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## Contributing to Gastrodiplomacy through Culinary Experience: A Cooking Event in Spain

### Mutfak Deneyimi Aracılığıyla Gastrodiplomasisine Katkıda Bulunmak: İspanya'da Bir Yemek Pişirme Etkinliği

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#### Abstract

It is utilized by governments as a potent strategy for building and cultivating contacts with other countries and cultures, as well as contributing to nation branding through gastrodiplomacy, culinary arts, and public diplomacy. Within the framework of public diplomacy, gastrodiplomacy—also known as culinary diplomacy—can be characterized as the transfer of culture through the kitchen. In the context of gastrodiplomacy and nation branding, the study focuses on gastronomic experiences that highlight the distinctive qualities of a nation. The article will also refer to the work of Carmen Antón, which emphasizes the term ‘culinary experience’ to discuss the concept and focuses on travelers’ unforgettable gastronomy experiences. The study examines the culinary experiences of academics from several countries in Spain between February 28 and March 4, 2022. Consequently, it aims to establish how the culinary experience contributes to Spain’s nation branding and gastrodiplomacy.

#### Keywords

Culinary Diplomacy, Culinary Experience, Gastrodiplomacy, Nation Branding, Public Diplomacy

#### Öz

Gastrodiplomasi, mutfak sanatlarının bir ulusun markalaşmasına katkıda bulunması ve yabancı ülkelerin vatandaşları ve farklı kültürlerle bağlantılar kurmak ve geliştirmek için güçlü bir kamu diplomasisi strateji olarak kullanılmaktadır. Mutfak diplomasisi olarak da bilinen gastrodiplomasi, bir ülkenin mutfak kültürünü ve mutfak sanatlarını kullanarak diğer ülkelerle olumlu bir iletişim ortamını tesis etmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu noktada çalışma gastrodiplomasi ve ulus markalaşması çerçevesinde, bir ulusun ayırt edici niteliklerini ön

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plana çıkaracak gastronomi deneyimlerine odaklanmaktadır. Çalışma, gezginlerin gastronomi deneyimlerine odaklanan Carmen Antón'un "mutfak deneyimi" kavramına atıfta bulunarak; 28 Şubat - 4 Mart 2022 tarihleri arasında İspanya'da gerçekleştirilen akademik değişim programı dahilindeki mutfak deneyimlerini incelemektedir. Sonuç olarak, mutfak deneyiminin İspanya'nın ulus markalaşmasına ve gastrodiplomasisine nasıl katkıda bulunduğu ortaya konulmaktadır.

### Anahtar Kelimeler

Mutfak Diplomasisi, Mutfak Deneyimi, Gastrodiplomasi, Ulus Markalaşması, Kamu Diplomasisi

## Introduction

By emphasizing their national cuisines through gastrodiplomacy, nations seek to win over the public's sympathies, reputation, and power. On the other hand, gastrodiplomacy, a vital component of public diplomacy, is crucial to nation branding. Gastrodiplomacy is linked to public diplomacy and combines cultural and culinary diplomacy with national branding, resulting in a physical perception of taste and touch towards a nation (Suntikul, 2019). Through gastrodiplomacy, countries promote brand awareness. It is attempted in gastrodiplomacy to win the hearts and minds of different nations through native foods.

Gastrodiplomacy, also known as culinary diplomacy, is a transdisciplinary concept initially put forth by Rockower and Chapple Sokol in the early 2000s (Nair, 2021). Countries use gastrodiplomacy to acquire sympathy, prestige, and power by emphasizing their national cuisines. In order to promote national food culture in gastrodiplomacy, a campaign is launched centered on a certain cuisine identity and a nationalized meal within that identity. At this moment, it is intended to assist the establishment of national food restaurants connected with the name of the chosen dish or the name of the country in many countries across the world. Opening culinary schools to educate the national food, taking courses on the applicable state's national cuisine in world-famous cooking schools, inviting trainee chefs from different nations to the country, and teaching the national cuisine are among the other objectives. Activities such as sponsoring gala dinners at international meetings and opening country cuisine restaurants in hotels all over the world are also regarded under the umbrella of gastrodiplomacy because they help to the promotion of the countries' cuisines (Alaca, 2018, p. 500). At this point, the promotion of each cuisine is differentiated by culinary experience. Positive national culinary experience is also a part of gastrodiplomacy. Positive experiences or high levels of satisfaction with particular events have an important role for gastronomy practices.

