by the TAT to help potential visitors better understand and appreciate Thai food and know where to get different traditional dishes during their travels (Koumelis, 2013), gastrodiplo­macy in tourism should take a more inclusive focus on the diplomatic foodscape of the nation as encountered by tourists, in which people (as culinary “ambassadors”) and sites (as “contact zones”) play equally important roles to food itself.

The various forms of “cultural brokerage” in gastrodiplo­macy in tourism raise challenges: How can governments work with different culinary operators in direct P2P gastrodiplo­macy? How are the gastrodiplo­matic roles of restaurants and gastronomic institutions within the country different from those abroad? How can the people and organizations engaged in grassroots food activities that are the lifeblood of local food culture (i.e. street markets) and that spur innovation and invention in the future evolution of food culture (i.e. food sharing platforms) be engaged without stifling them with undue governmental interference?

Both of Rockower's (2014) future trends of gastrodiplo­macy are applicable to gastrodiplo­macy in tourism. Besides restaurants, food producers, distributors and marketers, other obvious collaborators for “gastrodiplo­macy poly­lateralism” in tourism include destination management organizations and locally active NGOs. In bringing members of foreign publics to a destination, tourism offers opportunities for small-scale culinary enterprises and local organizations that lack the reach or resources to conduct international “gastrodiplo­macy paradiplomacy,” making local communities more aware of their role in diplomacy. Indeed, the role of place and locality becomes much more important than in “export”-focused gastrodiplo­macy campaigns. A “national brand” can perhaps be exported and broadcast, but a place cannot.

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