Spain is cited as an example of successful nation branding. Preston (1999) asserts that Spain is an excellent example of modern, successful national branding since it builds on what already exists. Spain was an isolated, autarky, destitute, authoritarian anachronism twenty-five years ago. It is now a contemporary, prosperous European democracy. The globalization of Spanish multinational enterprises such as Repsol and Union Fenosa, the Olympics and world fairs, the reconstruction of large cities, and the accolade that came with Almodovar's films all played a role in this transition. Spain positions and communicates the benefits of place to support its existing brand image. The catchy slogan "everything is under the sun" is the best example of this. Famous residents, events, and new attractions may help build or renew a destination's image. The ultramodern Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, Spain, gave the city of Bilbao a strong look and helped attract visitors and new investors (Kotler and Gertner, 2002). One of the most remarkable applications of Spain is the tasting tourism called "Tasting Spain". The aim of this application, in which the tasting of local flavors is brought to the fore, is an effort to create more tourism inputs and a national brand with a gastronomy theme. "TastingSpain", which has found an international spread in Spanish culture, has increased the brand value of the Basque region and provided an international spread for Spanish culture. In addition, the Basque management, which established the brand value control mechanism known as the 'Eusko Label', gave a guarantee of authenticity to products with the "K" logo on them (Çekiç and Aksoy, 2020).

Numerous countries are investing in gastrodiplomacy projects as a tool to promote their cultures, globalize their food industries, create wider tourism and build relationships over their national

cuisines (Pham, 2013). Spain has been carrying out important projects for the last 20 years to promote Spanish gastronomy worldwide. Reyes Maroto, Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism of Spain, introduced a new program called “SpainFoodNation” in 2022. The Spanish government sees gastronomy as a strategic priority “not only as a tourist attraction, but also because of its ability to combat depopulation and demographic challenges in the region”. The Restaurants from Spain quality seal was introduced in 2021 to distinguish enterprises outside of Spain that offer not just Spanish products, but also real quality Spanish cuisine with a distinct image. Furthermore, ICEX and the Royal Academy of food (RAG) signed an agreement to establish a framework of cooperation for the creation of actions aimed at promoting the image of Spanish food in worldwide markets. The new communication campaign “The richest country in the world” is launched with the participation of the prescribing chef José Andrés. Spain also has a campaign called TURESPAÑA that attempts to promote gastronomy and winemaking as a tourist product by providing access to materials such as culinary retreats and Spanish wine routes, among other things (Ministerio de Industria, Comercio y Turismo, 2022). Throughout this study, gastrodiploacy, culinary diplomacy and national branding concepts are defined. This study examines the connection between culinary diplomacy on nation branding and public diplomacy, based on the example of culinary experience in Spain.

## Literature Review

### Nation Branding

A brand, according to the American Marketing Association, is “a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination thereof, intended to identify and distinguish the goods and services of a seller or group of sellers from competing products.” A brand is a one-of-a-kind combination of functional and non-functional qualities and additional values that have become inextricably linked with the brand, and whose awareness can be conscious or intuitive (Macrae et al., 1995).

The concept was first used in 1996 by British policy consultant Simon Anholt, known as the father of the concept, as ‘nation branding’. In many countries, the marketing and brand approach has been applied to the public sector, and the principles of branding have been used to establish better communication and relationship with citizens (Szondi, 2008). According to Anholt (2002), each comes from a place with its own brand image, and the product is often strongly associated with this image. Countries with natural beauty, archaeological sites or a strong culture and history will attract natural tourists who are interested in the current features of the place (Kotler and Gertner, 2002).

The purpose of nation branding is to create a positive national image for the nation and its people, establish a brand identity for the nation, increase the export of its products, and attract tourists and foreign direct investment (Anholt, 2003; Dinnie, 2008). Countries can showcase their cultural richness by utilizing the inherent characteristics they possess while building their brand identity. The image of a country is a product of its geography, history, art, music, famous citizens, product brands, stereotypes, and other factors (Kotler and Gertner, 2002). Furthermore, nation branding has evolved contextually through local and global multidisciplinary domains. In the local context, researchers have expanded the concepts of national development and marketing of attractive places from cities to countries (e.g., Dinnie et al., 2010; Kotler and Gertner, 2002). On the other hand, Fan, defines nation branding as the process in which a country’s image can be created, modified, monitored, evaluated, and proactively managed to enhance the country’s reputation in the eyes of international audiences (Fan, 2010). Based on this, it is important to highlight the significance of gastrodiploacy in the processes of public diplomacy and nation branding. Gastrodiploacy, as a form of cultural diplomacy, utilizes food and gastronomy to promote a positive image of a country and enhance its reputation internationally. It recognizes the power of culinary experiences in capturing the hearts and minds of people from different nations.

### Gastrodiploacy

Gastronomy was first used in the sense of culinary art in 1800 by the French lawyer and poet Joseph Berchoux, who defined it as “the art of eating good and quality food” (Tez, 2021, p.101). The term “gastrodiploacy” was originally introduced in the 2002 article “Food as Ambassador” in the

Economist magazine to present Thai culinary strategy (Alaca, 2018, p. 500). Gastrodiplomacy was first codified in 2003 at UNESCO's 32nd General Conference with the adoption of the "Protection of Intangible Heritage" Convention (UNESCO, 2003). Under this pact, the national dishes of the states are safeguarded and promoted to other countries around the world.

Gastronome and international consultant who helps countries establish powerful culinary brands is known as "Gastrodiplomacy" or "culinary diplomacy" for short, according to Paul Rockower (2010). "Gastrodiplomacy, simply put, is the act of winning hearts and minds through stomachs," he says, emphasizing how food can serve as a non-threatening means to garner favor with and connect with a foreign audience. At this point gastrodiplomacy, which is one of the application areas of public diplomacy, started to be implemented with good examples in Asian countries and then spread all over the world. Public diplomacy can be applied both in short, medium and long-term processes as well as for different purposes and targets. Gastrodiplomacy, as one of the varieties of public diplomacy, strategically offers unique cultural cuisine. Gastrodiplomacy is also effective in the nation branding process and contributes to the image of countries.

Belasco states that the cuisine is shaped by a clear set of basic foods, taste principles, preparation techniques, consumption rules and a supply infrastructure to take the food from the farm to the table (2008, p. 34). At this point national cuisine is a national brand that emphasizes the identity of a particular state. Therefore, food can be used as a tool for public diplomacy (Solleh, 2018, p.162). Scholars define gastrodiplomacy as "the government's practice of exporting national culinary heritage as part of a public diplomacy effort to increase national brand awareness, promote economic investment and commerce, and engage with everyday dinners on a cultural and personal level" (Pham, 2013). Rockower (2010) defines gastrodiplomacy as "the act of winning hearts and minds through stomachs."

Gastrodiplomacy establishes a reciprocal relationship between food and nation. Moreover, food "brands" the nation, for example when food helps define a common past for the entire state, or when spectacles represent dishes that are also national symbols. These facts, in a sense, guarantee the unity of the state and advance the nation with a strong sense of identity (Buscemi, 2014).

Gastronomy has a soft power tool for public diplomacy and nation branding activities. Especially in the process of nation branding, the concept of gastronomy is not limited to cuisine, food and restaurants, but also includes public diplomacy activities that include cultural, economic, political and social backgrounds and spillover effects. Public diplomacy is related to the development criteria of the country, as well as the cultural attractiveness elements. At this point, gastronomy has key importance for destination attractiveness. For instance, by trying a dish from a different culture, it is possible to have sincere feelings for that country. Thus, gastronomy, which plays a bridge role in the interaction of cultures, is expressed as an important diplomatic tool of international politics (Morgan, 2012; Luša and Jakešević, 2017). Lusa & Jakešević References bölümüne eklenmemiş In this way, gastronomy activities among peoples contribute to international communication and cooperation. At this point, *experience* is a keyword that means a link between gastronomy and culinary diplomacy. Experience is a keyword that means a link between gastronomy and culinary diplomacy, and also our research focuses on culinary experience and its contribution to nation branding.

## Culinary Experience

Gastrodiplomacy is concerned with a nation's image and identity, as well as contributing to the nation's branding strategy. Culinary diplomacy is also defined as the use of food and cuisine as a tool to foster cross-cultural understanding to improve interactions and collaboration. Culinary diplomacy is linked to the notions of public diplomacy, cultural diplomacy, gastrodiplomacy, and nation branding.

One of the most effective ways to get to know different cultures is the cuisine. At this point, it is known that gastrodiplomacy, which emerged to influence different countries with food culture, is based on ancient history. In the modern sense, the French diplomatic tradition and especially the French chef Marie-Antoine Carême is the practitioner of gastrodiplomacy in the 19th century. Also, there are also quotations emphasizing the role of gastronomy. For instance, Greeks and Romans would invite their enemies to the table to get to know them. They would "break the ice." On the other hand, in modern times, Hillary Clinton brought "smart power" to the table. Also, there is a

common belief that people who eat together and share their plates, will never be enemies with each other. In a nutshell, culture begins and ends on a plate. The peaceful aspect of the culinary experience has been known for a long time. However, its strategic approach is strategically based on the “Global Thai” strategy in the context of Thailand’s gastrodiploamacy. As the first state to officially introduce gastrodiploamacy, Thailand launched the “Global Thai” practice in 2012. Along with the “Amazing Thailand” tourism campaign, different from traditional diploamacy, tourism and cuisine diploamacy among the peoples came to the fore. This initiative, “it is argued, will not only introduce deliciously spicy Thai food to thousands of new tummies and persuade more people to visit Thailand, but it could subtly help to deepen relations with other countries” (The Economist, 2002). References bölümüne eklenmemiş. This dual role, which is the idea of satisfying one’s appetite while also strengthening political ties, is at the heart of every gastrodiploamacy strategy. However, while Thai gastrodiploamacy is commendable, it does not unite essential ideals to overcome common worldwide supremacy; it must improve in order to compete in the global race. Gastrodiploamacy delivers the opening words and represents national characteristics and shared ideals. Nations must strengthen public diploamacy by replicating Western capabilities that have thus far led the way.

In today’s context, gastronomy or culinary experience has a key importance for tourism and it is known that there is a symbiotic relationship between tourism and food (Kivela and Crofts, 2006; Özdemir and Seyitoğlu, 2017).

## Methodology

The literature on the gastrodiploamacy experience shows that the concept focuses on the tourist experience. Tourism activities focus on following a certain program and experiencing the chosen destination at the maximum level in a limited time. Just as nation branding takes place based on the attractiveness of countries, the culinary experience contributes to the attractiveness and attractiveness of countries. At this point, as a short-term cultural exchange activity, International Staff Week focuses on the culinary experience of the participants coming together from various parts of Europe.

Universidad Pontificia de Salamanca prepared a social and cultural event as part of the international staff week in Salamanca, Spain, between February 28 and March 4, 2022. On the third day of the international week, a “Showcooking” event was held in La Cocinita Mágica. La Cocinita Mágica is a gastro-sociocultural venue in Salamanca where numerous seminars about food and gastronomy are held in a close and unique manner, upgrading the classic concept of the culinary school. They also always plan instructive, participative, and highly enjoyable special events for group, association, and individual celebrations. In Salamanca, as part of the international staff week, eight academic staff from Belgium, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, and Türkiye competed in a show cookery event among 12 other participants. 8 academic staff members from various nations learned how to cook Paella and make Sangria. The countries’ traditions, particularly their cuisines, reflect their cultural identity. Paella is one of the most authentic Spanish dishes and a component of the country’s culinary identity in Spain. Paella is a rice-like dish that is distinctive to the geographical and cultural texture of Spain. Sangria is a fruit-mixed alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverage from Spain.

Semi-structured in-depth interviews with academicians who participated in the cooking event of Spanish cuisine in Salamanca between February 28 and March 4, 2022 was conducted as a research approach. All eight participants who had prior experience preparing Spanish cuisine in Salamanca were invited to the interview, but only five agreed. Semi-structured in-depth interviews were performed to learn about the culinary experiences of the five interviewees in Salamanca.

## Findings

The purpose of this research is to explain the relationship between culinary experience, gastrodiploamacy, and nation brand creation. The meaning of the culinary experience will be discussed in this section. These include the staff’s Spanish gastronomic experience before, during, and after the mobility, as well as their vacation to Spain before, during, and after the mobility.

This study included five academic staff members, all of whom are university faculty members. All interviews were conducted through video conference using WhatsApp. Four of the participants

are female. Two participants are from Türkiye, one from Portugal, one from Lithuania, and one from Belgium.

**Table 1:** Demographics of Interview Participant

Participant	Gender	Country
P1	Female	Lithuania
P2	Female	Türkiye
P3	Male	Belgium
P4	Female	Portugal
P5	Female	Türkiye

During the participant interviews, it was discovered that 26 words were used the most, with the first five of them being Spanish, Spain, food, experience, and culture, in that order.

**Table 2.** Frequency of Most Word

Most Word Frequency			
Word	Length	Count	Weighted Percentage (%)
Spanish	7	109	2,67
Spain	5	96	2,36
Food	4	86	2,11
Experience	10	64	1,57
Culture	7	63	1,55
Country	7	59	1,45
Cuisine	7	54	1,32
Gastronomy	10	46	1,13
People	6	39	0,96
Mobility	8	37	0,91
Paella	6	33	0,81
Dishes	6	29	0,71
Cooking	7	24	0,59
Really	6	24	0,59
Think	5	23	0,56
City	4	20	0,49
Made	4	20	0,49
Shared	6	20	0,49
Drink	5	19	0,47
Cook	4	18	0,44
Try	3	18	0,44
Brand	5	17	0,42
Cities	6	16	0,39
Course	6	16	0,39
Ingredients	11	16	0,39
Salamanca	9	16	0,39

Three mobility processes, seven themes, and 19 codes are defined in this study.

**Table 3:** Codes, Categories and Themes of the Mobility Processes

Codes	Categories	Themes
Spanish Spain Food Experience Culture Country Cuisine Gastronomy People Mobility Paella Dishes Cooking Cuisine Sangria Wines Rioja Tapas Tortillos	Before the Mobility During the Mobility After the Mobility	Dishes and Drinks Cities Culture and Gastronomy Spanish Culture Culinary Experience Positive Perception of Spain Contribution to Nation Branding

## Before the Mobility

Participants were asked questions regarding their experiences prior to the mobility. Previous visits to Spain and their experiences with Spanish cuisine are among the inquiries. According to the responses of the participants, they had all visited different towns in Spain and had tasted Spanish cuisine. However, most of the participants were found in Barcelona, Madrid, Salamanca, Cortoba, Malaga, and Murcia, respectively. Before the mobility, the most frequent words were paella, wines, rioja, sangria, tapas, and tortillas.

**Table 4:** Previous Visits of Participants to Spain and Their Experiences in Spanish Cuisine

Dishes and Drinks				Cities			
Word	Length	Count	Weighted Percentage (%)	Word	Length	Count	Weighted Percentage (%)
Paella	6	2	8,33	Barcelona	9	4	22,22
Wines	5	2	8,33	Cities	6	2	11,11
Cook	4	1	4,17	Madrid	6	2	11,11
Drinks	6	1	4,17	Salamanca	9	2	11,11
Local	5	1	4,17	Cortoba	7	1	5,56
Rioja	5	1	4,17	Malaga	6	1	5,56
Sangria	7	1	4,17	Murcia	6	1	5,56
Spain	5	1	4,17	Spain	5	1	5,56
Spanish	7	1	4,17	Tarragona	9	1	5,56
Tapas	5	1	4,17	Valencia	8	1	5,56
Tortillos	9	1	4,17	Zagora	6	1	5,56

## During the Mobility

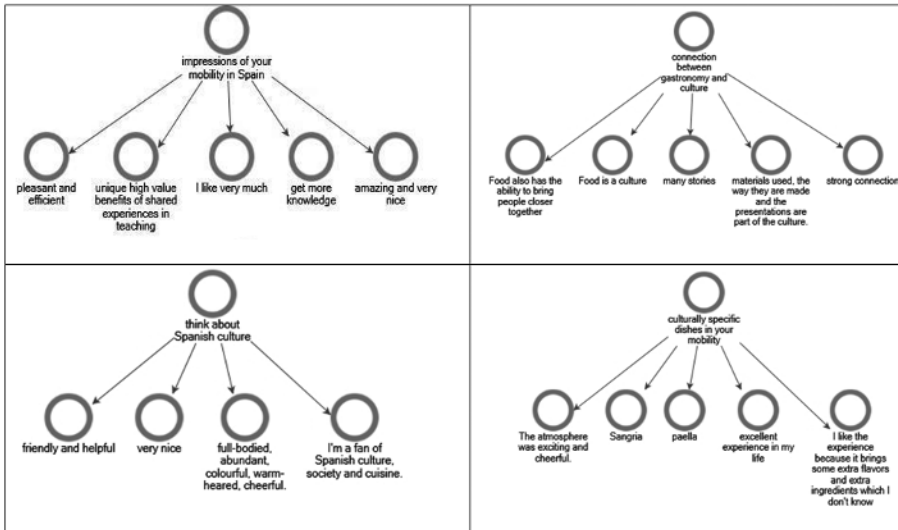
The general themes were developed based on the participants' first impressions of the mobility, the connection between culture and cuisine, their perspectives on Spanish culture, and their comments on the individual dishes they tried during the mobility. Culture, food, people, paella, Spanish, cuisine, like, and sangria are the most frequently used words for mobility.

**Table 5:** Frequency of Most Word During the Mobility

Word	Length	Count	Weighted Percentage (%)
Culture	7	18	2,63
Food	4	14	2,04
People	6	10	1,46
Paella	6	9	1,31
Spanish	7	8	1,17
Cuisine	7	7	1,02
Like	4	7	1,02
Sangria	7	7	1,02
Together	8	7	1,02
Connection	10	6	0,88
Cooking	7	6	0,88
Dishes	6	6	0,88
Friendly	8	6	0,88
Gastronomy	10	6	0,88

It gives a favorable view of mobility and Spanish culture in Spain. Participants evaluate their interactions as “very nice”, “pleasant and efficient”, and “friendly and helpful”. The responses to the questions about the relationship between culture and gastronomy demonstrate that food has a profound connection with culture. Furthermore, individuals who have cooked Spanish food regard their experience creating sangria and paella as a wonderful experience.

**Figure 1:** Themes and Codes Maps During the Mobility





## After Mobility

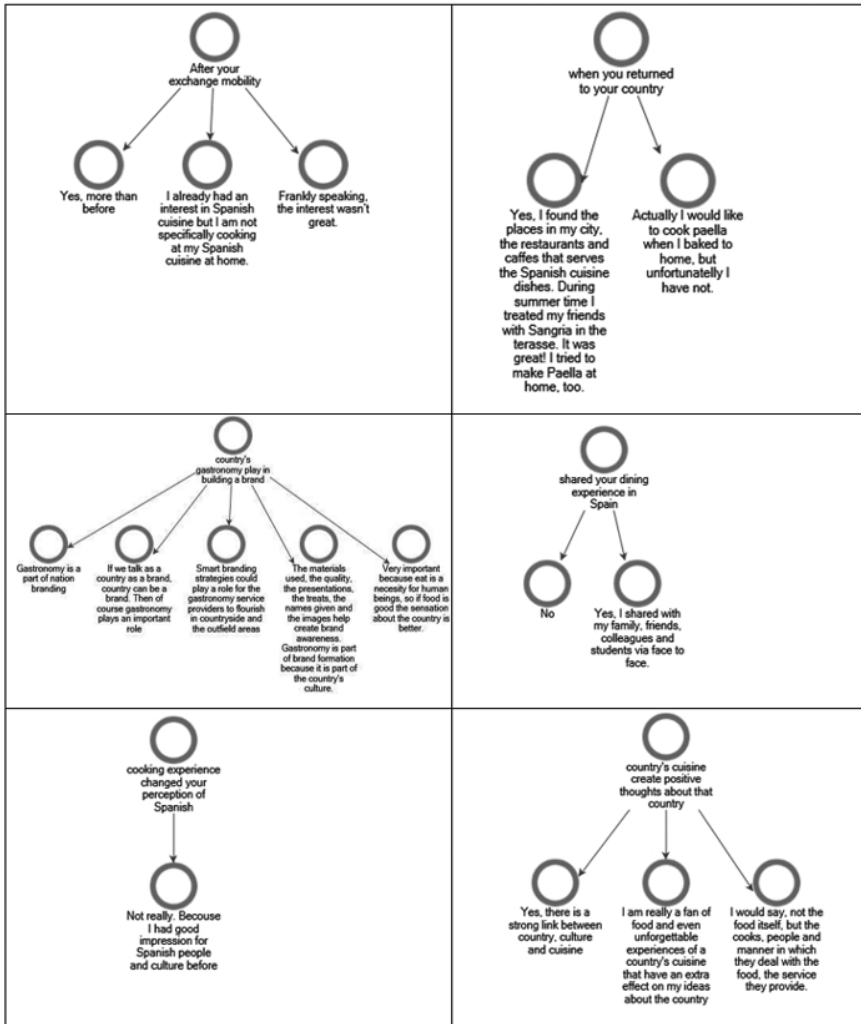
Food, country, gastronomy, Spanish, cuisine, and Spain are the most frequently used words after mobility.

**Table 6:** Frequency of Most Word After the Mobility

Word	Length	Count	Weighted Percentage (%)
Food	4	26	3
Country	7	22	2,53
Gastronomy	10	15	1,73
Spanish	7	15	1,73
Cuisine	7	14	1,61
Spain	5	12	1,38
Important	9	11	1,27
People	6	11	1,27
Brand	5	10	1,15
Culture	7	10	1,15
Friends	7	10	1,15
Paella	6	10	1,15
Experience	10	9	1,04
Like	4	8	0,92
Good	4	7	0,81
Restaurants	11	7	0,81
Shared	6	7	0,81
Branding	8	6	0,69

The study's final part focuses on the participants after the mobility experiences. Participants were asked on their thoughts on after the mobility, and themes emerged. When the participants returned to their own countries after the mobility, they claimed that they were more interested in Spanish cuisine. Except for one, all the participants shared their gastronomic experiences in Spain with their friends and family via face-to-face and social media. The culinary experience did not alter the participants' perceptions of Spain. All the participants have already retained a favorable opinion of Spain. All the participants believe that the country's cuisine can influence people's perceptions of it. Finally, all the participants agree that gastronomy is a part of the culture and helps to brand the country.

**Figure 2:** Themes and Codes Maps After the Mobility



## Conclusion

As one of the application areas of public diplomacy, gastrodiploamacy has spread over the world after being implemented successfully in Asian countries. Gastrodiploamacy is also useful in the process of nation branding and contributes to the image of countries. It is attempting to win the hearts and minds of many nations through gastrodiploamacy and national delicacies.

Five semi-structured in-depth interviews were done to discuss how a country's culinary experience contributes to that country's nation branding. The interviews were divided into three categories: before mobility, during mobility, and after mobility. Before the mobility, all the participants had visited several towns in Spain and had tasted Spanish cuisine.

It was found that 26 words were used the most, with the first five being Spanish, Spain, food, experience, and culture, in that order. Paella, wines, rioja, sangria, tapas, and tortillos are the most often used words before mobility. Culture, food, people, paella, Spanish, cuisine, like, and sangria are the most frequently used words for mobility. Food, country, gastronomy, Spanish, cuisine, and Spain are the most frequently used words after mobility. While food and beverage names are the most often used words before mobility, the phrases culture, cuisine, country, Spain, and Spanish are frequently used when describe the experience during and after mobility.

Positive words are used by participants to characterize their mobility experiences. The responses to the question on the relationship between culture and gastronomy reveal that food has a strong connection with culture. Participants who have made sangria and paella describe their experience as wonderful.

Before the mobility themes emphasize cities, dishes, and drinks. During and after the mobility, participants believe that culinary has a profound cultural significance and will help to brand the country.

When the participants returned to their own countries after the mobility, they claimed that they were more interested in Spanish cuisine. Except for one, all the participants shared their gastronomic experiences in Spain with their friends and family via face-to-face and social media. The gastronomic experience reinforced the participants' good impressions. Gastronomy, according to all participants, is an aspect of culture and adds to the nation's and people's branding. With these types of culinary experiences, Spain can contribute to nation brand building and gastrodiplomacy initiatives.

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## Özet

*Kamu diplomasinin uygulama alanlarından biri olan gastrodiplomasinin, başarılı bir şekilde Asya ülkelerinde uygulanmasından sonra dünya geneline yayıldığı görülmektedir. Gastrodiplomasi, ulus markalaşması sürecinde faydalı olup ülkelerin imajına katkı sunmakta ve ulusal lezzetler aracılığıyla birçok ulusun kalplerini ve zihinlerini kazanmayı amaçlamaktadır. Gastrodiplomasi, kültürel ve mutfak diplomasisini ulusal markalaşma ile birleştiren ve bir ülkenin lezzet ve dokunuşla algılanmasını sağlayan fiziksel bir deneyimdir. Ülkeler marka bilincini artırmak için gastrodiplomasi aracılığıyla yerel yiyecekleri tanıtmaktadırlar. Bu noktada alandaki araştırmacılar İspanya’yı, başarılı ulus markalaşması örneği olarak göstermektedir. Preston’a göre, İspanya, gerçekten var olanı temel alarak modern ve başarılı bir ulus markalaşmasının en iyi örneklerinden biridir ve bir grafik kimlik altında çeşitli faaliyetleri birleştirip, bütünlüklü, iç içe geçmiş ve birbirini destekleyen bir yapı oluşturmayı başarmaktadır. İspanya, yerin faydalarını konumlandırıp iletmekte ve mevcut marka imajını desteklemektedir. “Her şey güneş altında” sloganı bunun en iyi örneklerinden biridir. İspanya’daki ultramodern Guggenheim Müzesi, Bilbao şehrine güçlü bir görünüm kazandırmış ve ziyaretçileri ve yeni yatırımcıları çekmeye yardımcı olmuştur. İspanya’nın en dikkat çekici uygulamalarından biri olan “TastingSpain” adlı lezzet turizmi, yerel lezzetlerin ön plana çıkarılmasına yönelik bir çabadır. Bu uygulama, İspanyol kültüründe uluslararası bir yaygınlık bulmuş ve Bask bölgesinin marka değerini artırmış, İspanyol kültürüne uluslararası bir yayılım sağlamıştır. Ayrıca, “Eusko Label” olarak bilinen marka değer kontrol mekanizmasını kuran Bask yönetimi, ürünlerin üzerindeki “K” logosuyla otantiklik garantisi sağlamıştır. Bu noktada çalışman, İspanya’nın mutfak deneyiminin ulus markalaşmasındaki rolünü ortaya koymayı amaçlamaktadır. 28 Şubat - 4 Mart 2022 tarihleri arasında Pontificia de Salamanca Üniversitesi’nde gerçekleştirilen uluslararası personel hareketliliğinin bir parçası olarak İspanya yemeklerini pişirme etkinliği düzenlenmiş ve katılan akademisyenlerle yemek pişirme deneyimlerine yönelik yarı yapılandırılmış derinlemesine görüşmeler gerçekleştirilmiştir. Salamanca’da önce İspanyol yemeklerini pişirme etkinliğine katılan sekiz katılımcı görüşmeye davet edilmiş, ancak beşi kabul etmiştir. Böylece beş katılımcı ile Salamanca’daki mutfak deneyimlerini öğrenmek amacıyla yarı yapılandırılmış derinlemesine görüşmeler gerçekleştirilmiştir. Görüşmeler, hareketlilik öncesi, hareketlilik sırası ve hareketlilik sonrası olmak üzere üç kategoriye ayrılmıştır. Bu araştırmanın bulguları, gastrodiplomasi ve ulus markalaşması bağlamında mutfak deneyimlerinin önemini ortaya koymaktadır. Hareketlilik öncesi dönemde katılımcıların İspanya’ya dair izlenimleri ve önceki deneyimleri tespit edilmiştir. Buna göre katılımcılar İspanya’nın farklı bölgelerini ziyaret etmiş ve paella, şaraplar, rioja, sangria, tapas ve tortilla gibi yemekleri tatmışlardır. Kelime frekansı tablosu da bu bulguları desteklemektedir. Hareketlilik sürecinde katılımcılar, etkileşimlerinden olumlu izlenimler edinmiş ve bunları hoş, verimli, dostane ve yardımsever olarak tanımlamışlardır. Kültür ile gastronomi arasındaki ilişki vurgulanmış, katılımcılar yemek ve kültür arasında derin bir bağlantı olduğunu belirtmişlerdir. Özellikle sangria ve*

*paella gibi İspanyol yemeklerini yapmak, harika bir deneyim olarak değerlendirilmiştir. Hareketlilik sonrasında ise katılımcılar İspanyol mutfağına olan ilgilerinin arttığını ifade etmiş ve deneyimlerini yüz yüze görüşmeler ve sosyal medya aracılığıyla başkalarıyla paylaşmışlardır. Katılımcıların İspanya algıları olumlu yönde etkilenmiş ve ülkenin mutfağının insanların algılarını şekillendirmede önemli bir rol oynadığına inanmışlardır. Ayrıca, gastronominin bir ülkenin kültürünün ayrılmaz bir parçası olduğunu ve ülkenin markalaşmasına katkıda bulunduğunu kabul etmişlerdir. Genel olarak, gastrodiplomasi bağlamında mutfak deneyimlerinin, kültürel alışverişi, turizmi ve ekonomik gelişmeyi teşvik ederken ülkeler arasında anlayış ve ilişkilerin gelişmesine katkıda bulunarak ulus markalaşmasına olumlu bir etkisi olduğunu göstermektedir. En çok kullanılan 26 kelimenin sırasıyla İspanyol, İspanya, yemek, deneyim ve kültür olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Hareketlilik öncesi dönemde paella, şaraplar, rioja, sangria, tapas ve tortilla en sık kullanılan kelimelerdir. Hareketlilik sırasında en sık kullanılan kelimeler ise kültür, yemek, insanlar, paella, İspanyol, mutfak, beğenmek ve sangria'dır. Hareketlilik sonrasında ise en sık kullanılan kelimeler yemek, ülke, gastronomi, İspanyol, mutfak ve İspanya'dır. Hareketlilik öncesi en çok kullanılan kelimeler yemek ve içecek adları iken, hareketlilik sırası ve sonrasında deneyimi tanımlarken kültür, mutfak, ülke, İspanya ve İspanyol sıkça kullanılan ifadelerdir. Katılımcılar, hareketlilik deneyimlerini karakterize etmek için olumlu kelimeler kullanmışlardır. Kültür ile gastronomi arasındaki ilişki üzerine verilen yanıtlar, yemeğin kültürle güçlü bir bağlantısı olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır. Sangria ve paella yapmış olan katılımcılar deneyimlerini harika olarak tanımlamışlardır. Katılımcılar hareketlilik sonrasında kendi ülkelerine döndüklerinde İspanyol mutfağına daha fazla ilgi duyduklarını belirtmişlerdir. Bir katılımcı haricinde, tüm katılımcılar İspanya'daki gastronomik deneyimlerini yüz yüze ve sosyal medya aracılığıyla arkadaşları ve aileleriyle paylaşmışlardır. Gastronomi deneyim katılımcıların iyi izlenimlerini pekiştirmiştir. Sonuç olarak katılımcıların mutfak deneyimlerinden hareketle, gastronominin kültürün bir parçası olarak ulus markalaşmasına katkıda bulunduğu görülmektedir. İspanya'nın mutfak deneyimleriyle, ulus marka oluşturma ve gastrodiplomasi girişimlerine olumlu yansımaktadır. İspanya'nın ulusal mutfak deneyimi İspanya imajını olumlu olarak desteklemekte ve İspanya markasına katkı sunmaktadır.*